

The Second “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracle: God Working Through Us

I. Recall from Previous Sessions...

a. Thomas Aquinas on the Definition of a Miracle

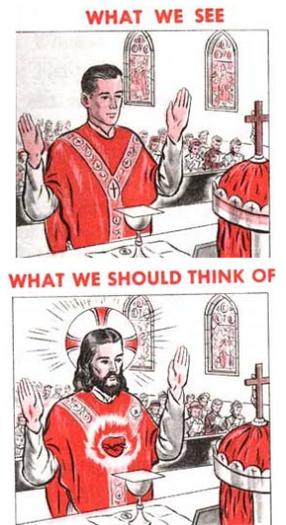
All Miracles: Events which Exceed the Efficient Causality of the Natural Order, Done by God

b. Fr. Louis Bouyer, CO: Rite and Man

- i. Humans Naturally Celebrate Ritual
- ii. We Better Understand Christian Liturgy if We Study Human Ritual Across Many Traditions to Discover What Ritual is Presumed to Do
- iii. However: Christian Liturgy is Unique, in that...
 1. Christian Liturgy is Founded on History, not Myth
 2. God Completes the Rituals as Humans Cannot

c. “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracles

- i. God’s Regular Intervention in the Natural Order for our Salvation
- ii. Apologetic/Theological Value in Studying Human Ritual
- iii. Previous Class: “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracle of Time Travel
- iv. This Class: The “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracle of God Acting Through Us in Ritual



II. Foundational Natural Human Action: God as the Agent of Human Ritual

a. Recall: To View Some Actions or People as Archetypal

- i. Rituals re-enact the myths, leaving time as we know it and entering sacred time.
- ii. The “Higher Time of Origins,” when Gods Established the World or Society
- iii. The Liturgy Remembers and Re-Enacts what Happened when Christ was On Earth

b. Aboriginal Worship Has Many Archetypes—as Does Christian Worship

c. The Fire-Sacrifice of Hinduism: Beyond Archetypes—God as the Agent of Human Ritual

- i. The “*Purusasikta*,” or Hymn of the Cosmic Man
“When the gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusa as their offering, its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the wood. They bonded as victim on the grass Purusa born in earliest time... He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame... from it where horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth... The Brahman [priests] was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya [rulers] made. His thighs became the Vaisya [farmers and merchants], from his feet the Sudra [laborers] was produced. The moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the sun had birth; Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vayu from his breath...”
- ii. The *Yajna* or Ancient Fire Sacrifice
 1. The *Purusha* is the Supreme Being and Cosmic Man...
 - a. The world is created when he is Sacrificed by the gods
 - b. The world is created *from* him—everything is a part of *Purusha*.
 2. Commissioned by a Layman but Performed by Four Priests
 - a. Priests who perform the ceremonies...
 - b. A Sacrificer, or man who officially offers the sacrifice
 - i. The Sacrificer *becomes* or *is* Purusha.
 - ii. The thing sacrificed is the Cosmic Man himself
 - iii. He is not immolated; he offers himself under the form of food
 3. Effects of the Sacrifice: Renewal of Creation & Renewal of the Sacrificer
- iii. The Mechanics by which Any Sacrificer is also the Purusha Itself, Whose Sacrifice Created the World and Renews the World: The Vedantic Doctrine of Monism (*advaita*)
- iv. Take Away: A Human Desire for a Ritual that Renews Creation and is Performed by God.

d. But: In Christian Ritual, Christ Actually Performs in History What Human Religion Grasped At

III. **Completion by God's Fulfilling Action: The Work of Jesus Christ, & Its Extension to the Liturgy**

a. The Letter to the Hebrews: Jesus as Our High Priest

i. Role of the High Priest in Second Temple Judaism

1. Priest picks the lamb on the day of preparation & slaughters the lamb
2. Priest offers prayers for the people

ii. Jesus Christ is Our High Priest

1. Jesus Sacrificed as the Atoning Sacrifice

"We might say that Jesus "translates" his divine Sonship into the language of human words, attitudes, actions, and relationships, as he constantly listens to his Father and says and does nothing other than what he hears from his Father... The human realization of his eternal Sonship reaches its consummation on the cross, because only on the cross does he live out and express the full depth of the Son's love for the Father, with the finality that only a freely accepted death can give to love in human life" (Roch Kereszty, 378)

2. Jesus Now Offers the Prayerful Mediation (Heb. 8:1, 6)

"Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens" If he were on earth, he would not be high priest of all... "But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises" (8:1, 6).

"For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day... this he did once for all when he offered himself" (7:26-27).

b. This Prayerful Mediation Continues and is Made Visible to Us in the Liturgy

CCC 1084: "'Seated at the right hand of the Father' and pouring out the Holy Spirit on his Body which is the Church, Christ now acts through the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace. The sacraments are perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our human nature. By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit they make present efficaciously the grace that they signify.

c. This Prayerful Mediation is Solely the Work of Christ, Who is *the Priest At Work* in Liturgy

"the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ... in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7)

IV. **Liturgical Theology: Christ Offers the Eucharist through Us by Sacramental Character**

a. A Problem: How Can Christ—the Incarnate Son—Work Through Us in the Liturgy???

i. Not a Problem for Hinduism, because of Monism

ii. Very Much a Problem for Us: The Self-Offering of Christ to Father is a Divine Act

The Priest "is God's vice-gerent in the midst of his flock precisely because Jesus Christ is Head of that body of which Christians are the members. The power entrusted to him, therefore, bears no natural resemblance to anything human. It is entirely supernatural. It comes from God." (*Mediator Dei* 40)

b. A First Part of the Solution: The Character of Priestly Ordination

Holy Orders (42) "imparts an indelible "character" besides, indicating the sacred ministers' conformity to Jesus Christ the Priest and qualifying them to perform those official acts of religion by which men are sanctified and God is duly glorified..." (84) "The people, on the other hand, since they in no sense represent the divine Redeemer and are not mediator between themselves and God, can in no way possess the sacerdotal power." *Mediator Dei*

i. NB: "In persona Christi Capitis" – In the Person of Christ *the Head*

ii. But Christ is at Work Offering Himself to the Father in the Mystical Body, too

“the faithful offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest from the fact that the minister at the altar, in offering a sacrifice in the name of all His members, represents Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body. Hence the whole Church can rightly be said to offer up the victim through Christ.”
(*Mediator Dei* 93)

- iii. Doesn't That Require a Kind of Supernatural Act that Christ Performs on the Laity???
- c. What is “Sacramental Character”?
 - i. The Structure of Any Sacrament...
 - 1. *Sacramentum Tantum*: The Visible Ritual of Word & Element
 - 2. *Res et Sacramentum*: A Spiritual Reality Created *Ex opere operato*
 - 3. *Res Tantum*: The Sanctifying Effects caused by the Spiritual Reality in those recipients who are well-disposed to Grace
 - ii. The *Res et Sacramentum* for Three Sacraments are Sacramental Characters
 - 1. Baptism
 - 2. Confirmation
 - 3. Holy Orders
- d. The Sacramental Character of Baptism & Worship (Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* III.63)
 - i. Sacraments are for Remedy against Sin & Perfection to Divine Worship
the sacraments of the New Law are ordained for a twofold purpose; namely, for a remedy against sins; and for the perfecting of the soul in things pertaining to the Divine worship
 - ii. Divine Worship Means Receiving & Giving Divine Gifts
the worship of God consists either in receiving Divine gifts, or in bestowing them on others. And for both these purposes some power is needed; for to bestow something on others, active power is necessary; and in order to receive, we need a passive power
 - iii. Divine Gifts are Given and Received Instrumentally
it must be observed that this spiritual power is instrumental: as we have stated above (III:62:4) of the virtue which is in the sacraments. For to have a sacramental character belongs to God's ministers: and a minister is a kind of instrument
 - iv. Thus the Character is the Passive Power to Receive the Gift of Christ's Priesthood
the whole rite of the Christian religion is derived from Christ's priesthood. Consequently, it is clear that the sacramental character is specially the character of Christ, to Whose character the faithful are likened by reason of the sacramental characters, which are nothing else than certain participations of Christ's Priesthood, flowing from Christ Himself.
- e. Thus: The Entire Church is a Priestly People, Involved in the Worship of the Father
“Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church ‘a kingdom, priests for his God and Father’ (Rev. 1:6). The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are ‘consecrated to be... a holy priesthood’ (LG 10.1).” —*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1546

V. **Practical Take Away: “Actively Participate” in Offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice to the Father**

- a. A Most Popular “Lay” Priestly Prayer: The Divine Mercy Chaplet
“Eternal Father, I offer to you the body and blood, soul and divinity, of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.”
- b. The Morning Offering as an Offering of the Day “in Union with the Sacrifice of the Mass”
 - i. The Body of Christ is Offered to the Father—And We are the Mystical Body of Christ
 - ii. A Version of the Prayer
I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, for the salvation of souls, the reparation of sins, the reunion of all Christians, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father this month. Amen.

- c. A Tradition of “Allegorizing the Mass,” at Least Back to Abbot Suger of St. Denis (1081-1151)
“the Church has prescribed so many ceremonies in the celebration of Mass... because, if the various ceremonies of Mass are well understood, they will greatly excite and foster a reverence and spirit of devotion in the hearts of the faithful. They all refer to our Saviour’s Passion and death, of which the Mass is a commemoration.”
– Fr. Michael Mueller, CSsR, *The Blessed Eucharist: Our Greatest Treasure* (1868)
 - i. The Vestments Represent the Clothes of Christ on that Day
 - ii. The Sacred Vessels Represent his Burial
 - iii. The Parts of the Mass Map onto the Stages of the Passion
- d. Three Good Criticisms of this Tradition of Allegorizing the Mass
 - i. The Allegories were Ahistorical, Having Little to Do with How the Ceremonies Developed
 - ii. The Allegories Focused on the Passion, Not the Whole Paschal Mystery
 - iii. The Allegories Distracted from the Liturgical Action by Literally Focusing on Something Else
- e. Could We Restore Some Kind of Liturgical Allegory to Focus Our Attention on Offering Eucharist?
 - i. Must be Focused on the Whole Paschal Mystery: Christ’s Birth, Death, Resurrection
 - ii. Must Help Us to Offer the Paschal Mystery of Christ to the Father—Not Distract From It
- f. A Suggestion for a “Light Allegory” to Guide Us Through the Eucharistic Prayer
 - i. At the Consecration of the Bread: “Out of love, Christ is born on the altar.”
 - ii. At the Consecration of the Cup: “Out of love, Christ sheds his blood for on the altar”
 - iii. At the “Look with Favor”: “When Jesus died, he prayed for us, and taught us to pray the same way”
 - iv. At the Elevation during the Doxology: “Christ is Risen!”
 - v. “Born, Died, Prayed, Risen...”—we stand—“...and when Jesus is risen, we can all be risen.”