Spring 2018

Christ the Truth: Church, Revelation, and Sacrament

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How can we know supernatural or suprarational Truth? This paper argues that the only answer is through a Christian conception of truth-mediation, i.e. Jesus Christ.
Chapter One
The Problem and Itinerary

§1.1 Introduction

Supernatural or divine truth seems to be beyond the grasp of humans and fundamentally incompatible with creaturely finitude. If Christianity is to be true, it needs an account of how supernatural truth is revealed and known. Such an account has many avenues and opportunities for research, since the attendant notion of revelation is at the core of faith. In this chapter I will develop out the problem, a taxonomy for handing it, and offer an itinerary for the rest of the work.

§1.2 Problem

I. The Problem of Truth

Christianity rests its foundation on the truth-status of revelation. Whether the revelation of the “Book of Nature,” the “Book of Scripture,” or the Person of Christ, all Christianities rely on some form of divinely-mediated knowledge. “All men by nature desire to know,” and we ought to seek the truth wherever it can be found. By investigating in what sort of truths Christian theology consists in, we will find no comfort or certitude in the hands of Christ.

Truth is “an idea in conformity with reality.” Truth is self-sufficiently necessary, as the following argument shows:

1. There are not universal truths.

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1 Such an account would benefit from comparative theology, e.g. against Buddhist thought.
2 Submitted for TH-343 FA 2016
2. 1 is either true or false

3. If true, it is a contradiction

4. *Reductio ad absurdum*

The notion that there must be at least one truth, and that is that there is such a truth I call the “universal truth statement.”

Christian faith claims that there are at least two kinds of knowledge, “rational/natural” and “suprarational/supernatural.” The latter are considered superior since “faith completes reason like grace completes nature.” On the surface level, it seems that for knowledge to be “superior” it must be more “true.”

The power of the universal truth statement seems to lie in the absolute certainty attendant upon it. The Muslim philosopher al-Farabi exhaustively considers certainty, drawing heavily on the *Posterior Analytics.* To be certain, contrary to the Pietists, is not to feel certain, but to have true epistemic certainty of something. That is, for the highest sort of truth possible when discussing the universal truth statement, we must affirm something like Farabi’s following six conditions for certainty:

- “S believes that \( p \) (the belief condition);
- \( p \) is true (the truth condition);
- \( S \) knows that \( p \) is true (the knowledge condition);
- it is impossible that \( p \) not be true (the necessity condition);
- there is no time at which \( p \) can be false (the eternity condition); and,

\[\text{NB: The argument holds for any set of truth-conditions, however, I select al-Farabi’s as one of the most stringent classical conditions.}\]
• conditions 1–5 hold essentially, not accidentally (the non-accidentality 
condition).”  

The universal truth statement holds for all of those of us who have been exposed 
to it. Thus, the exposed person believes that the universal truth statement is true. It is true 
(as demonstrated above). Because it is true, I know it to be true. It is impossible that it not 
be true (reductio ad absurdum). This truth must have been true for all eternity, since 
without it there is no certain truth. This is true precisely because of the nature of the 
universal truth statement. Thus, the universal truth statement satisfies al-Farabi’s high bar 
for certitude.

Therein lies the rub: if suprarational knowledge is superior to merely certain 
natural knowledge, the believer faces a dilemma. If the universal truth statement is the 
best kind of knowledge, then the best kind of knowledge is natural/rational and subject to 
al-Farabi’s criteria. Thus, suprarational faith must be either inferior to this knowledge 
(and therefore less worth knowing), or superior. If superior, then it must have some 
quality of “better truth” which the universal truth statement does not have, and which 
cannot be obtained natural reason. If that is to be the case, we must include in al-Farabi’s 
list a criterion which is unknowable by natural reason which distinguishes this superior 

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8 If it is merely equal in value to natural truth, I fail to see how it can be categorically distinct from it. This would make the content of revelation cocontaminant with the natural: pantheism.

9 To suggest that the criterion for suprarational knowledge can itself be rationally known would be to deny that the criterion participates in the very thing which it is supposed to interpret. That is, humanity cannot be the criterion for a cat’s behavior, because we do not participate in cat-nature. Rather, if cat-nature is what we are to understand, the criterion must be somehow cat-like, participating in the nature that is cat. This is not to deny that a criterion may be mutually intelligible. This argument works in parallel fashion on appeals to “intuition.”
knowledge from “merely natural certain knowledge.” It seems we must set Athens or Jerusalem over the other.

To put the same in propositional form:

1. There are external truths we can know on our own (natural truths)
2. External Supernatural truths are greater than natural truths
3. Therefore external Supernatural truths must satisfy more “truth-criteria” than natural truths
4. If the “extra criterion” is a natural criterion, then the external truth being measured must be a natural truth
5. If the “extra criterion” is a supernatural criterion, then we have no capacity to comprehend it as an external criterion.
6. Thus, external supernatural truths are impossible to understand/know as truth unless we have a criterion which is both natural and supernatural (which seems to be a contradiction, as they cannot be both knowable and unknowable at the same time)

§1.1.2 Methodological Options

a. Affirm Higher

While I claim this dilemma as original, theologians before me have not been unaware of the delicate nature of the natural-revealed distinction. Logos Christologies, the first half of the Summa Theologicae, and Barth’s own work all struggle with this difficulty and begin by affirming the notion of higher truth first. This affirmation is first and foremost a work of faith. If we affirm the higher truths first, such as Christ’s divinity, we only partially solve the problem, as why these propositions ought to be accepted lies in a justification which is either mutually intelligible or not. If intelligible, then we must interpret it through that which is mutually intelligible (i.e. Christ). Thus, the revealed becomes the hermeneutic of its own revelation, what Barth identifies as the self-

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disclosure of God.\textsuperscript{11} If the justification is unintelligible, then we have no capacity to decide between those who claim to exposit these “higher truths.”\textsuperscript{12}

The benefits of affirming higher truth are fairly simple to see. It gives primacy to revelation so that we cannot say Christianity is just philosophy playing dress-up. By affirming higher truths, we keep access to the content of those truths, treating them as resources that are to be engaged with in trying to theologize. They are the content of theology in se. Absent these “higher truths” it is difficult to say in what theology consists.

There seem to be three options in affirming a higher truth. 1) The “new criteria” are natural 2) the “new criteria” are revealed 3) the “new criteria” are both revealed and natural.

If the new criteria are natural, we can know nothing about God from them because God and creature have distinct natures.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, what is natural is not predicable of God because of His transcendence over it. If the new criteria are revealed, we cannot comprehend them for the same reason. Only a criterion which is both revealed and natural is possible and mutually comprehensible.

b. Affirm Lower

Affirmation of the lower truth as primary offers two distinct paths: subordinationism, which would lead to a narrow understanding of God, or some sort of understanding of sensus divinitatus.

\textsuperscript{11} Barth, I/1:113. “…God’s own Word spoken by Himself.”
\textsuperscript{12} Not due to plenitude of options, but because of ontic incapacity. Here, it would be easy to pick on the Buddhists, since it seems to be the claim that we can all arbitrate our own understanding of Buddhism; the claim that you can independently verify the Noble Truths in your own life, however, spares them this fate: “If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him.” “the Buddha had no teacher.”
\textsuperscript{13} Here, one might well ask how I know this.
Either religious truth meets the criteria we lay out for natural truth or it doesn’t. If it doesn’t meet the criteria, then it is a less desirable truth and ought to be laid aside in favor of contemplating the best sorts of truths. Such a view leads to a functional atheism, in which religious truths are laid aside in favor of better truths, not because religious truths are false, but because they don’t “make a difference.”

If, however, religious truth meets the criteria for natural truth, we must ask how we know that it does so. For example, the claim “Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God” must have been true from all eternity to meet al-Farabi’s standards. Certainly Scripture attests to such a fact. However, it is certainly not the case that “it is impossible that $p$ [Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God] not be true (the necessity condition).” If it is not impossible, then we have found religious truth(s) which are less true than the universal truth statement, which again descends into functional atheism, since we have no mutually interpretable criteria.

*Sensus Divinitatus* (Latin, sense of the divine), seems to offer a more compelling way forward. The most robust form of this argument would be to say that not only do we have a *sense* of the divine, but we somehow participate in “natural divinity”. Such a conception is consistent with the *imago Dei*, the idea that we are made “in the image and likeness of God.”

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14 The reductionist answer “God is Truth” shrinks God beyond the truths of revelation, since as an identity claim, God must be either the higher truth or the natural truth, and cannot be both for “there is no greater and lesser in God.”
15 Col. 1:17
16 López-Farjeat, “Al-Farabi’s Psychology and Epistemology.”
§1.1.3 Catching Scent of the Solution

II. Christ, the Hermeneutic

Within the Christian Tradition, only Christ meets the requirement to fit both the natural and revealed categories. Christ’s self-identification as the Son of Man, and the Gospel witness to Him as “Word made flesh,” indicate what they do not directly affirm: His dual nature. 18 Christ’s humanity forms a lens by which we are able to understand His divinity. Further, in affirming the lower option, we can say that Christ most fully embodies the culmination of sensus divinitatus and imago Dei because of His immediate apprehension of the Beatific Vision.

Orthodoxly, Christ has “two natures in one person.” 19 He is “true God and true man,”20 “God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.” 21 Christ’s identity is grounded in His divinity; if He is not divine, he’s just another “first century homeless Jew who was put on a Roman death device in a backwater of the empire.”22

Christ’s divine nature is not known by natural reason alone, but first by revelation. 23 Whether or not this nature may be known post-revelation by natural reason is a point that is less clear. The apostles did not understand much of Christ’s teachings until the Resurrection. So too it is possible that because of the historicity of Christ’s life and our temporal relationship to it that we may come to knowledge of Christ’s divinity by

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18 Jn. 1:14; Council of Chanceldon.
19 Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica (New York: Doubleday, 1997). § 481. The Catechism will hereafter be referred to as CCC, followed by section or page number.
20 CCC § 464
21 CCC p.49
22 Hall, Talking about HCT paper.
23 Matt. 16:17.
natural reason. This is unlikely, but certainly a possibility: If Christ’s work of recapitulation is working even now, and we take the sacrament of baptism seriously, it may be possible for natural faculty to affirm now what could not be affirmed before.\(^{24}\)

Christ is thus the key object of revelation and the Source of that revelation to humanity. “Behold this is my Son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”\(^{25}\)

Christ’s self-revelation on the Road to Emmaus or on Mount Tabor is the closest Scriptural witness to events that had to be reinterpreted as divinity post-Resurrection. All of this hermeneutic wrangling

All potentiality of Orthodoxy runs through this. “God did not want to save us without us,”\(^{26}\) and yet it is God who forgives sins.\(^{27}\) If Christ is not divine then “we are of all men most miserable.”\(^{28}\) Thus, we assert what we have to prove, namely the divinity of Christ.

III. Apophaticism and Cataphaticism: Hermeneutic Choices

a. Cataphaticism

The cataphatic tradition is one grounded in positive claims about God (e.g. God is good, God is love). Any theology with a content must be formally cataphatic. To continually negate our knowledge of God is to still be making a claim about what we know about God, namely nothing. We are caught in a theological “Cartesian Trap,” whereby that which we negate is a reality we cannot deny.

\(^{24}\) CCC §1216 “This bath is called enlightenment”

\(^{25}\) Matt. 17:5

\(^{26}\) CCC §1847: This does sound like too positive of an evaluation of human nature to be orthodox, however.

\(^{27}\) Matt. 9:1-8 “At this, some of the scribes muttered, saying ‘this man is blaspheming’”

\(^{28}\) I. Cor 15:19
If this is true, we are bound to say *something* about that Mystery we call Divinity. The question is how we do so. Three options appear, on the surface of things: a pure cataphaticism, which is just a humanism; a modified apophaticism, which is cataphatic in regards to categorical distinctions; a modified cataphaticism, which dwindles to deism.

None of these options are satisfactory, not only from the standpoint of revelatory theology, but also and more strongly from the point of natural theology. Purely cataphatic theology falls easily into Feuerbachian projection. To affirm whatever we want about God, without limiting it in some topological or categorical sense is to give free reign to the fallen will. For the basest example, it is unacceptable in any orthodox Christian theology to affirm that God is evil. What is less clear is why it is acceptable to call God “good” but not “evil.” A theology unrestrained in this way is either unchristian or impotent to explain the distinction.

A modified cataphaticism which would aim to affirm as little as possible about God seems to elude the sorts of categorical distinctions above. Nevertheless, the attempt to affirm as little as possible out God seems to run into its own difficulties. What is to be affirmed? What simply not affirmed or engaged with? In the end, holding too firmly to cataphaticism leaves us with the Philosopher’s God at best in our quest for certainty, because certainty is such a high bar.29

b. Apophaticism

The apophatic tradition begins from negative statements about God (e.g. God is not evil; God is not subject to change). As laid out above, we cannot perpetually claim to know nothing about God. What apophasic contains that is valuable, however, is an

29 As al-Farabi demonstrated above.
awareness of the categorical distinction between the finite and infinite, such that we cannot simply say that “God is good” in the same way we mean “Hutch, the pup, is good.”

A modified apophaticism, which would affirm something of God in cataphatic terms, but with the sort of categorical distinctions suggested above, cannot be sustained without an appeal to something beyond nature. The categorical limitations inherent to a modified cataphaticism cannot themselves be of the same sort of categories as the things which they limit. “What has [Scylla] to do with [Charybdis]?"30

§1.1.4 Earlier Attempts

IV. At the Crossroads: High and Low meet the -phatic choices.

Each of the following options offers a brief excursus into one of the options for resolving the paradox of truth as laid out above. While none of them is expressly dealing with the problem as such, they offer ways of “seeing in a mirror darkly” the various options from the Truth paradox.

a. Barth: High cataphaticism

Barth’s “Christocentricism” or “Christomonism” seem to place him on the “Affirm High” side of the Truth Dilemma. Our analogical participation in the life of Christ only appears to us to be natural, when in fact it is the fullest act of grace from the Begotten One to Creation. Indeed, insofar as dogmatics is concerned, it cannot be bound

even to a special “dogmatic science” within the Church. Instead we must begin with God, since there is no greater “being or nexus” upon which a dogmatics could depend.

Barth explicitly names the analogia entis as untenable within his line of thought. In this way, Barth affirms the utter transcendence of God with respect to creatures in a negative way. Even in their most fundamental aspect – viz., being – creatures have nothing to do with their Creator, which is certainly a modified cataphaticism. For Barth, however, this does not deny all analogy: Man is “an object of theological knowledge” precisely because our relationship with God is disclosed by the Word of God.

For Barth, to say that we may not know God in Himself does not make human search for knowledge of God futile because God is already always revealing Himself to us in the Word. Thus, even if what we say about humanity is already framed by our awareness of God, we cannot escape the reality of God’s self-revelation in Christ, who is the Truth. The confidence of humanity in the humanness of Christ is what allows us to affirm life at all:

Because God has become man, the existence of creation can no longer be doubted…The mystery of creation is not primarily – as the fools think in their hearts – the problem whether there is a God as the originator of the world; for, in the Christian sense it cannot be that we presuppose the reality of the world and then ask afterwards if there is a God.

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31 Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*, I/1:17.
33 Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1*.
For Barth, our fundamental affirmation of God must be a prerequisite to anything else. He does not answer the fundamental problem of the Truth Paradox (which he grants) that the divine is fundamentally unknowable to us as natural beings. At best, he can affirm some sort of irresistibility of grace or remote participation in Christ, but this is not the same as the sort of divine knowledge out with which we set to deal.

b. *Pseudo Dionysus: High apophaticism*

Modified apophaticism is embodied in the works of the Psuedo-Dyonysius. That is, when we say that God is good, we are making a cataphatic claim. However, implicit in that claim is the understanding of “good” in human terms. Thus, we must negate this claim insofar as it applies to humanity and not to God, which is apophatic. However, since God and humanity are fundamentally different categories (natures), post-negation we can only affirm the Goodness of God as a totally distinct category.36

Higher truth is ultimately more real for Psuedo-Dyonisyus, which foreshadows Neoplatonic emanation theories. The emphasis on the total transcendence of God threatens to push God into sheer incomprehensibility. However Psuedo-Dyonysius avoids this fate by insisting that categorical distinctions do not mean that God is *totally other*, rather God is in the highest form of a category, in which we only dimly and remotely participate.

c. *Kierkegaard to Lessig: low cataphaticism*

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Kierkegaard rejects the hope for a low cataphatic theology in a powerful way. Writing in response to Lawrence Lessig, Kierkegaard claims that not even having met the “historical Jesus” was a guarantee of faith in Him or in His divinity. Rather, it seems to make his apparent post-mortem divinization all the more shocking. He lived and died as a man among other men. Thus, for Kierkegaard, “higher truths” like the divinity of Christ are a matter of subjective faith, not in the relativistic sense, but in the sense that each individual must experience the revelation of God.

The individuality of these “higher truths” is consistent with Kierkegaard’s most famous passage on subjective truth:

If someone who lives in the midst of Christianity enters, with a knowledge of the true idea of God, the house of the true God, and prays, but prays in untruth, and if someone lives in an idolatrous land but prays with all passion of infinity, although his eyes are resting upon the image of an idol – where, then, is there more truth? The one prays in truth to God although he is worshipping an idol; the other prays in untruth to the true God and is therefore in truth worshipping an idol.37

Kierkegaard suggests some sort of notion of higher truth here. If “knowledge of the true idea of God” is to be considered as natural knowledge, then “praying in untruth” is to pray without higher truths – which would be a functional sort of atheism. If “knowledge of the true idea of God” is to be considered as higher truth, then it seems a manifest contradiction to say that one with such truth can still be “in untruth,” since no higher truth than the one he possesses exists.

The prayer of the idolater, which is filled with “all the passion of infinity,” seems to contain more truth for Kierkegaard. The question is why? Why should this one man have a passion for the Infinite, save he had some experience of It? Since the idolater is

here contrasted with the one who “prays in untruth” we can safely presume that the
idolater prays in truth. Now, he prays with “his eyes on the image of an idol,” just as the
one who prays to the true God has focused his mind on his right ideas of God. But for
Kierkegaard, the idol and the “right ideas” are not important because one can have what
might be called “true ideas” – which the idolater possesses “with all the passion of
infinity.” Thus, the idolater must be in possession of what we have thus far called higher
truths, incommunicable to mere reason, which is why they are given over to passion in
the soul of our pagan knight of faith.

Thus, it seems that the human soul must have a capacity to receive these higher
truths, which we may call a sense of the divine. Such a capacity must be inherent in the
individual, since even the idolater – who has presumably never been exposed to
Christianity – is capable of coming to these truths.

d. Johnson: low apophaticism

Johnson affirms low, not necessarily in the thoroughgoing subordinationist way I
have suggested above. Rather, she insists on “lowness” in the Christological sense,
beginning from uniquely female experience. In emphasizing women’s experiences,
Johnson defines them apophatically, trying to distinguish these experiences of a
transcendental human nature as women from men’s experience.

By grounding her theology in experience, Johnson is able to talk about women’s
personal narratives in their diversity in an attempt to point towards the transcendental
woman. In accounting for the goodness of women “Accordingly, the experience of God,

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38 Johnson, She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse.
which is never directly available, is mediated...through the changing history of oneself.”

Nordling notes that there are several problems with this approach in relation to transcendental anthropology. Certainly the devastated state of pneumatology has permitted such an attempt in through “the [back]door of the Holy Spirit.” Indeed, there have only been two encyclicals explicitly on the subject of the Holy Spirit in Catholic history, despite its frequent invocation.

Nevertheless, it is pneumatology which permits Johnson’s low apophaticism to have any weight at all. She is able to speak of the imago Dei precisely because of her pneumatology, as her reading of the priestly Genesis account indicates. Her pneumatology, in combination with her view of experience leads her to the closest unity between the sensus divinitatus and the imago dei, which I have called “natural divinity” elsewhere in this paper.

V. “Chose Life that you may Live”

It seems there is no good way to affirm the suprarational truths upon which Christianity depends with any certitude. Even its most foundational tenet – the divinity of Christ – upon which any attempt to rescue suprarational truth depends falls apart. The various attempts of theologians to – unwittingly—resolve this paradox do not help. They remain bound to something that is either natural knowledge or pure revelation; absent a “Christology of intelligibility,” divine truth is on the far side of Paul’s dark mirror.

39 Johnson, 65.
42 Divinum Illud Manus (Leo XIII) and Dominum et Vivificantum (Pope St. John Paul II)
§1.2 Taxonomy: Christology of Intelligibility

Christ is one of five possible answers to the problem posed above. Other answers would say that the answer is unknowable, indifferent, or offer an identification of natural and supernatural truth or vice-versa. The Christ-solution affirms the seeming contradiction between supernatural and natural truth, and is therefore the strongest claim among the options. We must therefore establish the possibility of the mediator and the criteria which He must meet, before we can elaborate how Christ is the perfect mediator of divine truth. Ultimately, Christ can mediate because he is mortal, without loss of his divinity.\footnote{Phil. 2:7-8} However, the historical mediation of Christ the Truth comes in and through the Eucharist, the means by which it is known to the modern Christian.

The \textit{Logos} is the order of the universe.\footnote{Jn. 1:1ff} \textit{Apokalypsis} is the revelation of the possibility of the revelation. \textit{Apokalypsis} is the prerequisite for any knowledge of the \textit{Logos}, which as already-disclosed in nature gives no further expectation or hope of revelation. The content of revelation is \textit{alethia} (truth). \textit{Alethia} is not necessarily guaranteed to be truth to an individual, for it also requires a hermeneutic move, viz., interpretive acceptance of the truth (\textit{apologia}) as true to the individual, independent of its own substantive being-as-true. The hermeneutic \textit{apoloigia} requires the construction of an interpretation (\textit{logia}) which can make sense of the \textit{alethia} into which one has been geworfen as the result of the \textit{alethia}-encounter.

The \textit{logos} of such a mediator would have to be human and divine; uncreated creature; and as both subject and object of revelation (§1.1.2.a). He must be human and
divine to be able to have a content and “way of being” in common with the subjects to whom truth is revealed. Without this commonality, there is no space in which revelation can unfold from subject to subject, or to give the Mediator freedom (as the “object” of revelation).\footnote{46} The capacity to relate as subject to subject, subject to object, and object to object to the receptor(s) of revelation, therefore presupposes a kind of dynamism within the finite subject. Because they can move to respond to the summons (Ansprechung) of the Revealer and Mediator, the space between them, i.e. their commonality is already-always a free space of truth, which is in a certain sense transcendent of the object’s own freedom.\footnote{47}

The brief sketch of these criteria gives us a basis for developing a fuller taxonomy of Truth. The internal logic of the Mediator meets the logic (logia) of the creature in its passive receptivity and active appropriation of the Truth of which the Logos is disclosure and summons (Öffen-barung, Erklärung, und Ansprechung). Just as there was an apokalypsis of the Logos this logia also has its own apokalypsis (qua apologia) and Logos (qua logia).

Each of these has an intimate relationship one to the other within the free space of truth, as well as within Balthasar’s “world of images.”\footnote{48} The appearance (Erscheinung) does not preclude its illusory (so ausscheiden) capacity. Rather, even because the appearance gives us a view into the essence of the thing,\footnote{49} there is still a recessed space

\footnote{47} Balthasar, 1:83.
\footnote{48} E.g., Balthasar, 1:158–59.
\footnote{49} Balthasar, 1:85.
wherein truth will always remain for both the subject and object to maintain their freedom.\(^{50}\)

I think that Jesus is at least the strongest claim that can be advanced here, as the answer to the mediator argument. Therefore, I want to see if the idea can bear the theological weight it has to. In particular, I think that Christ alone is an insufficient answer to the problem, as Lessig’s dilemma is still a powerful one. However, I don’t want to follow Kierkegaard and concede a lot of traditional ground. Rather, the Eucharist, in being Christ, gives us a way to access Christ as he was accessed as the Truth, i.e. as a hermeneutic problem.

This takes two major forms then, first a discussion of the Eucharist and second, a discussion of the eschata that would be possible if Christ and Eucharist really are the Truth. While the first is certainly more central to the paper, Eucharist as an eschatological sacrament\(^{51}\) requires a discussion of the eschata. The plural is salient here because of the freedom inherent in the pursuit of truth.\(^{52}\)

**§ 1.3 Itinerary**

Chapter two deals first with the memory of that salvation contained in Liturgy. Chapter three discusses the Church Who keeps that memory alive, before discussing the Christ who is remembered. Chapter five covers the Eucharist which is the *anamnesis* and Presence of Christ as Truth today.

Importantly, the difficulty of §1.1 suggests that the criterion-based approach there will be insufficient. Therefore, I want to take the Eucharist and the Eschaton as my two

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\(^{50}\) Balthasar, 1:85.

\(^{51}\) CCC §1402

guides towards which truth must aim, for if Christ is the fullness of the Truth then fullness (eschaton, \textit{Erfüllung}) and Truth must be available to us (in the Eucharist).

\section*{§ 1.4 Eucharist}

Eucharist is an end of truth, first as the sacrament towards which all others aim within the Church.\footnote{CCC §1324} The Church is the “sacramental-historical mediator of the Deposit of Faith,”\footnote{See (§3.1)} which is therefore grounded in the sacraments which she has been given as a precious treasure to guard. The signs of Christ (and the True Christ Himself) hold her in perpetual readiness to be taken up into the truth which has already-always irrupted to Her, into which She is already \textit{geworfen}.

Because the Eucharist is an end, it forms a natural doxia for the community, as will be elaborated in Chapters Three and Five. The Eucharist’s participation in the natural, supernatural, and human worlds makes it rightly the locus of the sacramental life. How these are grounded must be elaborated later (§5.1.2).

\section*{§ 1.5 Eschata}

The eschata are the ends of truth, the various ways in which the world works itself out in light of the Truth of Christ. Eschata exist as the potential realities which are possible because of human freedom. The entire range of \textit{apokalyptik} possibility within the bounds of the \textit{Logos} remain open, precisely because eschata are “dialogues” between free and relationally defining beings, each \textit{geworfen} into relationship with the other.\footnote{CCC p.56 “through whom all things were made.”}
These eschata form the loci of truth and revelation. All through Israel’s history, at the point where an eschata was chosen, God sent a prophet or a judge to call (ansprechen) the people back to the divine story of the eschaton in Christ.

§1.6 Trajectories

This chapter opens up a few possibilities, namely of how we can approach the rest of the project. Because we take the eschata and the Eucharist as the doxastic guides of our elaboration, it may be objected that we assert what we try to prove, namely that the Eucharist is the perfect mediation of the Truth of Christ. This is not the case, for treating the Eucharist as a potential end does not presume mediation, merely its status as telos conditional on the truth of the hypothesis of Christ’s mediation.

Our implicit eschata-logical viewpoint, i.e. that the Eucharist is the feast of all eschata, establishes the springboard for the Atonement and Trinitarian aspects that are critical to our Christology (§4). These together allow us to enter into the Eucharist, which is the final anamnesis of Christ’s Truth.
Part One

Anamnesis and Institution
Chapter Two

Liturgy

§2.1 Anticipating the Church

We begin with the Liturgy because it is the first formal expression of communal faith (See §3.1.X). It is the recapitulation of the faith (§2.2.5). In a more basic sense, however, the liturgy is the communication of the faith of the community to the community. To explore Truth then, is to explore what has been “handed on,” so that it can be judged vis-à-vis any notion of Truth that emerges from our future exploration.

Liturgy is what – pace God – binds the community together, which has its own criteria (doxa) for judging natural and suprarational truths. Despite this, it can still be interpreted as natural. This dual-interpretative possibility in Liturgy raises the question of whether it is divine in some sense. More importantly, however, is the question of whether it contains anamnesis of something divine (i.e. an alethia-encounter).

I answer that the Liturgy is the living anamnesis of faith, which grounds the ecclesial portion of the project. The Church will be the institution charged with protecting that anamnesis and the Truth of Christ, which forms the hinge to the Remembered One, i.e. Christ. These threads of present anamnesis and Christological reality culminate in the Eucharist, which is anamnesis, Christ, and eschatological feast.

We are analyzing only a representative section of the anamnesis, yet it is a crucial section given the Eucharistic orientation of this project. The Eucharist’s legitimacy relies on the

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56 As opposed to evangelization which is the communication of the community’s faith to those not yet a part of this community.
57 I want to thank Dr. Ed Glowienka for introducing me to the concept of doxa/doxastic criteria.
durability of an \textit{anamnesis}, unless and until we can establish Christ as Truth to be mutually reinforcing guarantors of the Eucharist’s validity \textit{qua} Truth.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{§2.2. Eucharistic Canon}

The Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{59} deserves especial mention here, for She consecrates the Host, sanctifies the Church, and saves souls.\textsuperscript{60} In some critical sense, as at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit \textit{makes} the Church and makes it to be more than a mere community, as we shall see in chapter three. The Holy Spirit plays the key role in the Eucharistic consecration, making it “spiritual and acceptable.”\textsuperscript{61} That crucial role is also bound up with the Truth, such that Christ \textit{qua} Truth is made present there (§5.2.2).

The Spirit-based vein is evident throughout the Eucharistic canon, which we will proceed to examine. Before we do so, however, an additional comment is helpful: while we are tracing the idea of memory (\textit{anamnesis}), it cannot be separated from the knowability and reality of its truth (\textit{apokalypsis} and \textit{alethia}), for memory is already-always the Tradition (\textit{tradere}) of something known and knowable.

\textbf{§2.2.1 Preface (no. 83)}

Prefaces exist for every time within the Church. They tie the community’s specificity into the universality of the Eucharistic prayer. We are focusing on both Christ and the Eucharist as the answer to the truth-problem, and therefore it is fitting that we chose the prefaces for the feast which celebrates the Real Presence, i.e. Corpus Christi.

\textsuperscript{58} This appears to be a “hermeneutic circle.” The \textit{eschata} break it.
\textsuperscript{59} The Holy Spirit will be referred to as She or It interchangeably, as necessary to avoid confusion.
\textsuperscript{60} CCC §739; Christ through the Holy Spirit.
§2.2.1.1 Preface I of Corpus Christi

The first preface goes as follows:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For he is the true and eternal Priest, who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim, commanding us to make this offering as his memorial. As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us, we are made strong, and, as we drink his Blood that was poured out for us, we are washed clean.  

The Eucharistic sacrifice marked here is a priestly one. Its obvious sacrificial nature focuses on the scapegoat. The saving Victim here is presented as expiatory rather than propitiatory, marking a distinction between most other religious traditions. In conjunction with the sacrificial role, it is worth noting that Christ is presented as both Priest and Victim, an utter reversal of the traditional scapegoat/immolation motif.

§2.2.1.2 Preface II of Corpus Christi

The second preface reads as follows:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For at the Last Supper with his apostles, establishing for the ages to come the saving memorial of the Cross, he offered himself to you as the unblemished Lamb, the acceptable gift of perfect praise. Nourishing your faithful by this sacred mystery, you make them holy so that the human race, bounded by one world, maybe enlightened by one faith, and united by one bond of charity. And so we approach the table of this wondrous Sacrament, so that bathed in the sweetness of your grace, we may pass over to the heavenly realities here foreshadowed. Therefore all creatures of heaven and earth, sing a new song in adoration, and we with the host of Angels, cry out, and without end we acclaim.

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62 Cole and Chojnicki, 750. (no.60).
64 Girard, Sacrifice, xi.
65 Girard, 75.
66 Cole and Chojnicki, Daily Roman Missal, 751. (no. 61).
The prayer has a clear focus on unity, echoing the Johannine High priestly prayer. The “acceptable gift of perfect praise,” presents the Eucharist as a sacrifice of thanksgiving (*eucharistein*). The *anamnesis* is more difficult to notice here. Yet the hope for the unity of the Church, and the wholeness of all present unifies them under one God, one Holy Spirit who will allow the faithful to “pass over to the heavenly realities here foreshadowed.”

§2.2.3. *Te Igitur* (no. 84)

To you, therefore, most merciful Father,/ we make humble prayer and petition/ through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord/That you accept [cross] and bless [cross] these gifts, these offerings,/ these holy and unblemished sacrifices,/ which we offer you firstly/ for your holy catholic Church/be pleased to grant her peace,/to guard, unite and govern her/throughout the whole world/ together with your servant N. our Pope/ and N. our Bishop,/and all those who, holding to the truth,/hand on the catholic and apostolic faith.

The *Te Igitur* offers an image of what these sacrifices are for and how they are offered. The unity of the local church with the universal *through and in* the bishops to the pope partially makes the gifts acceptable. However, it is first God who makes the gifts acceptable in blessing them. More interesting, is the triple description of the sacrifice as “these gifts, these offerings, these holy and unblemished sacrifices,” which insists on the purity of the immolated victim. In part, this is a universal sacrificial motif; it is a mark of continuance from the Jewish Tradition, where such criteria for sacrifice were nigh-paramount.

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67 CCC §1360
68 Cole and Chojnicki, *Daily Roman Missal*, 767. (no.84).
69 Cole and Chojnicki, 773. (no.88).
70 Cole and Chojnicki, 777. (no. 92).
§2.2.4 Commemoration of the Living (no. 85)\(^71\)

Remember Lord, your servants N. and N. [pause]
And all gathered here, whose faith and devotion are known to you, for them, we offer you this sacrifice of prayer or they offer it for themselves and all who are dear to them, for the redemption of their souls, in hope of health and well-being, and paying their homage to you, the eternal God, living and true.\(^72\)

The commemoration of the living prepares for the Infra Actionem’s (no. 86) more extensive anamnesis which first begins with the faith of the community. Because it begins with the faith of the community, it insists first on the living aspect of anamnesis, which is “re-presented” to God as a sacrifice.\(^73\)

That living memory comes first as forming the community around something still knowable today, viz., Christ in the Eucharist.

§2.2.5 Infra Actionem (no. 86)

In communion with those whose memory we venerate, especially the most glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, [dagger]and blessed Joseph, her Spouse, your blessed apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James John, Thomas, James, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude; Linus Cletus Clement Sixtus Cornelius Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonous, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian and all your saints; we ask through their merits and prayers in all things we may be defended by your protecting help. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.\(^74\)

The recapitulation of faith in Infra Actionem demonstrates the already-always communal nature of faith (§ 3.2). The liturgy of the saints\(^75\) recounts the historical community of faith, which has grounded its truth and faith (§3.2). Their life, like the life

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\(^71\) See also the anamnesis proper (no. 96); the dagger leads to extended meditations on the above.
\(^72\) Cole and Chojnicki, *Daily Roman Missal*, 769. (no.85)
\(^73\) Cole and Chojnicki, 769. (no.85)
\(^74\) Cole and Chojnicki, 769. (no.86)
\(^75\) Which begins *Communantes*... And is hence known by that name, although the rubrics do not name it as such.
of the living (§2.2.4) is dedicated to “the eternal God, living and true.”76 The unificatory nature of faith draws the entire community into the truth of the Eucharistic celebration (§5.2) and thus into the Truth which grounds faith.

§ 2.2.6 Hanc Igitur (no. 87)

Therefore, Lord we pray: graciously accept this oblation of our service,/ that of your whole family:/ order our days in your peace,/ and command that we be delivered/ from eternal damnation/ and counted among the flock of those you have chosen. /Through Christ our Lord. Amen.77

The Hanc Igitur merits little comment in our context, except to note the petitions: “order our days in your peace, command that we be delivered from eternal damnation,” and being “counted among the flock of those you have chosen.”78 These ascend from the temporal, to the divine order, returning to the individual, who is now joined with the divine peace in salvation. The anticipation of the Church in the divine-human eschatological unity will return in our later work.

§ 2.2.7 “Accipite... (nos. 89-90)

The consecration of the Bread (no. 89)

On the day before he was to suffer, he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, and with eyes raised to heaven/to you O God, his almighty father, giving you thanks he said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU [sic].79

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76 Cole and Chojnicki, Daily Roman Missal, 769. (no. 85).
77 Cole and Chojnicki, 773. (no. 87)
78 Cole and Chojnicki, 773. (no. 87)
79 Cole and Chojnicki, 775. (no. 90)
The consecration of the bread is far simpler than the following consecration of the wine (no.90). Its context is fitting within the Markan outline of the last supper. The extended meditation on the hands of Jesus and the prayer to the Father draw attention to the concreteness of the Father’s action in consecration, usually set aside in favor of a discussion of the Holy Spirit.

**The consecration of the Wine (no. 90)**

In a similar way when supper was ended, he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands, and once more giving you thanks, he said the blessing and gave the chalice to his disciples saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,/FOR THIS IS THE CHALICLE OF MY BLOOD, THE LBOOD OF THE NEWA ND ETERNAL COVENANT,/WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME. [sic]80

The elaborations of the cup follow Luke and Matthew, showing the synthetic nature of the prayer, yet remaining faithful to the entire, rather than a particular, memory. While the Eucharistic prayer continues, we have reached its apex in the consecrations considered above. Having thus “taken” the “apex,” we can now descend to the “fount,” as *Lumen Gentium* §11 describes the Eucharist.

### §2.3 Trajectories

We have established a church’s truth is shaped by and shapes its liturgy; we do not need at this point to elaborate what it means to be church, for that is the task of chapter three. Rather, we have established that critical points of faith and memory are at work in a liturgy. These memories open the possibility of revelation’s historical mediation. Mediation is not the sole guarantee of *alethial* preservation, yet it is a ground upon which modern liturgical faith and practice depend.

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80 Cole and Chojnicki, 775. (no. 90).
The following chapters, then, wrestles with how these critical points of memory are receivable; consequently, the Christology of Chapter Four demonstrates what is being received, both in 
*m<anamnesis*> and in the Eucharist. Indeed, all the historical mediations depend on the historical Mediator whose veracity *in se* depends on the mediation of His *anamnesis*. 
Chapter Three

§3.1 Introduction

The Church must be something beyond a mere “faith-community,” if it is to preserve the critical anamnesis of Truth. The purely “horizontal” church which would result is still bound into the cruciform by their subservience to God-the-Truth. Rather, the Church is the sacramental-historical mediator of the deposit of faith, which the Magisterium interprets correctly with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The understanding of the Church given above can be developed as follows: given that the earth itself is a sacrament (signum et res), which is already in history, then the Church participates in at least natural sacrament and history. However, insofar as the Church is grounded in Christ the Truth, then she has a truth, viz., Christ, to guard. Like the servant, however, she must not bury the talent, but invest it, so as to be the Kingdom of God on earth. \(^81\)

The church understands the deposit of faith in many distinct ways: Each is a different way of expressing the same content of the faith. \(^82\) The Church is charged to guard and expound the deposit of faith and does so communally, liturgically, dogmatically, and authoritatively.

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\(^81\) Mt. 25:14–30
\(^82\) This term refers to Christ, but more precisely here, to the content of the Christ-utterance
§ 3.2 Communal

The three Sacraments of Initiation are bound with the identity of the Church. Baptism is the beginning of the Church’s life, Confirmation its interpretation, and the Eucharist its perfection as the sacrament towards which all others aim.

Hence, Confirmation which is the “gift of the Holy Spirit” brings the individual into full communion with the Holy Spirit Who protects the Church. The same Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the Host therefore comes to complete Her sanctification of the soul, begun through baptism, moving the recipient fully into the Mystical Body of the Church. The presence of the bishop is particularly salient, insofar as the anointer’s apostolic link thus binds the recipient of the sacrament to that same tradition.

The Holy Spirit binds the community together under the rubric of Truth based on the same community’s alethia-encounter of the irruptive Christ-event. The alethia-encounter grounds the anamnesis on the part of the individual; hence, much is made of conversions, where that encounter has presumably taken place. In this way, the sacrament of Confirmation takes on new life. It does not merely complete the work of baptism, but demands of the believer fidelity to the tradition of the apostles and the full deposit of faith into which they have been catechized.

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83 I.e. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
84 CCC § 1324
85 CCC §1285
86 Lk 1:4; CCC§1292
§3.3 Liturgical

The community comes to express their common faith in a particular way. These means are properly mysterious: to the insider they mean much, to the outsider seemingly little or nothing. Hence we can say that the Church is necessarily sacramental. Because the Church is grounded in the Eucharist, which is Christ the Truth, it is both the natural and supernatural sacrament which is already prehended in the Logos.

The liturgical dimension of the faith is historical, as we have already touched on (§2.4-5). That historical mediacy, however is far more than the anamnesis we considered there. Rather, we must explore the temporality of the already-prehended Logos within the Church proper (i.e., beyond the communal).

§3.3.1 Historical

The Church is historical; as Christ founded it, so has it continued. Her sacraments have moved through history and have become defined in and throughout it. The liturgy contains the memory of the entire faith:

In communion with those whose memory we venerate, especially the most glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, [dagger] and blessed Joseph, her Spouse, your blessed apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, ….

In calling to the entire community of witnesses, great and small, the Church emphasizes her historical link to Christ and insists on Her ancient right to participate in the same Truth of Christ which was given to the apostles. Through the priesthood of the

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87 Cole and Chojnicki, Daily Roman Missal, 769.(no.86)
bishops, the legitimate successors to the apostles, the same claim of apostolic authority remains.

We can here develop upon the work of Chapter two. There, this move was considered as memory (anamnesis) of the history of salvation. History is constitutive here, for now, the Church’s existential duty is given over to historical mediation; that is, temporality threatens to interfere with the Truth, thus making history both a blessing and a bane to the salvation-experience (qua alethia).

Liturgy is bound to and grounds dogma. That liturgical link to dogma, the elucidation of communal faith is not to be underestimated; that the Eucharistic prayer is the recapitulation of the faith does not change the fact that it is already-always bound up with dogmatic considerations. This bond is like to the Logos-world relationship; it is already-always prehended within the faith of the believing community.

§3.4 Dogmatic

Dogma is the formal elaboration of the truths of the faith to prevent error and confusion from arising among the faithful. Dogma arises naturally from tradition, in that the ancient claim of Christ’s promise must not only be claimed but be properly preserved and handed down. Hence the danger of heresy en masse: that the truth will be lost.

The problem of dogmatics is more clearly stated above: history threatens the memory, but now it consequently threatens the content of alethia. The alethia-encounter which formed the root of conversion, and thus the community) is under attack from the veiling influence of the lie, and the impingement of an anti-eschaton, which would deny

88 Hence the old saw Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi (What is prayed is what is believed)
89 Thanks to Joshua Groux for this insight.
the eschata of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. Therefore, the community must define what it believes, in order that it maybe passed on in catechesis.

Because the community believes in the alethia-event and encounter which constitutes salvation, the community’s dogma pertains to the Truth. The Church’s doxastic standards cannot be transgressed without becoming a self-refuting untruth. Because the Truth is itself a doxastic standard, it becomes a metric, if not the metric, for judging dogmatic truth. While there may be error in judgement, there cannot be error in knowledge proper, for to err in knowledge means to know the untrue, which is patently absurd for finite beings.

§3.5 Authoritative

The knowledge of untruth and the possibility of error in judgement (deliberate or accidental) requires a mechanism by which the authority of the Truth can be imposed by those with right judgement. The judges, then, must be those who best adhere to the community’s doxia. The Magisterium is the paradigmatic example here. It is the perfect judge of the community’s doxastic criteria because it has the guarantee of the Holy Spirit (§3.6). However, it already adheres to the doxastic criterion of the Truth. (§3.6).

The Magisterium thus, is the mediator, authority (magister), and is guaranteed through the Holy Spirit. A few preliminary comments are in order. The doxia and the guarantee of the Holy Spirit are both hermeneutic processes, but from differing points of departure. The Guidance of the Holy Spirit roughly mirrors the first two limns of stability for the Trinity while the doxia refer to the latter two (§4.1.1.2.1). With that firmly

established, we can say that the move between these criteria is *mediation* (as does Christ, the mediator). Secondly, however, it is authoritative, for it contains the first cooperative act of God and fallen man.\footnote{The second Creation narrative offers a way in which to view this relationship mythologically pre-Church.}

**§3.5.1 Mediator**

The Church is *mediator*. The memory of the faith (*anamnesis*) is carried throughout history. Likewise, as with the magisterium, the interpretations and interpretive methods of the Church are and become part of Her being and identity as guardian of Truth. Indeed, insofar as these methods open up Christ the Truth more fully, then the Church comes to accept and follow those paths in order to preserve and elaborate theological progress.

This progressive notion of mediation need not be a surprise. Because the *Logos* is already-always disclosed in creation and atemporally eternal, the Church is coming to understand that disclosure.\footnote{That the Logos is already-always disclosed is the same as asserting the characteristics of the desired mediator.} However, she does so from the *doxia* which allow her to understand the graced, natural and supernatural.

Thus the Church mediates not only the Truth she guards, but also the Truths about that truth, i.e. Tradition. It is on this basis that it is legitimate to use tradition and history to develop further interpretations. Without such a justification, only the original encounter could be authoritative (Scripture, etc.).

The double-mediation then, of Truth and Tradition allows us to have a stability internal to the doxastic. The cohesion with tradition offers the modern person guarantee
of the same criteria measured against the *doxa* of those who originally experienced the *alethia-encounter*.

**§3.5.2 Magisterial**

The Church is *Magisterial*, since it requires a guarantee of its mediated Truth. The mediatory aspect of its reality requires it to have an authority figure to express the guaranteed truth. There must be *doxastic criteria* by which the community judges its belief. Now, even if we grant that Truth is self-justifying as developed above (§1.2.1), we must still judge what is *alethia*.

The community’s development of doxastic criteria is bound up with another against which this can be judged, i.e., the Holy Spirit. This other is precisely the interpreter, and the one who guarantees the limns of Trinitarian stability as developed in chapter four (§4.1.1.2.2.1). We will explore this further in the following section.

**§3.5.3 Guidance of the Holy Spirit**

The neglect the theology of Confirmation has suffered is dangerous as it is the sacrament associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is the sacrament which seals the Church to her true Foundation and the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant. The Church requires the *guidance of the Holy Spirit* in order to develop and maintain doxastic criteria. Robinson identifies the Holy Spirit as the perfect interpreter of God.\(^93\)

The guidance of the Holy Spirit will be further developed in the next chapter, where we discuss the Holy Spirit as the perfect interpreter of God’s identity. Here, we

can offer a foretaste, and say that the Holy Spirit is not only the guarantor of God’s stability, but also of guarding his Truth. Thus, the existential duty of the community is not left unaided. Rather, it is completed through the same grace of God which granted it in the first place. Because the Holy Spirit is central in Confirmation, a brief excursus is in order to elaborate a pneumatology.

§3.6 Postscript: The Holy Spirit

As briefly hinted at in the previous chapter (§2.2.7) the Holy Spirit makes Church to be what it is, viz., the sacrament of Christ to the world, and, consequently, the guardian of the Truth of Christ which she, in some sense, is. That Church, as elaborated above, is therefore the first sacrament of Christ.

The Holy Spirit plays many roles both throughout the Old and New Testaments. Most importantly for our purposes is the view of Holy Spirit as sanctifier, preserver of the Church, and interpreter. The Holy Spirit is sanctifier for it makes the Church holy by virtue of the Church’s being apostolic. Sanctification has two senses. First, the making-holy of the individual soul and second, the making- and keeping-holy of a community. If the Holy Spirit did not keep a community holy, then there is a risk of Donatism.

Donatism says the efficacy of the sacrament relies on the worthiness of the priest. If the Holy Spirit does not keep the community holy (though not sinless), then the Donatist position would have great purchase: there is no holiness in the community such that it can be redeemed save by a worthy priest; therefore a priest must be worthy to offer the sacraments. Such an option is, of course, heretical.

The Holy Spirit is preserver of the Church, such that she is one and catholic. The unicity of the Church is in the Mystical Body. Therefore, if the Church is one through the
perfect interpretation of the identity of God, the Holy Spirit is necessarily involved in any ecclesial effort; however, as we shall note, the Eucharist’s anamnesis in particular is protected by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the interpreter of the Church. She interprets the Church as the Bride of Christ, such that the Church can worthily be the Bride of Christ. We must be careful here and note that the Spirit is the “Spirit of Truth,” where Christ alone is the Truth. Certainly, insofar as the Spirit is God and God is truth, then the Spirit is also truth (a-lethia). However, the way in which the Spirit is true, I contend, is as being an interpreter of Christ the Truth, who is the perfect image of the Father.94

Interpreters do not set doxastic criteria, although they help create them, such that they can still rightly interpret. Further, once the criteria have been established, they defend them, lest it becomes no longer interpretable.95 This is the reciprocal duty of the dogmatic and authoritative functions of the Church vis-à-vis the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

94 Col 1:15
95 See the Limns of stability in §4.1.1.2.2.1
Part Two

Reality and Sacramentality
Chapter Four

Christology

We have developed a way in which Christian memory can be contained within the anamnesis of the Eucharistic celebration. Mediation, however, requires a mediator. Therefore we must develop our mediator. As we discussed in Chapter one this mediator must be finite/infinite etc., an uncreated creature, and be not have the Truth. This chapter will attempt to meet those burdens, albeit indirectly.

This Christology is not merely abstract, which could be applied as a “cookie cutter” theology, but rather one which – though driven by distinct impetuses – hopes to meet the criteria in hand. Such a Christology recognizes it does not meet the clearness of a system or summa, but rather offers itself as a launching pad for the larger Eucharistic project.

§ 4.1 Christology

§4.1.1 Trinity

§4.1.1.1 A Justification

I begin with Trinity because of my commitment to the Logos of faith, which, qua logia of nature already undergirds nature as grace. However, it seems a bit ambitious to go from the Mediator directly to Trinity as recognized. We make this move largely on the basis of the liturgy explored in chapter two, treating dogmatic statements as part of that memory. Those dogmatic statements will be further justified in chapter four.
§4.1.1.2 Trinity Proper

Trinity, Tripod of Theological Lenses

Trinity can be an all-consuming mystery to investigate. Trinity is at once the most fundamental and the most complex aspect of Christian thought. The Trinity therefore, must be approached with a species of confidence and reverence. I approach the question of the Trinity with a particular problem in mind, viz., how can we know that God’s disclosure of Himself to the world as Trinity coheres with God’s own understanding of Himself (presumably as Trinity)?

The classical expression of the Trinity is “one God in three divine persons.” The Trinity has been theologically divided between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. The economic Trinity is the Trinity involved in salvation, while the immanent Trinity discusses God in Himself. As Catherine LaCugna notes, however, the distinction between the two has been questioned, culminating in her own insistence on re-prioritizing the economic Trinity (her okonomia) and personhood.

In order to address the problem at hand, I begin with the development of the classical doctrine, before going on to expound my own interpretation of the Trinity. My interpretation will attempt to unify the four elements necessary to a clear creaturely interpretation of God as Trinity. For creatures to know God as Trinity then God’s self-interpretation (in se) and self-disclosure (ad extra) must be Trinitarian. For creatures to

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98 LaCugna, 13.
99 E.g., LaCugna, 288–89.
know God as Trinity, their interpretation of God’s self-disclosure \((ad \ nos)\) and God’s self-understanding \((in \ coram \ Deo)\) must be Trinitarian.

God’s self-interpretation and self-disclosure must be identical, for otherwise creatures can never be certain of His character. Creatures must understand both God’s self-disclosure, for it is the key to salvation. Creatures have to understand God’s self-interpretation, so they can enter into divine life.

From this standpoint, we can say that Trinity is God’s eternally repeating internal self-interpretation and self-disclosure to the world, as well as His entire relationship to the world. Trinity, in short, is God’s identity, the means of special revelation, and the understanding of salvation. The four unified understandings are grounded in God’s being and relation to the world; the question is how.

§4.1.1.2.1 The Historical Development of Trinity

Trinitarian doctrine developed for two reasons: first, because the Church is committed to the monotheism of the ancient Jewish tradition; secondly, because the Church is equally committed to the salvation it experiences in Christ. The problem of Trinity is how these two ideas can be held together, first for Christ, the Holy Spirit, and as a coherent idea.

Eusebianism and Arianism were the first major heresies that led to the development of Trinitarianism. Their emphasis on monotheism meant that they “subordinated” Jesus’ role in salvation to the Father’s salvation, making Jesus an obedient instrument of the Father’s will. The Church objected, for if Jesus is not
constitutive to salvation or unique in any way then we have threatened the central claim of Christianity, namely that Jesus is the Christ and the Savior.

If Jesus is not divine – or what is the same, the incarnate Logos of John’s Gospel – then it is unclear how Jesus can forgive sins, for only God can forgive sins. Therefore, the Christological claims of Arianism are nothing more than the first stage of Trinitarianism. The constitutive aspect of Jesus’ divinization is boldly asserted in the creed: “for us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven…and became man.” The Arians can perhaps avoid part of this via homoiousion, but the fullness of salvation requires homoousion, for only God, not merely someone God-like can forgive sin.

These problems are, of course, more complicated than they first appear. Eusebianism and Arianism both object to Christ’s generation because the Father is agennetous Theou and the liturgy’s use of subordinationist formulae. Each heresy’s version of “generation” is different. Arians say that Jesus was only a man. Adoptionists say that he was only a man, but that he was “adopted” by the Father as the Christ (usually at his baptism). Ascribing the idea of “generate” to Jesus’ eternal being seemed to suggest that the “ungenerate” Father could generate. If he could change, then he would not be the eternal “I AM.” By “subordinating” Jesus’ divinity under the Father’s, Arians and Adoptionists thought they still let in salvation, without shutting out monotheism. Subordinationist formulae (e.g., offering prayers “to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit”) permitted a liturgical and tradition-based defense of the theologically

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100 E.g. Matt 9:1-8; the assertion is the subtext of the scribes’ objection, and the content of Jesus’ healing act.
101 Arguing that the Son is “of similar substance” to the Father
102 That is, a Son that is “of the same substance” (consubstantial with) as the Father.
103 LaCugna, God For Us: The Trinity & Christian Life, 127.
104 Ex 3:14
sharp position of Arianism. LaCugna suggests that Arianism continued for so long because of its linkage of theology and liturgy.

The Fathers, such as Gregory Nyzansien, then had to defend how the Father could be ungenerate in Himself and yet still generate the Son in the economy. Predicating “ungenerate” of the father in himself, and generating of the Father in relation to the Son suggests the strategy which would develop into the idea of distinctive and relational personhood. However, God is ungenerate and (with the Son) has no “when” to begin at. Naziansen’s work already points out the way in which the “eternal self-disclosure of God” will begin to work out. If the Father is God, then he is ungenerate, yet if the Son is God, then he must also be ungenerate, yet Sons are generated from Fathers.

The strategy of predicating something of God as one and each person in relation to the other was also applied to those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was divine in respect of its essence, yet spirited (as the Son was generated/begotten) in relation to the Father (and, in the West, the Son). The Cappadocian Fathers (Basil, etc.) describe the Holy Spirit as part of the immanent work of salvation. Yet in both cases, the Church was left to define how these persons were still coequally divine. The clearest answer is that, having rejected subordinationism, the insistence on monotheism constrains all divine persons to an equally divine status as divine.

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105 LaCugna, God For Us: The Trinity & Christian Life, 127.  
106 LaCugna, 127.  
Augustine, as the culmination of Western Trinitarian theology, defined the personhood of the Trinity as the subsistence of certain relations.\(^{109}\) The Son is the Son because he is related to the first person (Father) as a son is to a Father (*genetum*), the Father because he is related to the son as a Father (*agen[n]etous Theou*).

The relational content of Trinitarian personhood is affirmed precisely against the Arian notion of Christ. Augustine’s explanation of relational persons is presented as an internal, psychological case; God’s simplicity is insisted on to a degree that *ad extra* unity is the emphasis.\(^{110}\) The challenge which Arianism and Pelagianism provide to orthodoxy, (perhaps most strongly in Adoptionism), drove a shift – criticized by LaCugna – from *okonomía* (salvation) to *theologia* (talking about God abstractly).

The shift from *okonomía* to *theologia* produced the distinction of economic and immanent Trinity mentioned above. The difference matters for the question at hand in a specific way, viz., that it can be restated: “when, if ever, does the economic Trinity align with the immanent Trinity, such that the economic Trinity could give a perfect image of the immanent Trinity?”

§4.1.1.2.2 Positive Trinity

§4.1.1.2.2.1 The Four Limns of Stability

That God interprets Godself as Trinity. That God interprets God’s relation to the world as Trinity. That creatures can interpret God’s relation to the world as Trinity. That creatures can interpret God’s self-understanding as Trinity.

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\(^{109}\) LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity & Christian Life*, 55–57.; *Laudato Si’* §240

\(^{110}\) LaCugna, 90.
§4.1.2.2.2 Self-Disclosure

God’s self-disclosure can be examined through three “ascending examples,”
namely
Creation, Incarnation, and Eucharist.

Creation discloses God as a hidden God. Natural theology allows creatures under
the light of reason to move from their finitude to an Infinite creator. Because what a
maker makes is always determined by who that Maker is and how they see the object of
their creative activity. No two potters make the same pot, since each has different
personalities, experiences, etc. God likewise “signs” his creation.

The distinctiveness of God’s creation, however, only gives a dim outline of His
character. Creation discloses God as a transcendent and remote God. God’s
transcendence leaves open the possibility that He is the uncaring God of deism, or even
the malign demiurge of the Gnostics. God’s non-involvement with the world beyond
creation, at this point leaves almost no hope that He would save it (theosis).

The lack of hope stems from the inability of natural theology to assert God’s
involvement with a world. Christian theology, therefore, must read Creation as an act of
grace. God’s natural divinity defines his asity and independence. At the risk of
anticipating, we can say that Trinity puts God already in a perfect set of relations. God is
already both a community and therefore perfectly self-sufficient.

Creation, therefore, does not and cannot lead us to an interpretation of God as
Trinity on any of the four levels we’re examining. Even though we can see an overlap
between God’s character and Creation, the nature of that overlap remains to be examined
through the next two cases. Creation provides a starting point for a relation of Trinity.
God’s relational character grounds any elaboration of the Trinity. God’s character, which natural theology suggests has both an interiority and exteriority, founds each of the four hermeneutic limns under examination.

Creation defines God as related to something outside of Himself. God’s other-orientation suggests first that God can relate to something outside Himself, and therefore that relational orientation is a mark of God’s character. Because God is relational, creatures can hope though not know, that God can more fully reveal and relate Himself to the world.

Incarnation is the first example of a “special revelation” disclosure to the world. Special revelation is the disclosure which we can hope for, but not know or truly expect. Incarnation is God’s first unexpected uniting of Himself to the world. The act of Incarnation elaborates on God’s creative relation to the world; in investing Himself in the world, God demonstrates the fullness of His fidelity to Creation. Further, Incarnation displays a different way that God is. Incarnation, therefore gives us the first hint of personhood in the Trinity. It is the Incarnation, after all, which creates the Church’s conviction of salvation in Christ which led to Trinity.

Special revelation is unknowable by the light of reason, though Scripture, through the work of the Holy Spirit gave hints of it. Prophets and the Noachic, Abrahamic, and Davidic covenants elaborated some of God’s particular commitments to a particular people.111 However, the cosmic nature of God’s commitment remained unclear and

111 2 Pet. 1:21
unexpected even in these times. For example, even the apostles, faced with God incarnate, maintained a parochial view of Jesus’ mission.\textsuperscript{112}

Incarnation is the culmination and crux of the Arian debates. If Jesus is God in a meaningful way, how is that so? Arians, favoring monotheism, insisted that Jesus was homoiousion (similar in substance) to the Father, in order to preserve the Father’s primacy and monotheism. However, as we saw above, the early Church Fathers rejected that notion; the elaboration of salvation, therefore required a cosmic God to become particularly incarnate for salvation to matter. The cosmic incarnation, therefore, points the path to cosmic salvation (thesis).

Cosmic incarnation allows us to approach Christology from a descent perspective and bridge the gap between the God of creation and the God of Trinity. Cosmic incarnation suggests that Incarnation occurred “for us men and for our salvation,” and that Incarnation would culminate in the “new creation.”\textsuperscript{113}

Rather, God’s identity as relational means that God’s irruption as Immanuel is the irruption of God as understandable to finite and fallen creation. Jesus’ title of Immanuel allows us to move from the transcendent and almost-unknown God we have so far examined, to an intimately relatable God. How these relationships work (namely, through creaturely finitude) magnifies the sense of God’s historicity and changeability. The changeability of creaturely finitude allows it to be revelatory to creatures. Jesus historical reality allows Him to expound to the world the “path” to God, rather than the overwhelming “glory” of God, briefly seen at Tabor.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{112} Act 1:6
\textsuperscript{113} CCC p.56 ; Rev. 21:1
\textsuperscript{114} Mat. 7:12ff.
Christ’s incarnation can be briefly summed up as *Logos*, *Kenosis*, and *Theosis* to further elaborate the connection. Christ as *Logos* explains how creation is tied to the Christological event of Incarnation, since Creation was a Trinitarian event – at least partially prefigured in the Old Testament – then the Incarnation means that the tree persons are related. *Kenosis* elaborates how creation can be bridged “up” to God. *Kenosis*, therefore, is the beginning of creaturely understanding of God’s *in se* character. *Theosis*, as the culmination of the Christological drama, both indicates how creatures understand God’s saving relationship to the world and begins to illuminate the eschatological elements of the Eucharist, examined below.

The Logos was the means of creation, since “God created the heavens and the earth,” and if Jesus was “born of the Father before all ages,” He was present and participated in Creation. Hence, the Creed affirms (with the Prologue of John’s Gospel) “through Him all things were made.” The *Logos’* creativity produces a problem and a hope: a hope that God’s interiority involves “persons,” and the problem of the harmony between these various persons *ad extra*.

The Logos was “made man” through *kenosis*. However, *kenosis* was mediated “by the Holy Spirit.” Jesus’ Incarnation is an act which involves the Spirit of Creation, putting the *Logos* in relation to the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ *Logos*-character and the Spirit’s divine cooperation in Incarnation powerfully argues (with the Cappadocians) for the Spirit’s divinity.

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115 CCC p.56; Jn 1:3.
116 We will return to this problem below.
117 CCC p.56 and Lk 1:26-38
Jesus kenosis opened the door for human salvation. The Spirit of God makes men holy, and Jesus’ sending of that Spirit at Pentecost ushers in the final age of humanity. The Spirit gives creatures a hope of their salvation’s actualization in history, rather than the mere potentiality given by the Atonement. Unless we wish to affirm universalism, the Atonement cannot be self-sufficient for salvation per se.\(^\text{119}\)

Jesus kenosis culminated in the possibility of theosis. Atonement theory has its place here; however, I will bypass it to say simply that the Christ-hymn of Phillipians, suggests that in exalting Christ to glory, that exaltation also elevated His human nature.\(^\text{120}\) The elevation of human nature is possible, therefore, for all creatures. Jesus’ Incarnation and glorification radically exposit God’s relationship to the world, such that we have hope, knowledge, and a means to salvation via the Atonement and Holy Spirit.

Theosis allows creaturely understanding to align with God’s understanding. Theosis, or becoming “partakers of the divine nature,”\(^\text{121}\) re-forms finite creatures away from the Fall and back to their perfect pre-lapsarian knowledge. Creatures perceive God “face to face” in their redemption, and consequently have a clearer knowledge of God then they could have had even in the Garden of Eden. The glory of salvation, therefore rightly drove St. Augustine to declare “felix culpa!”\(^\text{122}\)

Theosis is not immediate. The effects of sin still remain in the world.\(^\text{123}\) Theosis, however, is a process, particularly of developing godly virtue. Trinitarian participation and appropriation in reforming and sanctifying the soul allows us to say more than

\(^{119}\) CCC §§1036-7
\(^{120}\) Phil 2:6-11
\(^{121}\) 2 Pet 1:4
\(^{122}\) Elaborated by Aquinas in S.Th.III.q1.a3. resp. obj. 3
\(^{123}\) CCC §1264
“‘Lord, Lord,’” (e.g. the making of the new creation, to the Father; justification, to the Son; sanctification, to the Spirit).\textsuperscript{124}

\section*{§4.1.1.2 Self-Interpretation}

The Incarnation allows us to see into the Father as Jesus discloses Him. Jesus, however, is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”\textsuperscript{125} Jesus is a perfect image of the Father, and a reliable disclosure of the Father’s character. The perfection of this relation is insistently placed in the Creed, where Christ is “God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God.”\textsuperscript{126} The Creed thus insists on the \textit{homoousion} character of the Son here, but also on Jesus’ perfect identity with the Father. Thus, the Incarnate \textit{Logos} can make demands (\textit{Ansprechungen}) on us, as the Father would.\textsuperscript{127}

The “image of the invisible God” is related to the Father twice, first as the \textit{Logos} and secondly as the first witness of the Father’s character. The dual relation, just sketched, develops a further way for us to gain access to God’s understanding of His self-disclosure, as well as providing a basis for creaturely understandings. We have already dealt with self-disclosure above, yet it must be revisited here, as it is the link into God’s self-interpretation. The three lines of thought, it should be noted, are closer together than they were even when Jesus was considered alone, under “Self-Disclosure.”

Jesus, as the \textit{Logos}, defines the world-God relationship in Creation and in the New Covenant. Both of these aspects deal with God’s interpretation of His self-disclosure. However, both are oriented towards the salvific story of Atonement and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{124} Mt. 7:21
\item \textsuperscript{125} Col 1:15
\item \textsuperscript{126} CCC p.56
\item \textsuperscript{127} E.g., in instituting the New Covenant.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
eschaton. The Logos’ definition of creation, from God’s view, is the way to see creation through to the eschaton and the completion of the God-world relationship and of God’s own fidelity to His identity towards creation.

Jesus is the first witness to the Father’s character. Jesus’ witness is possible first because he was “born of the Father before all ages,” secondly because He is homoousion with the Father, and thirdly, because He is “the image of the invisible God” to creatures. The witness aspect here is not identical to self-disclosure; witnesses must be distinct from their objects. As a witness, the “Son of Man” is the creaturely witness to God, rather than His self-disclosure per se.

The Logos was “born of the Father before all ages,” yet this generation is not of a creature. Instead, Mary’s free participation in the drama of salvation is the first sign of creaturely witness to God’s grace. The divine character of the Annunciation makes evident that the Son of God is being heralded from the divine court in fulfillment of God’s promise to David etc. Mary’s participation, therefore, is not merely a sign, but the fulfillment of God’s promise to the world.

The divine character of the Annunciation allows further elaboration as to Jesus “consubstantial” nature (homoousion). First, that angels are subordinate to the heavenly court, even if they are akin to God as perfect intelligences. Secondly, Scripture is quite clear that the Messiah was not merely an elevated angel. God’s subordination of an

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128 For he was “begotten not made” CCC p.56
129 Hints of sacramentum emerge here, making the question of Mary’s involvement in the Eucharist an interesting line of future study.
130 CCC §330
131 Heb. 1:5.
angel to be a herald of the Incarnation, therefore, suggests that the one heralded is greater than an angel, i.e. God, the angel’s king.

The Annunciation’s aspect of heralding expands the God-world relationship. God orders the entirety of creation, even the highest creatures towards redemption of the world. Further, all of creation is part of the mediation of God to the world and vice versa. The holy messenger demonstrates that God can be clearly demonstrated to creatures and that creatures can fully understand the message. Although the case is harder for Divinity proper, this is an encouraging sign for the full development of Trinitarian relations.

Jesus is the “image of the invisible God,” and therefore a perfect representation of the Father. God’s self-interpretation in the creaturely realm has a double aspect in the Christological sense. First, the witness to God’s character from the creaturely aspect, as well as the divine Logos already discussed. Secondly, however, the enhypostatic relation of Christ’s natures witness to the validity of His own mission, aided by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit’s presence in Christ and to the world makes it the second witness to the Father’s character. First, as the agent of creation, secondly, as the agent of Incarnation, and lastly the seal and perfecter of the Church. Pneumatology is weakly developed in the Western tradition I draw on; however, the Spirit as “seal and perfecter of the Church” offers another avenue to a potential theology of Confirmation.

The Holy Spirit is the enacter of creation, which the Father made and the Logos defines. The Holy Spirit is the ground of the world’s continued existence and progress.

132 Seen in the OT, for example, in the angel’s interpretation of Daniel’s dreams. (Dan. 10:5-9ff).
133 Lk 4:16-21; Mt. 3:13-7.
134 In the sense of executor, enactor.
towards salvation in line with the Father. It is fitting, therefore, that the Holy Spirit was the means of Christ’s incarnational *kenosis* and the witness to His identity.

The Holy Spirit’s enacting of creation completes the Trinitarian explanation of creation which began with natural theology. Rather than being the one act of a potentially uncaring God, Creation can now be seen as the cooperative investment of God in a world. God’s cooperative investment is gratuitous not only in that it was not necessary, but also in that it draws the world into *God’s* loving interior relationship, rather than a perpetual duality of infinitely distant Creator and Creature.

As the agent of Incarnation, the Holy Spirit increases the bond between God and the world. The Spirit enacted the Father’s creation and perfects the world as its own appropriation, yet neither of these would be meaningful *eo ipso* without the Spirit’s involvement in the Incarnation, life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Far beyond the witness the Spirit provides to the Church and to Christ’s mission, the Holy Spirit provides the vital medium for the God-world relationship. The Spirit, in strengthening faith and understanding (e.g. in Confirmation) show that the Spirit is the “perfect interpreter of the Word of the Father,” and the guarantor of salvation.  

As the seal and perfecter of the Church, the Holy Spirit, therefore discloses and interprets the entirety of God as Trinity to the Church. The Holy Spirit, then, seals the Church to God and to its reception of God’s identity and promises in the Deposit of Faith.

§4.1.1.2.4 Eucharist and Eschaton

The Eucharist is the full overlap between all four hermeneutic limns. As creation it answers to the creaturely interpretation and God’s self-disclosure. As the Real

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135 Robinson, “Representation and Interpretation as the Basis of Participation in the Trinity,” 1018.
Presence, it answers to God’s self-interpretation and self-disclosure.

The Eucharist is the “source and summit of our faith” 136 Jesus’ confirmation of the new Covenant, however, is the beginning of the new ordering of creation. Thus, it is in some sense right to insist on the Real Presence. Consequently, the Eucharist is an overlap between what God does in sanctifying the Host and who God is in Christ and for us.

As creation it answers to God’s self-disclosure as Christ reinterprets us as incorporated and drawn up into the divine life of the Eucharist. The incorporation of the Eucharistic life always comes through Christ who has reinterpreted the fallen world as part of the eschaton. That eschaton, reinterpreting the world makes it possible for individuals to understand God and their place in the world, as part of a creation-wide communion of doxology.

As creation it answers to creaturely interpretation. The Eucharist repeats God’s identity to the believer, God’s call to the believer, and God’s love to the believer. God’s revelation relates to the individual in an intimate way, which calls the individual to virtue and holiness. In the face of the call of God to God, we are faced with the Trinity, which we can finally understand in Christ. Christ, having mediated the entirety of the Trinity makes the divine life available to us through himself, particularly in the Eucharist.

As the Real Presence it answers to God’s self-interpretation. The Eucharist, because of the Trinity, therefore is a “theophany” of the highest order. 137 God interprets Himself as a gift to the world in the Eucharist; that gift is not a passive surrender of

136 Lumen Gentium, §11
God’s identity, but an invitation and an actualization of an improved God-world relationship. The improving person sees God’s identity more clearly and can increasingly conform to God through grace.

As the Real Presence it is God’s self-disclosure, since Jesus is really, truly, and substantially present under the species of bread and wine. God’s self-disclosure would be lost to history without some way of preserving it. In that case, God’s self-disclosure is God’s self-disclosure and a long list of historical witnesses. The perpetuation of the self-disclosure offers immediate guarantee of that self-disclosure, such that the Spirit can reinterpret it as it was understood at the time. It is this immediate reinterpretation which marks the validity of apostolic succession, since it adds a third voice to witness, rather than being a self-supporting claim. Theologically, then, the Magisterium’s own authority appears to rest on the perseverance of the Eucharistic sacrifice, something the Church recognizes.

The Trinity decorates the Church, even as it calls the Church – the new Ark – to her rest on the “holy mountain.” Trinity, in illuminating the way and content of the Church, gives Her a solid guide and foundation. Christ’s Church, which is grounded in the Trinity, thus has the stability to make the claim that she possesses the power of the keys and the means of salvation.

The claim to soteriological authority, however, is not an exclusive one. The Church is oriented towards, but not coequal with God. She serves God in bringing all creation

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138 CCC § 1376
139 CCC§§1399-1400
140 Is. 11:9
141 CCC §§981-983
together to the Kingdom of God. God remains free to save those outside the Church, yet has most definitively bound Himself and the plan of salvation to the sacraments.\footnote{CCC §1129}

The Ark of the Church is not a one-way ticket in oriented just towards God. Rather, the Church is also a society within the Ark. The Kingdom of God is practiced within the Church, even as it is fulfilled in history. The Kindom, rather than the Kingdom, insists that the equality within the Trinity will be made present in human society in the “Heavenly Jerusalem.”\footnote{This approach has been criticized, e.g. by Margaret Campbell, “The Trinity as Model: Tanner and LaCugna on the Trinity and the Shaping of Human Community,” \textit{Colloquium} 48, no. 2 (November 2016): 146–60.}

The political aspect of Trinity is particularly clear here: if Trinity is God’s relationship to Himself and the world, then those who want to participate in the Trinity must have a similar relationship to others as well as to God.

The political Trinity is more contingent, even eschatologically provisional, than the ontological and soteriological Trinity, which is the focus of this essay. However, a political Trinity calls the people to a doxology for a future which has not yet come. The Sacraments however, are not merely waiting for the \textit{Parousia}, but rather activate and expect it. The clearest example of this is the Eucharist, also called the Mass, which sends us out to proclaim (and enact) the Gospel.\footnote{E.g. to the poor; CCC §1394}

The declaration of the Gospel is present in the good news of the Eucharist as the bearer of \textit{theosis} and “the medicine of immortality,” for it “makes present what it promises” through the entire mediation of the Trinity.\footnote{CCC §1131} The Spirit, which Incarnated
Christ, re-incarnates the Passover Lamb for us, in the gifts of creation which, blessed by their Creator, are returned to His use.

As the “source and summit of our faith,” it is the means to the eschaton and our cooperation with it. The Eucharist is the strongest point of contact between the economic and immanent Trinity. It is the first and highest example of the overlap between God’s identity and activity. The faithful, in reinterpreting the Host, then see with the eyes of faith the Trinity made substantially present. The re-interpretation of the Host at the moment of consecration is a Trinitarian reinterpretation of the Host and of one’s own identity, from parishioner, to a guest at the Feast of the Lamb, clothed in wedding garments.\textsuperscript{146} The Father’s greatest Sacrifice is the liturgical, theological, and soteriological expression of the Trinitarian mystery.

\textit{§4.1.1.3 Conclusion}

Trinity is how God relates to Himself. Were this not so, then God could not be related to the world. If we are to agree that Jesus is how we are saved, then God must be related to us in the person of Jesus. Jesus’ divinity, then, is the “gate” to the Kindom of God. God’s relation to Himself as a free being makes creation and creation’s knowledge of God possible.

God’s knowability and fidelity to the world relies on a Trinitarian witness to His transcendent nature as one, good, true, and beautiful. However, that witness is understood by creatures understanding the drama of salvation, for it is that drama which makes God’s transcendence comprehensible to a finite and fallen world. The comprehension of the God-world relationship grounds the world’s hope for and cooperation with salvation.

\textsuperscript{146} CCC §1382ff.
towards the Kingdom of God. The model of the Trinity is the goal of human life, and the model for the Church’s imitation.

Trinity, ultimately, describes how God is and how He and the world relate to each other. The world’s relationship to God is mediated by and shaped by God’s Trinitarian self-understanding and the world’s interpretation of God as Trinity. Each’s interpretation is stable because of God’s eternal self-interpretation, and the world’s eternal re-interpretation of God’s identity mediated by the Host, the Holy Spirit, and Christ Himself.

§4.1.1.3 Trajectory

The model of the Trinity shows the limns required to develop a fully hermeneutic theory of God. It does not, however, sufficiently deal with the person of Christ. Instead, it sets up the conditions whereby we can begin to understand Christ as incarnate Mediator. Without these conditions, the Logos would be abandoned, forcing us into a low Christology which seems unable to deal with the idea of a priori divine disclosure and divine logos (i.e. Logos). In order to elaborate the Trinity, as well as explain how we gain knowledge of Trinity, therefore, we must explain the Incarnation, the great mystery before we ought quake.\footnote{Hans Urs Balthasar, \textit{Theo-Logic: Truth of God}, trans. Adrian J. Walker, vol. 2 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 221.}

§4.1.3 Atonement

§4.1.3.1 Introduction

This model takes a more Platonic line. To help explain the role of knowledge in salvation, it makes sense to take the noetic emphasis of Plato and locate it within the
Christ-story. This emphasis does not interrupt, but furthers the hermeneutic line which our discussion of Trinity has just stabilized, such that we can begin an incarnate Christology.

§4.1.3.2 Awake Unto Evil

God from all eternity purposed to create the world and bring all creation into the fullness of flourishing; divine life is the apex of this purpose. As such, humanity was created with knowledge of natural good with the hope of gaining unity with God. We stood as co-creators with God, bearers of His image, to not only complete our own ends, but also to bring about the flourishing of the other parts of creation. God, as infinite, could not complete such a “divinization” without entering into finitude. Thus we must say that the Incarnation has been a part of the Eternal Will from the beginning since God’s will cannot change.

The enactment of such a will can only be done if the Incarnate One is both divine and finite. The entirety of Christianity revolves around one fundamental tenet: the divinity of Christ. While Chalcedonian Christianity erected orthodox Christology for all time as asserting Christ’s dual natures, it is only through the hermeneutic assumption of Christ’s divinity that the first apostles were capable of making sense of His life, death, and resurrection.

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148 Submitted for Violence and Atonement FA 2016
149 Gen.2:18-20
150 While it was always most salutary for God to be incarnate as a human (which bears His image), we cannot say that this is a necessity in se. This model, however, will deal with atonement from the point of Jesus, the God-man, not Frankie, the God-frog, e.g., though God could have ordered salvation to be through a frog, he did not and thus now cannot.
Christ’s divinity produces His ordered will that ensures Him impeccability. There is no impeccability in the merely human mind of Christ, but from the harmonious order of His two wills and natures. Christ is the microcosm of the world as it ought to have been: in harmony with the mind of God.

The incarnation of Christ was necessary to divinization. Beyond that, Christ’s mediation was salutary because man, in his First Parents, lost original justice.\textsuperscript{151} Since everything that God created was good, then the natural knowledge must have been good.\textsuperscript{152} As pre-lapsarians with perfect wills and perfect (if quantitatively finite) knowledge, our First Parents knew of the Good that was God by immediate experience.\textsuperscript{153} Humanity is enlisted in the act of creation, and takes up a station of seeming co-equality with God in the ordering of the world.\textsuperscript{154} The role humanity plays in co-creation with God further implies the desirability of humanity’s knowledge in the ordering of creation, which is made possible by immediate—thought not full—comprehension of the Good of God.

Because of humanity’s knowledge of natural good, the forbidden fruit exudes powerful allure. As a creature of God, the fruit participated in the goodness of all created beings. It is natural that humanity should desire the fruit for two reasons. First it was given to them to “till and to keep” and secondarily, if more abstractly, we can assert that the goodness God gave to each part of creation participates finitely in His constitutive nature.

\textsuperscript{151} I say justice, not righteousness, since I do not conceive of the pre-lapsarian state as one of God-drunk nativity. Justice, order, and harmony are used interchangeably throughout.

\textsuperscript{152} C.f. Aviccienna’s Bird-man for a contrary position. Even then, since they could only experience good…

\textsuperscript{153} By perfect knowledge, I mean they knew the Good insofar as it was necessary and perhaps to a degree beyond that which was merely salutary, if the necessary knowledge of Good is finite in such a way that salutary knowledge is still accessible without loss of necessary knowledge.

\textsuperscript{154} Gen. 2:18-20
goodness. The totality of Goodness is not expressible in a finite creature, and thus the desire of our First Parents was for the Goodness that they knew, but qualitatively lacked (i.e. divinization). Their desire to more fully participate the ordering of creation required knowledge thereof.

Scripture itself offer us insight into the nature of the pre-fall will. The fruit is described as being “desirable to make one wise.” Aquinas’ understanding of the will as a “rational appetite” brings this passage into new focus. The claim of the snake that “it shall make you like gods, knowing good and evil,” extends the appeal to the rational will, since man was created for divinity. It appears that the issue is not purely one of disobedience – of choosing our own desires before God’s commandments. Rather, it was a case of conflicted wills: The desire to obey God on one hand, and on the other to seek the good as it appeared to their wills, which saw a true good.

Humanity chose wrongly when our natural desires for goods conflicted. Sin, then, arises from conflicted will in the face of good options. While some knowledge of evil is implicit in the knowledge of the order of things as they are, it is more likely to be of a sort that might be called “unrealized” or “potential” in a way that does not come to affect what a person knows or wills, but is an external constraint. In partaking of the fruit of the

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155 As St. Augustine says “Not in thee, but in created things…” *Confessions, xx*(31).
156 Gen. 3:6
157 S. Th. I.IIae. q8.a1
158 Gen. 3:5. What they did not know, however, was that God knew good without the attendant evil (which did not exist), contra Augustine.
159 *Phaedo* 103c-e. One will or knowing must accede to another.
tree, they came to know in actuality what they had only known by potentiality (i.e.
mediately).  

The mind consists of knowledge and will. Because we traded our natural
knowledge of good for knowledge of evil, we have descended into the state known as
“Original Sin.” The corruption of our wills has led us to concupiscence, in which we
willingly trade a greater good for a lesser because humanity always desires some good
which we feel we lack. The trading of naturally good knowledge for the gain of
knowledge of evil is a loss in two ways. First, the “gain of sin” knowledge is a loss of
some good knowledge, since our minds are finite and cannot hold both perfect and evil
knowledge together in a state of salvation. Second, with less knowledge of good we are
less able to do good, since our will must act on what we know to be goods, if it is to be a
rational appetite. Because of this, the full rationalization of evil and its effects cannot
be performed by a mere human. Secondarily, however, merely finite human minds
corrupted by knowledge of evil cannot on their own come to the knowledge which was
created good, since their desires are disordered.

God owes nothing to any creature. Salvation is salvation from disordered
intellect and will (i.e. sin). Ergo, sin must not be a creature from which we are to be
rescued. I posit then that to know that which is not, you must be incarnate in and to it. It

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160 Gen. 3:7 "Their eyes were opened" They knew they were naked before, but were not aware of it, for example.
161 See the understanding of "perfect knowledge" given in footnote 152.
162 S.Th. I.Iae.q8.a1. and Rom.7:18-20
163 S. Th. I.q9.a1
164 This is a concise summary of Paul’s reading of Exodus. Baker and Green, The Scandal of the Cross, 102.
The entirety of the plague narratives reverse the order of the creation narrative, using disorder against Pharaoh to bring about the ordered exodus (Ex. 7:14-11:10).
is precisely the bodily nature of sin (i.e. that our bodies and minds cooperate in it) that makes it so pervasive.

The “gain of sin” and naturally good knowledge are alike in that they are not creatures. While Fall may have changed the order of things, it did not bring a new “thing” into being. That is to say, that evil, which can only exist as a deprivation of the Good, was not multiplied in being, but rather in its extension of effects to the human mind and creation. The possibility of evil is always greater than the number of orderings we call goodness.

The notion of conflicted or disordered wills is the microcosmic locus of disorder. The will of humanity, co-creator with God, was now conflicted. Because humanity became conflicted, we were unable to carry out our role in our own divinization and the perfection of creation. This conflict may be termed an injustice, for whichever option is chosen seems to conflict with the good order created by God. These sorts of decisions between two gods are arguments over the highest value, and illuminate the human desire for goodness.

The commandment of God -- not to eat the fruit -- exists not as a test of obedience, since to do the good was the natural desire of humanity.\textsuperscript{165} Rather, it existed to provide an ordering for the desiring wills. The continued existence, both of the Garden and of the Family fleeing it, is a sign that they are not totally deprived of all good, even if they cannot do nor will good as they once could.\textsuperscript{166} They still participate in God, who is the ground of being, even if more remotely than they once had. Humanity is not

\textsuperscript{165} C.f. S.Th. II.IIae.q104.a4.resp.obj.3
\textsuperscript{166} Were they totally depraved, they would cease to exist as explained below. Humanity, fortunately, is not so powerful.
absolutely depraved; we can still will the good, but we have come to mistake certain finite goods as greater goods than God.\footnote{Augustine, \textit{Confessions}. Lxx(31).}

The remoteness introduced by the fall in relation to the ground of being begs a question: “What were the ways of being available post-fall?” I contend they were threefold: Being (or salvation), nonbeing (or damnation), and existence (i.e. the pilgrim way). This tripartite division is not new, and owes something to Luther’s idea of “simultaneously just and unjust.”

Being, as a good, is the mark of salvation. To truly be as we ought to have been in participation with God the Savior. To briefly annex the classical tradition, we may call this the maximum of “flourishing” (\textit{Eudaimonia}). Indeed, if to be is a good, then pure Being must be Goodness itself, since to be is a prerequisite to any other form of goodness.

Nonbeing is the state of damnation and self-exclusion which has traditionally been called hell.\footnote{CCC § 1035} God accedes to the wills of those who chose such a thing. Such a view borders on annihilationism, as without some partial being (e.g. existence) a person would \textit{cease to be} in the eyes of God.\footnote{This stands in opposition to ibid., if true.} The disorder of their desires and wills removes from them the very order of being, since their desires do not truly \textit{exist} save as the “compliment paid to virtue.” Extant souls cannot continue their existence in knowing and willing the unreal, and so they are given over to their non-being in the same way that those who know and will Being itself are brought into It.
Existence, or the pilgrim way, is a path which by itself will accede to nonbeing, because it is not in order with the mind of God. Sin does not leave an infinite gulf between man and God, but alters the trajectory of history from what God had intended for humanity and creation. As such, the Incarnation’s purpose becomes more than a mere divinization of mortals. Rather, it must also overcome the evil and disorder which affects the world as a result of the conflicted wills of both humanity and nature.

In the state of mere existence, we retain the image of God, if not his likeness. The image of God, or *imago Dei*, is the touchpoint for a higher level version of the famous analogy of being. Although all beings must subsist (if only partially) in Being itself, unsullied humanity bears the ordering of all things within itself—as co-creator of the world—in the *likeness of God*. In the merely extant human, then, this order is not lost, but merely marred or difficult to see.¹⁷⁰

Being, or God, can be conceived of as Infinite Mind.¹⁷¹ God has infinite knowledge, and the knowledge of God is the best kind of knowledge. The best kind of knowledge is knowledge of things that *are*.¹⁷² Infinitude is not a quantity but a quality for God, since his knowledges are not distinct and countable, as this would give God parts.¹⁷³ From this, we infer there are some things that God does not know because they are either not existing things (i.e. things that have no being) or are not necessary.

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¹⁷⁰ I Cor. 13:12 “Now I see through a glass darkly…”
¹⁷¹ Remembering that mind is both knowledge and will.
¹⁷² López-Farjeat, “Al-Farabi’s Psychology and Epistemology.” (The same is true with respect to the will).
¹⁷³ If the universals are not parts of God, but are constitutive of Godself in a unitary (i.e. simple) way, so too must God’s knowledges of those universals be.
This is because God is *pure act*, who as such cannot activate some potential in Godself so as to come know (or will) some uncreated extant.\(^{174}\) His immutability leads to his aseity and other classical attributes.\(^{175}\) Divine self-sufficiency suggests that creation was a gratuitous act, aimed at bringing all beings into line with Divine Love. Immutability suggests that such a desire/plan could not be changed by God. Thus, God knows post-lapsarian contingents by mediation of the Incarnated Word, who became contingent and entered into nonbeing.

It is fitting that the Second Person of the Trinity, who processes in *knowledge* from Godself, should be the divine Mediator between God and man, not of sin only, but of the whole human reality.\(^{176}\) It is to the freely willed end of such mediation that Christ became “obedient to death even death on a Cross.”\(^{177}\)

The above is a fervent assault on the classical doctrine of omniscience, and to a certain degree the voluntarist notion of omnipotence. It asserts quite basely that the knowledge of God is His power and that his knowledge is not infinite absent the Incarnation, Passion, Atonement, and Resurrection. To this end, I contend, that the Incarnation would have been necessary even had humanity not fallen into sin, in order to complete the Work of God.

The first sin did not change God, but changes the orientation of the divine-human relationship. As a creaturely deviation from the divine will, the first act of God is loving

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\(^{174}\) S. Th. Iq3.a7.; Lq9.a1 being Aquinas’ own citations for God being pure act.

\(^{175}\) All of which may be attributed to the Logos (Heb. 13:8).

\(^{176}\) This is why scripture says “through him all things were made” (Jn. 1:3). Though “…the Father Almighty” is “Maker of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.” (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) “There is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ.” (1 Tim. 2:5). Etc.

\(^{177}\) Phil. 2:8. The word “to” or “unto” in this verse is *mechri* (Strong’s 3360) which I’m not sure is an *inclusive* “unto.” Luther translates μέχρι as “bis zum” not merely “bis” “or “zum”; “bis zum” is a more inclusive preposition in German.
in attempting to bring them back to divine order. The first questions asked post-Fall in the Genesis text are asked by God.\textsuperscript{178} They are not accusatory, rather attempting to understand the waywardness of creation. The attendant “curses” are thus not a condemnation of a creation which God loves, and (at this point in the text) does not regret. Rather, they are a description of the fate of the world because of the disorder, which even as disincarnate Mind is understandable to Him.

The paradox of twisted wills is echoed in the “curses.” The desire for food brings forth thistles; the desire for the husband brings subjugation; the lord of the animals is brought low. The state of the fallen humanity is thus one of lack. Creation lacks not only divine knowledge, but also an attendant relationship and order within the divine in bringing about its purposes.

The first sin changed the divine-human relationship from friendship to legalism. We are given over to our conflicted wills, and incapable of being “whole-minded.”\textsuperscript{179} As such, the Law is given, as was the command of the Garden, to guide our wills in the areas where they were liable to be conflicted. It seems then that the Father cannot have chosen to give the Law, since His will is immutable, the Law is only necessary because of the Fall. Equally, however, God wills awareness of the natural good, and to have withheld that knowledge from the created order is likewise to have changed. Thus, while it is necessary that the knowledge of the good be somehow available to creation, it remains a

\textsuperscript{178} Gen. 3:9-11.

\textsuperscript{179} To bastardize Frankfurt’s “wholeheartedness”; “whole mindedness” is to know what is good and to want it, as opposed to the desire to want what we want (or want what is good). (i.e. one can be whole-hearted in a bad desire, but not whole-minded in a bad desire)
matter of faith that the Law of the Jews was God’s specific “interim measure” until the Incarnation should occur.\textsuperscript{180}

The Christology that attempts to rise to this model must say something about the mutual intelligibility problem. Namely, it must make the merely extant intelligible to Being, and the Being intelligible to the extant, calling the extant away from that relational gap that is nonbeing. Such a system relies on an idea of \textit{communicato idiomatum}, at a minimum.

Man cannot understand God in the order of finite mind. Thus God must break into history in his divinity. That is, God must become \textit{Emmanuel}, not God for us, but God with us, like us.\textsuperscript{181} In order to do this He must “humble himself to the form of a servant.”\textsuperscript{182} Christ’s abdication of “equality with God” is the very paradox by which our standing with God is to be restored.

Thus the life of Christ is constitutive to our understanding of divine Infinitude. It is not only the finality of death which must be understood and subordinated, but every temptation, every inclination. The humanity of Christ experiences all these things up to and including nonbeing, and His Divine mind brings them into the perichoretic unity of the Trinity where they are subordinated to God’s unaltered Eternal Will for the good of the world, which we come to understand through His humanity, finitude, and mortal life.

The role of intelligibility in the Passion narrative echoes and re-orders the disordered will of humanity in the Garden.\textsuperscript{183} The dual choice facing the people at the trial of Jesus was a matter of selecting between goods: The Messiah or preservation of the

\textsuperscript{180} Again, there seems to be no \textit{in se} reason for God to prefer the Jews. (see also Rom.1:20).
\textsuperscript{181} Matt. 1:23
\textsuperscript{182} Phil 2:7-8
\textsuperscript{183} Thanks to Gordon Graham for this insight. (12/11/16).
people against Roman legions. In farcical repetition, the people seem to choose an inferior good for the second time.

As established, God must understand sin in order to subordinate it to his Eternal Will. If the world is not how it ought to have been then God was either blindsided or planned for this. If the latter, He is evil, for it would make our sin one of the “best things” God knows. Such a claim contradicts of the goodness of God. Such knowledge would further render the Incarnation useless, as our sin would be known to God and have no need of subordination – rather, the divine order should have begun re-forming, if God has been truly “recreating from all eternity.”

God’s plan cannot change, but the world can; our deviation from the plan means that God’s Eternal Will gains new purposes from the finite side of things, whereas God’s Will is always bringing about His purposes despite the waywardness of the world. Whereas before all of humanity would have willingly chosen divinization, it is possible to “reject and despise” the Incarnate One in the fallen world.

The Crucifixion is then the culmination of the repurposing of the Incarnation. As God in se cannot understand sin, the understanding of sin is worked out by the human nature of Christ, whose comprehension thereof is superintended by the Divine Mind, which also understands the same by meditation of human finitude. Such an understanding is foreshadowed in Gethsemane. Christ’s divine mind has begun to comprehend that “he who is Life itself faces the abyss.”

Though Christ would have died anyhow, the

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184 Hall, Eric. “My Model of Atonement” November 9, 2016. (Carroll College, Helena, MT)
185 Is. 53:3.
186 Ratzinger, Jesus of Nazareth: Holy week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection, 155
187 Ibid.
nature of fallen humanity, rather than divine will ensures that we could do no other than
to expose him to the absolute finitude of dereliction.\textsuperscript{188}

In being exposed to dereliction, Christ gains in knowledge, which brings into order the disordered. His mind perceives “the order behind” and sees “the order that could be.” God in Christ does both. “Seeing the order behind” means that God comes to know our disordered wills and how they prioritize various goods. It is insufficient for a surgeon to re-break a bone if he does not understand how it broke and healed in the first place. “Seeing the order that could be” is not an imposition of some preexisting ideal, but rather the transformation of a disorder into a new order. We may say that Christ’s \textit{kenosis} is an example of re-ordering the disordered.

It would be insufficient if Christ had \textit{merely} been crucified. The constitution of the Calvary sacrifice lies particularly in the unity of Bethlehem and Golgatha, in the sort of socialization by which “God became man.”\textsuperscript{189} If God is to truly understand the human condition, it is insufficient to just be thrown into nonbeing; He must understand the relation of existence and nonbeing in the way that humans understand it, much in the same way it does little good for a parent to discipline a misbehaving child without understanding \textit{why and how} what was done was done.\textsuperscript{190} Since God in Christ comes to understand the human state, Christ also comes to understand the “gain of sin.” Christ’s prophetic ministry revolves around calling out precisely a view of the “gain of sin.”

\textsuperscript{189} Anselm, \textit{Why God became Man} in Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works, 266.
\textsuperscript{190} To say otherwise would be to suggest that our salvation would have been just as assured had Christ joined the Holy Innocents.
namely a sort of disorder, which Paul calls “sinful passions aroused by the Law.” It is this disorder of knowledge and will from which Christ rescues us.

The mind of God comprehends the finite in its finitude via Christ, rather than from the sempiternal position of the Father, Creator. Though God in Godself understood and could understand the created as it was created, the mediation of the Word is necessary for God’s understanding of a creation “gone wrong.” The mediatory act of the Son as the “firstborn of all creation” and the “firstfruits from the dead” bring into the mind of God the sins of man, that they may be known and willed into harmony with the eternal order of the mind of God. God in Christ thus comes to understand the waywardness of creation via the life of Christ from the standpoint of eternity. In this way, Christ becomes the Door of our salvation, smeared with the Blood which assures us mediation.

The restoration of justice to our minds may be called salvation and participation in divine life. It is equally true then to say that I affirm that “becoming like God” is an end of salvation. This divinization comes to by knowing God and thus the attendant order of life as it ought to have been. In so knowing, we bring order into the world by the grace of God.

Evil is not expurgated from this world, nor is its power broken. Instead, it is known by the mind of God and forever subordinated to the Will of the Almighty. This knowledge offers us a “way out” of sin and into divine life. Because we are made capable by the grace of God to know and will the good again, we are “dead to sin, but alive in

191 Rom.7:5
192 Col. 1:15, 15:20.
193 Catechism par. 460
Christ’ in the way that sin to us returns to mere potentiality, as we can know, will and do the good.¹⁹⁴

Further, it seems improbable that God should totally remove from the minds of the faithful the notion of sin for at least three reasons. Firstly, that to do so would complete salvation and divinization in history. Secondly, that to do so is a denial of humanity (and thus a loss of a mediate link to Trinity). Thirdly, that it removes a potential for relationship with other humans vis a vis sin (communal salvation history). The necessity of these linkages is especially witnessed to by the sacrament of confession, wherein human knowledge and will are reconstituted in spite of sin.

The improvement of human knowledge better enables us to engage with the duty laid upon humankind at creation and redeem it from its own conflict of will. As our wills are conflicted in the sight of God, so too is the order of creation distorted in the eyes of humanity.¹⁹⁵ Humanity’s duty as co-creator and keeper of the world was abdicated in the conflict of our own wills and preferring our personal goods over the order of creation as it ought to have been. Human consideration of the injustice of nature leads us to a contemplation of our own injustices towards God, neighbor, self, and creation. Because of God’s contemplation and reordering of our injustice, we are able to rejoin the cosmic harmony in bringing all creation to its desired end.

§4.1.4 Synthesis

Our notion of the Trinity developed out a God who can be hermeneutically stable; this is critical for the project, for if God cannot be relied upon to be who God is, then

¹⁹⁴ Rom. 6:11
¹⁹⁵ Is. 11:6-9, all of Job.
God’s *adequatio* and *alethia* are likewise unreliable. The promise of *apokalypsis* dissolves into anti-eschata.\(^{196}\) The Trinitarian-stable God, thus can become incarnate such that He is recognizable in the Son.\(^{197}\)

Only such a Christ can reinterpret death and sin. The shift from a hermeneutic to a platonic framework is, admittedly, a jarring one, yet Plato’s stable Forms and *noesis* work well to expound the “understanding” that will become critical to Eucharist (§5.2.2).

The central move of the above section has been to try to find ways in which Christ can be “stabilized” in order to act as a text that can be interpreted as Truth. However, it also deals with the “‘the Father’s two hands’” as interpreters, viz., the Holy Ghost’s interpretation of the Son, and the Son’s reinterpretation of humanity.\(^{198}\) The double-reinterpretation of these figures makes God’s own *ad intra* life an hermeneutic process.

**§4.2 Trajectories**

Trinity and Atonement alone do not a Christology make. To further elaborate it, there would have to be an account of Incarnation, Jesus’ life, and most importantly, of Resurrection. However, for our purposes, it allows us to partially answer the question of “how is knowledge mediated in and from God?” That question will be more fully answered in the next chapter, for it is functionally equivalent to the truth-problem.

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\(^{197}\) Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. (Jn. 14:9)

Chapter Five

Eucharist

Introduction

We will begin our examination with a review of the argument thus far, culminating in an examination of Eucharist and Truth. These final comments must, necessarily, be incomplete as they offer only the possibility of supernatural mediation, rather than the clean guarantee of Eucharistic mediation. Rather, they offer a possibility, a trajectory, and a way of understanding Eucharist. In its most formal sense, we can say that Eucharist is the reversal of the apokalyptik-alethia; it’s the eucharistein of the logia-alethia. It is the meeting place of two truths: the received and the given, which are one in Eucharist. It is the sacramental touchpoint of humanity and divinity.

That formality can be boiled down to something clearer: Eucharist is the ground of faith, i.e. Christ qua Truth. That Christ becomes present in the host through the act of consecration which is ultimately a hermeneutic process, first of the Holy Spirit, and secondly, of the recipient, such that the interpretation is doubly stable qua revelation.

§5.1.1 Taxonomy of Revelation

Here, it is fitting to review the taxonomy which will help us through this final section. Logos is the Divine Utterance of the Father, and the eternal God-world relationship. As we have developed, the Logos, through kenesis becomes the Incarnate Mediator, capable of granting the alethia-event and alethia-encounter to finite beings. Apokalypsis, therefore, can now be understood as the content of the Utterance, while alethia and apologia are its reception into the person (logia).
Even as content, *apokalypsis* faces a difficulty, viz., that the greater content of Truth is its own content (*alethia*). Because there is no prophecy (*apokalypsis-event*) proper of the Eucharist, it seems the least important here. The distinction between *apokalypsis-event* (prophecy) and *apokalypsis-encounter* (*erfüllung*), however, preserves it from irrelevance. Because fulfillment (*erfüllung*) is one of the criteria we use, then the *apokalypsis-encounter*, already prefigured in the Church and the preface of the Eucharistic prayer is precisely such an encounter (§2.2.1).

§5.1.2 Church

The first two chapters developed an account of the Church, which is best summarized by saying it is the communal protection of Truth’s *anamnesis*. However, that Church is first grounded in the community’s *alethia*-encounter of their truth to which they witness. That *alethia*-encounter is already–always divine (graced) through the Logos who undergirds all truth. Thus, Truth is the beginning and the end of the world, its alpha and omega.

Since Word is the end of the World, we may say the Eucharist is the End of the Liturgy, which is given particularly in the *anamnesis* of the saints in the *Infra Actionem* of the Eucharistic Prayer (§ 2.2.5). The Church understands the Eucharist as the sacrament “towards which all others aim,”199 and thus affirms the Eucharist as the divine Utterance, the “font” of revelation.200

The Eucharist is the charge of the Church. The Church must guard the Eucharist, since it is Christ’s self-gift, and if they view Christ as the Truth, then the community and

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199 CCC § 1324
200 Lumen Gentium §11
Church must guard them all. If Eucharist is the charge of the Church, the identity-
forming end of Her liturgy, then we must remember were that memory is aimed, viz., at
Christ.

§5.1.3 Christology

Both Trinity and Atonement have critical roles in developing the Eucharist, hence
their extensive consideration in the previous chapter. Trinity stabilized the hermeneutic
God and yet opened up the space for understanding how we come to see divine things.
Atonement, on the other hand, developed a way of understanding the epistemic/noetic
way in which knowledge comes to play in the divine (and thus, implicitly, in the finite
realm).

More precisely, Trinity helped us develop a language of disclosure to which
Christ could answer in the Atonement section. Because Christ is the disclosure
(Word/Utterance) of the Father, He is Uttered to some end. The Holy Spirit and the
Pauline witness to the Father as the “the image of the invisible God,” allow interpretation
of this utterance’s plenitude.201

Atonement deals with the way Christ comes to reinterpret our own reality, viz.,
that of sin. Christ’s divinity and humanity allow Him not only to reinterpret the world
with the Father, but also to be reinterpreted vis-à-vis his humanity by the Holy Spirit. The
dual space of interpretation therefore allows Christ to recapitulate and redefine the
humanity qua incarnate Logos and the alethia of humanity.

201 Col 1:15
Eucharist is the Truth of Christ, made present under the species of bread and wine. It likewise carries re-interpretive power, but like Christ, must be interpreted by the community as such. That is not to say that the Eucharist is not Eucharist absent the community, but rather, the community only truly receives Eucharist in understanding it as such.

Eucharist is the Final Banquet, the perfect participation in Truth, for it allows us to “pass over to the heavenly realities here foreshadowed.”\textsuperscript{202} The eschata are “dialogues’ between free and relationally defining beings, each geworfen into relationship with the other” (§1.5). The dialogic understanding is developed through the discussion of Christ, such that the “dialogue” is between created and Creator, Who has already-always geworfen Himself into relationship with the world through the Logos.

\textbf{§5.2 Transalethiation of Eucharist}

\textbf{§5.2.1 Trent}

With §5.3, this forms my account of Transubstantiation, or the Eucharist’s core Truth. While lavish praise and requirements have been placed on the theology of the Eucharist, Trent’s first and Eucharistic canons are the most important.\textsuperscript{203} The first declares that the Eucharist is “truly, really, and substantially,” the Body and Blood of Jesus.\textsuperscript{204}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{202} Cole and Chojnicki, \textit{Daily Roman Missal}, 751.(no.61)}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{203} Summarized briefly at CCC §1376}
\end{footnotes}
§5.2.2 Real, True, and Substantial Presence.

Because the Holy Spirit as God, “living and true,” consecrates the host She interprets the Eucharist Truly, i.e. correctly. However, since God is the measure of righteousness, understood as rectitude, then the Eucharist must be interpreted as divine.

Real understanding necessarily follows from the Holy Spirit’s perfect interpretation of the Host as Christ. Interpretation then, gives to the individual a real understanding, which is grounded in the Truth which is rightly understood and thus had as present. Real understanding refers to the total understanding of the Host, communal, individual, and divine, but particularly to the communal interpretation. Such an interpretation, as outlined in chapters two and three, is what gives meaning (logia) to the community’s view of Truth, such that it can be true (a-lethia).

True Understanding, therefore refers to the way in which one comes to understand the Eucharist. Thus, when sin perverts and changes the will and knowledge of the individual, it is less likely that they will understand the Eucharist rightly. Hence the Church’s teaching on Eucharistic participation, i.e. that those in mortal sin may not partake.

Substantial Understanding, can be understood as the traditional way, with, however, the caveat that one recognizes the Truth as constitutive of that entire understanding. The distinction between true and substantial understanding consists in this: true understanding refers to the recipient’s understanding, where substantial

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205 Cole and Chojnicki, *Daily Roman Missal*, 769. (no.85)
206 The category of “understanding” is worth elaborating; space, however, does not permit it.
understanding refers to the result of the divine reinterpretation, i.e. how God sees the Host.

In sum then, transalethiation requires us to see the Holy Spirit’s action as a sign of the real change of bread, which we interpret as such. We cannot affirm that our interpretation signifies the real work of the Holy Spirit, since that would be tantamount to saying that the sign of the bread changes without the action of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{207}

\textbf{§5.3 Paul VI and Trent}

This section should properly not be split from the above section, since it frames the concern of the whole. However, I divide it for a few reasons. First, dogmatically, Paul VI’s objection would only confuse the presentation of my understanding which I must defend against his charge. Secondly, I introduce this after my presentation in order to clarify the lingering dogmatic questions which could not be used to ground my own interpretation, yet remain important if I am to remain within the tradition explored throughout the rest of this work (esp. §3).

\textbf{§5.3.1 Mysterium Fidei}

Here I must pause briefly and take up the looming charge expressed by Paul VI in \textit{Mysterium Fidei} (1965):

\begin{quote}
[I]t is not permissible … to concentrate on the notion of sacramental sign as if the symbolism…fully expressed and exhausted the manner of Christ’s presence in [the Eucharist]; or to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning what the Council of Trent had to say about the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the
\end{quote}

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{207} How the liturgy is constitutive of transalethiation will not be discussed here; suffice it to say that the liturgy and the community is just as constitutive of Eucharist as they were of the \textit{anamnesis} of Christ.
\end{footnote}
Blood of Christ, as if they involve nothing more than "transignification," or "transfinalization" as they call it;\(^\text{208}\)

The “marvelous conversion” that forms the central focus for the pontiff’s objection, therefore, needs situated in our discussion.\(^\text{209}\) It comes from the second Eucharistic canon of Trent.\(^\text{210}\) The term “conversion” seems bound to substance metaphysics in this context. Therefore in answering Paul VI’s objection, we must first demonstrate how our theory is a “marvelous conversion” before answering the other two charges.

**§5.3.2 A Response**

Transalethiation is a “marvelous conversion” in a different sense than which comes hermeneutically, rather than substantially. There is no less wonder in the Eucharist than in the Petrine confession, where “…flesh and blood has not revealed this….”\(^\text{211}\) From the Petrine analogy then, we can say that the Eucharist is fully “source” of revelation, and therefore equally in need of right interpretation from the human side.\(^\text{212}\)

The idea that revelation requires hermeneutics, especially for the Eucharist, strengthens the two principal charges, viz., first, the impermissibility of not talking about Trent, and secondly, treating the symbol as exhaustive. The above paragraph offers the start of a defense against the latter, but let us set it aside in favor of dealing with the easier charge.

\(^{208}\) *Mysterium Fidei*, §11.

\(^{209}\) D. 1652

\(^{210}\) D. 1651

\(^{211}\) Mt. 16:17

\(^{212}\) *Lumen Gentium* §11
We have had a discussion of Trent, and I have even modeled my own presentation after the Tridentine model (§5.2). I have perhaps rejected the substance metaphysics undergirding Trent, a point that is unclear; however, I have not left the interpretation of the Eucharist purely subjective as a sign might be.213 Rather, I have grounded the reality of the Host in God, the Interpretation in Christ and the Eucharist, and vouchsafe the Church’s proper interpretation through the Trinitarian duty of the Holy Spirit.

The second charge requires greater nuance to answer from the taxonomy we’ve established. How we answered the charge of not having a “marvelous conversion” strengthens this charge, especially in the handling of subjectivity. As we elaborated in Chapters Two and Three, the liturgical center of the Church is where truth is made present. Christ is already present there, yet because of the local character of the Eucharist, we must go one step further. By making the sign of the host present, all of nature is localized. The pontiff objects if we simply say here that the sign of the host becomes a sign of the True Host. So we must go further. It seems sufficient to say that the Eucharist is a symbol of faith, in the double sense. However, this alone is still insufficient.

Rather than being present as Truth, Christ must truly be present as Truth and the True. This distinction seems arbitrary, yet we must recall the difference between “appearing” (erscheinen) and “seeming” (so ausscheinen) developed above. If Christ merely seems to be present we have fled to a Gnostic or Docetist Christology. Instead, He must truly appear, as He once did to Thomas: as incarnate.

213 An examination of whether this is situatable within Thomistic metaphysics is a further avenue for research.
We may approach this by distinguishing between perfect and imperfect presence. The case of symbolic participation of the host pre-consecration would exemplify and imperfect presence. Because it does not yet “make present what it promises,” it is a memorial feast, but not a participation in the Truth.\textsuperscript{214} In contrast, perfect presence envelops all the attributes of the truth under question. Rather than signifying or symbolizing them, it \textit{is} there.

The in-carnality of Truth therefore is a “spiritual and acceptable” presence, which does not deny its reality.\textsuperscript{215} Rather, it is bound up with the Holy Spirit which binds community, liturgy, and Church to Christ via the sacraments. In this case the Truth appears (\textit{erscheint}) rather than merely seeming (\textit{als Schein auszuscheinen}) due to the interpretive function of the Holy Spirit.

Truth is not usually considered to be localized, but our liturgical reflections suggest that certain truths come to be (\textit{erscheinen}) in community, and in the way which they interact with each other to build up to the communal truth. The culmination of the Liturgy of the Word, the homily, meets the culmination of the Liturgy of the Eucharist – transubstantiation and theophagy – as the communal recognition of their truths as part of the Body of Christ, which is the universal truth.

\textbf{§5.4 Conclusion}

Here, the truth-problem steps into the light again, worthy of its final answer. As we said then (§1.2.I.a), it seems that the divine can have nothing to do with the human. Yet as Christ, the Eucharist is also human and capable of bridging the gap. Although by

\textsuperscript{214} Cf. CCC §1364
\textsuperscript{215} Cole and Chojnicki, \textit{Daily Roman Missal}, 773. (no.88).
al-Farabi’s criteria this is not the “best kind of truth,” its historic character means that we cannot grant it an ontological certainty (§3.3.1). Rather, the sempiternal existence of God grounds each moment of Eucharist and Christ in pure Being such that it is always properly oriented to God, Who is stable Truth (§4.1.1.2.2.1).

More fully, it might be said that the relationship of Man and God to the Truth of the *Logos* is eternally True, since the *Logos* is the sempiternal God-world relationship. The sempiternal relationship is a free one which offers the response of Truth to be or not to be true (*alethia*) to the individual (who has or does not have an *apologia*-response to the *alethia*-event).

We have in total opened up a few realms for further research. Does Truth need further stabilization after the failure of the certainty version of the truth-problem? Can Christ be further established as Truth, particularly on a non-communitarian model of Church?

Perhaps most fructifying would be a comparison of this version of an answer to the truth-problem and a Buddhist approach (which I labeled as reductionist; §1.3) Revelation is a concept foreign to Buddhist thought. The lack of revelatory thought puts the taxonomy to the test, to see if it truly is the best one, or whether it was somehow capable only of dealing with Christian truths. In sum, it seems we have established the possibility of a Mediator of Truth, not only for today, but for all time. Hence, my friend, do we confess that “[He] is… the Truth.”

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216 “Through Him all things were made” CCC p.56
217 Jn 14:6


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