

# **ECCLESIAL COMMUNION THROUGH THE EUCHARIST**

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# **PREAMBLE**





1. Why does ecclesial Communion take place through the Eucharist? Quite simply because ecclesial Communion finds its original model in the Most Holy Trinity, according to what the Lord Jesus expressed in these words to his Father: *The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one.* (Jn. 17:22-23) Now, whether in a solely spiritual manner, by grace alone, or wheter by means of grace and the sacraments, it is properly by means of Eucharistic communion that divine Trinitarian Communion models and gives life to ecclesial Communion, by finding in it a certain extension and image: *As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.* (John 6:57) Thus, according to the testimony of Christ, it is indeed through Eucharistic communion, as a means of participation in the divine Trinitarian life, that ecclesial Communion takes place: it is by uniting himself to the Love that is God that man unites himself to man, in the Church, through grace. But, as Eucharistic communion can be accomplished either by grace alone (spiritual communion), or by grace and the sacraments (sacramental communion); and as it is manifest that certain men and women belong to the soul of the Church without necessarily belonging to her Body as well; it is clear that, if ecclesial Communion is realized through the act of Eucharistic Communion, this act must be considered in a fundamentally spiritual manner, accomplished by grace alone: it is by uniting himself to the Love that is God that man unites himself to man, in the Church, through grace.

The union of men with each other, in the Church, in Christ, cannot be accomplished without the grace of God. Thus, any study of ecclesial Communion places us once again in the context of our previous study on the relation between the grace of God and the free will of man. This will be an occasion for us to present to the reader some notions we have already looked at, but from another perspective ...

This fourth book on the Eucharist follows naturally from the first three

and will refer to them. In practical terms, when we need to refer to *The Eucharist: The Church in the Heart of Christ*, the abbreviation **ECHC**, followed by the number of the paragraph in question, or followed by the page number (if it is an unnumbered text), will be inserted in the text. Similarly, when referring the reader to *A Stone in the Church of God: Cephas*, the abbreviation **SCGC** will be used, followed by the paragraph number. Finally, when referring to *The Breaking of The Bread (or Notes on the relation between the grace of God and the free will of man)*, the abbreviation **BOTB** will be used.



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **THE COMMUNION OF CHRIST AND MARY**





2. To realize the union of divine grace and the free will of man, three elements are necessary: God, the author and source of grace; man, a rational and free creature; and Christ, *the mediator between God and men* (1 Tim. 2:5). These three elements are the ones that Saint John gathers together and expresses in a single sentence: *From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace; for if the law was given to Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* (Jn. 1:16-17) However, since grace - as the word itself indicates - is free, the three necessary elements we have just mentioned suppose, by themselves and in themselves, a non-necessary element, one that is purely free: Mary Mediatrix, She who is *full of grace* (Lk. 1:28). So, in the proper context of the union of grace and free will, we must list these four elements: God, Christ, Mary Mediatrix, and man. But, given that freedom is, intrinsically, altogether personal, it is clear that the four elements listed above must be understood in a manner that relates exclusively to the notion of the person. From this it follows that these four elements can be reduced to the following three: Christ, Mary Mediatrix, and Man.

3. First, let us confirm that what we have just said concerning grace and free will agrees with all of the Tradition of the Church. The following text allows us to do so: *Mary, a daughter of Adam, consenting to the divine Word, became the mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator. Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience (...) All the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure.* (Council of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 56 and 60)

4. Next, we must note that, since grace, as a divine good, is spiritual - like God, who *is spirit* (Jn. 4:24) - and since grace belongs, by this very

fact, to the spiritual order, it is clear that this same grace directly relates to the mediation of Mary understood in its properly spiritual aspect, that is to say the aspect according to which the mediation of Mary is confused, in a manner that is simple and one, with the mediation of Christ himself (concerning this, see ECHC, no. 24). Now, while Christ is a mediator, he is also, at the same time, the redeemer: Jesus Christ is *the Redeemer of man* (H.H. John Paul II, encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 1). Consequently, if grace directly relates to the mediation of Mary considered in its spiritual aspect, this can be so only in full and total reference to the notion of sin. By that very fact, although, according to its properly corporeal aspect, the concept of Mary Mediatrix can be fully grasped only without any reference to the notion of sin (concerning this, see ECHC, no. 41), on the other hand, here, according to its properly spiritual aspect to which the union of grace and free will refers, we must necessarily consider the concept of Mary Mediatrix to fully refer to the notion of sin.

5. The spiritual aspect of the mediation of Mary, an aspect according to which there is a fusion, simple and one, between the mediation of Christ and the mediation of Mary, is particularly well-described in the following lines by Brother Mutien-Marie de Ciney (refer to ECHC no. 8 [old], 9 [new]), in which Mary Mediatrix is depicted as similar to Christ mediator and redeemer, *living always to intercede for [us]* (Heb. 7:25). He writes as follows: *Who could describe the intimacy between the Mother and the Son? For nine months he is pleased to be in her virginal womb; for thirty years he lives under her roof, and above all he lives in her heart: he lives there in fullness, he works there in his divine Spirit; he is but one heart, one soul, one life with her. To her he communicates his thoughts, his feelings, his virtues; he is in constant communication with her. The result is that it pleases him to anticipate her least desire, he is happy to respond to her requests in heaven: he makes her the distributor of the graces he merited for us (...) Each instant, Mary is in supplication for the unhappy; each instant, she obtains a multitude of graces and pardons. She intercedes on behalf of sinners, and Jesus answers her merciful requests.* (Brother Mutien-Marie de Ciney, *Pour aimer et faire aimer Marie (To love Mary and to promote the love of Mary)*, p. 105)

6. In the order of grace, Mary Mediatrix - according to the spiritual aspect of her mediation - can thus be justly considered to be the purely

free element that intervenes, not only in the increase of grace in the souls of the just, but also, and first, in the conversion of sinners: *With respect to the conversion of souls, it is through Mary and only through her that we can have success. God, in his infinite goodness, constituted the most holy Mother the treasurer of all graces and it is solely through her that they are distributed to the world. It is normal to ask God for graces, but one must always do so through the intermediary of the Immaculate.* (Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Conference of May 30, 1933, in "L'Immaculée révèle l'Esprit-Saint" (*The Immaculate Reveals the Holy Spirit*), p. 67) In this regard, let us recall the Marian conversion of Bruno Cornacchiola (see ECHC, no. 22). This took place in Rome on April 12, 1947, when the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, visible to the eyes of this Protestant Christian, told him, in a forceful and encouraging way: *I am She who is in the divine Trinity. I am the VIRGIN OF REVELATION. You persecute me; stop now! Join the chosen flock, the celestial court on Earth.* (cf. Msgr. Fausto Rossi, *La Vierge de la Révélation (The Virgin of Revelation)*, p. 18) This took place not far from the road to Ostia, where Saint Paul was decapitated, he to whom Christ had said, on the road to Damascus: *I am Jesus whom you persecute.* (Acts 9:5)

7. The divine grace given to men, in Christ, through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix directly relates to the spiritual aspect of the mediation of Mary united simply to the mediation of Christ himself: this is the fundamental basis of our research. This is also what Saint Maximilian Kolbe expresses in the following lines: *We know this Mother of Heaven, and we know that, without her, no grace comes to this world. If the giver of graces came to the earth with her consent, then each grace comes because she wishes it. If, from the first moment of his coming into the world, the Son of God accomplished his own will, but only upon receiving the consent of the Virgin Mary, then each grace depends on her.* (Conference of January 23, 1938, in "L'Immaculée révèle l'Esprit-Saint" (*The Immaculate Reveals the Holy Spirit*), p. 70) However, although, in virtue of its very essence (see no. 4), divine grace - as we have just noted - relates to the mediation of Mary considered in its spiritual aspect, then this same divine grace also, at the same time, relates to the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary, which then confers to divine grace a properly corporeal dimension.

8. Indeed, grace is a gift of God, a divine good: as such, that is to say considered as a good that comes from God, grace must be considered

and understood with no reference to the notion of sin. This amounts to saying that, in the measure that grace is transmitted from God to men through Mary Mediatrix, grace, inasmuch as it is a good given by God - in Christ - to Mary Mediatrix considered as the first among believers and their model (see, among others, SCGC no. 86), must be considered without reference to the notion of sin, since this last cannot be suitably applied either to God or to Mary Mediatrix, who from the first instant of her Conception was preserved from any stain of Original Sin (cf. H.H. Pius IX, Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, in Denzinger, no. 2803). Now, it is only according to its corporeal aspect that we can fully grasp the concept of Mary Mediatrix without any reference to the notion of sin (see no. 4). Thus, it appears that, mystically, that is to say with respect to the mediation of Mary considered in its corporeal aspect (see ECHC, no. 24), divine grace, as a gift that comes from God through Mary Mediatrix considered as the first of the faithful, necessarily possesses a properly corporeal dimension.

9. With respect to the mediation of Mary considered in its corporeal aspect, the divine grace given by God to the Church, in Christ, possesses, mystically, a properly corporeal dimension. But grace, still as a divine good, and thus according to the same relation as above (see no. 8), is essentially spiritual (see no. 4). Thus, if grace possesses a properly corporeal dimension, this same dimension must necessarily be characterized by the notion of spiritualization, or of simplification. By this very fact, in the context of the union of grace and free will, there is no doubt that divine grace can be transmitted to men through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix only if the body of the latter is spiritualized, or simplified. Now, as, on one hand, when Mary Mediatrix is considered solely according to her body - as is the case here, since we are considering grace as a divine gift, excluding any reference to the notion of sin (see no. 8) - that is to say when she is considered as a mediator of the corporeal order, Mary Mediatrix is, in a general manner, the Spouse of the Divine Trinity, and in a particular manner, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit (refer to SCGC nos. 84 and 85, as well as 102 and 106); and as, on the other hand, Mary Mediatrix is truly - in every sense of the term - the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and thus the Spouse of the Most Holy Trinity, only because her body is spiritualized and simplified (this was established in SCGC nos. 103 to 106); we must affirm that, here, in

the proper context of the corporeal dimension of grace, the fact of the spiritualization, or the simplification, of the body of Mary Mediatrix fully relates to the relation of spousal union between the Holy Spirit and Mary Mediatrix (a relation that is included in the relation of spousal union between the Divine Trinity and this same human person). We can thus conclude, from all the foregoing, that, in the context of the union of grace and free will, a context in which divine grace possesses a properly corporeal dimension, Mary Mediatrix must necessarily be considered to be the Spouse of the Divine Trinity in a general manner, and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit in a particular manner. By this very fact, it is absolutely clear that, in its corporeal dimension, of the mystical order, divine grace is given by God to men - in Christ - through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix the Spouse of the Holy Spirit in the bosom of the Divine Trinity.

10. In the context of the union of grace and free will, Mary Mediatrix acts as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit when divine grace is considered in its corporeal dimension (see no. 9). Now, every spousal union implies a reciprocal exchange, by means of giving, between husband and wife, an exchange by which and in which the spouses give themselves totally to each other (see SCGC no. 85). Consequently, in the context of grace and free will, the Holy Spirit and Mary Mediatrix, as Husband and Wife, must be considered to have been reciprocally given to each other: the Holy Spirit is in Mary, and Mary is in the Holy Spirit. However, given that it is written - in a mystical manner, that is to say by the mode of Revelation, a mode that fully relates to the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary (refer to ECHC no. 31) - that *man leaves his father and his mother to be joined to his wife, and that they become one flesh* (Gen. 2:24), it is clear that this reciprocal gift of self between the Holy Spirit and Mary Mediatrix is necessarily accomplished in Mary herself, since only she possesses flesh, that is to say a body: *We can affirm that the Immaculate is, in a certain sense, the incarnation of the Holy Spirit. In her, it is the Holy Spirit whom we love.* (Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Conference of February 5, 1941, in "L'Immaculée révèle l'Esprit-Saint" (*The Immaculate Reveals the Holy Spirit*), p. 53) By this very fact, this reciprocal gift of self accomplished in Mary, a human person, this gift of self, or this reciprocal exchange between the Holy Spirit and Mary Mediatrix, must be conceived and understood in the human manner and relative to the

notion of the person. Now, humanly speaking, since the person is the foundation and the origin of all the goods that are, or could be, possessed by this same person, every gift of self of one person to another implies, in itself, the gift of all the goods that are, or could be, possessed by the person who gives himself. Consequently, given that this is the proper context of the union of grace and free will, we can affirm without hesitation that the Holy Spirit, on one hand, and Mary Mediatrix, on the other, give each other their respective goods, namely, the graces of the Holy Spirit and the free will of Mary Mediatrix. Since all of this is accomplished in Mary, the *one flesh* (Mt. 19:5), we can conclude, finally, that the divine graces of the Holy Spirit are, in Mary Mediatrix, *incarnated* in a certain sense: this is the very notion of the properly corporeal dimension of divine grace in the context of the union of grace and free will, a union realized through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix.

11. All that we have just said concerning the corporeal dimension of divine grace with respect to the mediation of Mary is confirmed by the following lines: *The union of the Immaculate and the Holy Spirit is so inexpressible but so perfect that the Holy Spirit acts solely through the Immaculate, his Spouse. And thus she is the Mediatrix of all the graces of the Holy Spirit. And from the fact that each grace is a gift of God the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit, it follows that there are no graces that are not the property of the Immaculate, and that are not given to her that she might freely distribute them.* (Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Letter to Brother Salezy Mikolajczyk, July 28, 1935, in "L'Immaculée révèle l'Esprit-Saint" (*The Immaculate Reveals the Holy Spirit*), p. 68) But the entire notion of the corporeal dimension of grace is found eminently in the very person of Mary, who possesses a spiritual name: *full of grace*, and a corporeal name: that of the sea, of the maritime waters that encompass the lands. Indeed, *Saint Jerome says that the word Maria may be interpreted as: Mare amarum, Sea full of bitterness; and Saint Bonaventure explains this thought by saying that Mary is full of bitterness due to her compassion for the great pains suffered by her Son in his passion (...)* A well-known interpreter, *Placidus Nigidius, adds that the word Maria can also mean: Mare Amoris, Ocean of love, which he applies to these words of the Church, who, addressing herself to the Blessed Virgin in one of her canticles, says to her: Eia, Mater fons amoris.* (The Bollandists, *Vies des Saints (The Lives of the*



*Saints*), *The Holy Name of Mary*, Volume X, p. 625) And finally, Venerable Father Luis de la Puente (see ECHC, no. 15 [old], 16 [new]) declares, addressing himself to Mary: *O most holy Virgin, who could say how much this fullness of grace that has been communicated to you surpasses that which has been received by all the other Saints! The greatest Saints are like little streams, whereas you, in accordance with your name, are a great sea.* (Meditations, Volume I, Part II, Meditation VI, p. 438)

12. In the proper context of the union of grace and free will, we cannot speak of the corporeal dimension of divine grace unless we consider Mary Mediatrix to be the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, that is to say unless we consider Mary Mediatrix to be a human person whose body is spiritualized, or simplified (see no. 132). However, while we must consider the body of Mary Mediatrix to be spiritualized, or simplified (as we have just said), we cannot consider this same body of Mary Mediatrix to be simply similar to God-Trinity, who is spirit, and thus to be simply similar to a reality that is essentially simple and one: if we were to do so, we would necessarily empty of its meaning the very concept of the corporeal dimension, a concept understood here with respect to the essentially spiritual divine grace. Consequently, the body of Mary Mediatrix can only be considered in its own material and organic reality, which is intrinsically multiple and non-one, composite and non-simple. But, if Mary Mediatrix is, in a particular manner, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, she is, in a general manner, the Spouse of the Divine Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (see no. 9). Moreover, if Mary Mediatrix is considered directly according to her multiple and composite body, and thus, only indirectly according to her simplified or spiritualized body, then she is properly the Spouse of Christ, the Word made flesh, he to whom she is first and foremost a Mother (concerning this, see SCGC nos. 96 and 97). Finally, given that, as Husband and Wife who are *one flesh* (Gen. 2:24), the person of Christ and the person of Mary Mediatrix share - in a mystical manner - a corporeal identity (this was established in SCGC no. 24), we can affirm without any doubt that, with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace (in the proper context of the union of grace and free will), Mary Mediatrix, who is the Spouse of Christ, exercises her mediation by means of the very body of the incarnate Word, mystically identical to her own body.

13. With respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation through the intermediary of the body of the person of Christ (see no. 12). This allows us to say that the body of Christ himself must be considered here to be a mediator of the corporeal order. But, intrinsically, a mediator of the corporeal order depends, fully and in all things, in being and in action, on the joint and simultaneous action of the extremes of the mediation of which it is the intermediary element (refer to ECHC, no. 52). By this very fact, the mediator of the corporeal order must be considered to be existing and acting, necessarily, in each of the extremes of the mediation in question, and this in virtue of the full and complete similitude between the Trinitarian Mystery and the type of the mediator of the corporeal order, who is Mary Mediatrix (see what was said in SCGC no. 95). Now, given that Christ, as man (and thus with respect to his body), is *mediator between God and men* (1 Tim 2:5), the extremes of the mediation of Mary through the intermediary of the body of Christ himself are, on one hand, God, one and triune, and on the other hand, the Church, composed of men and women of every race and of every nation (read ECHC, nos. 18 and 19). So it is absolutely clear that the body of Christ himself, considered as the intermediary element through which and in which the mediation of Mary is exercised with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, must be existing and acting - by the *sine qua non* condition of the exercise of the mediation of Mary - in both the Divine Trinity and the Church. This amounts to saying that, in the context of the union of grace and free will, a context in which divine grace possesses a properly corporeal dimension, Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation in act only to the extent that Christ, considered according to his body, is and acts in the bosom of the Divine Trinity, and to the extent that Christ, again considered according to his body, is and acts - jointly and simultaneously - in the very midst of the Church.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **THE COMMUNION OF THE POPE AND MARY**





14. The communion of Christ and Mary can be summarized by saying that, in the economy of divine grace, considered in its corporeal dimension, and granted to men without any reference to the notion of sin, Mary exercises her mediation by means of the spiritualized or simplified body of Christ, mediator of the corporeal order between God and men. Now if, as mediator of the properly corporeal order, Christ is and acts, on one hand, in God-Trinity, and on the other hand, in the Church, then all that has just been said concerning the communion of Christ and Mary obliges us to also, and necessarily, speak of the communion of the Pope and Mary. Here is the reason why.

15. First, as to Christ, who, considered according to his body, is and acts in the bosom of the Divine Trinity, if we can say that Christ, considered according to his non-simplified or non-spiritualized body, is and acts in the Most Holy Trinity from the precise instant of the Incarnation of the Word in this same humanity (since the Divinity of the Word and the Humanity assumed by it are in each other reciprocally, as Husband and Wife - concerning this, see what was said in SCGC, no. 85), then on the other hand we must affirm that Christ, now considered according to his spiritualized and simplified body, is and acts in the bosom of the Divine Trinity from the very instant of his Ascension into Heaven, that is to say from the precise instant that his humanity, until then visible and palpable according to his body (cf. 1 Jn. 1:1-2), becomes invisible and untouchable due to the fact of the spiritualization or simplification of this same body of the incarnate Word.

16. Second, as to Christ who, considered according to his body, is and acts in the very midst of the Church spread throughout the whole world, if we can say that Christ, considered according to his non-spiritualized or non-simplified body, will be and act in the midst of the Church and the world at his second coming at the end of time, then on the other hand we must affirm that Christ, now considered according to his spiritualized and simplified body, is and acts in the midst of the Church

present throughout the world in the person of his Vicar, the Pope, since this last, as the successor of Saint Peter, is a *rock* (Mt. 16:18), that is to say corporeally similar to Christ, who is the *cornerstone, a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense* (1 Peter 2:7-8), though in an absolutely invisible manner (since it is a mystical manner, relating fully to the mediation of Mary - see ECHC no. 41 and SCGC no. 40), and thus in a manner that fully expresses the very notion of spiritualization, or simplification.

17. With respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, the exercise in act of the mediation of Mary depends fully, and in all things, on the existence and the action of the glorious Christ in the Heaven of the one and triune Divinity, and on the existence and the action of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on Earth. Now, all of this flows from the fact that the exercise of the mediation of Mary is accomplished through the intermediary of and by means of the body of Christ himself, this body considered in its spiritualization or simplification (see no. 14), and this in a perfect mystical identity with the body of Mary Mediatrix herself (see nos. 12 and 13). This amounts to saying that the mediation of Mary is considered here under its two aspects, the corporeal and the spiritual: the corporeal, inasmuch as grace is a divine good that excludes any reference to the notion of sin (see no. 8), and the spiritual, inasmuch as grace is a divine good that is essentially spiritual, like God himself (see no. 4). Consequently, we must conclude from all of the foregoing that with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, the exercise in act of the mediation of Mary is accomplished not only according to a corporeal mode, but also according to a properly spiritual mode, and thus that, by this very fact, the extremes, namely Christ in Heaven and the Pope on Earth, on which the exercise in act of the mediation of Mary corporeally depends - in its being and action - are simply united with each other by means of the spiritualized or simplified body of Christ himself, mystically identical to the body of Mary Mediatrix: it is in this way that the principle expressed in ECHC no. 5 applies.

18. Through the mediation of Mary understood according to both its corporeal aspect and its spiritual aspect, and this with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, the glorious Christ in Heaven and the Pope his Vicar on Earth, both of whom possess a true material and organic body, are simply united with each other through the

intermediary of the spiritualized, or simplified, body of Christ. Now, understood corporeally and spiritually, when it is exercised through the intermediary of the body of Christ considered as spiritualized or simplified, and thus, for this reason, as invisible, though truly material and organic, the mediation of Mary cannot be accomplished other than by means of Eucharistic communion (read ECHC nos. 26 and 56). Indeed, it is properly the sacrament of the Eucharist that allows Christ, true God and true Man, to be considered an intermediary means (as a sacrament), in which and through which Christ is truly present according to his body, though in an invisible manner, since that which is seen is not the body of Christ-Man, but rather solely the sacramental species of bread and wine. Thus, with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, the glorious Christ in Heaven and the Pope, his Vicar on Earth, are simply united with each other by means of the sacrament of the Eucharist given in communion through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix.

19. In the context of the union of grace and free will, with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, Mary Mediatrix simply unites - through the spiritual aspect of her mediation - three distinct elements, according to the corporeal aspect of this same mediation: the first two, the glorious Christ in Heaven and the Pope, his Vicar on Earth, are the extremes of the mediation of Mary; and the third, the sacrament of the Eucharist given in communion, is the intermediary element, or the middle term of the aforesaid mediation. However, of these three elements, which are corporeally distinct but simply united with each other, one of them, the glorious Christ, is present, and thus acts, not on Earth like the other two, namely the Pope and Christ-Eucharist, but rather solely in Heaven, in the bosom of the Divine Trinity. Consequently, in order that the mediation might be realized corporeally, it is absolutely necessary that one of the two elements on Earth should act in the name of the glorious Christ who is in Heaven. As, on one hand, the glorious Christ in Heaven is one of the extremes of the mediation; and as, on the other hand, of the two other elements of the mediation, only the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on Earth, is himself also one of the extremes of the aforesaid mediation; it is clear that it is properly the Pope who acts in the name of the glorious Christ, allowing him thus to act on Earth as in Heaven. By this very fact, with respect to

the corporeal dimension of divine grace, Mary Mediatrix, through the spiritual aspect of her mediation, simply unites two elements that are distinct according to the corporeal aspect of this same mediation: Christ-Eucharist and the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on Earth, acting in the name of the glorious Christ in Heaven, exercising his priestly ministry *in persona Christi* (see ECHC no. 73 and SCGC no. 81).

20. Through the mediation of Mary understood according to both its corporeal aspect and its spiritual aspect, with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace, the Pope, *in persona Christi*, communicates of Christ-Eucharist. Now, what we have just affirmed rests fully, in every way, on the fact - of the mystical order - of the corporeal identity between the person of Christ and the person of Mary Mediatrix (see no. 12 - see also no. 17). Thus, if the Pope communicates *in persona Christi*, he necessarily also communicates in the name of Mary Mediatrix. As the latter is a simple believer (since she is being considered here as the first of believers and their model - see no. 8), we can finally affirm, with absolute certainty, that, with respect to the corporeal dimension of divine grace given by God by means of and through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix, the Pope who communicates of Christ-Eucharist exercises his ministerial priesthood *in persona Christi* in order to thus assume the exercise of the common priesthood of the faithful accomplished personally by Mary Mediatrix. By this very fact, the corporeal dimension of divine grace fully relates to the joint and simultaneous exercise of the ministerial priesthood and of the common priesthood of the faithful in the act of Eucharistic communion, an act accomplished, on one hand, by the Pope (as to the ministerial priesthood), and on the other hand, by Mary Mediatrix (as to the common priesthood of the faithful).

21. The fact that the corporeal dimension of divine grace fully relates to the conjointness and simultaneity of the exercise of both the ministerial priesthood, in the person of the Pope, and the common priesthood of the faithful, in the person of Mary Mediatrix, was already discussed when we spoke of the breaking of the bread in the theology of grace (see BOTB, no. 22 et seq.). Let us simply recall that the breaking of the bread, as an action of the ministerial priesthood, is a properly corporeal action that manifests in the Eucharistic sign of the bread - in which is included



the Eucharistic sign of the wine - the spiritual action of divine grace, considered in its fullness, and expressed by the prayer of the epiclesis, inasmuch as it is an action of the common priesthood of the faithful; all this being nothing other than corporeal communion, on one hand, and spiritual communion, on the other hand, with Christ-Eucharist by means of and through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix. But - and this is important - while taking into account all that has just been said, it is absolutely permissible for us to think and to believe that, since the Church accomplishes the rite of the breaking of the bread only in virtue of the fact that the Lord himself carried it out at the Last Supper, the concept of the corporeal dimension of grace is directly founded on a tradition that comes from Christ in person, that tradition being the ceremonial and liturgical action of the breaking of the Eucharistic bread.

22. If the corporeal dimension of divine grace fundamentally relates to the liturgical action of the breaking of the bread, that is to say to the communion of the Pope and Mary in and through Christ-Eucharist, then this same liturgical action of the breaking of the bread, with respect to the union of grace and free will through Mary Mediatrix, is the clear and absolute sign of the ecclesial communion, both exterior and interior, of all the members of the mystical Body of Christ. This is why Saint Luke, speaking of the Lord Jesus and his disciples at Emmaus, tells us: *He was known to them the moment he broke the bread* (Lk. 24:35), a text in which the expression *known* must be understood (in virtue of the rule of association, simple and one, between the philosophy of human life and divine Revelation, the rule that governs the mediation of Mary, of whom we are speaking here) both naturally, and thus corporeally - the disciples recognized the Lord when they saw him break the bread - and supernaturally, that is to say spiritually - the disciples sacramentally anticipated the beatific vision of God by means of knowledge, in accordance with what Christ said in his prayer to his Father: *This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* (Jn. 17:3)

23. Along the same lines, here is what an eighteenth-century liturgist reports: *We see in the Constitutions of Popes Miltiades and Siricius found in the old Catalogues of the Popes, and in the Letter of Innocent I (Epist. 29) to Decentius, that the Pope and the other Bishops of Italy sent to the Priests of the*

*titular Churches, each Sunday, part of the Eucharist they had consecrated at Mass (...) The Pope and the Bishops, before the fourth century, received the Eucharist of distant Churches, as the Letter of Saint Irenaeus to Pope Victor touching on the Churches of Asia shows us (...) These particles sent to the Churches were called fermentum, yeast, because they were regarded as a yeast of communion and charity, and they signified that the Pope, the Bishops, and the Priests offered the same sacrifice (...)* (Pierre Le Brun, *Explication de la Messe (Explanation of the Mass)*, Volume I, pp. 502 - 503).

24. To the extent that, with respect to the union of grace and free will, the liturgical action of the breaking of the bread is the absolute sign of ecclesial communion understood both exteriorly, that is to say corporeally, and interiorly, that is to say spiritually, this same ecclesial communion must be, intrinsically, the union, realized through the Eucharist, of each and every one of the living persons (both body and soul together) who compose the mystical Body of Christ: the Church. So in order to study ecclesial communion through the Eucharist in detail, let us consider what is the living human person, basing ourselves on what Christ himself says, just as we base ourselves on the teaching and the life of this same Christ to perpetuate in the Church the liturgical gesture of the breaking of the bread (see no. 21).

25. Thus, the living human person is only fully known and revealed to us in the very person of Christ: *The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light (...)* Christ, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself (...) (Council of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22). Now, Christ himself presents his humanity as food and drink, as a nutritive element proper to the maintenance and increase of life: *My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.* (Jn. 6:55) (see ECHC, nos. 1 and 49). Thus, we can say that the living human person, no matter who, is also food and drink, or simply a nutritive and vital element. By this very fact, the act of Eucharistic communion, as an act of life of the living human person who unites himself to Christ-Eucharist by means of eating, is the act of life in which are united two nutritive and vital elements: the living human person and the Eucharist. As life is a simple principle, we may consider the act of Eucharistic communion to be the act of life of a single living entity or reality under the form of food, a reality composed of two

elements: the living human person and the Eucharist.

26. As nutritive and vital elements, the living human person and the Eucharist form a single living reality. Now, the Eucharist presents itself to us under two species: that of the bread and that of the wine, and these species are respectively called *the body of Christ* and *the blood of Christ* (1 Cor. 10:16). Thus the living reality formed by the living human person and the Eucharist in the act of Eucharistic communion is also necessarily called *the body of Christ* and *the blood of Christ*. But as to that which concerns the living human person, the flesh and the blood of this same living human person, by the very fact that this person is living, are united with each other, in a manner that is simple and one, by the principle of life, the blood being considered absolutely included in the flesh. In other words, the sole appellation of *flesh* or *body* is sufficient for the living human person. This is why, as *flesh* or *body* is properly the appellation of the Eucharistic bread, Christ reveals to us his living humanity as *the living bread* (Jn. 6:51); likewise, Saint Ignatius of Antioch compares his own body to the substance of bread, saying: *I am the wheat of God, and I am ground by the teeth of beasts, so that I might be found to be pure bread of Christ.* (Epistle to the Romans 4, 1, in "Sources chrétiennes" (*Christian Sources*), no. 10, p. 99) Consequently, all of the living reality of the act of Eucharistic communion bears the sole appellation of *Body of Christ*. By this very fact, both elements that form this living reality are called by the same unique name, and so they are identified with each other. This is what Saint Augustine expressly confirms when, presenting the Eucharistic bread to the faithful, he says: *Be what you see, and receive what you are.* (Sermon 272, for the day of Pentecost, in PL [Patrologia Latina] 38, 1247)

27. The living reality formed by the union of the living human person and the Eucharist bears the name *Body of Christ*. Now, this appellation rests on the two principles set forth above: one consists in the fact that Christ reveals his humanity as a food (no. 25); the other consists in the fact that the Eucharist receives the name of *Body of Christ* (no. 26). Moreover, on one hand, the fact that Christ presents his humanity as a food is truly and fundamentally a mystery, something that surpasses created reason: *Hearing this, the Jews began arguing among themselves: How, they asked, can this man give us his flesh to eat?* (Jn. 6:52) On the other

hand, the fact that the Eucharistic bread is truly the Body of Christ is also truly and fundamentally a mystery, *the mystery of faith*, exactly the same mystery as that mentioned above, but considered inversely. It follows that, if the living reality of the act of Eucharistic communion is called *the Body of Christ*, this can be so only in a mysterious or mystical manner. In other words, this living reality is properly *the mystical Body of Christ*: it is a mystical living reality. Finally, as this mystical living reality is the act of union of the living human person and Christ-Eucharist, and as the sole mysterious or mystical principle - which we have just mentioned and upon which rests this same mystical living reality - consists in the revelation of the humanity of Christ as a nutritive and vital element, therefore the mystical character of this living reality exclusively relates, intrinsically, to the living human person who communicates of the Eucharist. This mystical living reality is thus the reality that we can call the mystical Person of Christ.

28. The mystical Person of Christ, as the mystical living reality of the act of Eucharistic communion, is called *the mystical Body of Christ*. Now, intrinsically, the notion of the *mystical Body of Christ* does not concern a single person, but many: *Since there is but one bread, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the same bread (...)* *The body does not consist in a single member, but in many.* (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:14) Thus, although the mystical Person of Christ is truly and physically a single living human person that unites itself to Christ-Eucharist, it must necessarily be understood and considered as the act of union of each and every one of the persons who are members of the mystical Body of Christ with Christ-Eucharist present under the form of food. This means that the mystical Person of Christ, as a mystical living reality, is composed of two elements: one is Christ-Eucharist; the other is the living human person that, although necessarily single and unique, unites in itself each and every one of the persons who are members of the mystical Body of Christ. Thus, the mystical Person of Christ is none other than the living human person that, in the act of Eucharistic communion, realizes in itself the very principle of ecclesial communion. Now, intrinsically, the mystical Person of Christ, whose act of life is the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, is Mary Mediatrix, as we had previously established (refer to BOTB, nos. 54, 76, 77, 121 to 127, and 134). However, because She is the one who is *full of grace* (Lk. 1:28), Mary Mediatrix,

with respect to ecclesial communion through the Eucharist (which is necessarily placed in the context of the union of grace and free will), by herself and in herself supposes the proper notion of fullness, a notion that is absolutely excluded from the framework in which we elaborate our research, namely that which is founded on the concept of *food*. So, given that Mary Mediatrix is but *one body* (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:6) with the Pope, her Spouse in Christ (see SCGC no. 116), we must affirm without hesitation that the mystical Person of Christ that, in the act of Eucharistic communion, realizes in itself the very principle of ecclesial communion is the Pope himself, so that we can say, with Saint Ambrose: *Where Peter is, there is the Church*. (Enarratio in Psalmum XL, 30, in PL 14, 1134)

29. In the preceding sections, we have established how, with respect to the Eucharist, the person of the Pope can be understood as the principle of ecclesial communion. Now, to do this, we based ourselves on two fundamental scriptural texts, namely: *My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink* (Jn. 6:55; see no. 25) and *body of Christ ... blood of Christ* (1 Cor. 10:16; see no. 26). Consequently, to deepen our understanding of the person of the Pope with respect to the Eucharist, we will once again take up these two texts and reread them in a fuller and more complete manner. However, as both of these texts express the same mystery, though each in a way that is the inverse of the other (see no. 27), it is fitting to read them jointly and simultaneously. So, instead, we will take another text from Scripture in which the person of Christ and the Eucharist are indissociably associated and united: *This is my body ... This is my blood*. (Mt. 26:26-27) For the reasons explained above (see no. 26), we will only look at the text *This is my body* (Mt. 26:26), which intrinsically includes the text *This is my blood* (Mt. 26:27). Finally, since the Eucharist, as a sacrament, is second with respect to Christ, who is first, we will begin by applying the words *This is my body* (Mt. 26:26) to the person of Christ; then we will apply them to the Eucharist.

30. The person of Christ is the person who speaks and expresses these words: *This is my body*. As such, the person of Christ is the person of the Word made flesh who declares that his humanity is a food under the form of bread, as this same person of Christ declared in the following manner: *My flesh is true food* (Jn. 6:55). Now, manifestly, as we have already pointed out (see no. 27), this fact affirmed by Christ - that his

humanity is a food - is a mystery. So, we can say that it is properly the mystical Person of Christ who is a food, and that, by this very fact, it is properly the mystical Person of Christ who pronounces the words *This is my body*. But as this last conclusion rests entirely on the fact that it is indeed Christ himself who pronounces the words *This is my body*, we can conclude that these same words - *This is my body* - are pronounced simultaneously and indissociably by both the Person of Christ himself and the mystical Person of Christ. However, in virtue of the union of these two Persons and in virtue of the absolutely stable and unchanging character of the living human person, inasmuch as it is considered as a person, it follows that the words *This is my body* are pronounced by the Person of Christ himself and by the stable and unchanging mystical Person of Christ. Now, intrinsically, the mystical Person or Body of Christ is unstable and changing: it possesses a certain *growth* (Eph. 4:16). By this very fact, it is only at the end of time that the mystical Body of Christ will be stable and unchanging. Furthermore, the stable and unchanging state of the mystical Body of Christ is properly what we call the fullness of the mystical Body of Christ, a fullness that, in virtue of this same stable and unchanging character, is a fullness in act, and not in power. Thus, the words *This is my body* are pronounced by the Person of Christ himself and by the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness. But, as the words *This is my body* apply to the Eucharist that presents itself to us under the appearance of true food, these words must not be placed in the mouth of any but the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness considered fundamentally as a nutritive and vital element. Now, as we have seen above (see nos. 25 to 28), it properly and exclusively belongs to Eucharistic communion to allow the living human person, considered as food, to be the mystical Body of Christ. So we can affirm that the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness, as it pronounces the words *This is my body*, is the living human person who communicates, in fullness, of Christ-Eucharist: this is the fullness in act of each and every one of the persons who compose the Church until the end of time, in their union with Christ-Eucharist, in a single and unique living human person.

31. The Eucharist, inasmuch as it appears under the form of the food of bread, is the reality to which apply the words *This is my body*. This means that this reality necessarily relates to the body or the humanity of

the person who pronounces these same words. Now, we have just seen that the words *This is my body* are pronounced, in an absolutely indissociable manner, by the Person of Christ himself and by the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness. Thus, we can say that this reality, which is the Eucharist, is simultaneously and indissociably both the Body of Christ himself and the mystical Body of Christ in act of fullness. However, we have already noted above that the mystical character of the Person of Christ flows entirely from the attribution of the notion of food to this same Person of Christ. In other words, the notion of food absolutely does not concern the Person of Christ himself, but solely and uniquely the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness. Furthermore, every created reality, and thus the Eucharist as a sacrament, is composed of two elements: one, stable and unchanging, which is called the substance; and the other, unstable and changing, which is called the accidents or appearances. Finally, as, apparently, the Eucharist is a reality that appears to us under the form of food, that is to say a reality that possesses all the accidents or appearances of food under the form of bread, we can conclude that the Body of Christ himself is properly the substance of the Eucharist, and the mystical Body of Christ in act of fullness is properly the appearances or the accidents of the Eucharist. However, in virtue of the unstable and changing character of the accidents, while the Eucharist, as the appearances of food under the form of bread, is the reality to which the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness applies the words *This is my body*, the Eucharist absolutely cannot be the mystical Body of Christ in act of fullness, but rather, exclusively, the mystical Body of Christ in power of fullness. Thus, the reality of the Eucharist is comprised of the Body of Christ himself, according to the substance, and the mystical Body of Christ in power of fullness, according to the accidents. Now, as, above, we determined that we needed to consider only the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness, similarly, here we have to consider the Eucharist solely as the reality, under the accidental form of food, to which this same mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness applies the words *This is my body*, that is to say as the reality of the mystical Body of Christ in power of fullness. Finally, as we have seen above (see nos. 25 to 28) that the mystical Body of Christ, considered as being alive in time and not at the end of time, is properly a food only insofar as it is the living human person of the Pope in his union with Christ-Eucharist, we can thus

affirm that the Eucharist, as a reality under the accidental form of food to which are applied the words *This is my body*, that is to say as the reality of the mystical Body of Christ in power of fullness considered as food, is nothing other than the Person of the Pope in the act of Eucharistic communion: thus, it is the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness.

32. We have just seen that the words *This is my body*, words that serve as a link between the Person of Christ himself and the Eucharist, also serve as a link between the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the Person of the Pope, or the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness. In other words, in virtue of the words *This is my body*, there exists a link between the two living human persons, namely the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness. Now, as an act depends entirely on the power that allows this same act, and as act is limited by power, it follows that, inasmuch as the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness is considered under the form of food, that is to say in its properly vital aspect, this same Person is contained in the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness. In other words, all of the life of the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness is contained in the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness. Thus, the life of the very Person of the Pope is found, at the same time, both in his own person and in the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness: thus the Person of the Pope appears to us as the mystical Person of Christ, simultaneously incommunicable and communicable. As it is a link between two mystical Persons of Christ in fullness, one in power, the other in act, we can conclude that this link is nothing other than the link of full ecclesial communion: this is what is essential in the communion of the Pope and Mary, who (as we have already mentioned in no. 28) is none other than the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness.



## **CHAPTER 3**

# **THE COMMUNION OF CHRIST AND THE POPE**





33. Faith, by way of obedience, that is to say what Saint Paul calls *the obedience of faith* (Rom. 1:5), is the link that fully unites the absolute totality of the members of the Church to her Supreme Pastor, the Pope. This thesis on faith, which we will set forth in depth and in detail in this chapter, which we now devote to the communion between Christ and the Pope, has already been announced by us very synthetically when we spoke of faith as an expression of the mystery of the relation between Eucharistic food and the living human person (see no. 27). But, as this last relation finds its perfect expression in the words *This is my body*, it is by further deepening the meaning of these words that we will be able to develop our thesis on faith. And as the words *This is my body* serve as a link both between the Person of Christ himself and the Eucharist, and between the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness (see no. 32), we will have to study the concept of the obedience of faith, on one hand, by placing the words *This is my body* in the mouth of the Person of Christ himself, and on the other hand, by placing them in the mouth of the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness.

34. Before proceeding further, and as a principle, we must note that the words *This is my body* serve as a link, in a direct manner, between the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness, and that these same words serve as a link, in an indirect manner, between the Person of Christ himself and the Eucharist (see nos. 30 and 31). This means that the relation, through the words *This is my body*, between Christ himself and the Eucharist is at the full and exclusive service of the relation between the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness: the first of these two relations absolutely cannot be understood without the second, so that all of the dogmatic content of the first necessarily depends on what the second contains.

35. As a consequence of the principle we have just stated, we must take

an overall look at the second relation, the one between the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness, in order to derive from it a rule of study for the first relation. Now, in this second relation, it is manifest that there exists a dependence of the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness with respect to the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness, since that which is in act necessarily depends on that which is in power, insofar as the relationship is the same, as is the case here. So we can say that there also exists a dependence of Christ with respect to the Eucharist: we shall see in what it consists.

36. The fundamental relation we are studying is a relation, expressed by the words *This is my body*, that exists between the Person of Christ himself and the Eucharist. Now, as we have just said, this first relation is one of dependence of Christ with respect to the Eucharist. Furthermore, the notion of dependence that characterizes this relation exclusively rests on the fact that the relation between the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness and the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness is a relation of dependence, based on the difference between the times at which the mystical Person of Christ is considered: whether at the end of time, in the case of the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness; or whether before the end of time, in the case of the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness. Thus, the first relation between Christ and the Eucharist is a relation of dependence based on a relation between two times, one posterior, the other anterior. Now, if we consider the words themselves that are expressed by Christ, we see that Christ pronounces first the term *This*, which relates to the Eucharist, and next the expression *my body*, which describes the Person of Christ himself. Consequently, it is clear that the relation between the two times, one posterior, the other anterior, and thus, by this very fact, the relation of dependence of Christ with respect to the Eucharist, is perfectly signified by the very words that express this relation. So we can affirm that the first relation, expressed by the words *This is my body*, is a relation of temporal dependence of Christ with respect to the Eucharist. In other words, the phrase *This is my body* expresses, in a temporal manner, the dependence of Christ with respect to the Eucharist. But, as Christ is God and Man, and as God is intrinsically eternal, the notion of temporality does not pertain to Christ himself

except inasmuch as he is considered in his humanity. Finally, we can conclude, in virtue of the temporal character of the words *This is my body*, that we must consider these same words as coming from the human mouth of Christ under the action of his human spirit which conceives them. By this very fact, the words *This is my body*, as an expression of Christ's relation of dependence with respect to the Eucharist, are intrinsically human words.

37. The Person of Christ himself is in a relation of dependence with respect to the Eucharist when he pronounces the words *This is my body* in a human manner. Now, the spirit of every human person who lives in time apprehends exterior and temporal realities, including the Eucharist with respect to the Person of Christ himself, by means of the corporeal senses that place the human person into contact with contingent and material things. Consequently, Christ cannot pronounce the word *This* without necessarily understanding in this vocable the reality of the sensible appearances, that is to say the accidents, of the Eucharist. By this very fact, inasmuch as the words *This is my body* are human words, there exists a relation between the Person of Christ and the Eucharist considered in its accidental and apparent reality. Now, we have seen that the words *This is my body* intrinsically place into relation with each other the Person of Christ himself and the substance of the Eucharist (see no. 31). Thus, through the words *This is my body*, considered as human words, Christ is in a relation both to the accidents and to the substance of the Eucharist. But there is an absolute equality and identity between the Person of Christ himself and the substance of the Eucharist, as is clearly expressed by the copula *is*, which simply and directly identifies the two members of the phrase *This is my body*. So we can conclude that if there exists - and there truly does exist - a dependence of the Person of Christ himself with respect to the Eucharist, this can be so only with respect to the Eucharist considered as an accidental and apparent reality. Finally, as we have established above (see no. 31) that the Eucharist, as a reality under the accidental form of food to which apply the words *This is my body*, is nothing other than the Person of the Pope in the act of Eucharistic communion, it becomes evident that the words *This is my body*, considered as a relation between the Person of Christ himself and the Eucharist, express the link or the relation of dependence of Christ with respect to his Vicar, the Pope: *You*

*are Peter (...) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Mt. 16:18-19)*

38. There exists a relation of dependence between Christ and the Pope, a relation expressed by the words *This is my body*, which serve as a link between the Person of Christ himself and the Eucharist considered as an accidental and apparent reality. Now, every human word - including the words *This is my body* - is first conceived in the spirit of man before being uttered, in conjunction with the action of the spirit, by his body by means of the vocal organ. Furthermore, it is properly a man's spirit that gives a specific meaning to such-and-such a word pronounced by that man. So, if we want to know the proper signification of the relation of dependence of Christ with respect to the Pope, we must discover exactly in what consists the meaning given by the human spirit of Christ to the words *This is my body*.

39. Inasmuch as the relation between the Person of Christ himself and the accidents or appearances of the Eucharist is a relation of dependence, there is neither equality nor identity between the two elements of the relation. Thus, Christ should have said that *This is not my body*: every man, no matter which, has, through his conscience, knowledge of his nature - in this case, of his *body* - and he cannot say in conscience that *This* (the accidents of the Eucharist under the form of bread) *is his body* (his human nature). By this very fact, as Christ truly did pronounce the words *This is my body*, there necessarily must exist something that does not belong to the human nature of Christ, and which influences his spirit, so that he can say, in conscience and truth, *This is my body*, when otherwise he would have been obliged to say: *This is not my body*.

40. The Person of Christ himself is in a relation of dependence with respect to the Eucharist, considered under the accidental form of food, in virtue of the relation that exists between two times, one posterior, relating to the mystical Person of Christ in act of fullness, and the other anterior, relating to the mystical Person of Christ in power of fullness (see no. 36). Applied to the relation between the Person of Christ himself and the accidents of the Eucharist, this relation between the two times becomes a relation between the present and the past, with the

present dependent on the past. Indeed, when Christ utters the expression *my body*, he is speaking of himself and expressing his nature at the moment that he speaks these words. Now, we have already noted that the term *This* comes first in the phrase *This is my body*. Thus, since that which is first with respect to the present is called the past or anterior, it follows that the relation of dependence between Christ and the Eucharist under the accidental form of food is intrinsically based on a relation of dependence of the present with respect to the past. By this very fact, the notion or fact that intrinsically does not belong to the human nature of Christ and that permits this same Christ to speak the words *This is my body*, so that it transforms the relation of dependence into a relation of equality or of identity, is nothing other than the notion of eternity, since, in eternity, the past, as well as the future, coexist with the present instant.

41. In order for the words *This is my body* to be true, that is to say in order for them to express a true equality between *This* and *my body*, these same words must be characterized by the notion of eternity. In other words, the words *This is my body* are true only insofar as these same words are eternal words. Now, as every word is conceived by a spirit, there is necessarily a proportion between the word and the spirit that conceives it, a proportion that is intrinsically simple and absolute due to the simple character of every spirit. Thus, given that it is properly the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, who, during the Incarnation, acted, with regard to Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the act of the conception of the Body of Christ (cf. Matt. 1:18); and also given that Christ is none other than the Word of Life, that is to say the divine Person in whom the Father communicates his own divine life, which is partaken by man under the form of food (see ECHC, no. 49), we can affirm that the spirit who conceives the words *This is my body* as eternal words is none other than the eternal Spirit, that is to say the Holy Spirit, *the Spirit of God* (1 Cor. 2:11). By that very fact, since, firstly, the Holy Spirit, in the conception of the Body of Christ, is called *the Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35); and secondly, in the specific case of the participation or communion of man in the divine life, this *Power of the Most High* is not only active omnipotence, but also passive power in fullness (concerning this, read what we have previously written: ECHC no. 49 and BOTB no. 57); and finally, thirdly, the speaking in act of the

words *This is my body* realizes the first instant of the participation, or communion, in the divine life under the form of food (see BOTB, no. 48; see also ECHC, no. 103); we can thus clearly affirm that it is the Holy Spirit who, by the fact that he conceives in himself the words *This is my body*, allows Christ to conceive in his human spirit these same words, considered as eternal and true.

42. What allows Christ to conceive, in all truth, the words *This is my body* in his human spirit is, as we have just seen, the divine Person of the Holy Spirit. Now, according to the Tradition of the Eastern and Western Churches, the Holy Spirit must be considered under a double aspect. Firstly, he is the one who is common between the Father and the Son: he proceeds from the Father and the Son. Secondly, he is the one who is given by the Father to the Son, who in turn makes him his own by receiving him: he proceeds from the Father through the Son. This double aspect merits being further studied and defined, as we will do later. For the present, let us recall what Catholics and Orthodox think concerning this subject: *Without wishing to resolve yet the difficulties which have arisen between the East and the West concerning the relationship between the Son and the Spirit, we can already say together that this Spirit, which proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26) as the sole source in the Trinity and which has become the Spirit of our sonship (Rom 8:15) since he is also the Spirit of the Son (Gal 4:6), is communicated to us particularly in the eucharist by this Son upon whom he reposes in time and in eternity (Jn 1:32).* (Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, Second plenary meeting, Munich, June 30-July 6, 1982, *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity*, I, no. 6, in the magazine "La Pensée Catholique" (*Catholic Thought*), September-October 1987, page 72. Among the Catholic members: Cardinals Willebrands, Baum, Ratzinger, Etchegaray...) Furthermore, here, the Holy Spirit, who is God, comes to the aid of Christ considered in his humanity: the Holy Spirit here appears in that aspect of his which, because he is the Spirit of the Father solely according to origin, distinguishes him from the Son-Word, just as divinity is distinguished from humanity in the relation between the Holy Spirit and Christ-Man with respect to the words *This is my body*. Thus, the Holy Spirit, who allows Christ to conceive in himself the words *This is my body* in all truth, must be considered here in his second



aspect, that is to say as the Spirit of the Father who rests on Christ, Christ then explicitly being the Anointed One of the Lord (cf. Is. 61:1), he who declared: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me* (Lk. 4:18). By this very fact, it is properly in the Holy Spirit that the Person of Christ himself conceives in his human spirit, in all truth, the words *This is my body*: Christ conceives in the *Spirit of truth* (Jn. 14:17) true words, that is to say himself, since he is *the Truth* (Jn. 14:6). Finally, as the words *This is my body* are the expression of the bond of full ecclesial communion (see no. 32), we can conclude that the proper meaning and signification of these same words - which is what we have been seeking (see no. 38) - is that the bond of full ecclesial communion innately and fundamentally finds its unity in Truth in the divine Person of the Holy Spirit.

43. In the Holy Spirit who rests upon him, Christ conceives, in his human spirit, the words *This is my body* in all truth and conscience. Now, we have already noted (see no. 38) that the corporeal action which consists in uttering, through the organ of the voice, words audible to the one to whom they are addressed is accomplished in conjunction with the action of the spirit that conceives in itself these same words. Thus, it is also in the Holy Spirit that Christ truly and corporeally pronounces the words *This is my body*. But as the Holy Spirit, who is God, is essentially simple and one, since he is spiritual and divine, we can affirm that the words *This is my body* enjoy the divinity's character of simplicity and oneness. By this very fact, between, on one hand, *This*, which designates the Person of the Pope, and, on the other hand, *my body*, which designates the Person of Christ himself, there exists an equality and an identity that is absolutely simple and one. Now, we have seen above (see no. 36) that, when Christ pronounces the words *This is my body* - and it is precisely this act of speech that we are studying here - he does so in a human manner, using human words, and, consequently, there exists a relation of dependence of Christ with respect to the Pope (see no. 37). Thus, in virtue of the identity, simple and one, between the Person of Christ and the Person of the Pope, we must conclude that, in order to compensate and to balance, in an equality and identity that is absolutely simple and one, the relation of dependence of Christ with respect to the Pope, there also necessarily exists a relation of dependence of the Pope with respect to Christ, a relation that finds its expression in the words *This is my body*, which fundamentally serve as a link, simple and one,

between Christ and the Pope, as we have just said.

44. There exists a relation of dependence of the Pope with respect to Christ, a relation expressed by the words *This is my body*. Now, as these same words are uttered by Christ in the Holy Spirit, and as, by this very fact, these same words, inasmuch as they are conceived in the Spirit of God, are eternal and divine words, it follows that, in this relation of dependence of the Pope with respect to Christ, we must consider here the Christ who speaks eternal words, or who *speaks the words of God* (Jn. 3:34; cf. Council of Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 4; see also ECHC, no. 29). In other words, Christ addresses eternal and divine words to the living human person of the Pope. Now, every divine word, because it is divine, can be received and understood by the human person only by means of the supernatural virtue of faith, according to the words of the prophet Isaiah: *If you do not believe, you will not understand* (Isaiah 7:9 according to the LXX; see also Saint Jerome's version). Thus, the living human person of the Pope cannot accomplish his relation of dependence with respect to Christ without including, in that same relation, an act of faith in the divine words Christ reveals. So this is a relation of faith under the form of dependence or obedience, that is to say an act of the *obedience of faith*: The obedience of faith (*Rom. 16:26; cf. Rom. 1:5; 2 Cor. 10:5-6*) is to be given to God who reveals (Council of Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 5).

45. In summary, we can say that the words *This is my body* are the expression of two relations of dependence: the first, that of God who, in Christ, humbles himself before Man in revealing his uncreated Word to *his image* (Gen. 1:27), which is the *creature* (Mk. 16:15); the second, that of Man who humbles himself before God in receiving, in faith, the infinite Word he cannot understand by means of his finite intelligence. Now, as these two relations are united to each other in a manner that is simple and one, these relations are absolutely inseparable from each other. Thus, as the second relation cannot exist without the prior existence of the first (in virtue of the notion of Revelation), it is clear that the second relation includes the first within it and, necessarily and without any doubt, presupposes it. Finally, as we have seen that the Pope in the act of Eucharistic communion - and it is thus that we are considering him here (see no. 37) - is the living human Person who contains within

himself each and every one of the members of the Church (see no. 38), we can conclude by saying that the words *This is my body*, inasmuch as they serve as a bond between the Person of Christ himself and the Person of the Pope representing the Church, perfectly express the bond of full ecclesial communion realized through faith under the form of obedience. Finally, given that, on one hand, it is properly in the Holy Spirit that Christ pronounces the words *This is my body*; and that, on the other hand, the Pope and Mary being each other's spouse, it is fundamentally the human person of Mary who is the first of all the faithful of Christ to have given - even before the Pope - her faith to the Holy Spirit, her mystical Spouse; we can summarize these first three chapters by saying: with respect to the spiritual aspect of the mediation of Mary, ecclesial communion through the Eucharist rests essentially in the faith of Mary given to the Word of God in the Holy Spirit, a faith understood spiritually, and also corporeally (in virtue of its spousal dimension), and a faith that is shared by each and every one of the faithful of the Church, by means of and through the intermediary of the person of the Pope, the Spouse of Mary in Christ.

46. Before exploring, in the following chapters, the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, an action described by Saint Paul in his epistles, let us read what a well-known French theologian, Father Louis Bouyer (1913-2004), Oratorian, wrote in the 1950s about Mary in her relation to the grace of God in the Church, thus confirming, by means of other words, our own conclusions: *Free correspondence with divine grace, in virtue of which (while it is nonetheless true that it is always God who operates the willing and the doing in us) we ourselves have the duty to work towards our salvation, can never exist other than enveloped and, as it were, led by that which is perfectly realized in the Virgin Mary. The holy and believing freedom of Mary will perpetually beget our own. There is no human faith that accepts grace other than by copying hers and by allowing itself to be borne and absorbed in hers.* (Louis Bouyer, "Le Culte de la Mère de Dieu dans l'Église catholique" (*The Cult of the Mother of God in the Catholic Church*), Éditions de Chevetogne, no edition date, imprimatur May 5, 1954, printing completed on May 24, 1954, pp. 16-17) And speaking of Catholic Christians: *With Mary, as with a mother, they know that this ontological reality [of the person of Mary] extends itself through an equally inexhaustible psychological reality: that of an intercession that is one with her Fiat, with that*

*act of faith through which she surrendered herself to grace and surrendered all of humanity with her. Thus, it is, as it were, inside the merits of the Virgin, to use Western terminology, or included within her free response to grace (for merit is that, and nothing else), that our own germinate. It is within the prayer of the Virgin that our prayers are taken up, by the Son she conceived, in the Spirit who covered her with his shadow, to the invisible Father ... (ibidem, pp. 18-19)*

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **ECCLESIAL COMMUNION IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**AS SEEN BY SAINT PAUL  
IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS**





47. Ecclesial communion is realized, through the ministry of the Pope and the mediation of Mary, in the Holy Spirit, through faith in the Son of God made man. In other words, intrinsically, ecclesial communion is a true mystery, since all that is realized in God - and the Holy Spirit is God - surpasses the bounds of created reason. This is why we must have recourse to Holy Scripture, in which God reveals himself, in order to understand a little of this mystery, that is to say in order to describe what can be known about it. Of all the books of Holy Scripture, the epistles of Saint Paul constitute the best source for understanding ecclesial communion in the Holy Spirit. For the union of the Apostle with Christ had nothing human about it: it was based solely on supernatural faith and on the divine Power of the Holy Spirit, since Saint Paul, contrary to the other Apostles, was chosen by Christ not during his life, but rather after his resurrection (cf. Acts 9:15).

48. When we open the Bible, after the Acts of the Apostles we find the epistles of Saint Paul, ordered from the longest to the shortest, from the epistle to the Romans to the one to Philemon. This order does not take into account the chronological order in which the various epistles were written. But is the chronological order of the epistles better than the order chosen by the editor of the Bible? Nothing is less certain. For respecting the chronological order would be of interest only if we wanted to follow the evolution of Saint Paul's thought on our subject. Now, we would wager that Saint Paul certainly did not write everything he understood about the Holy Spirit and his action in the Church. Why? Quite simply because every Christian soul possesses a secret garden, reserved to God and to the soul in question. Thus, for practical reasons, we have opted to follow the order in which the epistles of Saint Paul appear in the Bible. For the same reasons, we will read only the first four epistles: the one to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, and the one to the Galatians.

49. In his epistle to the Romans, Saint Paul tells us: *Paul, a servant of*

*Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord ... (Rom. 1:1-4)* Let us note three important words that relate to the Holy Spirit: power, holiness, resurrection. These are three characteristics of the Spirit of God: he gives power, he sanctifies, he gives eternal life.

50. Power is certainly the first of all the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. He is the Power of God who comes to the aid of our humanity. Did not the Angel Gabriel say to Mary, at the Annunciation: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35)?* The power of God is given to us only if we are weak, only if we acknowledge our nothingness, our smallness before He who is the Almighty. It is through participation in the Cross of Christ that the Power of God is given to us. For it is at the price of the departure of Christ on the Cross of Calvary that the Holy Spirit was sent for the first time to the Apostles: *It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)* Only when we humble ourselves with Christ will the Power of the Cross come to us. It is of this that Saint Paul speaks when he says: *The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:18)* If we humble ourselves with Christ on his way of the Cross, then we will be exalted with him, and the power of God will be given to us. The power of God, which is the Holy Spirit, is the fruit of our humility: *In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes.'* (Luke 10:21)

51. How could we fully participate in the Passion of the Lord if not through Eucharistic communion? So it is through this sacramental action that the Omnipotence of God is communicated to us, insofar as we receive the Lord in this spirit of participation in his redeeming Work. When the priest takes the host and touches it with his hands, is this not a sign that the Omnipotence of God has been given to him? For who can place his hand on the Almighty, if not he who is almighty in the



Almighty? But what can be said of a sinner or a sacrilegious person who also would place his hand on the Eucharist? Can a sinner or a sacrilegious person be almighty? No, certainly not. For omnipotence is the fruit of the salvation of God. But this sinner or sacrilegious person can nonetheless play his part in the Passion of Christ, not as a conscious and voluntary victim, but rather as a tormentor and torturer. Saint Paul tells us so quite clearly: *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.* (1 Cor. 11:27-28) So we see that the omnipotence of God, that is to say his Holy Spirit, is given to us only if we are holy in Christ, the Holy One among the Holy. The Spirit of God is first and foremost a Spirit of holiness.

52. We find the notion of holiness in the very appellation of this divine Person: we call him the Holy Spirit. We may ask ourselves why the Father and the Son are not called the Holy Father and the Holy Son. Certainly, we may call them that, since all of the Divine Trinity is holy: our God is a thrice *Holy* God (cf. Isaiah 6:3, for example). Similarly, Jesus calls his Father: *Holy Father* (John 17:11). And Christ is called: *the Holy One of God* (Mark 1:24). But it is nonetheless true that the usage has spread in the Church of referring to the third Person of the Divine Trinity as the *Holy Spirit*. So it is to this Person that we must attribute the holiness of God, not in virtue of a purely human decision, but rather because the Church is ceaselessly guided and assisted by this same Spirit about whom we are speaking.

53. Holiness consists in perfection lived ceaselessly and always. This is what Jesus wanted to affirm when he said: *You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* (Matt. 5:48) Now God alone is perfect: as an eternal being who exists by himself, without depending on any other being than himself, God is the only being who is truly perfect. The holiness of God is thus his fundamental attribute, for it is based directly on his existence, which is eternal and independent of any other being. So this allows us to say that, if the third Person of the Divine Trinity is called the Holy Spirit, this same Person is, as it were, at the heart and at the very foundation of all the Divine Trinity.

54. We commonly say that the Father is the Principle of the whole Divine Trinity, that he is the Principle without Principle, that is to say he is the divine Person from whom the Son is begotten and from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds. But the sole mover of the generation of the Son by the Father is properly love, the mutual love of the Father and of the Son which is personalized precisely in the Holy Spirit. So when the Father begets his Son, he does so always in Love, that is to say in the Spirit who unites the Father and the Son. In other words, even if the Father is truly the Principle of the whole Divine Trinity, the Holy Spirit, as the mover of the generation of the Son by the Father, can justly be considered the heart and the foundation of the whole Divine Trinity. So the Spirit of God is the divine Person who is Holy par excellence, although this excellence itself derives from the Father and the Son, the principle of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.

55. To speak of the holiness of the Spirit of God plunges us into this eternity of the divinity. This surpasses us: our mind is limited and we cannot understand this in a natural manner. But the intervention and aid of the grace of God can help us to grasp a little of this Mystery. For grace is first a gift of knowledge, not a knowledge that is intrinsically intellectual, but rather a knowledge of love. Grace allows us to know the Love of the Thrice-Holy God. *We know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16) O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:25-26)*

56. This knowledge of love is a knowledge that is wholly free. If we wish to receive it, then we must ask for it, in accordance with the will of God, who has no other desire than to see us become Saints through his Spirit. To know the holiness of God is to live it every day of our life, it is to be faithful, day after day, to the Spirit of God who guides his Church. Now, for living the holiness of God always and ceaselessly, there is no better means than Eucharistic communion. Therein is all the life of the Thrice-Holy God: *As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. (John 6:57)* But to speak of the Eucharist is to speak of the Resurrection: *He who eats my flesh and*

*drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* (John 6:54) The Spirit of God and the Resurrection: that is the next subject of our research.

57. Saint Paul speaks clearly of this relation between the Holy Spirit and the resurrection of Christ: *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.* (Rom. 8:11) And elsewhere: *You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.* (Col. 2:12) The Spirit of God is at work in the resurrection of souls just as in the resurrection of bodies: he is truly Lord and the giver of life (cf. Credo).

58. Is the action of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of souls similar to his action in the resurrection of bodies? A priori, no; since the soul is immortal, while the body can die. However, these two actions of the Spirit of God - with respect to the soul and to the body - are similar to each other if we consider them in themselves, but are different if we consider them with respect to their object, which is the soul or the body. Thus, the resurrection of souls and the resurrection of bodies are different from each other with respect to us, but they are similar with respect to God, that is to say with respect to the eternal life given by the Spirit of God.

59. In other terms, we can see that the resurrection of souls is an action of the Holy Spirit working inside us. Indeed, this resurrection of the soul is realized through the reception of the sacraments, and firstly by the reception of baptism. Now, the sacraments can only be applied to living persons, that is to say to those whose soul is united to their body. Thus, the action of the Spirit of God on souls is accomplished solely inside us. On the other hand, we can see that the resurrection of bodies is an action of the Holy Spirit working both inside us and outside us. Indeed, the resurrection of the body consists in the reunion of the soul and the body of the person who is resurrected. So the Spirit of God must act in us, that is to say in our soul; and outside us in giving back to our soul, through the glorious re-creation of our body, the corporeal dimension that it then possesses for all eternity, but which it can already

have in this present life, through a spiritual life authentically lived in the body of Christ, which is the Church.

60. Certainly, this vision of the resurrection of souls and bodies can surpass our intellect. But is the Holy Spirit not there to teach all things: *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.* (John 16:13)? So if, already in this life, we are resurrected in our soul by the Spirit of God, then how can we die? For the soul is the principle that animates the body. Moreover, by that very fact, the resurrection of the soul must necessarily entail the resurrection of the body. Consequently, if the Spirit of God has resurrected our soul, it is also he who will resurrect our body. The resurrection of the soul is first: it always takes place before the resurrection of the body. There is a resurrection before death, and a resurrection after death. But the resurrection of the soul is the precondition of the resurrection of the body, for time is absolutely irreversible!

61. The resurrection of the soul is accomplished by means of the sacraments. Saint Paul explicitly mentions baptism: *You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.* (Col. 2:12) But baptism does not suffice: if we can receive the Holy Eucharist, then the Body of Christ is necessary in order to obtain for our soul the glory of resurrection in the Spirit. Indeed, the Eucharist is the pledge of the resurrection of the body: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* (John 6:54) Now, as the resurrection of the soul is the precondition of the resurrection of the body, and as, for any man or woman who is *in via*, that is to say capable of receiving the sacraments, body and soul are united to each other by the simple principle of life, then no one can be assured of the resurrection of his body without also, and first, having assurance of the resurrection of his soul. Thus, it is clear that the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, is necessary in order for our soul to receive from the Holy Spirit the glory of resurrection.

62. The Spirit of God is Lord and he gives life! The Eucharist gives us eternal life! So there exists a relation between the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist. What is this relation? In what does it consist? Can the Holy

Spirit be given without the Eucharist? Or the Eucharist without the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit work when the Eucharist cannot be given, such as, for example, outside the Church ?

63. Saint Paul writes: *Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.* (Rom. 5:1-5)

64. Let us note this last sentence: *God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.* This text by Saint Paul points out that there exists a difference between *God's love* and *the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.* God's love has been poured into our hearts *through* the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. This means that the Holy Spirit himself, as a gift of God, acts in us in order to pour the love of God into our hearts. This love of God which is poured into our hearts becomes for us a powerful love, a sanctifying love, a resurrecting love, since the Spirit of God, as we saw previously, is the power of God, the holiness of God, the resurrection of God.

65. The love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit is the love that saves the whole man for eternal life in God; he who has received this love hopes, free from worry, that God will grant him salvation for eternal life: *Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.* He who has received this love of God through the Holy Spirit is without worry, he is in peace: *Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* So the Holy Spirit who is in us acts in such a way that we are in peace with God and with ourselves, firmly hoping that the salvation of God will be granted to us for all eternity.

66. But, as we have noted, there is a precondition given by Saint Paul, about which he speaks at length in his epistle to the Romans, which is justification by faith: *Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Indeed, how could the Holy Spirit, he who

pours into us the love of God and gives us his peace, act in us if we do not allow him, through faith, to dispose of us according to his will? For that is precisely what faith is: to freely make ourselves available to divine action in us. Through faith, *man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals.* (Council of Vatican II, Constitution Dei Verbum, no. 5)

67. Welcoming the Spirit of God, Mary says to the Angel Gabriel: *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.* (Luke 1:38) From that instant, Mary was saved, giving to God her entire person through this act of perfect faith. From that instant, Mary became the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the Mediatrix of all graces, Cooperatrix in the Work of Salvation in Christ Jesus. For, firm in hope through the love of God poured into her heart, she began to work for the salvation of all. This is why she immediately went to bring to Elizabeth and to John the Baptist the Good News that she had just received (cf. Luke 1:39). Mary thus gives us the example to follow: if the love of God has been poured into our hearts, it is so that we might bring the Good News that is in us to everyone!

68. Through faith, the Spirit of God comes into our hearts in order to pour into them the love of God! Now, each Sunday, each day, we celebrate the Mystery of faith: the Eucharist. At each Eucharistic celebration, we are invited to proclaim our faith in Jesus the Savior, we can say to God once again that we are completely disposed to welcome him into us. And, in fact, we do receive him through the sacrament of the Eucharist, in the measure of our faith. So we have in this sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ the best means of salvation that God has given us in his mercy. But what about those who cannot receive the Eucharist?

69. We can already sketch out our answer by saying that the Eucharist is not the only means, as a sacrament, that allows us to proclaim our faith in God in order that he might act in us. The Eucharist is the best means for this, but not the only one. Indeed, as a means, the Eucharist is associated with all of creation and with every human work accomplished with a just and pure intention. Indeed, the signs of bread and wine express this universal link of the Eucharist. It is in this sense

that salvation can reach those whom the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, does not reach. It is in this sense that the Holy Spirit can pour the love of God into the heart of all those whom God calls to himself.

70. In his epistle to the Romans, Saint Paul tells us: *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* (Rom. 8:16) These words of Saint Paul illustrate what we can call communion in the spirit, or spiritual communion. This act of communion consists in a union between God, who is spirit (cf. Jn. 4:24), that is to say whose nature is of the spiritual order, and the spirit of the man or woman in whom the Lord dwells. This communion is ordinarily realized solely by grace, the divine means given to man to allow him to freely go to God. But, given that the spiritual soul of man is united, in a manner that is simple and one, with his body, and this by the very principle of life, then another means is joined to the ordinary means of grace, not an extraordinary one, but rather a means that completes the ordinary means of grace. This means is none other than that of the body and of all that constitutes the corporeal world with which the body is in contact by means of the five corporeal senses. Communion in the spirit can thus be accomplished by grace or by the body, or rather by grace and by the body. So communion in the spirit is divided into three categories: spiritual communion (by grace), corporeal communion (by the body), and spiritual and corporeal communion (by grace and by the body).

71. As we are body and soul, the most common communion in the spirit is, without any doubt, that which is both spiritual and corporeal. This communion in the spirit is that which is accomplished during Eucharistic communion, for then, the Spirit of God, which rests on Christ, enters into communion with us by grace and by the body: for to receive the Eucharist, one must have sanctifying grace, and one must place one's hand on the Body of Christ and be corporeally nourished by it. It is of this communion that Saint Paul speaks when he says: *The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.* (1 Cor. 10:16-17)

72. Communion in the spirit by grace is proper to those who believe in Christ without yet having received baptism; so it is proper to

catechumens. Indeed, only Christ can bring the Holy Spirit to men; and only faith, which is solely spiritual, allows man to enter into communion with the Spirit of God, and to receive, by anticipation, the Gift of God.

73. Communion in the spirit by the body (an appellation that may seem contradictory!) relates to all other circumstances. So it concerns all those whom God calls to his communion without the knowledge of Christ the Savior being directly necessary. This communion in the spirit by the body can only be realized if the body is governed by the spirit, that is to say if the body is, as it were, spiritualized and in a way made similar to an element of the spiritual order. For the spirit is the superior part of the soul, that is to say the superior part of the principle that animates the body. Understood in this way, the appellation *communion in the spirit by the body* is no longer contradictory but, rather, well-founded.

74. It is clear that, if the body is the means through which to enter into communion with the Spirit of God, then the body, being but one with God, becomes an essential part of the image of God in man: God and man are but one, God and man are similar to each other, and so man is the image of God, not only in his soul, but also in his body. This is what Saint Paul implies when he says: *When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts.* (Rom. 2:14-15)

75. Indeed, Saint Paul is saying that the pagans - those who do not know Christ - manifest through their acts (which supposes the action of the body and of the soul) their relation of dependence (the law) with respect to the Creator and, thus, their union with him. The pagans look at their neighbors and they see in them the law of God, just as it is in themselves. They see the actions of men and women united to the Creator by their respect for the law of God, and by their obedience to that law, and thus they see the image of God that is in every man and woman, both body and soul.

76. This has been so ever since the Original Sin, ever since man lost the grace of God that had taught him interiorly. Adam was the first man to live his union with God in this way, remembering the image of God that



he had once known in perfection, and thus offering an example for his descendants to follow. Before the flood, this mode of union to God sometimes attained perfection, as in the case of Enoch, about whom it is written: *Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.* (Gen. 5:24) So we can see that, by the mercy of God, the life of union with God is possible without a direct relation to Christ (an indirect relation, by means of all of creation, is indeed absolutely necessary), although this union to God outside the Church remains for everyone a mystery that God alone knows perfectly!

77. Previously (see no. 70) we commented on this passage of Saint Paul: *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* (Rom. 8:16) But just before writing these words, Saint Paul declares: *All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* (Rom. 8:14) How should this be understood? Does the Spirit of God lead us like a mother leading her children by the hand? It is a little like that, for let us not forget that the Spouse of the Holy Spirit is the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Church.

78. *All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* Can we fully understand these words of the Apostle without making reference to the mediation of Mary? Certainly not. On one hand, if we are led by the Spirit of God, the Lord thus manifests his omnipotence over us. On the other hand, the Spirit of God being wholly Love, he can only lead us in love, and thus in a manner in which we are absolutely free: it is in the freedom of love that the Holy Spirit leads the children of God. Thus we are placed directly in the context of the union of the grace of God and the free will of man. And so it is fitting to make reference to the mediation of Mary, if we want to consider Mary the universal mediatrix of all graces, as the Church commonly believes.

79. Saint Paul speaks to us abundantly about the Holy Spirit. Not having known Christ while he lived on earth (see no. 47), Saint Paul, like us, had no other experience of divine communication than through the Spirit of God himself. And his experience was exceptional, as he was taken *up to the third heaven, up to paradise* (2 Cor. 12:2-4). In contrast, Saint Paul speaks to us very little about the Most Blessed Virgin Mary; he simply says that Jesus is *born of a woman* (Gal. 4:4). But as, in a

spousal union, Husband and Wife are but one, we can nevertheless understand, in a certain manner, the actions of the Wife by considering solely the acts of the Husband. And this applies particularly to the union of the Holy Spirit and Mary, since she wishes to do nothing but the will of God, always and in all things, a will that is none other than that of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son by mode of will.

80. *All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* If we understand this in light of what was said above (see no. 70), then the harmony between the grace of God and the free will of man becomes altogether manifest. Indeed, if the communion in the spirit between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man is realized by the spirit and by the body, then God, through his Spirit, is omnipotent in the action of his grace on the spirit of man, while man remains sovereignly free, in his dignity as a creature of God, by his corporeal movement in the universe.

81. What we have just said applies to he who has communion with God by the spirit and by the body, as well as to he who has communion solely by the spirit, the catechumen, this last state being but one temporary step towards communion with Christ through baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist.

82. As for he who has communion with God solely by the body, the action of the Holy Spirit can be accomplished in an ordinary manner, but also in an extraordinary manner. Our first example, one that is quite striking, is that of the Magi called by God to go and adore his Son Jesus in Bethlehem. God did not hesitate to make use of a star to manifest his omnipotence to pagans: *When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.'* (Matt. 2:1-2) Perhaps more spectacular was the miracle of the conversion of Saint Paul. Let us listen to his account: *As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.'* Now those who were with me saw the

light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' And when I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. (Acts 22:6-11) And so, thanks to Saint Paul, some light has been shed on the action of the Holy Spirit and that of Mary Mediatrix in the economy of grace. In summary, it is almost as if Mary were holding us by the hand to guide us in following the Spirit of God, just as Saul's companions took him by the hand to lead him to Damascus, where he was baptized in water and in the Spirit.

83. Saint Paul writes to the Romans: *We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.* (Rom. 8:22-24) This text includes three tenses: the past tense, the present tense, and the future tense. These correspond to three distinct moments described by Saint Paul: a past moment, a present moment, and a future moment. The past moment relates to the creation: *The whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now.* The present moment relates to the Spirit of God in us: *We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit.* The future moment relates to the resurrection of bodies at the end of time: *We groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

84. The present moment, the moment of the Spirit of God, is fleeting, elusive. The present moment immediately tumbles into the past in order to make way for the future moment. So the moment of the Spirit is ceaselessly in tension between the past moment and the future moment. It is on these two moments - the past and the future - that the moment of the Spirit depends: the moment of the Spirit ceaselessly becomes a past moment that calls for the coming of a future moment. Indeed, faithful to the Spirit of God, Saint Paul says: *One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* (Phil. 3:13-14)

85. The past moment is a moment of the memory: it is the memory that allows the human spirit to, in a way, rejoin the past. This past moment

is what the present moment tumbles towards, it is where the moment of the Spirit seems to lose itself in order to become itself more fully: *The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.* (Jn. 14:26)

86. The present moment par excellence, the one in which the Spirit acts in fullness, is without any doubt that of the Eucharist, when the sacrifice of Christ is actualized - made *present* - for us, who are alive now, by the power of the Spirit of God. So we partake of the sacrifice of Christ in the Spirit of God: we, who are now alive in the Spirit, remember the sacrifice of Christ. The priest, bearing the seal of the Spirit through the sacrament of Orders, acts in the name of the whole Church to accomplish the Order of Christ: *Do this in memory of me.* (See SCGC, no. 59 et seq.; BOTB, no. 87 et seq.)

87. The future moment is the one that takes the place of the present moment: ceaselessly, the present moment tumbles into the past to make way for the future moment. Now, Christ called the Spirit the *Paraclete*. Moreover, there are two *Paracletes*. There are not two Holy Spirits, but there are indeed two *Paracletes*. Jesus says: *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth ...* (Jn. 14:16-17) Jesus himself is the first *Paraclete*: he is the one whom the Father sent to earth in order to give us his life through the Blood of his Cross. And he is also the last *Paraclete*, being the Alpha and the Omega of all creation (cf. Rev. 21:6). Consequently, if the future moment takes the place of the present moment, it is in order to signify and to realize the fact that Christ, the last *Paraclete*, takes the place of the Holy Spirit, the *other Paraclete*. Calling to Christ Jesus as he returns at the end of time, *the Spirit and the Bride say, Come!* (Rev. 22:17)

88. All of Saint Paul's thought is turned towards the future, towards the future moment: *Straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal ...* And in his Epistle to the Romans, he insists on this call of the coming of the Lord who will restore all things in him: *We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* The Spirit is he who urges us forward; he makes way for Christ, and invites us to do the same. The Spirit is he who urged Saint John the Baptist to declare, speaking of Christ: *He must*

*increase, but I must decrease. (Jn. 3:30)*

89. We have already commented on these words of Saint Paul: *We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies ... (Rom. 8:23)* In the same context, and continuing his discussion of this subject, the Apostle writes: *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what the Spirit desires, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom. 8:26-27)* These words of Saint Paul concern those who are saved in Christ, those to whom God has given the first fruits of the Spirit, that is to say eternal life already begun on earth, before its full manifestation at the second coming of Christ and the final resurrection. What Saint Paul says in the following lines shows this clearly: *For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)* Saint Peter, for his part, is not afraid to affirm: *I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. (1 Peter 5:1)*

90. The language of the two Apostles is clear: the Christian has a certain assurance of his eternal salvation! This means that, having received the first fruits of the spirit, the Christian hopes for the salvation of God in such a firm manner that he is already saved in this life. Saint Paul would simply say: *In this hope we were saved. (Rom. 8:24)* On one hand, the Spirit is in us; and on the other hand, we firmly hope that God will save us in his Son for all eternity. There is an action of God, who is Spirit, and there is a spiritual action of the man who hopes in God. These two actions end up being but one, for that which is spiritual - the action of God and the action of man - is essentially simple and one. So here the action of God and the action of man are similar to each other, since they are but one. When man hopes for something, he wishes for that something to be realized: he expresses from the bottom of his heart a desire concerning the realization of this or that. When man hopes for eternal salvation, he desires that this salvation be realized and that his soul be, eternally, in the beatitude of paradise. This type of desire or

wish is interiorly expressed through prayer, which can become exterior by means of words, gestures, or bodily positions. So it is through prayer that we obtain the salvation of God: he who prays obtains salvation for himself!

91. Similarly, the Spirit expresses a desire that in a way divinizes the desire or prayer of man. Saint Paul calls these desires of the Spirit *sighs too deep for words*. (Rom. 8:26) These desires of the Spirit bring to the prayers of man all the fullness that they could not otherwise have, for man does not know what he asks. When he asks for eternal beatitude, the spirit of man cannot perfectly understand what he desires with all his strength: *The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words*. Let us recall the episode of the Transfiguration of the Lord, when Peter wanted to remain forever on the mountain with Jesus, as if it were already heaven (and it was, in fact, a foretaste of heavenly beatitude), saying: *Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah*. (Luke 9:33) And Saint Luke adds: *He did not know what he said*. (Luke 9:33)

92. Once man has expressed this desire for eternal life, if he conceived this desire with a just and pure intention, having no other intention than the glory of God and the salvation of his soul, then man receives from God the gift of the Spirit, the *first fruits* of which Saint Paul speaks. Man prays and the Spirit comes! Then the prayer of man is no longer a simple prayer: it is a prayer lost in the immensity of the desires of the Spirit of God. *He who searches the hearts of men knows what the Spirit desires, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God*. (Rom. 8:27)

93. But, as we know, the action of man is never first: it is not man who has the initiative in his salvation. It is God who, first, gives his grace to man in order that the latter, responding to the call of grace, might pray to God, asking him to save him for all eternity. As Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians: *By grace you have been saved! ... For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God*. (Eph. 2:5 & 8) So the salvific action of God, that is to say the realization of ecclesial communion in the Holy Spirit, can be summarized as follows:

the grace of prayer is offered to man; if he responds to the grace of God, man prays for the Lord to save him; if the prayer of man is worthy to be granted, God sends his Spirit, who goes into man to strengthen his prayer, accomplished through divine grace. Saint Paul described this in the following manner: *Those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.* (Rom. 8:30)





# **CHAPTER 5**

## **ECCLESIAL COMMUNION IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**AS SEEN BY SAINT PAUL  
IN HIS FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS**





94. In the first epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, we read these words, among the Apostle's most intimate: *As it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him (Is. 64:4), God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* (1 Cor. 2:9-11) Here Saint Paul communicates to us the very principle of the entire economy of the Revelation given by God to man. He briefly describes the various terms of this divine action toward man: he speaks of the term of origin, which is God himself; of the term of destination, which is man; of the intermediary term, which is the Spirit of God; and of the objective term, the goods that man receives from God through the intermediary of the Spirit. So there are always four terms in the economy of salvation: God, the Spirit, man, and the divine goods. There are three subjective and active terms: God, the Spirit, and man; and one objective and passive term: the divine goods.

95. But Saint Paul stresses in his discourse the Person of the Holy Spirit, the intermediary term. Let us note already that, as the intermediary term, the Spirit appears immediately as the Spouse of Mary Mediatrix, the human person whom God has associated with his work of salvation as mediatrix in the one Mediator, Christ. For Saint Paul, it is indeed the Spirit who *searches everything, even the depths of God*, and who transmits the divine goods to man by means of revelation: *What God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit.* (1 Cor. 2:9-10)

96. To help us understand this action of the Spirit who *searches everything, even the depths of God*, Saint Paul compares it to the action of a man who, with his own spirit, looks at himself in an effort to know himself: *For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the*

*Spirit of God.* By engaging in such contemplation, man tends to know himself; similarly, the Spirit of God perfectly knows the divinity itself; *he searches everything, even the depths of God.*

97. But the knowledge of the divinity that the Spirit of God possesses is a knowledge that gives life. The Spirit of God's knowledge is not simply an intellectual knowledge: it is fundamentally a knowledge of will and of love. The Holy Spirit, indeed, proceeds from the Father and the Son by mode of will, in a mutual love of each other. This is why the Lord Jesus addresses his Father, saying: *This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* (Jn. 17:3) Saint John expresses this in another way in his first epistle: *Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God.* (1 Jn. 4:7)

98. As man possesses various faculties of knowledge, these natural gifts must be directed first to leading him to the eternal life to which God calls him. But, as may happen with any natural gift, man always risks misusing the gift of knowledge. It is, moreover, what happened in the Original Sin, when man used this gift of knowledge against the express will of God, who had forbidden him from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (cf. Gen. 3:3-5). The first man and woman used, in a disordered manner, the gift of knowledge that God had given them in order that they might obtain the blessing of eternal life: *Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.'* (Gen. 3:22)

99. Let us note that the notions of the intermediary and the middle are essential here. Knowledge is a means, and not an end in itself. It is a means, an intermediary, with a view to the end, which is God alone. Knowledge must be situated in a just mean if it is to be a means and an intermediary with a view to the end to which it is directed. So it is not without reason that the author of the book of Genesis pointed out that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was situated in the middle of the garden: *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'* (Gen. 3:2-3)

100. Knowledge is not an end in itself. The Holy Spirit gives us knowledge of God in order for us to obtain the eternal life that he himself is. The knowledge of God is meant to lead us to his life and to his eternal love. So the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not at the exact center of the Garden of Eden, but was placed beside the tree of life which dominates the center of that place of delights: *Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow ... the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:9) And now, in the restored and renewed heavenly Jerusalem, in the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month ... (Rev. 22:2)*

101. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Saint Paul develops the preceding text, saying: *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? (Is. 40:13) But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:12-16)*

102. Let us note this last affirmation: *We have the mind of Christ.* What could this mind of Christ be, if not divine thought, thought that has God as its object, thought through which Christ conceives in his human spirit all that God is in himself? Indeed, when Christ thinks, he conceives and begets in his spirit a thought. As Christ is a perfect man, similar to God who created man in his image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26), he becomes similar to his Father when he produces in himself a thought: Christ, in conceiving a thought in his spirit, becomes similar to his Father. So Christ-Man, even if he thinks about some reality other than that of his Father, cannot fail to also think, at the same time, about he who begets him, as God, from all eternity. When Christ thinks in his human spirit, he immediately enters into a relation with his Father by the fact that he perfectly resembles him, although in the manner of a creature. When Christ thinks of his Father, he becomes the human image of his Father, and thus, the thought of Christ-Man becomes divine, while remaining

human, proper to Christ-Man.

103. If the thought of Christ is divine, then this thought is not a fruit of the faith of Christ. And therefore we who have the thought of Christ have a thought that does not come from faith, even if faith is necessary for this thought to be transmitted to us by Christ himself. We must first believe in Christ the Son of God and true Man before he, Christ, whose own thought was originally in him, might convey to us this same divine thought. But, once we have received in us this thought of Christ, the following principle is applicable: *The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.* The spiritual man is he who has received the thought of Christ. As the thought of Christ is divine, the spiritual man judges all things, as God himself judges all things. The spiritual man receives from God himself all the light he needs to live his faith with prudence and in due measure, to judge in a manner that is sound and holy the situations in which he finds himself throughout his life, day after day, as long as he remains in obedience to the law of God and in the humility that befits the Sons of God.

104. *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.* With these words, Saint Paul teaches us who it is who allows us to put into action the thought of Christ we have received: it is the Holy Spirit! The thought of Christ is a good that, in itself, is passive, just as the Eucharist, as a sacrament under the form of food, is a passive good. Thus it is necessary for the Holy Spirit, he who proceeds from the Father and the Son in the bosom of the Divine Trinity, to act in us in order for us to be able to obtain help from this divine gift.

105. *The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.* The unspiritual man is he who has not received the thought of Christ; for either he does not believe in Christ, or he did not continue to believe long enough to receive the thought of Christ. Faith is a trial: we must undergo this trial and persevere in it until the end of our life. When God judges that our faith has become solid and strong

enough, he gives us the gift of the thought of his Son, which the Holy Spirit comes to maintain in us. We must undergo this trial, just as Jesus underwent the trial of the Cross before being able to send the Holy Spirit to the world, acting in common with the Father: *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.* (Jn. 14:16-17) *They are folly to him.* The things of the Spirit of God, the thought of Christ, these are folly to the world! For these are lived in the Cross of Christ, which is *folly to Gentiles* (1 Cor. 1:23).

106. Let us continue our reading of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Saint Paul writes: *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.* (1 Cor. 3:16-17) Here Saint Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as God dwelling in a temple, the temple of God that we are: *God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.*

107. Seen from one perspective, the temple of God appears to be fundamentally spiritual: with respect to us, and with respect to the divine guest of this temple. With respect to us, for, strictly speaking, we are men and women and not temples: with respect to us, this notion of the temple can only be spiritual. With respect to the guest of this temple, that is to say with respect to the Holy Spirit, for *God is spirit* (Jn. 4:24): with respect to the guest of this temple, this notion of the temple, similarly, can only be spiritual.

108. If the notion of the temple of God, or the temple of the Holy Spirit, which we are, is spiritual, then we must be spiritual to understand it, and, by that very fact, to live it in our spirit, and in the Spirit of God: in spiritually understanding what the temple of God is, we adhere to it through faith and we live it through charity in the Holy Spirit. As we are both body and soul, material and spiritual, in order to understand and to live as temples of God, it is necessary that, in us, the spiritual dominates the material, that the soul dominates the body. But, if, in us, the material dominates the spiritual, if the body dominates the soul, then for us it is as if the notion of the temple of God were nonexistent. If we have never had in us this knowledge of the temple of God, then if our

body dominates our soul, we are in a simple state of waiting, often unconsciously, for this knowledge of the temple of God. But, if we have already had this knowledge in us, then if our body were ever to re-dominate our soul, we would be responsible for the loss of that knowledge; this is what Saint Paul calls the destruction of the temple of God: *If any one destroys God's temple ... This is, strictly speaking, the fault of he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, the fault of he for whom there is no forgiveness (Lk. 12:10): If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. (1 Cor. 3:17)*

109. Seen from another perspective, the temple of God appears to be corporeal; indeed, Saint John, following the example of Jesus himself, clearly declares this in recounting the episode of the driving of the money changers from the Temple: *The Jews then said to him, 'What sign have you to show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he spoke of the temple of his body. (Jn. 2:18-21)* As the spiritual aspect of the temple of God is fundamental, it is clear that its corporeal aspect can only be taken in its strict and proper meaning; once again, as we are truly men and women, we cannot be true temples in the material and corporeal sense of the word. Thus, since Christ truly spoke of the temple of his body, then we too, like him, are corporeal temples of the Holy Spirit, temples that are corporeal not in a natural manner, in accordance with the realities that come under the senses, but rather temples that are supernaturally, or mystically, corporeal.

110. This second aspect of the temple of the Holy Spirit allows us to better understand how the destruction of the temple that we are could take place. Indeed, in virtue of this corporeal aspect, it is clear that the temple of God is not limited solely to our own person: if there were only the spiritual aspect of the temple of God, then this notion could only concern our own person, and there would be as many temples of the Holy Spirit as there are faithful members of the Church of God; but due to the corporeal aspect of the temple of God, this reality, which is proper to each person in a spiritual manner, is in a way shared and communicated to the entire universe outside the human person who is a temple of the Spirit. Consequently, any exterior influence can become



harmful to the existence of the temple of God that we are. And, in fact, Jesus himself was put to death by people exterior to him, and his body, the temple of God par excellence, was separated from its soul, the source and foundation of the temple of God in him.

111. If there are, outside us, harmful influences, there are also, outside us, good and positive influences, and much more powerful ones: those of Jesus and Mary, both of them body and soul in Heaven, living always, interceding or praying for us. *The temple of the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 6:19) that we are will never be destroyed if we remain faithful to God in the hope for eternal beatitude. This assurance is given to us by the Eucharist, the Mystery that tests our faith and that, in testing it, strengthens it and makes it powerful against death itself: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* (Jn. 6:54) The Eucharist brings us perfect, though mysterious, knowledge of the temple of God that we are: he who receives the Body of Christ in the spirit of a son of God receives the pledge of his eternal resurrection!

112. After various recommendations on morality, Saint Paul continues his first letter to the Corinthians by speaking of the charisms of the Spirit: *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may have been moved. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.* (1 Cor. 12:1-3)

113. When a Christian declares, *Jesus is Lord*, everyone can hear him: other Christians as well as those who are not disciples of Christ. But if other Christians hear him, it is as if these words of faith were addressed to Christ himself. Indeed, Christians are *the Body of Christ* (1 Cor. 12:27): with Christ and in him, they all form *but a single body* (1 Cor. 10:17). So when a Christian says: *Jesus is Lord*, what Saint Peter accomplished for the first time in Caesarea Philippi is realized anew in the Church today; indeed, Saint Peter said, addressing Christ, present before him: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!* (Matt. 16:16) This means that Jesus, the man we call Christ, is the Lord.

114. Saint Paul declares that, if someone says *Jesus is the Lord*, he does so under the action of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, and long before Saint Paul, Jesus declared to Simon Peter: *Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.* (Matt. 16:17) So it is clear that, if it is the Holy Spirit who allows Christians to say *Jesus is Lord*, then it is strictly speaking the Spirit of the Father who acts in them in order for them to proclaim their faith. But as the words of a person reveal what that same person has conceived in his spirit, we see that it is the very Son of the Father - who is expressed in the words *Jesus is Lord* - who allows the revelation and the knowledge of the Spirit of the Father. So, as it is revealed and known to us, the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.

115. When a Christian says *Jesus is Lord*, just as Saint Peter said to Jesus: *You are the Christ, the Son of living God*, the Holy Spirit acts in him and thus allows Christ himself to be known and revealed to the entire world. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Father, is he who reveals the Son; it is through the Spirit and in him that the Father reveals to the world his own Son: *When the Counselor comes ..., even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.* (Jn. 15:26-27) Thus the Holy Spirit is the person of the Most Holy Trinity who is the Spirit of the Father and who leads us to the Son: he is in a way the intermediary between the Father and the Son, although he is but one with the Father and the Son.

116. What we have just said allows us to understand a little better the fact that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. If the Holy Spirit is, in a way, the intermediary between the Father and the Son, then, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, he also proceeds from the Son, and this, by mode of mediation, that is to say a mode according to which the Holy Spirit is in a just mean between the Father and the Son, in which what is fitting to the Holy Spirit with respect to the Father is also fitting to the Holy Spirit with respect to the Son. Thus, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, then he also proceeds from the Son. If the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, he is also the Spirit of the Son: *... the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name* (Jn. 14:26) *... when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you* (Jn. 15:26) *... he*

*will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:13-15)*

117. The Holy Spirit allows us to proclaim our faith in the Son of God. He is in us if we love God with a sincere faith and charity, hoping for eternal bliss with all our heart. *So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)* The Holy Spirit will act in us only if we love God with all our heart: our faith will be active under the Spirit of God only if our charity gives it all its power, the very power of the Holy Spirit. Then, if we love God sincerely, we will be able to say with an intimate and profound conviction: *Jesus is Lord*. And it will be impossible for us to say: *Jesus be cursed*.

118. If we have the Spirit of the Father in us, then Christ will once again be sent into the world by the proclamation of our faith: *Jesus is Lord*. The human word that we will pronounce will be the seed of a new birth in the Church: that of the Body of Christ. Pentecost perpetuates itself throughout the course of the Church's life: ceaselessly, the Paraclete is sent into the world when we proclaim our faith by saying: *Jesus is Lord*. For Christ himself is the first Paraclete, and the Holy Spirit is the *other Paraclete* (Jn. 14:16).

119. In the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, Saint Paul speaks at length on the gifts of the Holy Spirit: *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Cor. 12:4-11)*

120. Saint Paul stresses the fact that *there are varieties of gifts, but the same*

*Spirit, and that to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.* This means that if someone has received a gift from the Holy Spirit, this gift is first and foremost destined to serve the Church, the mystical Body of Christ. By that very fact, if someone has received a gift from the Spirit, he himself can benefit from it only in the measure that he belongs to the Body of Christ and that he is united to God and to each and every one of the members of the mystical Body of Christ through charity.

121. The reason for this is that the gift that comes from the Spirit is, intrinsically, a good destined to be given, and also that this same gift belongs to the one who received it only due to the fact that it is given to the other members of the mystical Body of Christ. For the Holy Spirit is the Person-Gift par excellence, realizing in his person the divine expression of the gift of self (cf. H.H. John Paul II, Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and of the world, first part, no. 11). So when the Holy Spirit gives someone a spiritual favor, this same favor cannot fail to possess this characteristic of the gift of self, since every spiritual gift that comes from a spiritual person necessarily possesses the personal characteristic, both of them - the gift and the person - being simple and one, since they are spiritual.

122. The gift of the Spirit is destined to be used by everyone. In this sense, it is close to the ministry, that is to say close to the spiritual mission entrusted by the Church to such-and-such a person in a sacramental manner (through the sacrament of Orders), or in a non-sacramental manner (through ministries or missions of every kind). For ministry is always entrusted to someone for the common good of the entire mystical Body of Christ. This is why Saint Paul, after having said: *there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit*, adds: *there are varieties of service, but the same Lord.*

123. The difference between the gift and the ministry resides in the fact that the spiritual favor of the Holy Spirit is given interiorly in the case of a gift, and exteriorly in the case of a ministry. However, as the human person is body and soul, we should say instead that the gift is received more interiorly than exteriorly, and that the ministry is received more exteriorly than interiorly. But for the very reason that the human person

is body and soul, we must also add that the gift must always tend to become even more exterior, and that the ministry must always tend to become even more interior, in order that the greatest harmony might exist between the exterior and interior characters of the gift and the ministry, just as it exists, intrinsically, between the body and the soul of the human person. All of this amounts to saying that the gift must always tend to resemble the ministry, and that the ministry must always tend to resemble the gift. Or again, that the gift must tend towards its integration into the ministerial Church upon which the person who received this gift depends, and that the ministry must tend towards its integration into the spiritual life of the person who has received it through the Church.

124. While the Church received from the Lord Jesus the ministerial charge of spreading the Good News of Salvation, the Holy Spirit is always at work, throughout the course of the Church's life, to dispense his gifts to whomever he wants, for the use of all: *All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.* What Christ began himself, the Spirit pursues and accomplishes: the gifts of the Spirit are the complement and the accomplishment of the ministerial action of the Church.

125. After having spoken of the diversity of the charisms of the Spirit given for the use of all, Saint Paul stresses the notion of body, and more precisely that of the Body of Christ, going so far as to say: *You are the body of Christ.* (1 Cor. 12:27) But previously he discussed this idea by evoking the action of the Holy Spirit with a view to the unity of the mystical Body of Christ: *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.* (1 Cor. 12:12-13)

126. *By one Spirit we were all baptized.* Saint Paul here clearly alludes to the word of the Lord: *Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* (Jn. 3:5) The allusion to water also appears in the continuation of the discourse of Saint Paul, when he says: *All were made to drink of one Spirit.* However, it is more precisely of the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, that Saint Paul speaks: the Blood of Christ

is the spiritual drink that intoxicates us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Let us recall the day of the first Pentecost: when the Apostles had begun to speak in various languages, certain people thought they were drunk, and said, mocking them: *They are filled with new wine.* (Acts 2:13)

127. Baptism in the Spirit, the sacrament of Christian initiation, which includes in it, under the form of desire, the reception of the Eucharist, recreates us in the dead and resurrected Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to transform us into new creatures: this is the new creation in Christ. Now, the new creation is not realized without relation to the first creation: on the contrary, the new creation restores the first creation, giving it an added splendor. Certainly, through baptism and the Eucharist, the whole man is not yet entirely restored as a new creature: man receives here but a beginning of this new creation, awaiting with a firm hope the final Resurrection which will give him a complete and eternal restoration in the glorious and triumphant Christ. If man already receives the beginnings of restoration, it is because he has received the seed of the Word of God, a seed that has yet to germinate and sprout, as Saint Peter teaches us: *You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.* (1 Peter 1:23)

128. *In the beginning ... God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* (Gen. 1:27) As an image of God, man has in him a fundamental unity, that of God: if God is one in himself, then the man created in his image also possesses, by participation, a unity that is proper to him. It is clear, from the text of Genesis, that if man was created in the image of God, this was done according to a fundamentally spiritual relationship: the image of God in man is first and foremost in his spiritual soul. In other terms, since God is spirit (cf. Jn. 4:24), the image of God in man relates in the first place to the spiritual aspect of man, which is his soul.

129. But in the new creation in the Spirit of God, the material aspect of man, that is to say his body, receives, in Christ, an equal importance with regard to man's likeness to the divinity. The Spirit of God who resurrects man through baptism and the Eucharist brings to the image of God in man a new dimension: that of the body of man recreated in the

dead and resurrected Christ. If the creation of man was perfect, and it truly was, then the re-creation of man in Christ will be even more perfect. When God created man, he knew that man would sin; but he also knew that re-created man would be even more perfect, and this is why he did not hesitate to create him. Moreover, an ancient liturgical prayer, used for the blessing of the water destined to be mixed with the Eucharistic wine, says that *God, in a wondrous manner, created human nature in its nobility, and restored it in an even more wondrous manner.*

130. Re-created in the Holy Spirit, through baptism and the Eucharist, man is integrated into the unity of the mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. What we have just said is but a commentary on the words of Saint Paul cited above: *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.* That is the action of the Spirit of God through baptism and the Eucharist: to give the body of man its unity, not its natural unity (for this comes from the soul), but rather its supernatural and mystical unity, according to which it is possible to speak of the mystical Body of Christ.

131. To conclude this chapter consecrated to the first epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, let us deepen our research on the action of the Holy Spirit, who realizes the unity of the mystical Body of Christ, still basing ourselves on these words: *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.* (1 Cor. 12:12-13)

132. Let us remember above all the following words of the Apostle: *All the members of the body, though many, are one body.* This sentence by Saint Paul, which speaks of the natural body of man, is easy to understand: the body of man is composed of multiple members which are all unified by the soul, the principle of natural life of the human person. But the soul, since it is itself vivified by the Spirit of God, possesses not only natural life, but also supernatural life, which is participation in the very life of God, and which is at the same time the principle of the resurrection of the body that the soul animates.

133. Supernaturally speaking, the words of Saint Paul cited above lead us to say that *all the members of the mystical Body of Christ, though many, are one mystical Body*. Now, it is clear that each of the members of the mystical Body of Christ is a whole human person. This obliges us to consider each member of the Mystical Body to be independent and free with respect to each and every one of the other members. So let us see how the unity of all these *independences* is supernaturally realized in the Church.

134. In his epistle to the Colossians, Saint Paul tells us, concerning Christ: *He is the head of the body, the Church*. (Col. 1:18) Now, it is clear that this appellation of *head* given to Christ must be taken in its two senses, literal and figurative, although mystically: that is to say, Christ is the true corporeal head of his Mystical Body, and also he is truly the Head, he who commands and is at the head of the Church, being *the first-born among many brethren* (Rom. 8:29). Moreover, Saint Paul tells us in his first epistle to the Corinthians, a few lines before the passage upon which we are commenting: *I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head*. (1 Cor. 11:3-5)

135. If Christ is the head of the Church, his mystical Body, then it is necessary for the members to obey their head. That is, each of the members of the mystical Body of Christ adheres to the will of the Head, who is Christ. Now, the will of Christ, who is God, is nothing other than the will of God himself, as it is personified in the Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son by mode of will. As the Spirit of God is essentially simple and one, we see from this that each of the members of the mystical Body of Christ, in obeying the Head, who is Christ, is united to each and every one of the other members of the Church, and first among them Christ himself.

136. Obedience to Christ, our Head, is not an obedience that renders us slaves: it is an obedience in which we remain fully free. Jesus said so himself, speaking of the truth brought by *the Spirit of truth* (Jn. 14:17): *If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the*



*truth, and the truth will make you free. (Jn. 8:31-32) For the Spirit of God is a Spirit of Love, and love requires freedom. This is why Saint Paul affirms: The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Cor. 3:17)*

137. However, in the act of obedience, we accomplish the will of he who commands us. As freedom is a faculty of the will, when we obey, we make an abstraction of our freedom, we suspend its action in order to be able to accomplish the will of he who gives us the order to carry out. But when we do the will of God, we are but one with God himself, and thus, when we obey God, in Christ, God himself acts in us at the very moment when we accomplish his will. Thus, when we obey the Spirit of God, it is as if we were freely accomplishing our own will. So now we have shed a little more light on the unity of the mystical Body of Christ in the Truth of the Holy Spirit!



# **CHAPTER 6**

## **ECCLESIAL COMMUNION IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**AS SEEN BY SAINT PAUL  
IN HIS SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS  
AND IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS**





## a) Second Epistle to the Corinthians

138. In his second epistle to the Corinthians, Saint Paul writes: *The Son of God, Jesus Christ, the one who was proclaimed amongst you by us - by me and Silvanus and Timothy - was not Yes and then No, but, in him, it has always been Yes. For, in him, every one of God's promises are Yes; therefore is it through him that the Amen is spoken, to the glory of God. But it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who anointed us, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.* (2 Cor. 1:19-21)

139. *God gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.* This means that God gives us his Spirit in advance: in the measure that we firmly hope that God will realize his promise to make us participate in his life in eternity, we already receive now, in time, the gift of the Spirit.

140. So there are four elements here that must be taken into account: the promise of God, the response of man, the resultant of the promise of God and of the response of man, and the gift of the Spirit.

141. The promise of God has become steadfast in Christ: *In him, every one of God's promises are Yes.* In Christ, who came to fulfill all of the Law of God, the promise of God concerning the gift of eternal life will not be revoked. God has promised: it was all said in Christ, the very Word of God.

142. Man's response to the promise of God must be firm and definitive. How can God reward in a firm and definitive manner he who still hesitates, even a little, in his heart and does not firmly hope in the omnipotence of the one who wants to save him in his Son Jesus? No, that is not possible. Our response to the promise of God must be firm and definitive: it is the only acceptable condition under which God could reward us, already, here below, with eternal life.

143. As Christ is the *yes* of God, and as we have no other Savior than Jesus to heal us of our weakness and of our condition as sinners, it is clear that, if we wish to give God a firm and definitive response to his promise, there is but one solution: to make the *yes* of Jesus our *yes* to God. This is realized through the Eucharist: through it, the *yes* of Jesus is actualized in his sacrifice on the Cross and we make it our own through our communion with his act of oblation to the Father, in the Spirit. *Therefore is it through Him that we say Amen to the glory of God.* (2 Cor. 1:20) *Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!* (Eucharistic liturgy)

144. The resultant of the promise of God and of the response of man is found in the reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist, which also supposes the reception of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. We then receive the seal of God mentioned by Saint Paul: *It is he who also sealed us.* (2 Cor. 1:21) This seal is the mark of the Son of God, the mark that indicates that we belong to God, and not to the world or to Satan. Thus, this seal is that of the Cross, for that is the instrument of torture on which Jesus spoke his perfect and definitive *yes* to God.

145. Saint John, in his Apocalypse, tells us: *I saw another angel ascending from the East, who had the seal of the living God. He shouted out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given permission to damage the earth and the sea: 'Do not damage the earth nor the sea nor the trees until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.'* (Rev. 7:2-3) This seal of God received on our forehead makes us forever similar to Christ, the Head of the Church, his Mystical Body. We thus become *living stones*, similar to the one *living stone*, who is Christ, in order to join in the building of this edifice, which is the Temple of God (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-5).

146. The gift of the Spirit that we receive is proportionate to the mode of reception. Indeed, we do not receive eternal life in the way that God intends to give it to us in heaven, for otherwise there would be no difference between the eternal life received here below and the eternal life received in heaven. Just as there is a difference between the earth and heaven, there is also a difference between eternal life received here and that received in heaven. However, in itself, the life of God is the life

of God: being in itself simple and one, the life of God is always the same, whether received here or in heaven. So it is indeed the mode of reception of the life of God that determines the difference between the life of God received here below and that received in heaven.

147. Here below we receive the life of God in Christ Jesus. Now, as we have seen, what is important here is the notion of the Head: the *yes* of God is definitive in he who is the Head of the Body, of the Church; the response of man to the *yes* of God is a communion with the *yes* of Christ-Head; the union of the promise of God and the response of man is made concrete through the seal of God that one receives on the head. It is the notion of the Head that characterizes the gift of God, the down payment of the Spirit received by he who says *yes* in the Christ of God. The down payment of the Spirit is thus a beginning of eternal life: for he who marches at the head is the first, he is the one who begins the procession, the pilgrimage of the elect of God!

148. Saint Paul writes: *Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.* (2 Cor. 3:1-3)

149. Addressing himself to Christians, Saint Paul says: *You show that you are a letter of Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.* The Apostle, to explain the significance of the name of **Christian**, makes use here of the sign and symbol of a letter that one writes. We know the importance of what is written compared to what is not: spoken words fly away, but writing remains, as the saying goes. As a letter written with the Spirit of the living God, the Christian is thus seen as being established in a permanent state granted by the Spirit of God himself, although through the intermediary of the Apostle: *You are a letter of Christ, delivered by us.*

150. Saint Paul says not only: *You are a letter of Christ*, but he first specifies: *You yourselves are our letter.* This means that the letter in question is that of Saint Paul and not, for example, that of Saint Peter. In

other words, the letter that constitutes the Christian of Corinth is a letter *signed* by Saint Paul, and not by someone else. This letter indeed bears the signature of the Apostle and this is what allows him to say: *You yourselves are our letter.*

151. This notion of the signature is important for understanding the relation of the letter to the Spirit of the living God who serves to write it, if we may speak in this way. Indeed, Saint Thomas Aquinas points out that the Christian is constituted a letter of Christ through baptism, but that this letter is not yet signed: it will be signed through the reception of the sacrament of confirmation (cf. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, Pars Tertia, Questio 72, Articulus 9, Corpus). Through confirmation, the Christian receives the Holy Spirit in order to be strengthened in his faith: like a letter that is signed, the Christian then receives the seal of the Spirit, which is realized and manifested by the unction of the Holy Chrism received on the forehead.

152. The sign of the letter in itself possesses a dimension of relation with those around us, with whom we can have any relation: a letter is made to be read. Even if we store a letter away in the attic, we do so in order to be able to reread it later on and retrieve the information contained in it. A letter is made to be read: the baptized and confirmed Christian is a letter *known and read by all*, says Saint Paul. Thus are realized the words of the Lord: *You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.* (Matt. 5:14-16)

153. As a letter, the Christian testifies to the work of God in him: a letter is a means that serves to communicate certain facts. If a letter relates to the person who possesses it, that same letter therefore serves to communicate to others certain facts concerning that person. As a letter written with the Spirit of the living God, the Christian testifies to his sonship with respect to the Father who is in heaven: just as the Spirit unites the Father and the Son in the one divine essence, so the letter written with the Spirit manifests the relation established between the Father and his adopted son, the baptized and confirmed Christian.

154. But, as we have already noted, this is not an anonymous letter. The



Christian of whom Saint Paul speaks is a letter that he himself has written, for he is a minister of Christ, acting under the guidance of the Spirit of the living God. By this very fact, this letter, which the Christian is, also manifests the work of Saint Paul, and so this letter manifests the fact that the Christian is not only an adopted son of God in the Spirit, but that he is also, at the same time, an adopted son of Saint Paul in Christ. This is why the Apostle says, in his first epistle to the Corinthians: *For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.* (1 Cor. 4:15)

155. We see that, if the Christian is a letter written with the Spirit of the living God, then the Christian is called to manifest his relation to God and his relation to the Church: no baptized and confirmed Christian can keep secret his belonging to the Church if he wants to remain faithful to God in his heart. God and the Church are inseparable: we cannot call ourselves Christians and truly be so without manifesting our belonging to the Church. The Spirit and the Church are but one in Christ, just as Husband and Wife are but one with each other. This is why the Christian, if he wants to be a letter of the Spirit, is called to manifest throughout his life the ineffable sighs of the Spirit and the Church, who say: *Come!* (Rev. 22:17)

156. Continuing our reading of Saint Paul, here is what we find in the same chapter we discussed above: *We are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor. But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.* (2 Cor. 3:13-18)

157. We have already (see no. 136) said a word or two about this passage: *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* So we will not dwell on that subject. Instead, we will focus our attention on the following passage: *We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the*

*Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.* The action of the Holy Spirit about which Saint Paul speaks here consists in a perfecting and a completion of the action of Christ: what Christ realizes in its beginning, a beginning that is perfect in itself (for Christ is God and realizes everything in perfection) but which calls for a completion, the Holy Spirit realizes it in a more perfect fullness, for what the Holy Spirit realizes is nothing other than the action of the glorious Christ anticipating his second coming at the end of time. This is what the Lord himself announced, saying to Nathanael, by way of prophecy: *Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these (...) Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.* (Jn. 1:50-51)

158. This is indeed about vision and revelation. Jesus is the revelation of God: he is the one who removes the veil between God and us. (...) *that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.* But we, who belong to Christ, united to him through faith and charity, also reveal to the world the image of God that is in us. Christ is truly *the Image of the invisible God.* (Col. 1:15) Being *the Body of Christ* (1 Cor. 12:27), that is to say being mystically but a single body with him, we are also, though by participation (in virtue of our filial adoption), the image of God in Christ. This image is in us as it already was in Moses (though under another form, that of hope and of awaiting the Messiah); but unlike us, Moses did not yet reveal to the world the image of God that was in him: *We are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor.*

159. This image of God in us does indeed relate to our body. We have already spoken about this (see no. 74). But the text of Saint Paul being discussed here further illustrates what we were saying. Let us go back to the episode in which Moses must veil his face after having met with the Lord: *When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face*

*again, until he went in to speak with him. (Ex. 34:34-35)* So it was only when Moses removed the veil from his face that he could transmit the orders of the Lord: the Revelation of God, that is to say the transmission to men of the Word of God expressed here under the form of orders, takes place through the revelation of the face of Moses, who removes the veil that covers him corporeally.

160. The image of God that is in us is revealed to the world through the intermediary of our body. This is the action of the Holy Spirit in the faithful of Christ constituted as the Mystical Body, that is to say the Church. Just as our body ceaselessly evolves, the cells composing it being ever in dynamic activity, so the image of God that was begun in us by Christ is ceaselessly in progression towards its perfection and its final completion through the action of the Holy Spirit, in the measure that we remain alive in God through charity (just as our body remains alive through that which nourishes and maintains it). *We are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

161. The connection with the Eucharist is simple: if bread is the food of the body, then the Eucharist is that food of the soul which allows the Holy Spirit to ceaselessly make the image of God that is in us ever more radiant to the eyes of all. When we are but one with the Body of Christ - the Eucharist - then the Spirit can act in us to perfect this Image of God, which is Christ in his Church. Therein lies all the reality of the missionary action of Eucharistic communion.





## b) Epistle to the Galatians

162. Let us see what Saint Paul says about the Holy Spirit in his epistle to the Galatians: *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us - for it is written, Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree (Deut. 21:23) - that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal. 3:13-14)* The Apostle is clearly teaching us here that it is through faith that we receive the Spirit of God, and not through the practice of the law, as he says a little earlier in the form of a question: *Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? (Gal. 3:2)* So we see that the subject here is nothing other than the question of justification through faith (cf. Gal. 3:11).

163. Is the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is to say the grace of justification, obtained through faith alone or through faith and works? The answer can be found in the very notion of *faith*. What is faith? When we answer this question, we will have the solution to our problem.

164. According to the expression of Saint Paul, *we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*. So faith is seen to be an intermediary between God, who is spirit (cf. Jn. 4:24), and man. Faith being of the spiritual order, we can say that it consists in a contact, simple and one, that unites us with God. Faith thus unites us with Christ, in a manner that is simple and one: he who believes in Christ, the Son of God, is but one with Him.

165. Saint Paul previously specified that *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us - for it is written, Cursed be anyone who hangs on a tree (Deut. 21:23) (Gal. 3:13)*. This means that Christ, in redeeming us from our sins, has become the law in all its perfection. Jesus not only came to fulfill the law (cf. Matt. 5:17), but he himself personifies, in a way, the whole of the law: being the Word sent by the

Father, Christ is like Order - the Law - personified. So, from this perspective, faith in Christ becomes an adherence to the very Order of God. This is why Saint Paul speaks of *the obedience of faith* (Rom. 1:5).

166. In the measure that man, through obedient faith, is united with Christ who is the very Law of God, we see that faith is nothing other than the definitive fulfillment of the law, and that, through Christ, with Him, and in Him, the grace of salvation in the Holy Spirit extends from the subjects of the law to all the men and women of every nation, as the Apostle affirms: *In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles.* (Gal. 3:14)

167. What was the obedience of Christ, and thus, what is the law of God to which we are called to adhere? The obedience of Christ is that of the Cross: *Being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.* (Phil. 2:8) And the law of God consists in participating truly, in works, in the Cross of Christ, through faith and in faith in the Son of God.

168. So the Holy Spirit will be given to us only if we truly participate in the Cross of Christ, through faith, and not without works but with them. Indeed, speaking of his departure on the Cross, Jesus said, on the eve of his Passion: *If I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.* (Jn. 16:7) And Saint Paul adds: *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.* (Rom. 8:16-17)

169. The place where the Cross and faith meet in an altogether special manner is without any doubt the celebration of the Eucharist! So it is there that the Holy Spirit is given to us, in the measure that we unite ourselves to Christ in his Passion: it is there that we receive from God the glory of the Resurrection in the Spirit, provided that, in faith and through faith, we bring our own participation to the Work of God! And the grace of a faith that is alive and full of love will help us to accomplish such a great project and such a noble vocation, for the glory of God in the Spirit.

170. Saint Paul writes: *When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.* (Gal. 4:4-7)

171. This is one of the most beautiful texts of Saint Paul, who summarizes in a few words, in a line or two, the entire economy of salvation in Christ. It involves all the Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit; the Virgin Mary, Mother of God; and the adopted sons called to become heirs of God himself. In particular, the action of the Holy Spirit is described there in all its relations. The Spirit is he who is sent by the Father; he is the Spirit of the Son; he is the one who realizes in us our bond of filial adoption, crying: *Abba! Father!*; He is the one who realized in Mary the initial Work of the Incarnation.

172. Our filial adoption in the Spirit is without any doubt a Trinitarian work. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Son, and he is sent by the Father. Every Trinitarian work *ad extra*, that is to say *outside* of the Holy Trinity, is always common to the three divine persons. But it is attributed to one of them; in this case, our filial adoption is attributed to the Holy Spirit. This thought of Saint Paul can also be found in the gospel of Saint John, when Jesus says: *If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.* (Jn. 14:23)

173. The Spirit is sent to us by the Father: *God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.* A French Carmelite nun, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, writes in one of her prayers: *O consuming fire, Spirit of love, come into me in order that in my soul there might be, as it were, an incarnation of the Word; that I might be for Him another humanity in which he renews all of his Mystery.* We see that this nun, truly inspired by the Spirit, established a similitude between the sending of the Word during the Incarnation and the coming into her of the Spirit of God. This similitude has its foundation in the very words of the Lord, who calls the Holy Spirit *another Paraclete* (Jn. 14:16), thus wanting to signify that he himself is the first Paraclete.

174. If the Spirit sent by the Father is the Spirit of the Son, this means that the Spirit comes into us inasmuch as he perfectly reflects all the thought of the Son, all that the Son - who is the Image of the Father - can have in his spirit, that is to say the spirit or the concept of sonship. So it is to give us this spirit of sonship that the Spirit of the Son sent by the Father comes into us: he thus makes us adopted children, animated by the spirit of sonship to the Father, through the Son. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is indeed he who possesses in himself all that is absolutely proper to the Son, as the Lord declared, saying: *When the Spirit of truth comes (...) he will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.* (Jn. 16:13-15)

175. When the Holy Spirit is in us, he acts in a way that is similar to the Word, since, inasmuch as he is that *other Paraclete*, he came into us like the Word was incarnated and became flesh. Of course, let us not believe that the Holy Spirit was incarnated in us! That is not the case. There is no similitude of being (in us) between the Word and the Spirit. There is only similitude with regard to the manner of coming: the Holy Spirit comes into us in a manner similar to that in which the Word was incarnated. Now, this coming of the Spirit into us is nothing other than his action in us: when the Spirit is there, he acts. So when the Spirit comes into us, he acts like the Word, like the Word of the Father. And the Spirit utters a word, a cry: *The Spirit cries out: 'Abba! Father!'*

176. If the Spirit cries out *Father!* in us, this means that we are sons of God by adoption. The Holy Spirit conforms us to Christ, for, through the Spirit, we bear in us the very Word of the Father. But this allows us to discover the full importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist. For only through the Eucharist can we truly have in us the very Word of God. Thus only the Eucharist, whether received actually or by desire only, can make us adopted sons of God. Moreover, the Lord himself affirmed: *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* (Jn. 6:53)

177. Finally, the Spirit who comes into us is the one who realized in Mary the Work of the Incarnation. If there is a similitude between the coming of the Word at the Incarnation and the coming of the Spirit to



make us into adopted sons of God, it is clear that it is with Mary's help that the Spirit comes into us: Mary is there in us to help us in this marvelous task of regeneration in and through the Spirit! It is as if Mary were giving birth to us into divine life in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

178. Thus speaks Saint Paul in his epistle to the Galatians: *But I say, let your lives be guided by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.* (Gal. 5:16-18)

179. *Let your lives be guided by the Spirit.* These words of the Apostle should be read in relation to the following sentence taken from his epistle to the Romans: *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* (Rom. 8:14) *Let your lives be guided by the Spirit:* with this sentence, Saint Paul shows us the path to follow to become *sons of God*. It is a key sentence: a few words that indicate the entire economy of salvation in Christ through the Spirit.

180. *Let your lives be guided by the Spirit.* These few words indicate two actions: that of God, who is Spirit, and that of man. The action of God consists in leading the man or woman who was chosen in Christ. The action of man consists in freely allowing the action of the Spirit within him: it is necessary for man to *let* the Spirit act in him. The filial relation to God is always a free relation between the two beings: God chooses whom he wills, and man lets the Spirit act freely in him.

181. This double action of the Spirit of God and of man can exist on two levels: one that is perfect, and another that is more perfect. The level that is perfect and which, intrinsically, is sufficient for salvation consists, for man, in responding to the grace of God that calls him to love, through conversion of the heart. Here, the grace of God is initially a grace of prayer: the first grace is given to man in order that he might ask God to grant him other graces, which in turn would guide and lead him on the way of salvation. Here, it is rather man who implores the Lord to enlighten him, to help him, to guide him and to lead him. Of course, the

action of God is always first, but it is rather man who seems to act through prayer.

182. The more perfect level consists, for man, in always being attentive to what the Spirit tells him interiorly, and in always being prompt and diligent in carrying out his divine will. Being but one with the Spirit, the man who is at this more perfect level will accomplish works that are astonishing to other men, so astonishing that they will ask themselves if it is indeed a man who acts or if it is not rather the Spirit of God who acts in his servant. Here, indeed, it is rather the Spirit of God who manifests his power and his action in the world. Of course, the man who is under the guidance of the Spirit acts altogether freely and willingly.

183. Those who are led by the Spirit are spiritual men. Although they are still composed of a soul and a body, they act like spiritual beings. This is what Saint Paul affirms when he says: *Let your lives be guided by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.* But, nevertheless, there is an effort to be made and a battle to be waged unrelentingly in order for the Spirit to continue to lead those whom he has chosen in Christ. This is why Saint Paul adds: *For these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would.*

184. We would like to be led ceaselessly by the Spirit, but one must nonetheless take into account the weakness of the flesh. The Lord himself did not fail to remind us of this on the eve of his Passion, saying: *Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* (Mk. 14:38) We must therefore pray and continue to pray. If we are led by the Spirit in a more perfect manner, as described above, we nonetheless must not stop praying to the Lord to help us, to enlighten us, to guide us, ceaselessly and always. The more perfect level is always based on the perfect level: to remain attentive to what the Spirit tells us, we must remain vigilant in prayer.

185. Taking up again the counsel of vigilance given by the Lord, Saint Peter ends his first epistle by saying: *Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist*

*him, firm in your faith.* (1 P. 5:8-9) If the Spirit of God invites us to follow him, we must remain faithful to him, *firm in our faith*, even if the flesh, the world, the devil tempts us. We must ceaselessly allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit: this is something we must do every day, every instant. In sum, this is the good fight of the faith (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12) in the Spirit!

186. Toward the end of his epistle to the Galatians, Saint Paul writes: *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* (Gal. 5:22-24) In this passage, Saint Paul enumerates the principal fruits of the Holy Spirit in the soul united to him.

187. This enumeration follows a list of faults and sins that are unworthy of Christians, being fruits of the flesh and not of the Spirit. There is indeed an opposition between the flesh of man and his spirit united to the Spirit of God. This is why Saint Paul says: *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* If the Spirit of God truly lives in us, then we will manifest it through our entire being, producing fruits of the Spirit and not of the flesh: it is the Spirit of God himself who will urge us to act in this way.

188. Man is composed of a body and a soul: he is wholly both corporeal and spiritual. We cannot conceive of a living man who is solely corporeal or solely spiritual. Man always needs the two elements that compose him. In this sense, we cannot speak of an opposition between the body and the spirit. If it were otherwise, man would no longer be man. So when man lives according to the spirit and not according to the flesh, as Saint Paul says, this means that there is a domination of the spirit over the flesh, and not the inverse. On the other hand, when man follows the desires of the flesh, then there is indeed a domination of the flesh over the spirit.

189. Let us recall, as we have already seen (see no. 77), that, in his epistle to the Romans, Saint Paul writes something in the same vein: *We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the*

*body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* (Rom. 8:12-14) So he who welcomes into himself the Spirit of God and allows himself to be led by him comes to dominate the flesh in order to live according to the spirit.

190. Man, being composed of a body and a soul, is attracted both to the body and to the soul. Either he turns toward the body, or he turns toward the soul. The consequences of Original Sin are such that man has a greater tendency to turn towards the body. But the grace of God, which can be granted to man by several means, ceaselessly urges man to turn towards the spirit: this is what we call conversion. The man who thus follows the grace of God changes his orientation: he turns away from the flesh in order to turn towards the spirit.

191. This attraction to the body or to the spirit is a desire that man cultivates in himself: he performs repeated acts which influence him in his life. The more numerous and the more frequently-repeated are the acts dedicated to the attractions of the body, the more difficult and painful conversion to God becomes, and the more subject it is to relapses, numerous and frequent. In sum, it is love that is determinative in conversion. If man no longer desires the pleasures of the flesh, but rather desires the goods of the spirit, then the very Spirit of God, who is Love, will come into him to fortify and strengthen him in this spiritual and supernatural love. *The fruit of the Spirit is love ...*

192. What is the source of the fruits of the Spirit, if not the desire to love God? To want to love God with all one's heart, that is the sign of the Spirit in us! For spiritual desire is already, by anticipation, the realization of the thing desired: what we desire for the glory of God is already received by us in hope! It all depends on the intention of our heart! This is why the Church, following the example of Jesus, teaches us to pray; and, notably, the Church teaches us to pray together, as the Body of Christ, during the celebration of the Eucharist. So it is there that Jesus is truly given to us, and, with him, his Spirit of Love!

193. Jesus said: *If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.* (Jn. 14:23) If Jesus is in us, we are sons in the Son, and our Father is the Father of

Jesus. If we love Jesus in the Spirit, we are united to the Father of mercy with a bond of sonship that no one can break, for the Spirit himself is its guarantor. The Spirit keeps us united to the Father: he is, in Jesus, our way to the Father. The Spirit is that other Paraclete who keeps us for eternal life in the bosom of the Father!



## **CHAPTER 7**

# **THE MYSTICAL PERSON OF CHRIST**

**- I -**







194. Having analyzed, in the previous chapters, ecclesial communion through the Eucharist understood according to its properly spiritual aspect, first with respect to the grace of God (chapters 1 to 3), and then with respect to the person of the Holy Spirit (chapters 4 to 6), it remains for us to see how ecclesial communion, or the union of each and every one of the members of the mystical Body of Christ considered in his Eucharist, is realized sacramentally, and thus corporeally (since every sacrament is of the order of the sensible and concrete sign). Indeed, it is clear that, if ecclesial communion is realized spiritually through the Eucharist, then it is also realized in a corporeal manner through and in the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, this act being nothing other than the outcome and the perfection of spiritual communion. By this very fact, we will not discuss ecclesial communion in the act of Eucharistic communion without also speaking of the spiritual aspect of ecclesial communion.

195. Considering ecclesial communion in its spiritual aspect allows us to consider, in ecclesial communion, men and women who belong to the soul of the Church without necessarily belonging to her body. By this very fact, it truly seems that, if we study ecclesial communion in and through the act of Eucharistic communion, we will not be able to take into account the absolute totality of the members of the mystical Body of Christ. This would not take into consideration a fundamental notion, one we have already set forth (see no. 27): the notion of the person. For the notion of the person is common both to Eucharistic communion and to each and every one of the members of the Church, whether they belong to her body or to her soul. Consequently, it is in the measure that we consider the act of Eucharistic communion to be the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ (see no. 27) that we will be able to discuss ecclesial communion in this same act of Eucharistic communion.

196. The notion of the person, on which we are basing ourselves, and which, here, characterizes the act of Eucharistic communion, obliges us

to transport ourselves, by anticipation, to the end of time. Indeed, we have introduced the notion of the person in virtue of the fact that each and every one of the members of the Church, no matter who it is, must be taken into consideration. Now, seen in this light, the notion of the person must introduce into our reasoning that state of stability and permanence which is proper to any human person. Moreover, it is only in the context of the end of time that the mystical Person of Christ, whose act of life is the act of Eucharistic communion, can and must be considered as stable and permanent (see no. 30). So it is absolutely clear that, with respect to the notion of the person, this study of ecclesial communion in and through the act of Eucharistic communion is placed in the proper context of the end of time.

197. In a certain sense, it may appear paradoxical to place oneself at the end of time in order to study ecclesial communion in the act of Eucharistic communion. For, indeed, the end of time is a context that is improper for any study of the sacramental order: the end of time is the time of vision, of revelation, and not of the sign, not even if it were sacramental. Nevertheless, it remains true, on one hand, that the act of Eucharistic communion has a fruit, which is nothing other than the realization in act of ecclesial communion, which Saint Thomas Aquinas summarizes in a few words: «Unitas corporis mystici est fructus corporis veri percepti» *The unity of the mystical body (of Christ) is the fruit produced by the reception of his true body* (Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, IIIa, q. 82, a. 9, ad 2); and on the other hand, that this same act of Eucharistic communion gives its fruit only by virtue of its disappearance, under the form of food or drink that is completely and entirely consumed. Consequently, it is clear that if we make reference to the act of Eucharistic communion at the end of time, we can do so only with regard to its fruit, which is ecclesial communion. By this very fact, at the end of time, or with respect to the notion of the person, to study the act of Eucharistic communion or to study ecclesial communion through the Eucharist is one and the same thing.

198. If we study the act of Eucharistic communion at the end of time, that is to say with respect to the notion of the person, it is absolutely clear that we will be able to refer to all of its doctrinal content, in an absolute and definitive manner, since in this context Eucharistic

communion is considered in its complete consumption (see no. 197). So we have situated ourselves in the overall plan of this Work of God on the Eucharist, whose proper object is the act of Eucharistic communion (concerning this, see ECHC, "By Way of Preface"). More precisely, we will accomplish what had been previously announced (see ECHC, no. 4): we will definitively establish the principle according to which the prayer of the faithful Christian, in the measure that it is united to the great Eucharistic Prayer of the Liturgy, is the one particular means by which the human person can entirely offer himself, and principally his freedom, to God.

199. With respect to the notion of the person, and of the human person in particular, we want to know the absolute and definitive truth regarding the act of Eucharistic communion, which is a corporeal and spiritual union between Christ-Eucharist and the Church. Now, here is what Saint Augustine, the great Doctor of grace, and thus of the Eucharist, tells us, through the intermediary of the Council of Vatican II: *Through the ministry of the priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ. He is the only mediator who in the name of the whole Church is offered sacramentally in the Eucharist and in an unbloody manner until the Lord himself comes. The ministry of priests is directed to this goal and is perfected in it. Their ministry, which begins with the evangelical proclamation, derives its power and force from the sacrifice of Christ. Its aim is that the entire commonwealth of the redeemed and the society of the saints be offered to God through the High Priest who offered himself also for us in his passion that we might be the body of so great a Head.* (Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, 10, 6; PL 41, 284) (Council of Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 2)

200. By way of the Council of Vatican II, Saint Augustine presents Christ-Eucharist as a Head, and the Church as a Body, saying: *... that we might be the body of so great a Head.* By this very fact, he presents the union of Christ-Eucharist and the Church as the union of a Head and a Body, that is to say as a total and complete human Person. Saint Augustine did not invent or coin the terms *Head* and *Body* as designations of Christ and the Church respectively. He just faithfully transmitted what Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Nations, wrote under the authentic and absolute inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is he

who said, in his Epistle to the Colossians, speaking of Christ and the Church: *He is the head of the body, of the Church.* (Col. 1:18)

201. The Spirit of God wanted to reveal in this way, through Saint Paul, that Christ, the incarnate Word of God, is the one who, as the *firstborn among many brothers* (Rom. 8:29), commands, issuing orders, as the head of the absolute totality of the human persons composing the Church, his Body: Christ is the Head of the Church, being *the head of every man* (1 Cor. 11:3). Now, Christ, because he is God himself, can command and give orders to any man in two ways: interiorly or exteriorly. But, of these two ways, that which is interior cannot correspond in any way to the thought of Saint Paul when he speaks of Christ as the Head of the Church, his Body.

202. Indeed, when Christ interiorly gives an order to a person in his Church, that order intrinsically pertains only to the person in question. As any human person is unique, since a person is altogether incommunicable, the order given interiorly by Christ is characterized by oneness, not multiplicity. Now, the Church, as the Body of Christ, is essentially multiple, as Saint Paul affirms: *Though we are many, we form but one body.* (1 Cor. 10:17) By this very fact, every order given by Christ to his Body, which is the Church, must be characterized not by oneness but by multiplicity: the Order of God given to the Church in Christ is always multiple, not in virtue of its origin, but rather in virtue of those who are united simply together in *the obedience of faith* (Rom. 1:5) and who thus compose the Body of Christ. Consequently, it is clear that, when Christ, as the Head, gives an order to his Church, which is his Body, he does not do so interiorly, but only exteriorly; and that, by this very fact, when Saint Paul refers to Christ as the Head of the Church, his Body, he cannot fail to think that Christ, thus considered, acts exteriorly, and not interiorly.

203. From all this, it follows that the expression *Head* used by Saint Paul to designate Christ must be understood in a fully corporeal manner, the only manner that corresponds to an exterior action of Christ as he gives an order to his Church. So the human Person, the union of a Head, who is Christ, and a Body, who is the Church, must be considered corporeally, that is to say in a manner similar and identical to the order

to which belongs the act of Eucharistic communion: the order of corporeal realities (see ECHC, no. 103).

204. In the act of Eucharistic communion, in full and complete reference to this same act and as a representation of it, we study the human Person realized through the union of the Eucharist, as Head, and the Church, as Body. Now, as it must be considered not only spiritually but also corporeally (see no. 203), Eucharistic communion is an act of eating and nutrition: it is properly a vital act. Thus, the human Person constituted by the union of the Eucharist and the Church is, intrinsically, a living Person. But it is absolutely impossible for a Person to be alive without a Head or without a Body. In other words, the Head and the Body are the two absolutely essential parts of a living Person. It follows that the entire notion of the living Person is found fully in the part called the Head, and just as fully in the part called the Body. As a name is what expresses the entire person as such, we thus see that the Eucharist, which is the Head, and the Church, which is the Body, necessarily have a single identical name. But as, in the living Person, the Head is the part that commands, and the Body is the part that obeys the Head, it is therefore necessarily the Head that imposes its own name on the entire Person. So, finally, it is clear that the living Person formed and composed by the Eucharist, as Head, and the Church, as Body, is none other than the Person of Christ.

205. The living Person formed by the Eucharist and the Church is called the Person of Christ. Now, the Head and the Body, as essential parts of the living Person, bear a single identical name, which is that of the Person (concerning this, see no. 204). So the Eucharist, which is the Head, and the Church, which is the Body, are both called by the same name of Christ: the Eucharist is Christ-Head, and the Church is Christ-Body. In other words, in the proper context of the living Person, the Eucharist and the Church possess, in an essential manner, a similar and identical character. However, with respect to the living Person composed of the Eucharist and the Church, the vital act of this same Person is nothing other than the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, that is to say the act of Eucharistic communion considered corporeally and spiritually. Now, every act of eating is composed of two opposing elements: one element that gives life - food - and one element that

receives life: he who eats. Consequently, the living Person, whose act of life is essentially the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, is made up of a Head (the Eucharist) who gives life, and of a Body (the Church) who receives life. By this very fact, in the proper context of the living Person, the Eucharist and the Church possess, in an essential manner, a character that is opposite and different.

206. In the proper and exclusive context of the living Person, the Eucharist and the Church possess, at the same time and in the same respect, both a character that is similar and identical, and a character that is opposite and different (see no. 205). This amounts to saying that, simultaneously and in the same context of the living Person, the Eucharist and the Church must be considered to possess both a character that is one and a character that is multiple. By this very fact, this allows us to affirm that the living Person composed of the Eucharist and the Church possesses this same character which is simultaneously one and multiple. Now, given that this character finds its basis in the proper context of life, and that life is essential to the Person composed of the Eucharist and the Church, this living Person possesses this same character in an absolutely essential manner: the living Person of Christ is essentially one and multiple. But it is impossible for human reason to conceive of a personal being who is essentially, at the same time, both one and multiple. So from all this we must conclude that the living Person of Christ, composed of the Eucharist and the Church, is of the order of mystery: it is none other than the mystical Person of Christ.

207. Through the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, the mystical Person of Christ is in act of life: it possesses life in act. But this life, because it is that of the mystical Person of Christ, is essentially one and multiple, both at the same time (see no. 206). Now, considered in its aspect of oneness, the life of the mystical Person of Christ intrinsically relates to the proper notion of the person, fully expressed by the name of *Christ*, a name that belongs to both the Head and the Body, in a manner that is similar and identical (see no. 205). As the person, which is altogether incommunicable, is permanent in its individuality, and this from the beginning of its existence, the life - considered in its aspect of oneness - of the mystical Person of Christ must be considered as a principle, that is to say as a cause that endures in the effect produced. In

this sense, the life that the mystical Person of Christ possesses is a principle that necessarily animates all of this same mystical Person in each of its parts. In other words, life in act of the mystical Person of Christ - when this life is considered in its aspect of oneness - is entirely the life in act of Christ-Head, and also entirely the life in act of Christ-Body.

208. Considered in its multiple aspect, the life of the mystical Person of Christ intrinsically relates to the proper notion of eating and nutrition, a notion based on the indisputable fact that Christ-Head is the Eucharist, the element that gives life by means of food, and that Christ-Body is the Church, the element that receives life by means of food. In this sense, the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is a union between the act of life of Christ-Head and the act of life of Christ-Body. In other words, the mystical Person of Christ, considered in the multiple aspect of its life, that is to say considered in the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, possesses life in act both in the giving of life and in the receiving of it. But every being is in act in a certain respect only in virtue of a power that corresponds to the act in question. Thus, the mystical Person of Christ is in act of life only in virtue of a certain power, which is none other than that which allows the giving and receiving of life, both at the same time. However, given that the aspects of oneness and multiplicity of the life of the mystical Person of Christ are absolutely indissociable from each other (since otherwise this Person of Christ would not be mystical), what we have just concluded concerning the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ considered in its multiple aspect must fully concern both the act of life of Christ-Head, and the act of life of Christ-Body (concerning this, see no. 207): the power necessary to the act of life of Christ-Head and that necessary to the act of life of Christ-Body must be such that they allow, at the same time, both the giving and the receiving of life, these powers being simply identical both with each other and with the power necessary to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ.

209. In the act of life, one and multiple, of the mystical Person of Christ, the element that gives life, that is to say the object or the food itself, is that which gives life and does not receive it: Christ-Head is properly the element in act with respect solely to the giving of life. As Christ-Head

possesses the power to both give and receive life (see no. 208), therefore, in this act of the gift of life, he is in act with respect to the giving of life and in power with respect to the receiving of it. Similarly, the element that receives life, that is to say the subject or the being that is nourished, is the one that, in this act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, receives life and does not give it: Christ-Body is properly the element in act with respect solely to the receiving of life. Thus, for the same reason as above, Christ-Body, in this act of receiving life, is in act with respect to the receiving of life and in power with respect to the giving of it. It follows that, in this act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, an act that is and must be a union of the act of life of Christ-Head and that of Christ-Body (see no. 208), the power necessary to the giving of life (relative to Christ-Body in act of life) and the power necessary to the receiving of life (relative to Christ-Head in act of life) - in a word, the very power that permits the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ - coexists with and in this act of life. In other words, in the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, the mystical Person of Christ is at the same time in act and in power of life.

210. A being that lives according to act and according to power, and this under the same conditions and in the same respect for both the act and the power, can never begin its act of life, and, by this very fact, it can never end it: it lives eternally, without beginning or end. Thus, the mystical Person of Christ, in the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, truly possesses life that never begins and that never ends, that is to say, eternal life: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.* (Jn. 6:54) But as this act of eating - in which power coexists - is properly an act of eating food, food of the corporeal order, fully relating to natural and ordinary life, it follows that only the power that permits this act of life is eternal and divine. So we see that, in the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, the divine coexists with the human, the supernatural with the natural, the eternal with the temporal: in this action, the mystical Person of Christ lives in a natural and human manner according to act, and in a supernatural and divine manner according to power. As the mystical Person of Christ is such that his life is wholly and simultaneously one and multiple, this same Person is intrinsically that which possesses, in one and only one act, both divine life and human life at the same time, in an indissociable union. So, finally, as power and act



are notions that are mutually exclusive, this act of life of the mystical Person of Christ unites divine life and human life without any confusion between the two, and, by this very fact, does so by means of simple contact. Concerning all of this, the reader may refer to what we have said previously (see BOTB, no. 57; see also ECHC, no. 44).

211. While living humanly, the mystical Person of Christ is in act of divine life in the eating of the Eucharist by the Church. As the life of the mystical Person of Christ is essentially one and multiple, divine life is proper to the entire mystical Person of Christ, the Head as well as the Body. Now, intrinsically, divine life can be given only by the element that is God, and, likewise, it can be received only by the element that is not God. Thus, in the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, Christ-Head, who is God, is the element that gives divine life without being able to receive it, and Christ-Body, who is not-God, but Man, is the element that receives divine life without being able to give it.

212. In the context of divine life, the mystical Person of Christ, in the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, lives its divine life according to power, and its human life according to act, and this in a manner that is one and indissociable (see no. 210). As the elements that compose the mystical Person of Christ, in virtue of the essentially one and multiple character of the life of this Person, it is clear that Christ-Head and Christ-Body live in the same manner. Now, on one hand, we have seen that, in the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, Christ-Head is in act with respect to the giving of life, and in power with respect to the receiving of it (see no. 209). Thus, in this act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, Christ-Head, in a manner that is one and indissociable, but also mystically, in a mysterious way, gives human and natural life, by means of food, and receives divine and supernatural life. As, in this act of life, which is an act of divine life, Christ-Head is properly the element that gives divine life without being able to receive it, and as the receiving of divine life is proper to Christ-Body, or the element that is human and not-God, it follows that the element that is properly God participates in a properly human character in this same act of life of the mystical Person of Christ.

On the other hand, we have seen that, in the act of the eating of the

Eucharist by the Church, Christ-Body is in act with respect to the receiving of life, and in power with respect to the giving of it (see no. 209). Thus, in this act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, Christ-Body, in a manner that is one and indissociable, but mystically, in a mysterious way, receives human and natural life, by means of food, and gives divine and supernatural life. As, in this act of life, which is an act of divine life, Christ-Body is properly the element that receives divine life without being able to give it, and as the giving of divine life is proper to Christ-Head, or the element that is divine and God himself, it follows that the human element, which is properly not-God, participates in a properly divine character in this same act of life of the mystical Person of Christ.

213. In the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, Christ-Head, who is God, participates in a properly human character of Christ-Body, who is Man (see no. 212); and, reciprocally, Christ-Body participates in a properly divine character of Christ-Head (ibid.). Now, given that its life is essentially one and multiple, the mystical Person of Christ, in this act of eating, unites divine life and human life by means of simple contact, as we have seen above (see no. 210). Thus it is in virtue of this same contact that the reciprocal exchange of divine and human characters can be accomplished; and, as it consists of an act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, that is to say an act of life that is common to Christ-Head and Christ-Body (see no. 211), it is in this contact itself that is truly accomplished the reciprocal exchange of characters between divine life and human life. By this very fact, in the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, that is to say in the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, these two characters, divine and human, simply unite with each other: that of the power to receive divine life, a character possessed mystically by the divine element that gives life; and that of the power to give divine life, a character possessed just as mystically by the human element that receives life. Together, these two characters thus form the power to give and receive divine life. But we have seen that the power necessary to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is a power that can give and receive life (see no. 208). Moreover, the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is an act of divine life. Consequently, it is clear that the divine and human characters exchanged between the divine and human lives, and the power

necessary to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, are a single identical reality.

214. Since the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is an act of divine life, the power necessary to this act is a divine power, as we pointed out above (see no. 210). Now, this divine power is nothing other than the simple union of the divine and human characters exchanged between divine life and human life in the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ (see no. 213). Moreover, these same divine and human characters are exchanged only in virtue of the simple contact realized between divine life and human life in the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, and they are exchanged only in this same contact (*ibid.*). It follows that this divine power cannot be considered in itself, that is to say prior to the realization of the act to which it is directed, but rather solely in this act itself. In other words, it consists of the divine power that allows the extrinsic participation of the human creature in divine life in the act of Eucharistic communion, a power considered indissociably as divine omnipotence and as passive power (see no. 41). This may also be expressed as follows: the reality of the power cannot fail to appear in the act of Revelation that God made of his own life in the Eucharist (concerning this, see ECHC nos. 43 and 44, comparing them to ECHC nos. 48 and 49).



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THE MYSTICAL PERSON OF CHRIST**

**- II -**





215. At the point we have reached in our research on the link between the Eucharist and the Church, we can determine the essential characteristics of the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, that is to say all that is absolutely required in order for the Church to live by eating Christ-Eucharist. As power is directed to act, and as act is limited by power, it is necessary and sufficient for us to study precisely in what consists the power that permits the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, if we want to know the essential facts concerning this same act.

216. The divine power we are studying derives its existence from an act of human life or an act of eating (see no. 210 - see also no. 214). So the conditions necessary for the existence of this divine power are the very ones necessary for the existence of the act of human life in question. Now, the divine power considered in the very act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church is exclusively and absolutely composed of the divine and human characters exchanged between the divine and human lives. Thus, these divine and human characters derive their existence from the act of human life of eating, and, by this very fact, the necessary conditions for the existence of these characters are those proper to the act of human life in which they coexist as power.

217. Concerning the divine and human characters in question, we have seen that the properly divine character is nothing other than the power to give divine life (see no. 212), and that the properly human character is nothing other than the power to receive divine life (*ibid.*). As power is directed to act, and as act is limited by power, neither of these characters can derive its existence from anything other than an act of human life corresponding to its species. This means the following, which is absolutely the most important finding of our research: the divine character derives its existence from the very act of giving human life, and the human character derives its existence from the very act of receiving human life. It follows that the conditions necessary for the

existence of the divine character are those proper to the giving of human life, and that the conditions necessary for the existence of the human character are those proper to the receiving of human life.

218. With respect to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, both the divine character and the human character, which together and jointly form the power directed to this act, coexist as divine power: the first coexists in the very act of giving human life, and the second in the very act of receiving human life (see no. 217). Now, it is properly in the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ that the power directed to this same act coexists (see no. 209). Thus, the act of giving human life and that of receiving human life are nothing but the very act of the mystical Person of Christ considered in the union of Christ-Eucharist and the Church, and this by means of and through the intermediary of the power directed to this last act. But the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is intrinsically an act that belongs to the order of oneness and multiplicity, both of these together and simultaneously (see no. 206). Thus, it is clear that, similarly, the very act of giving human life, in which coexists the divine character, and the very act of receiving human life, in which coexists the human character, necessarily belong to this same order of oneness and multiplicity. By this very fact, all the conditions necessary for the existence of the two aforementioned acts must also be considered to belong to the order of oneness and multiplicity. As the power directed to an act belongs to the conditions necessary for the existence of that act, all of this allows us to say that knowing and determining the nature of the conditions necessary to the very act of giving human life and to that of receiving human life will tell us, intrinsically and absolutely, about the very nature of the divine and human characters considered as power, which coexist in the acts in question, and which are simply identified with the conditions necessary for the existence of these same acts.

219. The divine and human characters are exchanged through a contact between the divine and human lives, without there being any confusion between the two lives (concerning this, see no. 210). Thus, each character modifies nothing in the life it characterizes, at least with respect to the essence of that life. Now, as every character is a power, and as this power is indissolubly - since it is eternal - united to the life in



act that it characterizes, each character confers on this same life a proper and particular mode that emanates from the other life from which it comes. That is, each life, divine and human, is determined by the proper nature of each of the characters united to it. Since the nature of the divine and human characters is known to us from the conditions necessary for the existence of these same characters (see no. 218), we must study how these conditions determine the life united to the corresponding character. In other words, we must consider each of the two lives, divine and human, in the particular act that is determined by the conditions necessary for the existence of the character that is united to it. In practical terms, the divine life must be considered in the particular act of receiving human life, and the human life in the particular act of giving human life.

220. In Christ-Body, human life in act is united to the divine character, or the power to give divine life (see no. 212). But, as we have just said (see no. 219), this can be reduced to the study of human life in the particular act of giving human life: we must consider how the act of human life of Christ-Body is characterized, in particular, by the giving of human life. Now, the act of human life through which man gives life is the act of generation. Moreover, in order for it to relate to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, that is to say in order for it to be considered in a supernatural and mystical manner, the act of generation must necessarily be considered in the proper and absolute context of marriage or the nuptial union of the agents of this same act of generation. So, as a nuptial union is a properly personal union, a union that intrinsically supposes the personal giving of each spouse to the other, the act of generation we are discussing here must be considered to be an act that engages absolutely the entire human person, both body and soul or spirit. Thus it follows that the mode that characterizes human life in act in Christ-Body is properly the notion of the person. By this very fact, we can clearly affirm that the divine power necessary to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is a personal power.

221. The divine life in Christ-Head is united to the human character, or the power to receive divine life (see no. 212). But according to what we have seen above (see no. 219), this can be reduced to the study of divine life in the particular act of receiving human life: we must consider how

the act of divine life of Christ-Head is characterized, in particular, by the receiving of human life. Now, as God, Christ is *the Word of Life* (1 Jn. 1:1), the Logos who reveals the divine life, He in whom *the eternal life which was with the Father (...) appeared* (1 Jn. 1:2). Furthermore, the receiving of life, no matter what kind, implies a beginning, which is incompatible with the notion of eternity. Thus, the receiving of life cannot pertain to Christ, considered solely as a divine eternal Person. However, as *the Word became flesh* (Jn 1:14), that is to say as Christ, who lives eternally as the Word or Son of the Father, received temporal life as Man and Son of Man, then the receiving of life, and specifically human life, does indeed pertain to Christ who lives, in a single hypostasis, of divine and eternal life and of human and temporal life. In other words, the receiving of human life does not pertain to Christ except insofar as eternal Life enters time. So it follows that the mode which characterizes divine life in act in Christ-Head is properly the notion of time. By this very fact, we can clearly affirm that the divine power necessary to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is a temporal power.

222. Insofar as it is essentially composed of the divine and human characters exchanged between Christ-Head and Christ-Body, the divine power that is ordained to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, that is to say to the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, is a power that is properly personal and temporal: personal with respect to the divine character, and temporal with respect to the human character (see nos. 220 and 221).

223. If we consider this divine power to be personal, given that it coexists in the act that it produces, this act being an act of human life accomplished by means of food, then the whole of this act necessarily participates in the notion of the personal. As the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is an act that is essentially one and multiple (see no. 206), it is absolutely clear that, in this same act, the object, or the element that gives life, and the subject, or the element that receives life, act, one as Head, the other as Body, in a truly - though mystically - personal manner. Since a person is intrinsically incommunicable, the object and the subject of this act of eating both exist independently of each other, while realizing in their person that which they signify: Christ is fully and truly present under the species of bread and wine

independently of the Church he feeds; likewise, the mystical Body of Christ is fully and truly present in the human person who eats the Eucharist in a fully and absolutely free manner.

224. If we consider this divine power to be temporal, given that it coexists in the act of human life that it produces, then the whole of this act necessarily participates in the notion of the temporal: the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, or the act of Eucharistic communion, is accomplished in a certain time. Now, we have just seen that the whole of this act of human life also, and necessarily, participates in the notion of the personal (see no. 223), and this in a primary and fundamental manner, due to the fact that this notion of the personal is the very expression of the divine character that essentially composes the power directed to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ. So we must apply the notion of the temporal to this act of human life, or act of eating, while taking into account the previous application of the notion of the personal to this same act.

225. With respect to the notion of the personal that is proper to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, we must consider the human person both corporeally and spiritually (see no. 220). Thus, the act of human life in which the divine power necessary to this same act coexists must possess both a corporeal aspect and a spiritual aspect, both of these being essential, just as the body and the soul are essential to the human person. In other words, the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church is composed of an act of eating according to the body, or corporeal and sacramental communion; and an act of eating according to the spirit, or spiritual communion. But, with respect to the notion of the temporal that is proper to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, we must apply this same notion of the temporal while taking into account our conclusion concerning the application of the notion of the personal (see no. 224). Consequently, each of the acts which compose the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church fully and absolutely participates in the notion of the temporal.

226. However, given that the corporeal act of the Church with respect to the Eucharist, that is, sacramental communion with the Body and Blood of Christ, is realized through simple contact (in virtue of the character,

simple and one, of the life that governs this act), this same corporeal act of communion is accomplished in an instant. Thus, the notion of time cannot pertain to the corporeal act of the Church with respect to the Eucharist other than in an indirect and mediate manner, by means of the spiritual act which, itself, directly participates in the notion of the temporal. This is what we have already shown in our earlier work, with the help of arguments drawn from the Tradition of the Church and from Holy Scripture: commenting on the words of the Lord *Do this in memory of me* (Lk. 22:19), we have established, following the teaching of the Council of Trent, that spiritual communion, and thus sacramental communion, is accomplished by mode of memory, that is, in a temporal manner (see, among others, SCGC no. 52).

227. We have just seen how, inasmuch as it is personal and temporal, the divine power necessary to the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, or the act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, influences, in an essential manner, this act itself. But what must be noted above all is that, in the measure that this divine power is personal and temporal, there is, in this act of the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, an exchange of characters between the divine and human lives. That is to say, Christ-Head has the power to receive divine life, and Christ-Body has the power to give divine life. (At this point we encourage the reader to attentively reread the formulation of this thesis in no. 212. For we are at the heart of the mystery that we are trying to, not understand, since that is impossible, but describe as completely as possible.) Now, intrinsically, in the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, Christ-Head is the element that gives divine life without being able to receive it, and Christ-Body is the element that receives divine life without being able to give it: we can say that, with regard to divine life, Christ-Head and Christ-Body are fully and absolutely opposite to each other. So it follows that this divine personal and temporal power conciliates and mediates between Christ-Head and Christ-Body in that which concerns the reciprocal exchange of divine life from one to the other.

228. The divine power we are studying is a power that mediates divine life (see no. 227). Now, this same power is directed to an act of eating, or an act of natural and human life. Moreover, it coexists in the very act that it produces. Thus, this divine power is simultaneously, in a manner

that is one and indissociable, a mediator of divine life and human life. This amounts to saying that the divine power necessary to the act of human life of the mystical Person of Christ is a power that mediates divine and human life. By this very fact, we can clearly affirm that the entire mystical Person of Christ, in both its divine and human life, is a mediator between Christ-Head and Christ-Body.

229. Since every relation of mediation is reciprocal, the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ is essentially double: there necessarily exists an act of the mystical Person of Christ by which Christ gives both divine life and human life to the Church; and also an act of this same mystical Person by which the Church gives both divine life and human life to Christ.

Now, since this mediating act is accomplished in virtue of a mediating power, each of the two acts of the mystical Person of Christ is realized in virtue of a corresponding power. Thus, as to divine life, the act by which Christ gives divine life to the Church is accomplished in virtue of a power such that Christ has the power to give divine life and the Church has the power to receive divine life. Likewise, the act by which the Church gives divine life to Christ is accomplished in virtue of a power such that Christ has the power to receive divine life and the Church has the power to give divine life.

Furthermore, the divine power we are considering here is exclusively and absolutely the divine power that coexists in the act that it produces, as we saw previously (see no. 214). In other words, we are considering solely the divine power such that Christ has the power to receive divine life and the Church has the power to give divine life (see no. 212).

So it follows that, although both of these acts of the mystical Person of Christ are essential, only the act by which the Church gives divine life to Christ must be considered perfect in itself: it alone determines the entire nature of the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ.

230. Let us analyze the act by which, with respect to the mystical Person of Christ, the Church gives divine life to Christ. This act is accomplished in virtue of a mediating power, one that is personal and temporal. Now,

in the measure that this mediating power coexists in the act that it produces, this power must be considered to be fundamentally temporal: it is absolutely and exclusively the divine power considered, intrinsically, in the act of God's Revelation of himself that he performs by entering into time in order to bring it to its fullness (cf. Gal. 4:4); we have discussed this above (see no. 214). Thus, by this very fact, the act to be analyzed is none other than that of the spiritual communion of the Church with Christ-Eucharist, a communion accomplished temporally (see no. 226), between the instant of the consecration and that of sacramental communion (ibid.).

231. The act of life of the mystical Person of Christ is fundamentally temporal (see no. 230). But the divine power that corresponds to this act is also, and first, a personal power. Moreover, in a personal manner, Christ must be considered mystically as the Head, and the Church as the Body. Thus, as to Christ, with respect to the act of spiritual communion between the Head and the Body of the mystical Person of Christ, it is clear that this same Christ acts temporally in a manner that is primary, that is to say as the Head or the First. So Christ must be considered to personally act in the first instant of the spiritual communion of the Church with the Eucharist, this instant being that of the act of consecration. Now, manifestly, it is the Church who pronounces the words of consecration: *This is my Body* and *This is my Blood*. So, from the foregoing, we must affirm without any possible doubt that, in the act of consecration, in the first instant of the spiritual communion of the Church with Christ-Eucharist, the Church truly acts, sacramentally as well as mystically, *in persona Christi*.

232. Similarly, as to the Church, with respect to the act of spiritual communion between the Head and the Body of the mystical Person of Christ, it is clear that the Church acts temporally in a corporeal manner, that is to say as the Body of Christ, who is the Head, of the fully corporeal order (see no. 203). So the Church must be considered to personally act at the instant of sacramental or corporeal communion, which is the final instant of spiritual communion. Now, manifestly, the Church, in taking into her hands the bread and wine to be consecrated, acts personally in a corporeal manner from the instant of the consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Moreover, in our previous analysis of the breaking of the bread (see BOTB, no. 42 et seq.), we have amply shown that there exists an indissociable relation between the spiritual communion of the Church with Christ-Eucharist and the liturgical rite of the corporeal order we have just mentioned: the breaking of the bread. So, from the foregoing, we must affirm without any possible doubt that the Church acts personally as the Body of Christ from the instant of the consecration to that of the sacramental or corporeal communion, and this in a manner that is both mystical and sacramental.

233. The act of the consecration of the bread and wine, an act considered as the first instant of the spiritual, as well as the corporeal, communion between Christ-Head and Christ-Body, is an act in which, sacramentally and mystically, Christ and the Church each act in a fully personal, as well as temporal, manner (see nos. 231 and 232). But, intrinsically, understood in their corporeal union, Christ-Head and Christ-Body realize the individual entity we have called the mystical Person of Christ. Thus, as the mystical Person of Christ is the mediator between Christ-Head and Christ-Body (see no. 228), it is absolutely clear that, sacramentally and mystically, when Christ acts personally, the Church does likewise, and reciprocally, by means of and through the intermediary of the mystical Person of Christ.

234. However, given that the corporeal union between Christ-Eucharist and the Church is realized, intrinsically and necessarily, in the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, all that has just been said can be fully considered only in the act of communion with the Body and Blood of Christ. And this allows us to say, as the first conclusion of this Eucharistic study, that the Church, the Body of Christ, sacramentally partakes of the Eucharist *in persona Christi*.

235. The mystical Person of Christ, as the corporeal (and spiritual) union of Christ-Head and Christ-Body, lives of the divine life, in a personal and temporal manner, in the sacramental and mediating act of Eucharistic communion: this is the summary of all that we have established up to this point. Now, as Christ is God, and as all that relates to God, considered in himself, possesses the character of fullness, it is clear that the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ, as this act

has been defined above, must be considered to be essentially characterized by the concept of fullness.

236. Consequently, we must absolutely think and believe that the period of time, from the instant of the consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ to the instant of communion with Christ-Eucharist, is a time in fullness; and also that, with respect to this time in fullness, Christ-Head acts, intrinsically and solely, at the very instant of the consecration, and Christ-Body acts, intrinsically and solely, at the very instant of sacramental communion (concerning this, see what we wrote in no. 231, for Christ-Head, and in no. 232, for Christ-Body). But the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ is, mysteriously, the act by which the Church gives divine life to Christ (see no. 229): it is the perfect - thus necessarily accomplished in fullness - vital act of the mystical Person of Christ. Furthermore, with respect to the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ, Christ-Head has the power to receive divine life and Christ-Body has the power to give divine life (*ibid.*). Thus we can affirm, first of all, that, since Christ is the final term of this action of the Church who gives divine life to this same Christ, this action of the Church is truly accomplished from the very instant of the consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. However, we must then also add that, since the Church is the initial term of this action with respect to Christ, the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ is accomplished, intrinsically, in hope. As prayer is the mode by which our hope is expressed, this action of the Church with respect to Christ, the vital and perfect act of the mystical Person of Christ, is accomplished by means of a prayer: the Eucharistic Prayer.

237. With respect to the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ, while the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ is the only one that is perfect in itself (see no. 229), it cannot and must not be separated from the action of Christ who gives divine life to the Church, since the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ is an essentially mediatorial act (*ibid.*). Now, we have just seen that, in a personal and temporal manner, understood in fullness, the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ is accomplished in hope, in the Eucharistic Prayer, from the instant of the consecration to that of



communion (see no. 236). It then follows that the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ precedes in time and, by this very fact, conditions the action of Christ who gives divine life to the Church, in the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, an act accomplished in virtue of a power such that Christ has the power to give divine life and the Church has the power to receive it (see no. 229).

238. As we have just said, with respect to the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ, the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ precedes in time, considered in fullness (see no. 236), the action of Christ who gives divine life to the Church. Now, manifestly, this cannot be so: the Church absolutely cannot give divine life to Christ before having received it from Christ himself, since, because it must be understood corporeally (in virtue of the notion of fullness; see no. 236), the Church is, intrinsically, the element that is non-divine, since it is human. However, just as manifestly, the Eucharistic Prayer, expressing the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ, is always recited, in the Eucharistic liturgy, before the sacramental action of communion, in which Christ gives divine life to the Church. Thus, we can affirm from the foregoing that the liturgical Tradition of the Church is the very foundation of what may be called a mystery, that of the mystical Person of Christ.

239. All that has just been said is intrinsically based on the notion of the mediator: it is by considering the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ as an essentially mediating act that we have progressed in our research (see no. 237). Now, it is absolutely clear that the mystical Person of Christ is not only the mediator of divine life, but also, necessarily, the mediator of human life (see no. 228). Thus, the only possible way to shed light on the very mystery of the mystical Person of Christ is to look at this mediation of human life and to say that, by means of and in accordance with the mode of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Church gives Christ the human life that is proper to her, human life considered absolutely in fullness, to the full extent of the person. But, given that the mystical Person of Christ is a mediator of both divine life and human life, and this in an absolutely indissociable manner (see no. 228), the action of the Church who gives her human life to Christ must be accomplished jointly with and inseparably from the action of the

Church who gives divine life to Christ. As it is clear that the Church cannot give divine life to Christ without having received it beforehand from this same Christ (in the act of Eucharistic communion), it is absolutely permissible to conclude from the foregoing that, with respect to the act of divine life of the mystical Person of Christ, by means of and through the intermediary of the action of the Church who gives divine life to Christ, the action of the Church who gives her human life to Christ is an action in which the Church personally offers herself to Christ, dependent on the sacramental action of the Eucharist which, in communion, gives divine life to the Church.

240. Synthesizing all that has been elaborated up to this point, we can say, as the principal conclusion of this Eucharistic study, that, in the proper and exclusive context of the mystical Person of Christ, or the union of Christ-Head and Christ-Body in the act of Eucharistic communion, the action of the Church who gives her own human life to Christ, firstly, is accomplished in dependence on the action of Christ who gives his divine life to the Church, and secondly, conditions this same action of Christ with respect to the Church. In other words, the act of divine life and of human life of the mystical Person of Christ, or the act of Eucharistic communion, essentially consists in a personal offering or giving of the Church to God in Christ, by means of and with a view to obtaining divine life, conferred sacramentally, in the measure and proportion of this same offering of the Church, this offering being expressed in the Eucharistic prayer accomplished between the instant of the consecration and that of communion.

241. In order to complete our study, and thus to bring to a close our considerations with regard to the act of Eucharistic communion, it remains for us to identify by name the mystical Person of Christ: we must know who this is. As, intrinsically, a person - any person - is absolutely incommunicable, the mystical Person of Christ can be known only in virtue of its personal relations with those who, while being personally different, partake of its life: Christ-Head and Christ-Body. Now, the mystical Person of Christ is properly, as a person, a mediator of divine life and of human life between Christ-Head and Christ-Body (see no. 228). Thus, as, in God, there can be no question of a middle, the mystical Person of Christ must necessarily be a human person who,

while being a mediator of divine life, is fundamentally mediator of human life between Christ-Head and Christ-Body.

242. If the mystical Person of Christ is a mediator of human life - understood corporeally, as well as spiritually - between Christ-Head and Christ-Body, then the act of human life that unites, by means of natural food, Christ and the Church is necessarily composed of an act of human life between Christ and the mystical Person of Christ, and of an act of human life between the mystical Person of Christ and the Church. But as the act of divine life, by means of human food, of the mystical Person of Christ is essentially characterized by the notion of fullness (see no. 235), we can clearly affirm that there exists an act of human life in fullness both between Christ and the mystical Person of Christ and between the mystical Person of Christ and the Church. Now, given that life is a principle, the act of human life in fullness is properly the act of life in which this principle is given in its beginning, that is to say the act of human generation or conception according to the flesh. Consequently, it is absolutely clear that the mystical Person of Christ is united to Christ and to the Church by an act of generation: therefore this mystical Person is Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Church (see BOTB, nos. 54, 76 and 127; these passages corroborate in three different ways the present affirmation that Mary is the mystical Person of Christ).

243. As the act of divine life and of human life of the mystical Person of Christ is expressed by the Eucharistic Prayer begun at the consecration and completed at communion (see no. 240), and as the mystical Person of Christ is Mary Mediatrix (see no. 242), the final conclusion of this Eucharistic study will be that the Eucharistic Prayer is and must be the Prayer of Mary Mediatrix. As Mary is not a priest (to whom the reciting of the Eucharistic Prayer is reserved), this amounts to saying that Mary Mediatrix, who is the model of all the faithful of the Church, unites her own prayer to that of the Eucharistic Liturgy in order to freely offer herself to God in Christ, her Son. So here we have achieved the objective that we had set for ourselves: to show that the prayer of the Christian faithful, in the measure that it is united to the great Eucharistic Prayer of the Liturgy, is the sole and particular means by which the human person can fully offer himself, and in particular his liberty, to God (see no. 198; see also ECHC, no. 4). In a word, this definitively manifests the

meaning of the following words of Christ: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.* (Jn. 6:56)

# **COROLLARY**

**The living God of the Eucharist**





244. If, in Eucharistic communion, we are all united to Christ in a single Body, through Mary, in Mary, with Mary, and for Mary, then, as each one of us, and especially Christ, is the Image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26), ecclesial Communion resembles Trinitarian Communion, that of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In other words, the mediation of Mary in the bosom of the Church reveals to us exactly in what consists the Communion of the Three Divine Persons; and, by this very fact, the scriptural foundation of the mediation of Mary, which is John 6:57, here cannot fail to manifest all of its dimension as divine words revealing the Trinitarian Mystery in its comparison to ecclesial Communion. The next logical step in our study of ecclesial Communion will thus be an attempt to synthesize the comprehensible notions concerning the Mystery of the Divine Trinity which the Lord himself revealed to us in John 6:57. This is what I propose to accomplish as a conclusion to this book.

245. As the Most Holy Trinity is and will always remain a Mystery, a Truth that surpasses our spirit, I will try to be as clear as possible. Sometimes I will make reference to my previous books, notably the one in which John 6:57 has already been analyzed (see ECHC, no. 34 et seq.). Elsewhere, I will cite one author or another, whether ancient or modern. Please take the time to weigh what I say or analyze the citations provided here and there.

246. In John 6:57, Jesus said: *As the living Father sent me, and I live through the Father, so he who eats me will live through me.* In the *Preliminaries* (see ECHC, no. 37), I have presented this passage from Scripture as the sure and absolute foundation of the mediation of Mary. In this perspective, we shall see everything that the notion of the mediation of Mary allows us to understand, with the help of the scriptural argument of John 6:57, about the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. In other words, we shall see to what extent Mary Mediatrix, mystical Person of Christ and reflection of the Divinity, helps us to

penetrate deeper into the great Mystery of the Trinity of the Persons in God.

247. The first part of the sentence: *As the living Father sent me, and I live through the Father*, expresses the union of life of the Father and the Son, a union that finds its full and complete realization in a person other than the Father or the Son: that is, in the person of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Indeed, the liturgy says that the Son *lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit* (Conclusion of the Collect of the Mass). Now, in the text of John 6:57, there exists a comparison, or an analogy, between the two parts of the sentence: *As ... so ...* Thus, we can say that the second part of the sentence - *so he who eats me will live through me* - expresses the union of life of Christ and the Church, a union that finds its full and complete realization in a person other than Christ or the Church: that is, in the person who proceeds from Christ and the Church. As Christ is mystically called *the Head ... of the Church* (Col. 1:18), and as the Church is just as mystically called *the body of Christ* (1 Cor. 12:27), the person who proceeds from Christ and the Church can be called the mystical Person of Christ, or the mystical union of Christ-Head and Christ-Body. Lastly, in virtue of the analogy of the two unions, each expressed by part of the scriptural text of John 6:57, we can say that the mystical Person of Christ resembles, at least according to the proper context of life, the very Person of the Holy Spirit. Now, since a person is intrinsically individual, there cannot be an analogy or similitude between two persons except in virtue of the spousal or matrimonial bond that unites them: *They are no longer two, but one flesh.* (Mt. 19:6) Thus we can conclude that the mystical Person of Christ, or the union of Christ and the Church in Eucharistic communion, is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit: that is to say Mary, Mother of Christ and of the Church, Mediatrix of Life between Christ-Head and Christ-Body. This is another way of identifying the mystical Person of Christ, and it is in fact the best one of all, since it is nothing other than the scriptural foundation of the mediation of Mary. It is, finally, the best way of knowing and understanding, to the extent possible, the Life of the three Divine Persons.

248. If we wish to analyze in greater detail the scriptural passage of John



6:57, what is most important to note is that the corporeal aspect of the act of Eucharistic communion, which is essential to this same act when it is considered in itself (see ECHC no. 103), is also fully essential to this act when it is considered in the proper and particular context of the scriptural text of John 6:57.

249. Thus, a contemporary writer, who translates John 6:57 with the words: *As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who absorbs me, he too will live because of me*, comments on this passage by saying: *We cannot express the full force of what follows, for the Greek verb τρώγειν which we have translated as to absorb is more precise in its meaning; it necessarily denotes eating, and its use here is certainly meant to allow no doubt to remain concerning the materiality of the act about which Jesus speaks ... So Jesus teaches as something indispensable the assimilation of his human being by our own, an assimilation that is mysterious, but one that is so real that it is possible, and carried out in a concrete physical action ... (Note: This, in other terms, corresponds to the central idea of Paulinism: our incorporation into Christ, the contemporary exegesis of which has demonstrated its Eucharistic origins.) By means of what Saint Cyril of Alexandria calls, very precisely, a physical union, we can remain in him and he in us. Thus there will be established between us and him a union analogous to that which exists between him and the Father, the effect of which is that we will be able to possess, in the Son, the Life that he has from the Father. That is the outline of a new theme that Jesus would take up again in his final conversations with his disciples, after the Last Supper: our union with him, a true image of his union with the Father. (Louis Bouyer, *Le quatrième évangile (The Fourth Gospel)*, pp. 129-130).*

250. In the same order of ideas, another writer, who translates John 6:57 in the following manner: *As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will also live because of me*, declares, speaking in the name of the Lord: *I live through my Father, from whom comes my subsistence and my personality; and just as a plant lives through the root that transmits to it nourishing sap, likewise you will live through me, receiving your life from me, as I receive it from my Father; for if the Father is the root that begets me, I too am the vine-stock from which you come, like living branches: Ego sum vitis vera et vos palmites. [I am the true vine (Jn. 15:1) and you are the branches (Jn. 15:5)] And thanks to the divine life that comes to me*

*from my Father and that I transmit to you, you will live in me, and I will live in you; and we will be united, as the vine is united to its branches, and the branches to the vine. (Augustin Chometon, S.J., Le Christ, Vie et Lumière, Commentaire spirituel de l'Évangile selon Saint Jean (Christ, Life and Light, Spiritual Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint John), pp. 176-177).*

251. The corporeal aspect of Eucharistic communion intrinsically supposes the fact that Christ and the Church are united with each other for their common mediator (see ECHC no. 52), who is Mary Mediatrix, but who is also, by this very fact, Christ, and thus God himself. So let us rediscover this notion expressed in the scriptural passage of John 6:57, as witnessed by the following two analysts.

252. The first, Father M.-J. Lagrange, asking himself what would be the result of the union of man with the Son of God, replies as follows (after several lines of textual analysis based on a text by Saint Augustine): *The starting point is the mission, and thus doing the work of the Father (cf. Jn. 3:34; 17:8). There is, moreover, less disproportion between the intention of the incarnate Son toward the Father and the intention of he who receives communion toward the Son, than between the divine life received by the Son and that which he gives to man ... We will thus obtain a new idea of great value: in uniting himself to the Son of God, man learns to consecrate his life to him. Moreover, this is the sense of the ancient translations. (Évangile selon Saint Jean (The Gospel According to Saint John), pp. 185-186) Let us note that Father Lagrange translates John 6:57 as follows: *As the living Father sent me, and as I live for the Father, so he who eats me will live for me. (ibid., pp. 185-187)**

253. The second offers us a similar interpretation of the sacred text: *The words we read here: As I, sent by the living Father, live through him; so he who eats me will live through me (Jn. 6:57), expressly invite us to look into the relations that unite the Father and the Son: the model, and more than the model, the very principle of the union realized between Jesus and us. The Eucharist produces the union, and the union brings about our transformation in Christ. This transformation in turn makes his love become the principle of our life; we live through him, but to live through him is also to live for him. From the union comes our consecration to his service, just as the Son who lives*

*through the Father also lives for he who sent him. Through the Eucharist is thus realized a consecration of our life to the very life of God. (Paul-Marie de la Croix, O.C.D., L'Evangile de Jean et son témoignage spirituel (The Gospel of John and his Spiritual Testimony), p. 191)*



### Trinitarian Life and Eucharistic Communion

254. We have seen that, in a general and global way, the scriptural passage of John 6:57 speaks of the comparison, established by the Lord himself, between the Most Holy Trinity and the three persons mystically and sacramentally united in the act of Eucharistic communion: Christ, Mary Mediatrix, and the Church. Now, with respect to the Most Holy Trinity, because Mary Mediatrix is the mystical Spouse of the Holy Spirit, she is the Spouse of all the Holy Trinity. Indeed, besides what we said previously (see, among others, SCGC nos. 103 to 118), it is clear that, although they are different from each other, the three divine persons nonetheless have a resemblance to each other due to their own proper action in the bosom of the divinity: the Son is indeed similar to the Father, since he is his *image* (Col. 1:15), and the Holy Spirit is indeed similar to the Son, the first Paraclete, since the Holy Spirit is *another Paraclete* (Jn. 14:16). Thus, given that husband and wife are simply similar to each other, and that the act of life of Mary Mediatrix, as the personal union of Christ-Head and Christ-Body, is nothing other than the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, we must absolutely think and believe that the act of life of the Divine Trinity and that of the mystical Person of Christ in Eucharistic communion are not only analogous, but simply similar to each other.

255. The Most Holy Trinity being the ultimate end of all things, and Eucharistic communion, with respect to the mediation of Mary, being a means to an end, it is absolutely clear, in virtue of the foregoing, that the sacramental and mystical act of Eucharistic communion is, in the order of the mediation of Mary, the only means through which one can perfectly know the Divine Trinity in its own essential act of life, and this in a way that particularly highlights the very person of the Holy Spirit, the Spouse of Mary in Christ.

256. All of this is in full conformity with what is taught by the Tradition of the Church, upon which rests, likewise, the reality of the mediation of Mary itself. It is sufficient for us to remember that *Saint Hilary (of Poitiers), based on the union and the unity, so to speak, established between Christ and he who receives his body, proved the unity that exists between the Son and the Father ... (Thus), according to the testimony of this doctor, based on that of Jesus Christ himself, the Eucharist reveals the divinity of Jesus Christ and the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father.* (Th. M. Thiriet, O.P., *L'Évangile médité avec les Pères (The Gospel Contemplated with the Fathers)*, Tome III, pp. 197-198) An eloquent text of Saint Hilary of Poitiers is found in the *Patrologia Latina* (10:248-249).

257. Intrinsically, life is a principle. As we are considering here the life of God, and as God does not depend on any being other than himself, the principle that gives life to God cannot be anything other than God himself. Now, in virtue of the similitude between Trinitarian life and Eucharistic life, life in God cannot be conceived without the notion of change, without a passage from power to act. Indeed, we have clearly shown that the act of Eucharistic communion is an act of life in which coexists the power corresponding to this same act of life (see, among others, BOTB no. 57; see also ECHC no. 49). Thus, in the measure that we base ourselves on the similitude between the act of life of God and the act of Eucharistic communion, it is absolutely permissible to think and to say that, for God to live, it must be possible to consider him simultaneously as power and as act. We shall see below how and in what manner the notion of power finds, in the life of God, all of its reason for being.

258. The divinity can be considered in two ways: as essence, and as

persons. Considered in terms of his essence, God is pure act: so life does not pertain to him in this respect. Considered as persons, God possesses an intimate life that he has revealed to us through the intermediary of his Son made flesh, according to the text we are discussing: ... *the Father [is living] ... and I live because of the Father ...* (Jn. 6:57). This means that the life of God, in terms of the persons, must be understood as follows: the Father is properly the person who gives life to his Son; and the Son is properly the person who receives life from his Father. Now, according to the very revelation of Christ, the Father and the Son are not in power but rather in act of life, each according to the relation proper to him. Thus, life as power pertains neither to the Father nor to the Son. Thus we can conclude that the Life of God necessarily depends on the person of the Holy Spirit: only he who is called *the Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35) allows us to consider God both as power and as act. Let us note that the notion of passive power must necessarily be joined, in a manner that is simple and one, to the notion of active power (see ECHC no. 44), a fact that allows us to perfectly apply to our subject the biblical expression: *the Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35).

259. The notion of God includes within itself the notion of the infinite: God is the being who is without limits. His power, in particular, is thus infinite. So the Holy Spirit is the Power of the Most High in fullness: all of his Person is Power. Therefore, this brings into the life of God a passage in fullness from power to act, an infinite change. As God is pure act, and, consequently, immutable, this infinite change in God can be conceived only in the measure that it is sent into the infinite, beyond all beginning and all ending. This means that, in the Life of God, this change has never begun, and that, by this very fact, it has never ended. Now, this change can be infinite only if God eternally accomplishes one, and only one, act of life, an act that is absolutely first, without there ever being a second. So the notion of the infinite power of God is indissociable from the unique and first act of the Life of God. As the first act of life is that of generation, we see that the Holy Spirit is the Power of the Most High that allows the Father to eternally beget his beloved Son: *You are my son, today I have begotten you.* (Ps. 2:7) In the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, we can participate in this endless change, in this eternal movement of the Life of God: *Communion associates us with the intimate life of the Trinity ... Led to the Father by Jesus and to Jesus by the*

*Father, brought into their mutual love, I am in the Holy Spirit, the eternal Movement of the love of the Father and of the Son.* (M.-V. Bernadot, *De l'Eucharistie à la Trinité (From the Eucharist to the Trinity)*, p. 27-28)

260. The Life of God consists in a unique and eternal act of generation. But as we have pointed out, this unique and eternal act excludes any change in the Life of God. Consequently, in God, power cannot exist in itself, but only in an exclusive and absolute dependence on this unique and eternal act of Life. In other words, in God, power exists totally outside of itself: it exists only in the measure that it gives itself fully to this unique act of divine generation. This is why it belongs to the Holy Spirit, or the Power of God, to exist as Person-Gift, or Gift in fullness: *Through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of this self-giving.* (H.H. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on the Holy Spirit *Dominum et Vivificantem*, first part, no. 10). So, due to the fact that God is infinite, that is, in virtue of his very essence, the power of God is absolutely inseparable from the act of divine generation: the Life of God is eternally both act and power.

261. To summarize and confirm what has just been said, let us show that all this can be found in the act of Eucharistic communion. So, as we have recalled previously (see no. 254), we know that Mary Mediatrix is the mystical Wife of the very Person of the Holy Spirit, who, in turn, as Husband and Person-Gift, is entirely given to his Wife, in Christ. Now, the act of life of the mystical Person of Christ, who is Mary Mediatrix, is nothing other than the act of Eucharistic communion, an act in which and through which this same Person mystically receives her existence (see no. 247). Thus, with respect to both the act of Eucharistic communion and that of the eternal generation of the Word by the Father, the Person of the Holy Spirit appears to us as the *Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35), active and passive, directed to these same two acts, which are similar to each other, in virtue of the Revelation of God in John 6:57.



## Knowledge in the Life of God

262. *God is spirit.* (Jn. 4:24) His eternal act of life or act of generation thus consists in producing in him a thought. As God is perfectly simple, the thought that he begets is necessarily a total and full turning to himself; his thought is God, just as he is: it is his Word. But since producing a thought is properly an action of the intellect, the Father begets the Word, his Son, by mode of intellect or knowledge. The Life of God, considered as the generation of the Son-Word by the Father, is thus founded on the notion of knowledge.

263. In virtue of the similitude that exists between the divine Trinitarian Life and Eucharistic communion, what has just been said concerning the Life of God is also true with respect to the sacramental and vital act of communion: *What do chapters 1 to 9 of the book of Proverbs signify, if not this: that to every man is offered the possibility of partaking of the very Wisdom of God, provided only that he faithfully observe the maxims of wisdom? Chapter 6 of the Fourth Gospel elaborates on this magnificent intuition, going into the most astounding detail: As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. (Jn. 6:57) The incarnate Son of God is the holder of all the riches of the divine life he continuously receives from his Father; through the Eucharistic mystery, this life is transmitted to his disciples who thus truly participate, in Jesus, in the very life of God. (A. Feuillet, Le discours sur le pain de vie (The Discourse on the Bread of Life), p. 122)*

264. All knowledge is a good possessed by the spirit that knows; in this case, as God knows himself fully, the knowledge of God is nothing other than Good in fullness, or perfect Good. As every good can be given, and as the knowledge of God in fullness, or the perfect Good he possesses, is

the foundation of the generation of the perfect Word of the Father, this generation fully depends on the Person-Gift or the Power of God, and so the Knowledge of God in fullness necessarily belongs, absolutely and exclusively, to the Holy Spirit: *No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* (1 Cor. 2:11) However, to say, as we just have, that the Knowledge of God belongs absolutely and exclusively to the Holy Spirit implies two facts, which we will establish with the help of the similitude that exists between the act of Trinitarian Life and that of Eucharistic communion: the first, that any divine attribute, no matter which, can be considered to be intrinsically distinct from the divine essence itself; and the second, that the Knowledge of God belongs - in a direct manner - to the Holy Spirit, to the exclusion of the Father and the Son.

265. As to the first fact, namely that every divine attribute can be considered to be essentially distinct from the divine essence, we must remember that the vital act of Eucharistic communion is properly the act in which coexists the power in virtue of which this same act receives its existence, a power that must always be understood in both a passive and an active manner. On this subject, it is not unprofitable to present the following absolutely eloquent testimony: *Pious soul, you enter into profound contemplation, you formulate in your heart an ardent desire. Touched, pressed by this desire, Jesus goes to his beloved spouse: there he is in your heart! (...) It is no longer God who is the sovereign Master; it is no longer the creature who is the servant. Instead, the creature becomes the sovereign mistress of God; and God makes himself the most docile and eager servant of the creature. 'I did not come among you,' said Jesus, 'to be served, but to serve.' Spiritual communion is truly an omnipotence given to the creature over the Creator, to the pious soul over Jesus! And Father Faber is right: 'Spiritual communion is one of the greatest powers on earth!'* (Msgr. de Gibergues, *La Sainte Communion (Holy Communion)*, pp. 208-209)

266. So, since the notion of knowledge is the very foundation of the divine Trinitarian Life, we must clearly affirm, in virtue of the simple similitude between the act of divine Life and the sacramental act of communion, that the divine attribute of knowledge, and therefore every divine attribute, on one hand fully relates to the divine Life in act, and on the other hand fully relates to the divine Life in power. By that very



fact, all of this allows us to say in an absolute manner that, with respect to the divine Life in act, no divine attribute can be distinguished from the divine essence, but that, with respect to the divine Life in power, every divine attribute must be distinguished from the divine essence, and this in virtue of the mode - that of power - according to which the divine Trinitarian Life is considered.

267. As to the second fact, namely that the Knowledge of God directly belongs, exclusively, to the Holy Spirit, let us begin by noting that it is properly through a vital mode (that of food) that the Knowledge of God is communicated to man in the act of Eucharistic communion. Now, this same act of communion is and must be, intrinsically, the vital act of Mary Mediatrix herself. Thus, it is absolutely clear that the Knowledge of God communicated in the act of Eucharistic communion essentially possesses a dimension that is properly personal. By this very fact, in virtue of the similitude that exists between the act of Trinitarian Life and that of sacramental communion, the Knowledge of God, in the Trinity, intrinsically possesses a dimension that is truly and fundamentally personal. In other words, in God-Trinity, the fact of knowing relates completely to the subject who knows; the act of Knowledge is a properly personal act: *No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son.* (Mt. 11:27)

268. And all of this allows us to affirm without hesitation that the Knowledge of God necessarily belongs absolutely and exclusively to the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Knowledge of God, which is received by means of Revelation, and thus in a way that is completely free, belongs to the order of the gift: in the act of Eucharistic communion, the Knowledge of God is a free gift given to man by the Divine Trinity. Moreover, humanly speaking, (and this is necessary in the context of the mediation of Mary, which is governed by the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and human philosophy, the latter being the basic reference of the rule in question; see ECHC, nos. 39 and 40), it is solely and uniquely in marriage that a man (the husband) or a woman (the wife) is united to the personal gift of his or her spouse: the husband freely gives himself in a personal way to his wife, and vice versa. Thus, since Mary Mediatrix is the Spouse of all of the Divine Trinity only because She is directly the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, we cannot fail to

declare with certainty that the Knowledge of God belongs absolutely and exclusively to the Holy Spirit.

269. Previously we have seen how the Holy Spirit is entirely given to the Father and to the Son-Word in the unique act of divine Life or act of generation, and this by mode of knowledge. So the Father and the Son each possess, in an absolute and full manner, the Spirit as Knowledge of God. In other words, by the very fact that they are in the act of life, the Father and the Son are in the act of knowledge. This is what Christ himself taught, with these words: *This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* (Jn. 17:3) And: *O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me.* (Jn. 17:25)

270. In order to shed light on our subject, let us read the following notes, very profound and deeply spiritual, concerning the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God: *The eighth fruit of the Eucharist is the treasure of all riches: God enriches the soul with the gift or treasure of Wisdom, and this Wisdom acts in such a way that the soul, no matter what it does, never has any reason to repent. Now, the Wisdom in God is that light by which he knows himself, a light that is inaccessible to any creature. However, in the measure that the soul participates in the knowledge and the love of God, it is in that same measure, neither more nor less, that it is united to God and that God unites himself to it. In this union of love, the soul is not only with God, through grace, but it becomes, in a way, God in God, through that same grace. However, let us make sure we understand this properly. Certainly, he in whom Wisdom itself resides is like the temple of God Almighty in which He Himself dwells. Indeed, God loves he in whom Wisdom resides; He satisfies all of his desires, since He Himself is Wisdom. For God knows himself and loves himself in every way. It is this same Wisdom that he recommends to all, for it is not merely the source of beatitude; it is beatitude itself. No, God cannot give man a more precious gift than Wisdom. Is it not the sovereign joy, the supreme beatitude eternally enjoyed by the Most Holy Trinity?* (Master Eckard, *les Oeuvres complètes de Jean Tauler (The Complete Works of John Tauler)*, Volume VIII, pp. 389-390 - Literal translation of the Latin version of the Carthusian Surius)



## In the Heart of the Divine Trinity

271. *No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God (1 Co. 2:11):* the Knowledge of God in fullness belongs absolutely and exclusively to the Holy Spirit. Now, it is necessarily as the Spouse of Mary in Christ that the Holy Spirit can be considered to possess the Knowledge of God absolutely and exclusively. Consequently, given that Husband and Wife *become one flesh* (Gen. 2:24), in order for the Knowledge of God to belong absolutely and exclusively to the Holy Spirit, it cannot fail to possess, intrinsically, a dimension of the properly corporeal order, and this in a manner that is altogether supernatural and mystical, that is to say, in a manner that fully relates to the mediation of Mary.

272. All of this fully appears in the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion: the Knowledge of God, and thus the Life of God (since, for God, living and knowing are one), possesses, in the sacramental act of communion, a truly corporeal aspect. In this regard, let us cite the following passage, in which the aspect in question is particularly well-described, especially with regard to the spousal dimension of the act of Eucharistic communion: *It is written, the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does (1 Cor. 7:4); and I have already meditated on this: for Jesus Christ, every soul that bears grace in it is a wife. Thus, my body, if I have the happiness of possessing his grace in my heart, belongs to Jesus Christ: it belongs to him through the baptism in which the covenant was sealed in mutual vows; and even more perfectly so through the mutual giving that takes place in the Eucharist. The wife, once the oaths have been exchanged before the altar, belongs to the husband; but who does not know what strength is given to their union through the consummation of their marriage? So communion strengthens and perfects the union of our body with the body of the*

*Lord. 'This is my body, take it,' says Jesus. And the believer who receives it in order to enjoy it responds, in turn, by giving both his acceptance of it and the gift of self that accompanies that acceptance: I too give you my body, with all its members and all that I am. My beloved is mine and I am his. (Cant. 2:16) The principal union is accomplished by the spirit; but since the union of bodies is the principle of this spiritual union, it must also be its consequence. (J.-B. Terrien, S.J., La grâce et la gloire (Grace and Glory), Volume II, pp. 115-116)*

273. With respect to the Holy Spirit and Mary Mediatrix considered as each other's spouses, the Knowledge of God essentially possesses a dimension of the properly corporeal order. As this regards the context of the mediation of Mary, we must consider this dimension of the corporeal order both in a natural manner, first, and in a supernatural manner, second.

274. Naturally speaking, the Holy Spirit, as his name indicates, is solely spiritual, whereas Mary Mediatrix, who is a human being, is both spiritual and corporeal. Moreover, regarding Mary Mediatrix, it is properly the corporeal faith (that is to say, faith in its relation to the Mystical Body of Christ) of this same human person that allows us to consider the Knowledge of God in its dimension of the properly corporeal order. Finally, given that faith is, intrinsically, a means or an intermediary, one must conclude, from all the foregoing, that, if one must admit that the Knowledge of God has a properly corporeal dimension, then this same Knowledge of God, that is to say the very Life of God, possesses a certain middle, and this by means of and through the intermediary of the corporeal faith of Mary Mediatrix.

275. Supernaturally speaking, given that human philosophy is the basic reference of the association, simple and one, between human philosophy and divine Revelation (an association that intrinsically governs the mediation of Mary; see ECHC nos. 39 and 40), we must necessarily arrive at the same conclusion that there exists a true middle in the very bosom of the Life of God, an intermediary in the act of the generation of the Son by the Father, an act accomplished by means of Knowledge. Indeed, supernaturally speaking, the corporeal dimension of the Knowledge of God fully relates to the Holy Spirit and Mary Mediatrix

considered together as *one flesh* (Gen. 2:24), or one body. Now, all of this presupposes that the Knowledge of God is, in God-Trinity, a properly personal act: *No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son.* (Mt. 11:27) Thus, supernaturally speaking, in order to be able to speak of a corporeal dimension of the Knowledge of God, one must admit that, with respect to the act of Trinitarian Life of the generation of the Word, when the Father and the Son are in act of knowledge, the Father knows according his person as Father, and the Son knows according to his person as Son. As the notion of knowledge is the foundation of the generation of the Son by the Father, therefore the Father knows inasmuch as he is personally he who begets, and the Son knows inasmuch as he is personally he who is begotten.

276. God is spirit; by this very fact, his knowledge is absolutely simple and non-composite. Thus, as the Father and the Son are but one God, the knowledge of the Father and the knowledge of the Son are absolutely identical. Now, in themselves, the knowledge of the Father, which is the knowledge of he who begets, and the knowledge of the Son, which is the knowledge of he who is begotten, are not identical, but rather different and totally opposite. Thus, in the Life of God, it is necessary that a mediating element intervene between the Father and the Son, one capable of conciliating them and uniting them with respect to generation. But since the Holy Spirit, as the Knowledge of God, is fully possessed by both the Father and the Son, the knowledge of the Father and the knowledge of the Son - that is, the knowledge of he who begets and the knowledge of he who is begotten - resides, in a full and complete manner, in the person of the Holy Spirit who, alone, *comprehends the thoughts of God.* (1 Co. 2:11) So we can affirm that the necessary mediator in the Life of God is none other than the Spirit of God himself: the Holy Spirit is the person who unites the Father and the Son in the intimate Trinitarian life.

277. The entire Person of the Holy Spirit or Power of God only exists in dependence on the unique act of divine Life, and the notion of knowledge is the only one that requires a mediator in the generation of the Son by his Father. From this, it follows that the entire person of the Holy Spirit cannot be understood without this same notion of knowledge: the person of the Holy Spirit is the Knowledge of God in

fullness. And so, in the Life of God, there is a mediator or link between the Father and the Son, in the person of the Holy Spirit, who is therefore Person-Knowledge or Person-Life: he is *the Lord, the giver of life*. (Credo).

278. From all the foregoing, we would be led to believe, with respect to the mediation of Mary considered in its properly corporeal aspect (see no. 271), that a certain symmetry could be established between the extremes of the mediation of the Holy Spirit, these extremes being the Father and the Son. Thus, the scriptural passage we have just cited (see no. 275), namely: *No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son* (Matt. 11:27), a passage summarized in the following words: *The Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father*, could be translated as: *The Father begets the Son, and the Son begets the Father*. This last proposition is not strange: it is mysterious. Indeed, if we remember that the object of the mediation of Mary is to reveal the Divine Trinity (see ECHC no. 22), then the sentence *the Father begets the Son, and the Son begets the Father* becomes: *the Father reveals the Son, and the Son reveals the Father*. So, in the very bosom of the Most Holy Trinity, we can say that the Father knows the Son, and that, in conceiving and in knowing his Word, the Father sees himself in that Word, perfectly, in fullness, without any veil; and that, similarly, the Son knows the Father, and that he sees the Father perfectly, in fullness, without any veil, not only in that person who begets him, but also, and first, in himself, the Son, who knows the Father in knowing himself, that is to say as a Person who is begotten: *No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him*. (Matt. 11:27)

279. Finally, we might also be led to believe, still with respect to the mediation of Mary considered in its properly corporeal aspect (see no. 271), that the Holy Spirit, being alone, as mediator, in the middle of the Divine Trinity, would be more perfect than the Father and the Son taken jointly and together, since the geometric center is the one and only point equidistant from the extremes. In reality, this apparent superiority of the Holy Spirit is fully compensated, by mode of balance and harmony, by the fact that the Holy Spirit, as the power directed to the act of the generation of the Word, would be less perfect than the Father and the Son, who are in act of Life by way of Knowledge. In other words, we can affirm without hesitation that the Holy Spirit is the mediator

between the Father and the Son only in the measure that he is personally *the Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35) who allows the act of generation of the Word by way of Knowledge.

280. To clarify our subject a little, here is a beautiful text in which the Holy Spirit appears as the way (or the mediator) by which we can go from the Father to Jesus, and from Jesus to the Father: *It is in the Holy Spirit, o Father, that you lead me to Jesus. It is in the Holy Spirit, o Jesus, that you lead me to the Father: he is your Gift ... He teaches me all things. (Jn. 14:26) He delivers all things to me ... It is through him that your supreme prayer is realized, o Jesus, beloved Master: Father ... the glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou ... hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. (Jn. 17:20-23)* (M.-V. Bernadot, *De l'Eucharistie à la Trinité (From the Eucharist to the Trinity)*, p. 28) In summary, it is absolutely clear that the Holy Spirit, the Spouse of Mary, and thus, by that very fact, Mary Mediatrix herself, is, intrinsically, the Almighty Mediator, or the Mediator-Type.



#### A Divine Person: The Mediator-Type

281. The introduction of the notion of power in the life of God has allowed us to understand, to the extent that we can, the Person of the Holy Spirit as mediator in the bosom of the Divine Trinity, and thus as Mediator-Type (see no. 279). This is the principal reason for conceiving the life of God as both act and power at the same time. Moreover, we

shall see that, if the Holy Spirit is mediator between the Father and the Son, then the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son: *ex Patre Filioque procedit* (Credo of the Roman Liturgy). Finally, all of this will allow us to establish the principal characteristics of the mediator-type.

282. As we have seen previously, the Holy Spirit is the Mediator-Type inasmuch as he is the Knowledge of God understood, with respect to the mediation of Mary, in its properly corporeal dimension (see nos. 274 and 275). Now, given the fact that the Knowledge of God absolutely and exclusively belongs to the Holy Spirit, and also given that it is as the *Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35), entirely given to the act of the generation of the Son by the Father, that the Holy Spirit exclusively and absolutely possesses the Knowledge of God (see no. 268); therefore, we must affirm without question that the Knowledge of God is of the order of the gift, being not only free, but also, and first, necessary. Thus, since every gift, in order to be a gift, must be given in love, we can clearly see, in virtue of what has just been said, that the Knowledge of God, which belongs exclusively to the Holy Spirit, is intrinsically and necessarily the Knowledge of Love of the Divine Trinity. Consequently, if the Holy Spirit is the Mediator-Type inasmuch as he is the Knowledge of God, then likewise he must also be so inasmuch as he is the Love of God: for «amor» *love* is the proper name of the Holy Spirit (Saint Gregory the Great, 30th Homily on the Gospels, for Pentecost - PL 76, 1220).

283. Saint Augustine teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the person «*quo uterque (Pater et Filius) conjungitur, quo genitus a gignente diligatur, generatoremque suum diligit*» *through whom the two of them (the Father and the Son) are united; through whom the begotten is loved by the begetter; and through whom the begotten loves he who begets him* (De Trinitate 6, 5, 7 - PL 42, 928). From this text, it follows that the Father, who «*nec Filius est nec Spiritus Sanctus*» *is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit* (Saint Augustine, De doctrina christiana 1, 5, 5 - PL 34, 21), is «*solus qui generat*» *the only one who begets*; and that, on the other hand, the Son, who «*nec Pater est nec Spiritus Sanctus*» *is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit* (ibid.), is «*solus qui genitus est*» *the only who is begotten*. In other words, the Father realizes in his own person the notion of paternity, and the Son that of sonship. So we find, in the Holy Trinity, two Persons: the Father and the Son, who are opposites in a certain respect, that of



generation. But, from this same text of Saint Augustine, we see that the person of the Holy Spirit unites, by way of love, the Father and the Son in their oppositeness with respect to generation. Consequently, the Holy Spirit is the divine Person who, by way of mediation in Love, unites the Father and the Son, if and only if the aforesaid notion of Love includes within it, at least in a certain manner, the notion of paternity and the notion of sonship.

284. The Holy Spirit realizes in his person the spirit of paternity and the spirit of sonship: he is the one who reconciles the Father and the Son; he is their mediator. This is why Venerable Father Luis de la Puente (see ECHC no. 16) addresses himself to Spirit-Love in the following terms: *O divine Spirit, who through the way of love come from the Father and the Son as from a single principle, you are rightly called Spirit (...) You are the Spirit of the Father and the Son, who communicate to you the love that they have for each other (...) You are truly a spirit, for you come out, like an ardent breath, from the heart of the Father and the Son, and you remain eternally in them, through the unity of a single essence and of a single love, you yourself being the common bond that joins them together.* (Meditations, Volume IV, pp. 167-168)

285. Since the fourth century, the Holy Spirit has been called «Patris et Filii Spiritus» *the Spirit of the Father and of the Son* (Council of Rome, year 382, Decree of Damasus, in Denzinger, no. 178). If the Holy Spirit is the mediator between the Father and the Son, then, necessarily, the same Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son: *ex Patre Filioque procedit* (Credo of the Roman Liturgy). Indeed, as we have already seen (see ECHC no. 52), regarding the type of the mediation of the corporeal order, *the existence, and therefore the action, of the mediating element emanates directly and exclusively from the union of the two extremes of this mediation.* The procession of Love of the Holy Spirit in the bosom of the Divine Trinity is described in the following manner by Saint Thomas Aquinas, who declares: «Spiritus Sanctus dicitur esse nexus Patris, et Filii, in quantum est amor: quia cum Pater amet unice dilectione se et Filium, et e converso, importatur in Spiritu Sancto, prout est amor, habitudo Patris ad Filium, et e converso, ut amantis ad amatum. Sed ex hoc ipso, quod Pater, et Filius se mutuo amant, oportet, quod mutuus amor, qui est Spiritus Sanctus, ab utroque procedat.» *The*

*Holy Spirit is called a bond between the Father and the Son, inasmuch as he is Love: indeed, since the Father loves both himself and his Son with a single love, and conversely, there must be in the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as he is Love, the attitude of the Father towards his Son, and conversely, as the lover towards the loved. But, by the very fact that the Father and the Son mutually love each other, it is necessary that mutual Love, which is the Holy Spirit, proceed from both of them. (Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 37, a. 1, ad 3) And again: «Spiritus Sanctus procedit a Patre et Filio, in quantum sunt plures, si habeatur respectus ad supposita spirantia. Cum enim Spiritus Sanctus sit amor mutuus et nexus duorum, oportet, quod a duobus spiratur.» The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son, inasmuch as they are several, if we are referring to the persons who spirate. Since the Holy Spirit is the mutual Love and the bond between the two (the Father and the Son), he must in fact be spirated by the two of them (the Father and the Son). (Saint Thomas, De potentia, q. 10, a. 2, ad 15) Finally, the Holy Spirit is «medius nexus duorum ab utroque (Pater et Filius) procedens» the central bond between the two (the Father and the Son) from whom he proceeds (Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 37, a. 1, ad 3).*

286. Let us note that if we speak of an opposition between the Father and the Son, it is but a virtual opposition «cum fundamento in re» *with a basis in the thing*. Indeed, the Holy Spirit being the mediator between the Father and the Son, he reconciles and unites them. Now, as the Holy Spirit is God, and as God is eternal, the mediation of the Holy Spirit is eternal. Thus, from all eternity, the Father and the Son are united in the Holy Spirit, and, consequently, there never has been and there never can be real opposition between them, but only a virtual opposition. This is what allows us to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son as from a single principle: «Pater, et Filius in omnibus unum sunt, in quibus non distinguit inter eos relationis oppositio. Unde, cum in hoc, quod est esse principium Spiritus Sancti, non opponantur relative, sequitur, quod Pater, et Filius sunt unum principium Spiritus Sancti.» *The Father and the Son are one in all things, wherever the opposition of relation does not distinguish them. Thus it follows that the Father and the Son are a single principle of the Holy Spirit, since, in being the principle of the Holy Spirit, they do not oppose each other relationally. (Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 36, a. 4, corp.) Nevertheless, as this opposition is based on the distinction of the persons in God, and as*

this distinction is quite real, we can say that the opposition between the Father and the Son, although virtual, has a real foundation: it is a distinction of reason «cum fundamento in re» *with a basis in the thing*.

287. Basing ourselves on the established fact that the Holy Spirit is the Mediator-Type, we can identify the three principal characteristics of the mediator, summarizing or showing in another way what has already been demonstrated above.

**F**irst, as for existence, the mediator cannot be the instrumental cause of one of the two agents he unites, but rather he is a properly personal being. Indeed, cause is «principium quoddam» *a certain principle*. Now, the Father is «principium sine principio» *principle without principle* (Council of Florence, Decree for the Jacobites, in Denzinger, no. 1331). Moreover, the Holy Spirit proceeds «ex Patre et Filio, non tanquam ex duobus principiis, sed tanquam ex uno principio» *not as if from two principles, but rather as from a single principle* (Council of Lyon, Session II, in Denzinger, no. 850). It follows that the Holy Spirit can be a cause neither with respect to the Father, nor with respect to the Son. Indeed, far from being a cause, the Holy Spirit must be considered a formal effect emanating from the Father and the Son and realizing in his own person the mutual love of the Father and the Son: «Sicut dicitur *arbor florens floribus, ita dicitur Pater dicens Verbo, vel Filio se, et creaturam. Et Pater et Filius dicuntur diligentes Spiritu Sancto, vel amore procedente, et se, et nos.*» *Just as we say of a tree: It flowers with flowers, in the same way we say that the Father, through his Word or through his Son, speaks himself, and the creature. And we say that the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit, or through Love that proceeds, love themselves and us.* (Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 37, a. 2, corp.)

**S**econdly, as for action, the mediator cannot act by himself, but only in virtue of the joint and simultaneous action of the two extreme agents that he unites. Indeed, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son. In other words, the Holy Spirit exists only in virtue of the existence of the Father and the Son. Now, God is pure act: in him, existence and action are confused with each other in a manner that is simple and one. Consequently, the Holy Spirit acts only in virtue of the action of the Father and the Son. And as there is but a single God,

whatever the Father does, the Son does jointly and simultaneously. We find an application of this principle in the mission of the Holy Spirit accomplished by the Father and the Son: *The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.* (Jn. 14:26) And: *When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me.* (Jn. 15:26)

Thirdly, as for rest, by the gift of self that he realizes in his very person, the mediator obtains rest for the extreme agents that he unites, and, by this very fact, for himself. Indeed, God is said *to be at rest* in the measure that he is happy through the enjoyment of himself: «*Rebus conditis (Deus) ipse non indigebat, sed seipso fruendo beatus est. Unde post conditionem omnium operum non dicitur, quod in suis operibus requievit, quasi eis ad suam beatitudinem indigens; sed ab eis requievit, utique in seipso; quia sufficit sibi, et implet desiderium suum.*» (God) *himself had no need for what he had created: he is happy in enjoying himself. So after the creation of all of his works, we do not say 'that he found his rest in his works', as if he needed them for his beatitude, but 'that he rested from them', in himself, for he suffices for himself and satisfies his own desire.* (Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 73, a. 2, corp.) Now, enjoyment of oneself is nothing other than love of self. God is thus at rest in the measure that he loves himself. But, on one hand, God is his own love; and on the other hand, «*amor habet rationem primi doni*» *love constitutes the first gift* (Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 38, a. 2, corp.). Thus the rest of God consists in the Gift of God to himself. Now, by the very fact that the Holy Spirit is the mediator, or that he proceeds from the Father and the Son, he realizes in his own person the Gift of God: «*Donum, secundum quod personaliter sumitur in divinis, est proprium nomen Spiritus Sancti (...) Cum Spiritus Sanctus procedat ut amor (...), procedit in ratione doni primi.*» [*in English: Taken in the personal sense in God, 'Gift' is the proper name of the Holy Spirit (...) Since the Holy Spirit proceeds as Love (...), he proceeds in the quality of the first Gift.* (Saint Thomas, *ibid.*) *The Holy Spirit is the personal expression of this self-giving, of this being-love* (H.H. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on the Holy Spirit *Dominum et vivificantem*, 1st part, no. 10). Finally, the Holy Spirit, being the Person-Gift, obtains rest for God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

288. In conclusion, let us apply to Mary Mediatrix the principal characteristics of the Mediator-Type, of whom she is the Spouse. So, concerning the act of Eucharistic communion (considered as a means through which Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation between Christ and the Church; see ECHC no. 28), Mary exercises her ministry as Mediatrix according to a properly personal mode, and not in the manner of an instrumental cause; next, Mary Mediatrix can act, and truly does act, only in virtue of the joint and simultaneous action of the extreme agents she unites through her ministry, these agents being Christ and the Church; lastly, regarding the notion of rest, Mary Mediatrix obtains rest for Christ and for the Church (as well as for herself, as a member of the Church) by the fact that she unites them with each other as extremes of her mediation, a rest that establishes them in a permanent abode, as it were: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.* (Jn. 6:56)



### Synthesis of the Life of God

289. At the heart of the Most Holy Trinity is Person-Life: the Holy Spirit, the link and mediator between the Father and the Son in the one and eternal act of divine Life. In other words, let us say that the notion of the Mediator is fundamental to understanding intimately, in accordance with God's Revelation of his own Life, the very person of the Holy Spirit as Knowledge of God. And thus we can offer the following three reflections on the appellations proper to the third Person of the Divine Trinity.

290. First, we see that the necessity of having a mediator between the Father and the Son is based on the spiritual aspect - which is, by this very fact, simple and one - of the divinity: a mediator between the Father and the Son is necessary only in virtue of the fact that the divine attribute of Knowledge, and indeed any divine attribute, can be indistinguishable from the divine essence itself. From this it follows that the Mediator of the Life of God bears the personal name of Spirit.

291. Second, we see that the role of the mediator belongs to the Holy Spirit because he alone knows all the Life of God, both the aspect of he who begets and that of he who is begotten; but he does not know these two aspects of generation under the mode of act, since otherwise he would be the Father or the Son, and he could no longer be the mediator between the Father and the Son; thus, the Holy Spirit knows these two aspects of generation under the mode of power. However, for the Holy Spirit, to know under the mode of power is not at all a complete and total ignorance, but rather a perfect and full knowledge, since the power in question is an infinite power, entirely given over to the eternal act to which it is directed and in which it coexists in fullness. So, for this reason, the Holy Spirit is properly called *the Power of the Most High* (Lk. 1:35) who allows the Father to eternally beget his Son.

292. Third, as mediator, the Holy Spirit appears to us as the Person-Knowledge or the Knowledge of God in fullness, which is, in itself, the unique and simple knowledge of the divinity. Now, knowledge, being a good possessed by the subject who knows, obtains rest and happiness for this same subject. Thus, the Holy Spirit, as a Good possessed in fullness, obtains perfect rest for all the divinity, that is, for the Father, for the Son, and for himself. Now, on one hand, the Father and the Son are in act of knowledge; on the other hand, the Holy Spirit is in power of knowledge. Thus, only the Father and the Son possess perfect rest in themselves; and the Holy Spirit possesses this same perfect rest only in the measure that this same Spirit exists totally in the Father and in the Son, and not in himself, that is to say in the measure that he is entirely given to the Father and to the Son in this one and eternal act of divine generation by mode of knowledge: *In the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift.* (H.H. John Paul II, the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, first part, n. 10)

293. On the subject of these appellations of the Holy Spirit, here is a bold and eloquent text: *Perhaps it would appear to our feeble minds that it would be an increase in glory, and a perfect fulfillment of the infinite goodness of the Holy Spirit, if this same goodness were also the principle of a divine Person; but this is impossible within the Most Holy Trinity. Why do we say this? We are taught this by the faith, and that is sufficient for us to remain firm in this belief; but, granted that we must believe this, if we were permitted to raise the eyes of our feeble reason and look, we would see that this infinitely fertile goodness, which ends in the Holy Spirit, is completely exhausted by the Father and the Son in producing him, since they could not make less than full use of it in producing such a noble end. It is true that he has this same fertile goodness, which belongs to the Father and the Son, but it has been completely exhausted in him, he being, if we may say it, its complete exhaustion.* (Louis-François d'Argentan, *Conférences théologiques et spirituelles sur les Grandeurs de la Très Sainte Vierge Marie, Mère de Dieu (Theological and Spiritual Conferences on the Greatness of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God)*, page 20 of the Avignon edition, 1755)

294. The Holy Spirit, as Mediator of Life between the Father and the Son, is the Gift or the Person-Gift of the Father and the Son: he is at once the Good of the Father and the Good of the Son, being he who is common to both the Father and the Son. But, as the Mediator between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit must be considered, on one hand, in a corporeal manner, and on the other hand, in a spiritual manner: the Holy Spirit can be considered as the Mediator-Type only in the measure that he is the Spouse of Mary, that is to say insofar as he is simply similar to Her, she who, with her Spouse, in Christ, is but one spiritualized mediating body, or a single corporeal and spiritual mediator. So, understood in this sense, the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (if we consider the Holy Spirit as a mediator of the corporeal order) while permitting, as power, the act of union of the Father and the Son by way of generation (if we consider the Holy Spirit as a mediator of the spiritual order).

295. However, as the Father is he who is *living* (Jn. 6:57), that is, he who is the source of the divine Life, we can consider the Person-Gift (the Holy Spirit) as the personal Good belonging to the Father inasmuch as the latter is he who gives Life. Likewise, as the Son is he who *lives*

*because of the Father* (Jn. 6:57), that is to say, he who receives Life from his Father, we can say that the Son possesses the Person-Gift only in the measure that he is united to the Father by the bond of Life. In other words, the Son partakes of the personal Gift of the Father as a Good in fullness received from him: *All things have been delivered to me by my Father.* (Mt. 11:27) Thus, the Holy Spirit, as the Mediator of Life between the Father and the Son, must be considered under a double aspect:

- first, he is the one who is common to the Father and the Son: he proceeds from the Father and the Son;

- second, he is the one who is given by the Father to the Son, who in turn makes him his own by receiving him: he proceeds from the Father through the Son.

296. So it is clear that, in the Life of God, there is a link or a Mediator between the Father and the Son: it is the Person of the Holy Spirit, who appears under two conjoint, indissociable and complementary aspects.

297. As every gift is free, every gift presupposes love, which is the motive for which one person gives a gift or gives of himself. Consequently, the relation in which the Holy Spirit, as Person-Gift, is given by the Father and received by the Son-Word, that is to say the relation of generation, or the one and eternal act of divine life, presupposes a preliminary relation of love between the Father and the Son. As divine power can exist only in dependence to the relation of generation, and not in dependence to any other relation, it follows that the aforementioned preliminary relation of love must be understood apart from any notion of power. Now, any being deprived of power is reduced to possessing but a single perfection, that of existence. So the preliminary relation of love between the Father and the Son can find its foundation only in the notion of existence.

298. There cannot be a relation based solely on the notion of existence among creatures. But in God, it is possible; it is even essential to the divinity: the three divine Persons are but one God, the single divine nature is common to the three Persons. So, in the relation of love preliminary to the relation of generation, we must consider the Father,



the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be identical with respect to their single nature, though different with respect to their persons. In other words, the Father is properly the Being or He who is; the Son is properly identical and similar to the Father, the *Image* of the Father (Col. 1:15); the Holy Spirit is properly Existence-Love. As the Gift of God is perfect and full, the preliminary relation of love between the Father and the Son is nothing other than the perfect Love between the perfect Being and his perfect Image.

299. In the analysis of the Life of God, we have established that there exists a relation of generation which is the unique Act of God: it is God acting; and a preliminary relation of love which is the Existence of God: it is God being. For God, being and acting are one and the same thing, so these two relations are identical, except that the relation of generation is effected with power, and the preliminary relation of love is effected without power. Lastly, as God is eternal, these two relations are necessarily coeternal, and the word *preliminary* is a distinction of our mind but with a basis in the reality. Thus, the Life of God must be considered solely from the point of view of the relation of generation, which must always be considered under its two aspects, that is, with and without power. So the Life of God is presented to us under its two aspects by the divine Revelation transmitted to the Apostles. Indeed, Saint John tells us, on one hand, that *God is Light* (1 Jn. 1:5): this is the Life of God with power, the fundamental aspect of the divine life as the source of life of the Church; and, on the other hand, that *God is Love* (1 Jn. 4:16): this is the Life of God without power, the first and preliminary aspect of the life of God and the Church.

300. In the light of the Eucharistic text of John 6:57, read and understood through the mediation of Mary, a mediation of the properly corporeal order, the Holy Spirit or the *Power of the Most high* (Lk. 1:35), in the bosom of the divine Trinitarian life analyzed in its comparison and similitude to Eucharistic communion, appeared to us as the Knowledge or the Life of God personified: he is the Good in fullness that the Father ceaselessly gives to his Son, his sole and absolute heir, he who *always lives* (Heb. 7:25). By this very fact, all of this enlightens us further concerning the act of Eucharistic communion: the Life of God manifested and communicated in the Eucharist is, finally, the personal

Gift of Christ to his Church. Saint John, the great Apostle of divine life, testifies to this, saying: *God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life. I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.* (1 Jn. 5:11-13)

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