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## MULTICULTURALISM, SCIENCE AND THE EUCHARIST (Same Essential Truth, Different Packaging)

In the RCIA process, the local parish team attempts to explain all the essential truths of the Catholic faith in the best possible way to each catechumen. In our very multi-cultural parish of at least eight language groups and a variety of national origins, this includes phrasing these spiritual ideas in terms understandable within each person's culture. It is an ancient approach, as old as the three synoptic gospels themselves, which were each written with an outreach or sympathy toward people of different cultures.<sup>1</sup> The message of the Messiah was not changed, but its flavor or "packaging" was different for the Jews or the Romans or the Greeks.

From the fact that there are also different liturgical rites in the church--which emerged from the apostles' interaction with different cultures--it seems likely that this "theological packaging" of the essential truths of the faith continued through the ages and continues still today. This parallels the different way we explain things to children than we do to adults. Likewise, we adapt to the different "flavors" which explanations (and art forms) take in various parts of the world so that the real meaning can get through not just to the catechumens' minds but to their hearts and souls as well. Even in "non-mission" lands, this effort is the missionary work of the Holy Spirit at its truest and best.<sup>2</sup>

Recently it has become more and more recognized<sup>3</sup> and accepted that in our present world the scientific community is also a developing sub-culture--as unique (and different) as the Roman culture was to the Greek or Jewish culture in the ancient world. This scientific subculture can be seen not as a replacement for but as a complimentary outlook to the more sociological and literary flavor of our contemporary consumer society. This complementarity might be described as the contrast between the criminologist who delights in deciphering the anatomy of a crime and the sociologist who resonates with the hurt in the victims. Society needs both skills, even though these co-workers might have trouble understanding or even talking to each other.

Unfortunately, a distressing fact has emerged from ongoing studies of the extent to which scientific culture is or is not integrated with non-scientific culture:<sup>4</sup> each group sincerely--but incorrectly--believes it is communicating with the other group. In fact, the attitudes, nuances and real meaning of many paragraphs and even of some words themselves are significantly different in each sub-culture. Neither is "right" or "wrong", but is subtly different. However, if we want to reach the inner depths of catechumens who flourish in a scientific milieu, then we have to cross that barrier and let the faith be expressible in each ambient. If we want the faith to "move" people to conversion, and to a commitment of the whole self to Christ, is it not incumbent on us to be open to--indeed to even search for--a variety of ways of expressing that faith?

**What is the difference in explanation?** The real difference is in what is seen as constituting "reality". At the risk of assigning labels that might seem inadequate, allow

me to call the general, non-scientific approach to reality "societal", and the approach taken by laboratory scientists like chemists, biologists, physicists, geologists, most engineers, many physicians and other medical personnel and even lots of construction workers and other tradesmen as "clinical". Whereas a societal approach or philosophy would see reality represented by opinion polls and politics, a clinical approach would look for verification of a proposition by experiment and hard data. A societal sense of "wonder" would be enhanced by an aura of mystery; whereas a clinical view would feel that wonder becomes more profound with deeper knowledge.<sup>5</sup> From a societal outlook, perception is reality, and reality is a swirl of events that we are rarely if ever sure of. A *symbol*, like a wedding ring or the flag, is a meaning giver: a foundation stone in that whirling reality. From a clinical outlook, reality here is absolute and true, but incomplete. It is also measurable, and it is consistent from person to person. Symbols are merely signs, like road signs, that just help us limited creatures sort out that immense quantity of data that leads to ever more certain and complete understandings of the consistent and true reality in and around us. Hence the phrase from St. Paul "now we see as through a glass darkly, then we shall see face to face"<sup>6</sup> is equally true in both sub-cultures, but means something significantly different in each.

In the Middle Ages, these two approaches to reality would have had names that seem strange to us today. The societal approach would have been called "analogical" and formed the underlying basis of Saint Thomas Aquinas' great theological treatises. Yet it held that we cannot really know ultimate reality as it exists as coming from the mind of God because our capacity to understand is too small. The clinical approach would have been termed "univocal" and formed the basis of Blessed John Duns Scotus' great theological works (which included the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception). It believed that even though God is infinite and we are very limited, the same sense of "reality" exists in God, in things and in us. Moreover, because we are made in the image and likeness of God<sup>7</sup> and because the divine and the human (material) could interact so harmoniously as to be compatible within one person (Jesus Christ),<sup>8</sup> there had to be a single or common sense of reality. Both of these philosophies supported the ongoing deepening of theological insight expressed in the great ecumenical councils of Florence, Trent, Vatican I & II--as well as the multitude of papal encyclicals. Yet each looked at the explanations of these wonderful theological doctrines in their own way without realizing that others might be looking from a different philosophical perspective. That same phenomenon, an unnoticed divergence of perspectives, happens still today and can stop a conversion process dead. For if we want to reach the heart and soul of those catechumens who come from a clinical background, it is crucial that we make an entrance possible from a *univocal* perspective without requiring them to become *analogical*.

**"How" we do this** In every scientist's innermost soul, the "how" and the "what" of every happening are intimately related. To ask a scientist to look at a grandfather clock, for example, and not wonder how the gears and springs work to tell time--but just accept the result--is to ask him to step out of his "clinical" culture, to deny part of his personal character. He does not need to know how the clock works completely,<sup>9</sup> but he is still allowed to ask about it. Likewise, anyone from a "clinical" perspective has to be allowed to ask "how" about any church doctrine.

The legitimacy of asking "how" something theological happens does not imply that we have to have an answer. It is perfectly OK to tell a scientist "I don't know how this works, but I do know that it does work--and here is the evidence..." However, over the centuries we have come up with many helpful theological explanations of sacred events. To deny someone access to these kinds of explanations, to imply even in devotional books<sup>10</sup> that it is wrong to ask *how* or that one should "just take it on faith" without offering the supports or "stepping stones" that have become available over the centuries, is withholding spiritual food from someone spiritually hungry. Does not Christ expect us<sup>11</sup> to do the opposite? Let us examine how this applies throughout the discipline of theology, and in particular to helping catechumens understand the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

**Application to Sacred Scripture** The excellent efforts in the past several decades that have applied the principles of literary criticism to the texts of the Old and New Testaments are a joy to both the societal perspective and the clinical. Yet, unless the theological packaging is done with some sensitivity, the terminology used to describe this new approach can be unnecessarily threatening. For example, though clinical people are generally delighted with the precision involved in the examination of word and textual histories, and though concepts like literary genre and context or "*sitz im leben*" spark their interest, the word "myth" upsets them immeasurably.

From a societal perspective using the term "*de-myth-ologize*" about scripture is OK, because it most often means removing a fundamentalistic or superstitious approach to a word or passage. To point out similarities with other scriptural passages (and with non-biblical texts), to see the human flavor in the progression of passages along with the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in short, to ground the texts in a community *mythos*--to put them in their time and place--is to "demythologize" (originally termed "re-mythologize") the sacred scriptures.<sup>12</sup> It adds human depth and texture and richness. In a sense, it keeps the feeling of "awe" but puts it in the right place. This is good, but cannot be conveyed to scientists and technicians.

From a clinical perspective, the word "myth" cannot be separated from the idea of untruth. These two ideas are so closely linked in the entire scientific sub-culture that the association is unbreakable. Hence, to avoid an unnecessary trap, instead of packaging textual criticism as *demythologizing*, one can easily describe the very same effort as "breaking the code" in which Scripture was written. It is easy to point out to scientists that the sacred texts are indeed highly encoded, that they are not the same as newspaper stories. Ancient writers had to condense as much as possible onto the limited materials available, much like computer "zip" programs do. By next revealing the tools (literary genre, contexts, archeological dating, etc.) available to break open the code to get to the various levels of revelation and meaning, one would grab any scientist's attention and spark a natural curiosity and interest. *Demythologizing* and *Breaking the Code* convey the same essential idea to the two different sub cultures; but the outward theological packaging is critical to reducing unnecessary hurdles in the RCIA program.

**Application to Christology** Though getting to know the person, Jesus Christ, is essential to the RCIA process, it has never been easy. Even in divinity schools, students struggle with trying to organize and understand the immense amount of data in the Gospels about Jesus. In many divinity school courses on Christology the approach taken is the same as that commonly used both by the media and the legal professions: that "perception is reality." Students are introduced to Christ by describing the perception others had of him, revealed through the titles they used like "Son of Man" or "Son of God" or Isaiah's "Suffering Servant." This is akin to the political consensus or opinion polls important to the societal outlook; but it does little to open doors for Christ to enter into either the minds or hearts of clinical people. For them, perception is not automatically reality. They want hard facts and raw data, not someone else's opinion of who Christ was to them.

Fortunately, this data is abundantly available. The arguments against the Docetists<sup>13</sup> give excellent data establishing the human personhood of Christ. Similarly, the evidence put forth against the Arians<sup>14</sup> can demonstrate the reasonableness of believing that Christ is divine. When added to scientific data like that available on the Shroud of Turin,<sup>15</sup> the evidence for Christ's divinity is compelling. Providing that kind of info (at least to those who might want it) allows Jesus Christ--true God and true man--to speak directly to clinical people in the language of their hearts. Only after that will the fact that the apostles and many other early Christians gladly went to torturous deaths rather than deny that Savior move them to want to make a similar commitment.

**Application to the Sacraments** Though other Christian communities share with Catholics a devotion both to the person of Jesus Christ and to Sacred Scripture, the seven sacraments as particular actions that connect one with Christ are the core of Catholic spiritual life and the ordinary avenue of grace. At least from the time of Archbishop of Paris Peter Lombard<sup>16</sup> (1100's) and down to the Baltimore Catechism (1800's & 1900's), sacraments have been described as (1) outward signs (2) instituted by Christ (3) to give the grace (4) that they signify. It is only natural for clinical people to ask how such a process works.

Moreover, for those in the RCIA program sacraments are also an immediate upcoming reality, rather than just an interesting past fact. Hence, even those coming from a societal perspective often ask how sacraments work: what really happens. Therefore, if one fails to offer at least some kind of an explanation of the functioning and the effects of the sacraments, the RCIA candidate is left with so mysterious an approach to these sacraments that they sound like magic.

To counteract that temptation to view sacraments as mysterious magical events, societal explanations have centered on how the outward sign (the obvious community event) opens one toward an encounter with Christ.<sup>17</sup> The better or more true the experience, the deeper the sign's meaning will penetrate, and the more fully the ritual actions will involve the whole person. Hence, the deeper will be the encounter with that marvelous Savior who brings His grace into--and makes a divine connection to--our essential human actions: birth (baptism), adulthood (confirmation), death (anointing),

healing (reconciliation), nourishment (Eucharist), and community (marriage and holy orders). Therefore, how well or intensely one "celebrates" each sacrament is immensely important to the societal outlook.<sup>18</sup> Sadly, because we humans easily get bored, the continual search for ever deeper meaning can lead to constantly seeking for new approaches (or a new gimmick) to exemplify some new insight about the same sacrament year after year.

The clinical perspective, on the other hand, avoids slipping into a magical approach not by enhancing an experience but by examining very precisely the way humans are made at the biological/instinctive level. They interface this understanding with an examination of how God's grace interacts with that structure of our human nature--in Christ. And it is through our connection to Christ, ritually, that this grace then "naturally" connects with us. This explanation reveals enough about how sacraments work that magical explanations give way to a "natural" type of connection: an integration of grace with nature.

Here's how it works: The clinical approach accents grace as God's very own life. The Incarnation connected the essence of human nature with the very source of grace: the divine nature in Jesus Christ. He chose critical times in human life (the essential human actions mentioned above) as passage points or positions of harmony where the divine and human are "in line" to interact--much as tumblers in a lock or gears in a transmission synchronize together naturally at certain pivotal points. Christ took these critical human experiences and gave us ritual actions that bridge from the instinctive depths of human nature all the way into Him (and thus into eternity) by "shaping" the soul in conformity with that instinctive longing or need. This was called "imparting a character." Baptism, for example, is a 'birth-like' action and opens the soul to eternal life: gives it a new or second birth. Confirmation is the equivalent of Pentecost: the transformation by the Holy Spirit of the recipients from frightened children into courageous adult proclaimers of God's kingdom. These particular characters on the soul are permanent (one cannot become unbaptized or unconfirmed, etc.); whereas one who has been healed and cleansed by Confession could get soiled again by sinning, or one who was nourished by Communion gets spiritually hungry again.

The way that a person's soul is shaped involves the essence of what constitutes a truly human act. The mind understands what is happening and what is at stake. The will freely chooses to invest the whole self in an action. And the body undergoes the results of this commitment. However, these sacramental rituals instinctively involve the mind, will and body all together as one act of entering into Christ who is lifegiver (baptism), healer (confession or anointing), nourisher (communion), and community maker (confirmation, marriage and holy orders). In doing these rituals (that Christ designed), one has all the right parts for human actions that reach into the instinctive depths of human nature and "shape the soul" into conformity with Christ's human & divine natures. This is an entering into Christ (who as both human and divine is exactly that connector to God) rather than an entering into any kind of magical action with (supposed) power in itself. This is how they work on the deepest human level, even if the ceremony itself sometimes happens to be uninspiring.

In short, the expression of what makes sacraments "valid" or true and effective will be different for the clinical and the societal outlooks. How one assembles the essential components that have roots in the instinctive structure of human nature so as to shape the soul (impart a character) which will open it to Christ in a particular way will be what clinical people look for; whereas how one celebrates sacramental rituals "well" (gets into the meaning or "feel" of them) will be a greater concern of those of the societal outlook. When these two actions work together, the effect of the sacraments is especially powerful.

However, perceiving the effects of grace is not automatic. Theologians agree that people require "a hermeneutic to translate the world of liturgical and religious symbols into the language of people of all walks of life."<sup>19</sup> To expose someone from the societal perspective--and even worse someone from the clinical perspective--only to the "experience" or the "celebration" of the sacraments, without offering at least some explanation of the divine-human connection at work at the instinctive level, will leave both groups (and clinical people especially) with a nebulous and unsatisfying sense of what sacraments are. The right packaging needs to be there to help them avoid the temptation of slipping back into the trap of viewing sacraments as magic.

**Application to the Eucharistic Sacrifice:** Many who look at the Catholic Church from the outside, especially from the scientific sub-culture, find the idea of actually worshipping as God the Eucharist on the altar intimidating. Nor does the present very cooperative ecumenical atmosphere help either. There is the temptation, even among long-time Catholics, to assume that all these good religions that we are working so intimately with are so much alike in so many areas that their understanding of "communion" must also be the same. Sadly, many faithful Catholics have unintentionally diluted the reality of this unique sacrament to little more than what other Christians believe their "communion" to be. Polls from a variety of theological perspectives in various publications have claimed that this is already the case.<sup>20</sup> Without some kind of adequate explanation, prospective Catholics (especially those coming from a clinical outlook) are often torn between this kind of minimalism--or magic. We owe them an adequate explanation to help them across the threshold of belief.

Although sacraments are real human experiences that allow us to touch the divine, and although the Holy Eucharist is also an experience (of sitting at the Last Supper and standing beneath the cross) that touches the divine, it is really a divine experience that we merely share in, not a human one. The uniqueness is that this is more than a sacrament; it is a divine sacrifice involving some human actions. Though people consume the communion materials, the sacrifice is more than human because of the divine priest and the divine victim.

The divine **priest** is Jesus Christ himself who offers every mass using the human priest as his tool or instrument. This is why valid ordination from a validly ordained (consecrated) bishop whose lineage extends unbroken all the way back to the apostles is essential. A local human community does not decide on its own initiative whomever it wants to constitute as a priest. The universal church does this, because it is Christ's body who "picks up this tool." Moreover, members of the local community simply cannot consecrate the Holy Eucharist by their own efforts, not even with "three deacons who try

really hard." The real and only priest is Jesus Christ, who needs the "tool" he himself has designed to bring his sacrifice out of ancient Jerusalem, through Himself as He moved from time into eternity on the cross, and through the "instrumental action of the priest" into this contemporary place and time.

The **victim**, however, also is Jesus Christ. But the victim is what is destroyed (consumed) in the sacrifice, so a *real* Christ has to be *really* consumed. Since he told us in unmistakable terms to eat his flesh and drink his blood, for his flesh is real food and his blood real drink,<sup>21</sup> what we consume (destroy, sacrifice) in the mass has to be his real flesh--not just a representation or symbol of him.<sup>22</sup> Both the societal and clinical outlooks affirm this wholeheartedly. Eucharistic spirituality is centered in this vivid reality.

Yet because the victim still appears to be bread and wine when it is destroyed/consumed, two nagging questions occur to prospective believers: How do we know that this truly is Jesus Christ, and how does it happen? Only if we give some answer to these questions can a true understanding of the Eucharist and a satisfying spirituality develop in believers immersed in the present technological milieu.

**How do we know this truly is Jesus Christ's body and blood?** It is often objected that one knows that the bread and wine are (or were) present because anyone can see and touch and smell and taste them, but that one cannot do the same for the *Body and Blood of Christ*. Not so. We see light waves; we feel, touch, smell and taste molecules and energy packets. From all these impressions we deduce the presence of bread and wine for very good reasons. Machines can help with the detection of these molecules and energy/light packets, but--acting alone--they cannot deduce the presence of "bread" or "wine". Machines work on a tiny or "sub-level" of detection, lower than the level of comprehension at which the entities "bread" or "wine" truly exist. Yet using human experience and comprehension, we have very good "solid" reasons for believing that bread and wine, not just starch or ethanol molecules, really are there.

The same process should apply equally well to determining whether Jesus Christ's Body and Blood are present. Yet, just as the determination of whether someone is "civilized" requires a different kind of data set than simply determining whether that person is merely alive; so the sets of data to be analyzed here (for divinity) will be more than packets of light waves or the imprint of small groups of molecules on one's taste buds or olfactory nerves. But the data are just as real and the process of analysis is the same.

So how do clinical people know that this physical presence of Christ really is there--in more than just the symbolic way described in the opinion polls? They have two historical reasons and two experimental reasons to found that belief in true reality. Both the societal approach and the clinical approach treasure the **Real Words** of Christ in sacred scripture as being powerfully effective. This is the argument from the authority of revelation itself. Strictly speaking, do not the scriptures really talk of "chewing" the body of Christ<sup>23</sup> and drinking His blood? This graphic vividness, when applied to the words of institution at the Last Supper, emphasizes the reality of the physical presence of Jesus there. Moreover, within the biblical tradition of words having extraordinary power,<sup>24</sup> the very "Word" of God was understood as so effective that reality conformed immediately:

"Then God said, 'Let there be light! And there was light.'<sup>25</sup> Jesus clearly had such power over everything from demons & diseases,<sup>26</sup> to water and storms,<sup>27</sup> and food and drink;<sup>28</sup> so his transforming of bread and wine into his Body and Blood was and is clearly within his power.

The other historical data set that scientists and non-scientists alike accept is the **Real Effects** the Eucharist had in the lives of those who consume it.<sup>29</sup> One should notice an increase in holiness of action in individuals and groups who partake of communion often. This has been true from the time of the apostles down to the present day--and is particularly evident in the *longing* that various saints had for the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to the influence inside a person, is not the Holy Eucharist a powerful external instrument that drives away evil spirits from places, things and even people?<sup>30</sup> Though historical rather than experimental, this is still data that scientists and non-scientists alike can and do legitimately accept.

The first experimental reason is the data set of the many Eucharistic miracles.<sup>31</sup> These **Real Events** include hosts that bleed, remain suspended in air or unharmed during fires, move animals to adore it, give off light, or disappear from the tongue of a mystic while people watched.<sup>32</sup> Particularly noteworthy are the miracles that were requested as proofs by those who challenged the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, such as the miracle of St. Anthony of Padua and the Donkey.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, spectacular miracles cannot be reproduced at will just to satisfy someone's interest; but, though they are not immediately available on call, they are still concrete, external data that are undeniably true.

However, there is a personal perception of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist that is readily available. This **Real Experience** is the second experimental reason for believing in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. In short, it is possible, using the human soul as the proper analytical instrument, to perceive the presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated host or wine. The analogical outlook or Tomistic tradition calls this using the spiritual eye;<sup>34</sup> the univocal outlook considers it the natural congruity between image and source.

Saint Thomas Aquinas describes building up this spiritual eye through prayer and study--even though the spiritual eye leads only to an analogical understanding of divinity, not a true perception.<sup>35</sup> The univocal (or clinical) outlook employs the instinctive or intuitive powers of the human soul to actually recognize the presence of the divine. Though studies at Duke University for the past 30 years and in research labs in southern California have experimentally demonstrated such instinctive human powers,<sup>36</sup> Christian mystics and other faithful (from St. Theresa of Avila<sup>37</sup> to Rev. Andrew Greeley<sup>38</sup>) have used such powers for centuries to recognize the Blessed Eucharist even when it has been hidden. This tradition suggests that with practice we all should be able to do so at least to some extent.

Contemporary studies in psychology and spirituality agree.<sup>39</sup> Dr. Abraham Maslow describes "peak" experiences that we all have where the clouds seem to part and we can see (at least a portion of) our lives very clearly.<sup>40</sup> Rev. Bernard Lonergan, SJ, roots this deeply in clinical society by describing this as the essential way all sciences naturally develop and progress.<sup>41</sup> Who has never felt the sensation of being "moved" or



“awed” by some experience which put each of us in touch with a deeper reality that we don’t ordinarily see? Who has never had an intuitive or “gut” feeling either that “something is just not right here” or that finally “things have all come together?” This is the same “natural” human power we used as children in a darkened room to know whether our parents were in that room with us, even though we could neither see nor hear them.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, although one may not be able to pick out of a group of hosts the one that may have been consecrated, through ongoing prayer and developing a spiritual longing<sup>43</sup> one should be able to notice the presence (at least at times) of God when one walks into a church. In using these powers to detect God’s presence, it is the image of God in us responding to the divine source--just as it did in the disciples on the road to Emmaus.<sup>44</sup>

In short, from the evidence available, it is just as legitimate to deduce that Jesus Christ’s body and blood are truly present on the altar as it is to determine that bread and wine are there.

**How does this come about?** is the question naturally asked once the deep and true Real Presence of Jesus Christ is clear. In terms of the specific ritual functionality, much was already described. Jesus himself is the real priest offering his same sacrifice as at the Last Supper and as on the cross.<sup>45</sup> Yet the human instrumental priest (the celebrant) not only has to be directly connected to the hand of Christ (through valid ordination), but also is the instrument that produces the sacrificial victim. With the *power* of Christ, the priest calls down (epiklesis) the Holy Spirit to overshadow the bread and wine bringing Jesus Christ (who abides in infinity and eternity) into this point of space and time. In the *name* of Christ the priest pronounces the words of Institution: “This is my Body, this is my Blood”--thereby connecting Christ to that bread and wine. Because Christ is one, whole and entire, when the body and blood are consumed in a deliberately remembered sacrificial atmosphere (anamnesis), the destruction of the victim--the death on the cross--is made living here and now without being repeated.<sup>46</sup> Even the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1367) and recent commentators agree that “the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*.”<sup>47</sup> Christ so thoroughly takes over the bread and wine that their physical reality is what anchors him and his unique one-time-yet-eternal sacrifice to this specific time and place. This conversion endures until the materials are digested or destroyed: no longer bread and wine. This is not a co-existing or “consubstantiation” so much as it is a “transubstantiation”: a pulling of a substance across a threshold into a more profound reality.

From the evidence in nature it is possible for two essences or two substances to exist together at the same time and same place--where one goes to build up the other. Atoms don’t cease to be atoms when they are incorporated into molecules; molecules don’t lose their identity when they are part of biological systems; organs don’t cease to be what they are when part of individual living systems; humans don’t cease to be part of the animal kingdom (with all kinds of animal needs, like air or water) just because they can think or reason; etc. The greater reality, a sum greater than the totality of the parts, builds on and takes over the independent reality of the parts without destroying them. Likewise, by divine action the bread and wine, which are an essential component<sup>48</sup> of the Holy Eucharist, are joined by Christ to His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. These come out of eternity and infinity into the limited point of space and time the bread and wine occupy,

making them the immediate “surface” which allows direct physical contact with the divine presence of Christ. This connects us beyond our limited world but does so in a way consistent with the “greater encompassing the lesser” found throughout all of nature, and (as described in the early church<sup>49</sup>) parallel as well to the way the divine nature of Christ encompasses his human nature without destroying it.

**Transubstantiation’s real meaning in the Council of Trent:** Just because our contemporary ambient is highly technological does not mean that scientific questions or a clinical approach did not exist in previous centuries. Geometry predated the apostles, as did Archimedes and Aristotle. The Romans and the Byzantines were excellent engineers; and the gothic cathedrals soar to wondrous heights because of mathematics and physics, not magic. People of previous centuries struggled with the same data that we do: deducing from the “five senses” that bread and wine are there and deducing from a “sixth sense” that Jesus Christ is just as really there. History recounts challenges that varied from ancient accusations of cannibalism<sup>50</sup> to contemporary minimalism (just a new meaning being added).<sup>51</sup>

In the 1500’s the Council of Trent was called to battle against both Luther’s errors about justification (can any human action truly be holy, and hence can any material ‘thing’ contain something so holy?) and Calvin’s ideas like predestination and the symbolic nature of religious actions, including the “Lord’s Supper.” The theologians and bishops of that council chose the term “transubstantiation” to champion both the reality of Christ’s entering into contact with a material and making it holy (contra-Lutherans, Luther himself adored the Eucharist) and a connection that was radically greater than just a new symbolic meaning (contra-Calvin & Zwingli).

To make this very clear, the council fathers also chose a specific Latin wording (*negaveritque*) in the second canon of the section on the Eucharist to affirm that transformation in a way that would prevent dissenters from using the tangible presence of bread and wine as a pretext for denying that something much more than just a symbolic or “meaning” change took place. To be in violation of Trent’s canons, one had to both maintain that the substance of bread and wine remained and (*negaveritque*)<sup>52</sup> deny that “marvelous and singular conversion of the whole substance of bread into<sup>53</sup> the body of Christ...” etc.<sup>54</sup> Had Trent wanted to demand that one adhere to the Tomist or analogical position, that the bread and wine were destroyed in the transformation, they would have used other wording to make that intention precise. On the contrary, as the noted Dominican theologian E. Schillebeeckx, OP, relates in his book on the Eucharist: “The Council [Trent] stated in at least five different places that it only wished to make a stand against the Reformation and had no intention of settling scholastic disputes between Catholic theologians.”<sup>55</sup>

Sadly, later commentators have generally mistranslated the Latin “*negaveritque*” into “either-or” rather than “both-and” and the “*in corpus*” into a sense of destruction rather than incorporation. This is clearly contrary to the intention of the Council of Trent as described throughout this section of the ACTA, the daily log of the council’s discussion.<sup>56</sup> The mistranslation also contradicts the ongoing official church references, from the time of the apostles to the present day, to the Blessed Eucharist as bread and wine after its consecration into Jesus Christ. Various fathers and doctors of the church affirm this<sup>57</sup> and it is similarly so described after the consecration of the mass even today

in Eucharistic Prayers I, II and IV.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, according to the specific wording of the Council of Trent, verified by the daily notes in the ACTA of the council, and confirmed by the practice of the universal church, one can legitimately view the power of Christ at work in the holy sacrifice of the mass as so thoroughly overwhelming the bread and the wine that they become simply the surface connection in one tiny portion of time and space to the immense reality of the Body and Blood of the Son of God. From the evidence available, this is most precisely what “transubstantiation” truly means.

**A Timeless Eucharistic Spirituality for the Scientific Sub-culture:** Where does this leave the prospective catechumens who try to develop their own proper devotions to Jesus Christ in this most Blessed of Sacraments? If they are made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27) then the image should be congruent enough with the “source” that it could understand the source truly and naturally—perhaps not completely, but more than just analogically. From a true understanding, deeply experienced, comes deep and true awe. But also because most scientists are very graphically material, the real materiality of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ will connect with them intensely. It is natural for them when holding an acorn to know the oak tree it will become. So when they hold the consecrated host or the chalice to know that they hold the Redeemer of the universe in their own hands is overwhelmingly awesome. With their own natural skills they can sense His divine presence there—if they are given the right tools in the RCIA program.

With those proper tools (the evidence compiled over the centuries) a natural spirituality of “wonder in the presence of God” will develop in the same way scientific wonder has grown--time after time--in their hearts. It may look different than most societal style devotions, but it is the action of God in the hearts and souls of His beloved: cold, hard scientists who can split atoms, construct space shuttles and skyscrapers or transplant a kidney easily--but who are moved to tears as they kneel before the tabernacle--knowing full well Who calls to them from inside.

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<sup>1</sup> It is common knowledge that Matthew wrote for the Jews, particularly those of the diaspora and drew on messianic predictions or foreshadowings. Luke wrote in much more eloquent Greek to the philosophy-loving international Greek community; whereas Mark used the preaching of Peter to present a much more simple Greek account to the Romans, one filled with miracles and reasonably helpful Roman soldiers.

<sup>2</sup> See: “Decree on the media of Social Communications” # 15 (p. 104) and “Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church” # 1 (p. 461) # 7 (p. 468) and especially # 33 (p. 472) in The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II, NCWC translation, Daughters of St. Paul Pub., Boston (1968).

<sup>3</sup> Rudy Baum, "Science and the Nature of Awe", Chemical and Engineering News, June 4, 2001, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> An example is the rainbow. Some people feel that knowing how the rainbow is composed of light being refracted by droplets of moisture in the atmosphere lessens the awe they experience looking at the vibrant colors in the arch. Others find that knowing how this works makes it all the more delightfully remarkable and helps them know where to look to find the best place to view it and its secondary or even tertiary overtones and why those colors are inverted and different in hue. Both experience "awe" but each in a different way.

<sup>6</sup> I Cor 13:12.

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<sup>7</sup> Gen 1:27.

<sup>8</sup> Council of Calcedon, 451. Decree found in *Denzinger, "Enchiridion Symbolorum", Herder, Freiburg im Briesgau, 1946, D 148*; English Translation of decree by the Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, KS: "The Church Teaches" TAN Books, Rockford, IL, (1973).

<sup>9</sup> Most scientists or any others don't know how digital clocks work at all.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the July 10 devotion in *My Daily Eucharist* by Joan Carter McHugh, (Witness Ministries, Lake Forest, IL, 1995) quotes, Francis J. Connell, CSSR, *The Seven Sacraments*: New York, 1996, Paulist Press as "asking how" being the equivalent of denying the Real Presence: "Those who deny the doctrine of the Real Presence do indeed adduce numerous arguments ... [about] ... the difficulty of understanding *how* Our Lord's real body and blood can be simultaneously present in thousands of places imperceptible to human senses. ... Shall we twist His [Jesus'] assertions to suit our ideas just because our puny intellects cannot understand *how* the miracle of the Real Presence takes place?"

<sup>11</sup> Lk. 11:9 "ask and you shall receive, ..."; Mt. 18:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."; Acts 10:34ff "In truth I see that God shows no partiality. Rather in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to Him."

<sup>12</sup> More precisely, the idea is to connect the meaning of the *mythos* of the time of the passage to the *mythos* of today: "re-mythologizing" or "Entmythologisierung" as Rudolf Bultmann described in *Evangelisches Verlagswerk, GMBH, Stuttgart, (1949)*.

<sup>13</sup> Densinger, *op. cit.*, p. 148

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, ff.

<sup>15</sup> K. Stevenson & G. Habermas, *Verdict on the Shroud*, Servant Books, Ann Arbor, MI, (1981).

<sup>16</sup> Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, # 191-2, 4<sup>th</sup> Book of *Sentences*, distinctions VIII-XIII.

<sup>17</sup> E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, Sheed and Ward, London, (1963), p. 64ff.

<sup>18</sup> This is a widespread perspective, one example of which is Earnest Falardeau, SSS, in *Emmanuel*, V. 108, # 6, p. 343, July-August 2002, "...liturgical signs should not be minimal. We need 'big' signs..."

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>20</sup> For example, the position of the New Oxford Review: "And today, two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist--which isn't surprising, given that *how* we worship has a profound effect on *what* we believe about the meaning of the mass." As quoted in NewsMax.com, vol. 4, number 9, September, 2002, p. 79 (6).

<sup>21</sup> John 6:55.

<sup>22</sup> Council of Trent, Densinger, *op. cit.*, D 877, D 884.

<sup>23</sup> John 6:53-4.

<sup>24</sup> Sirach 42:15b, "At God's word his works were brought into being."

<sup>25</sup> Gen 1:3.

<sup>26</sup> Mt 8:1-4, 14-15, 28-34 and parallels.

<sup>27</sup> Mt 8:23-7, Mt 14:22-33 and parallels.

<sup>28</sup> Mt 15:32-8 and Jn 2:1-10.

<sup>29</sup> A. Butler, *The Lives of the Saints*, Benzinger Brothers, Inc., New York, 1878, new edition: 1955, p. 33ff.

<sup>30</sup> Attested as early as St. Ignatius of Antioch (ca 110 AD) cf. "Letter to the Ephesians" in Staniforth and Louth, ed., *Early Christian Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Hamondsworth: Penguin Books (1987), p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> Joan Carroll Cruz, ed., *Eucharistic Miracles*, TAN Books & Publications, Inc., Rockford, IL, 1987, [303 pages of verified miracles from 8<sup>th</sup> century Italy to Stich Germany in 1970].

<sup>32</sup> M. O'Carroll, CSSP, *Corpus Christi*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1988, "Miracles of the Eucharist", p. 139.

<sup>33</sup> Guyard, *Life of St. Anthony*, in A. Corblet, *Histoire du Sacrament de l'Eucharistie*, Paris, 1885.

<sup>34</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III Q76 a7.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> L. Bartlet, "What Do We Really Know About Psychic Experience", *Readers' Digest*, August, 1977, p. 82; L. Phine, *ESP in Life and Lab*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1967.

<sup>37</sup> Theresa of Avila, *The Book of Her Life*, translated by K. Kavanaugh and O. Rodriguez, OCD, ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1976.

<sup>38</sup> A. Greeley, *The Louisville Times*, Dec 7, 1978, page B1.

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- <sup>39</sup> M. Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence, Paulist Press, New York, (1976), p. 170; R. Moody, Life After Life, Bantam Books, Inc., New York, 1975, p. 170-5; J. J. Heaney, "Some Implications of Parapsychology for Theology", Theological Studies, 40:3 (Sept. 1979), p. 479.
- <sup>40</sup> A. Maslow, Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences, KAPPA DELTA PHI, The Viking Press, New York, (1964), p. 74 & 86.
- <sup>41</sup> Insight, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, (1957).
- <sup>42</sup> J. J. Heaney, *op. cit.*, p. 476.
- <sup>43</sup> M. Buber, I and Thou, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, (1937), p. 13.
- <sup>44</sup> Lk 24:32.
- <sup>45</sup> M. de la Taille, Mysterium Fidei, Paris, (1924), [English trans. London 1930] Elucidatio XXIII, p. 394.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> O. Cummings, "Eucharistic Sacraments V: The Eucharist", Emmanuel, Vol. 108, # 8, (Oct 02) p. 477.
- <sup>48</sup> If their identity as bread and wine were not of true importance, one could use other materials (beer and pretzels are nearly identical chemically) instead.
- <sup>49</sup> St. Theodoret of Cyrillus, Eranistes, Dial. #2, (c. 360 AD) Migne, *op.cit.*, PG 83:167.
- <sup>50</sup> Refuted by St. Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, also Apologia I 65-6 Migne, *op. cit.*, PG 6 # 428.
- <sup>51</sup> Berengarius of Tours to J. Calvin & U. Zwingli to contemporary "low church" Protestant sacramentology.
- <sup>52</sup> C. Bennett, New Latin Grammar, Allyn and Bacon, New York, (1958), # 341, p. 223.
- <sup>53</sup> "in" with the accusative implies movement, not necessarily destruction; *ibid.*, ff.
- <sup>54</sup> Densinger, *op. cit.*, # 884.
- <sup>55</sup> E. Schillebeeckx, OP, The Eucharist, Sheed and Ward, New York, (1968), p. 54.
- <sup>56</sup> Concilii Tridentini Acta, ed. Gorres Gesellschaft, pt. 7, p. 189.
- <sup>57</sup> St. John Damascene, Book IV De Fide Orth., c. 13, Migne, *op.cit.*, PG 94:1144, 1149; St. Theodoret of Cyrillus, Eranistes, Dial. #2, PG 83:167; St. Augustine, De Symbolo, PL 35:1614, and even St. Paul in I Cor. 11:27.
- <sup>58</sup> EP I: "the Bread of life"; EP II: "this life-giving bread"; EP IV: "all who share this bread and wine."