

## AN ALTERNATIVE THEOLOGY OF JESUS' SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE IN THE EUCHARIST

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This article has four parts. In the first I set out the main elements of solemn Catholic teaching concerning Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist. In the second I argue that several statements essential to St. Thomas Aquinas's theology of this matter either are incoherent or lack clear meaning. In the third I propose a hypothesis about Jesus' substantial presence that I think might be developed into a satisfactory alternative to Aquinas's theology. In the fourth I reply to some anticipated objections and suggest some lines for further inquiry.

I think the hypothesis I propose is consistent with Catholic faith, but perhaps it is not. I also am not certain that every argument I offer in part II is sound: in criticizing Aquinas's theology, I may be calling into question one or more truths of faith. Still, many elements of Aquinas's account plainly do not pertain to faith, and if they are unsatisfactory, an alternative theology is needed to remove needless impediments both to the faith of individuals and to unity among Christians. So, I share the view that this matter calls for theological investigation and discussion.<sup>1</sup> This article is meant to be a contribution to that.

### **I. Solemn Catholic Teaching Concerning Jesus' Substantial Presence in the Eucharist**

The profession of faith of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) includes the first solemn Catholic teaching about Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist:

One is the universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved. In it, one and the same Jesus Christ is priest and sacrifice. In order that the mystery of unity may be completed by our receiving from him something of his which he himself received from what is ours, his body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread having been transubstantiated into his body and the wine into his blood by divine power.<sup>2</sup>

This compact passage states (1) how Jesus is in the Eucharist: contained under the appearances of bread and wine; (2) how this presence comes about: transubstantiation by divine power; and (3) why Jesus makes himself present: to consummate the unity of the Church's members with him and one another by giving them the flesh and blood assumed by the Word in becoming human.

The Council of Florence's bull of union with the Armenians (1439) adds something to Lateran IV's teaching on each of these matters:

The form of this sacrament is the words of the Savior by which he confected the sacrament. For the priest confects this sacrament speaking in the person of Christ. For, by the power of those words, the substance of bread is converted into the body of Christ and the substance of wine into his blood, yet in such a way that the whole Christ is contained under the appearance of bread and the whole Christ under the appearance of wine; also, when the parts of the consecrated host or the consecrated wine are separated, the whole Christ is contained in every part. The effect of this sacrament, which is brought about in the soul of anyone who receives it worthily, is the human person's uniting to Christ. And since a human person is incorporated into Christ and united with his members by grace, it follows that grace is increased by this sacrament in those receiving it worthily.<sup>3</sup>

Florence thus adds to Lateran IV by teaching that (1) the whole Christ is contained under both species and, when their parts are separated, under every part of either species; (2) the conversion of bread and wine into Jesus' body and blood is brought about by the power of his words, uttered in his person by the priest; and (3) the sacrament increases grace in those who receive it worthily; by that grace, recipients are incorporated into Christ and united with his members.

The first canon in the Council of Trent's decree on the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist (1551) further clarifies how Jesus is in the Eucharist:

Canon 1: If anyone denies that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there are contained truly, really, and substantially--and not as in a sign or symbol only, or in power only--the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the whole Christ, let that person be anathema.<sup>4</sup>

Trent here adds to previous teaching by making it clear that the words *whole Christ* refer to Jesus' body and blood, soul and divinity; and by affirming that Jesus' presence in the sacrament is substantial, not merely symbolic or dynamic.

The second canon of the same decree develops previous teaching on how this substantial presence of Jesus comes about:

Canon 2: If anyone says that in the sacred sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of bread and of wine remains along with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denies that wonderful and unique conversion of the whole substance of the bread into his body and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood--only the appearances of bread and of wine remaining--which conversion, indeed, the Catholic Church very appropriately calls "transubstantiation," let that person be anathema.<sup>5</sup>

This canon makes two closely related points.<sup>5</sup> First, Jesus' substantial presence comes about in such a way that nothing of the substance of bread or wine can remain present; only their appearances remain. Second, transubstantiation is a unique conversion: the whole substances of bread and wine are converted into Jesus' body and blood.

The third canon of Trent's decree repeats Florence's teaching that the whole Christ is contained under the appearances of both bread and wine, and, when their parts are separated, under each and every part.<sup>6</sup>

Chapters three and four of the same decree add further nuances.

Chapter three states that the whole Christ is present "immediately after the consecration" and explains that, while Jesus' body is present under the appearance of bread and his blood under the appearance of wine "by the power of the words," his body is also present under the appearance of wine, his blood under the appearance of bread, and his soul under both appearances "by virtue of the natural connection and concomitance by which the parts of Christ the Lord . . . are joined with one another," and his divinity is present "on account of its marvelous hypostatic union with his soul and body."<sup>7</sup>

Chapter four adds that the Council's declaration on this conversion reaffirms what the Church always had been convinced was true, the New Testament's institution narratives are cited as that conviction's source.<sup>8</sup>

The second chapter of Trent's decree on the sacrament of the Eucharist clarifies part of the complex reason why Jesus makes himself substantially present in the Eucharist. He wanted the Eucharist to be a number of closely related things, among them the spiritual food of those "living by the life of him who said, 'Whoever eats me will live because of me' [Jn 6:57]" and also "the pledge of our future glory and unending happiness, and thus the symbol of that one body of which he is the head [see 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23]."<sup>9</sup> In other words, Jesus wished to share his life with his disciples, to provide a pledge of what his gospel promises, and to provide a symbol of his extended body.<sup>10</sup>

The first chapter of Trent's teaching on the most holy sacrifice of the Mass (1562) clarifies another part of the reason why Jesus makes himself substantially present in the Eucharist. As the Letter to the Hebrews teaches, Christ's priesthood did not end with his death. So, though the bloody sacrifice of the cross would be sufficient forever, at the Last Supper Jesus "offered his body and blood to God the Father under the appearances of bread and wine, and under these same symbols gave them to be consumed to the apostles--whom he then made priests of the New Testament--and, with the words 'Do this in memory of me' etc., prescribed that they and their successors in the priesthood offer them."<sup>11</sup> In this way, he "instituted a new Pasch--himself--to be immolated by the Church through priests under visible signs in memory of his passage from this world to the Father."<sup>12</sup> This new

Pasch makes Jesus' unique, bloody sacrifice permanently available to his disciples, for the eucharistic sacrifice represents the sacrifice of the cross, sustains its memory until the end of time, and applies its saving power for the forgiveness of the sins which disciples commit every day.<sup>13</sup>

## **II. Problematic Statements in Aquinas's Theology of Jesus' Substantial Presence in the Eucharist**

If I thought one could reasonably accept Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist I would not call it into question. It not only avoids contradicting relevant truths of faith but is, as it were, commingled with them in various documents of the Church, so that at some points the boundary between faith and Aquinas's theology is unclear. Calling that theology into question is likely to disturb some of the faithful, since catechesis on the Eucharist has made such extensive use of it that Aquinas's views imbue most Catholics' eucharistic devotion and practice. Moreover, the magisterium has frequently commended Aquinas's theology in general.

However, since theology seeks understanding, an acceptable theological account must be not only consistent with faith but intelligible; and an account is intelligible only if it is a logically coherent set of propositions expressed in statements whose terms have definite meanings. But Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist seems to me to avoid falling into incoherence only by evacuating key terms of their usual meanings, without supplying them with other, definite meanings. Consequently, it seems to me that his account fails to meet the requirement of intelligibility and is appropriately called into question.

To show what seems to me problematic, I begin by summarizing Aquinas's teaching about the accidents of bread and wine.

Aquinas states that the accidents that previously inhered in the bread and wine remain, after the consecration, without a subject--they continue to exist without being accidents of anything. They cannot go on being accidents of the bread and wine, which no longer exist; and, Aquinas says, it is obviously impossible that they remain as accidents of Jesus, both because a human body cannot be affected by such accidents and because Jesus' risen body, in particular, cannot be altered so as to receive them. So, he concludes, as with other miracles so here, infinite divine power causes the whole set of accidents which previously existed as determinations of the bread and wine to exist by themselves.<sup>14</sup> Among these accidents, Aquinas explains, measurable quantity is more basic than the others, and qualities belong to it, so that after the consecration the perceptible host is really just a white, crisp, wafer-shaped size.<sup>15</sup>

Existing by themselves, the accidents remain able, Aquinas says, to do "every action that they could do with the substance of bread and wine existing."<sup>16</sup> The persisting accidents decompose under conditions that would cause bread and wine to decompose; when that happens, what would come to be from bread and wine comes to be from the accidents,<sup>17</sup> though, Aquinas notes, "it is hard to see how."<sup>18</sup> His explanation is that, since the consecration makes the quantities of the bread and wine become the subject of their other accidents--a role proper to matter--the consecration also gives those quantities the ability to turn into whatever the bread and wine could turn into if they were still there.<sup>19</sup> So, the sacramental species, previously the mere accidents of bread and wine, now can nourish, inebriate, and, in general, do whatever the substance of bread and wine can.<sup>20</sup>

Most of the preceding account pertains only to Aquinas's theology, not to faith. Considering it critically, one wonders whether it makes sense to say that accidents, rather than the substance in which they inhere, do anything. Even when bread and wine exist, does it make sense to say that their accidents, rather than those substances, can nourish and inebriate? Supposing it does, can it make sense to talk about a white, crisp, wafer-shaped, so much of nothing that, being eaten, nourishes; or about the contents of a chalice full of the accidents of nothing, which, being drunk, inebriate?

A pious Catholic might answer that the host is not "so much of nothing," but so much of the Lord's body, and the chalice is not "full of nothing," but full of the Lord's blood. Indeed, when dealing with the formula for consecrating the precious blood and with the reverence due the Eucharist, Aquinas himself says Jesus' blood is contained in the chalice.<sup>21</sup> But both the pious Catholic's answer and those statements of Aquinas imply that what previously were the quantities of bread and wine now are quantities of Jesus; and Aquinas has excluded, as obviously impossible, that any of the accidents that belonged to bread and wine remain as accidents of Jesus. Accordingly, he holds that the "body of Christ is not in this sacrament in the way in which a body is in a place, so that it fills the place with its dimensions, but in a certain special way that is proper to this sacrament."<sup>22</sup> So, while Aquinas affirms that Christ's body and blood are contained under the sacramental species, his view forbids one to say that the host is so much of Jesus' body and the chalice is full of his blood.<sup>23</sup> We are left no alternative by Aquinas except to say that the host is a white, crisp, wafer-shaped so much of nothing, which nevertheless nourishes, and that the chalice is full of the accidents of nothing, which nevertheless can inebriate.

These statements about the accidents that belonged to the bread and wine, and persist after the consecration, lead to problems.

First, Aquinas holds both that the whole Christ is present in the Eucharist<sup>24</sup> and that Jesus' gloriously risen body has a definite size and is located in heaven.<sup>25</sup> I do not question

either point: the former is part of Florence's and Trent's teaching, quoted above; the latter seems to me unquestionably true. But, given these truths, to say that Jesus' body is not in the sacrament as a body is in a place raises a question about whether his body's own size and location are present in the sacrament, and, if so, how. Aquinas answers that the "entire size of the body of Christ and all his other accidents are present in this sacrament by virtue of their real concomitance" with the substance of his body and blood,<sup>26</sup> yet not in the way characteristic of accidents but rather in the way characteristic of a substance.<sup>27</sup> So, while Jesus' size is present in the Eucharist, it does not spread out his bodily reality and make him too big to fit in it or in any part of it.<sup>28</sup> And, though Aquinas does not say so explicitly, on his view Jesus' location in heaven must be present in the Eucharist in the way characteristic of substance, and so in a way that does not affect his presence as contained in the sacramental species.

By saying what he says about how Jesus' own accidents are present in the Eucharist, Aquinas succeeds in avoiding inconsistency. But what does it mean to say accidents exist in the way a substance does, and so without determining the substance whose accidents they are, as accidents seem to do *per se*--that is, necessarily, precisely insofar as they are accidents? For instance, what does it mean to say that a body really is of a certain size, but is that in the way characteristic of substance, with the result that its size does not spread out its parts and make it too big to fit in a space smaller than its size (though spreading out its parts is just what a body's size does for it)?<sup>29</sup>

Second, Aquinas's view that none of the accidents of the sacramental species are accidents of Jesus himself does seem to account well for some things--for example, that breaking up hosts and sharing the cup does not mutilate and use up the glorified body and blood of Christ: "The very body of Christ is not broken, except according to the sacramental species."<sup>30</sup> In other words, not Jesus himself, but only the sets of accidents (that in a certain special way contain his body and blood) are broken and divided. Similarly, according to Aquinas, Jesus' flesh is not chewed: being chewed "is referred to the sacramental species, under which the body of Christ truly is."<sup>31</sup> In other words, being chewed and sipped affect not Jesus, but only the sacramental species that contain his body and blood.

That explanation is attractive inasmuch as it puts to rest disgusting imagery and anxieties about consuming Jesus alive, and makes it easy to answer nonbelievers' challenges regarding cannibalism. Yet the appealing solution is not without its price: in receiving the Eucharist one does not, on Aquinas's view, eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood. Rather, one eats and drinks--in the ordinary sense of eating and drinking--accidents that previously belonged to bread and wine, the sacramental species under which in some sense Jesus' body

and blood are contained. The difficulty with this, however, is that Jesus is not described as saying: "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the accidents which inhered in bread and drink the accidents which inhered in wine that somehow contain the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you."

Aquinas did not consider this difficulty. If he had, he could (and I expect would) have said that we really do eat and drink Jesus' body and blood, but not in the usual way; rather, in receiving Communion, he might have said, we eat and drink in a certain special way, so that Jesus' body and blood are eaten and drunk without being chewed and swallowed. But that response would save coherence by emptying *eating* and *drinking* of meaning.

Third, though Aquinas repeatedly says that Jesus is present under the species or contained in the sacrament, he never explains what these expressions mean. He does make it clear that they do not mean that Jesus is located where the species are or is the subject of any of the accidents that constitute the species. Yet at times he suggests that Jesus' substance is present or contained much as the substance of bread and wine was: "In this sacrament the whole substance of the body and blood of Christ is contained after the consecration, just as the substance of the bread and wine was contained there before."<sup>32</sup> Again, in arguing that Jesus' body is not located in the sacrament, Aquinas points out that a substance is not located within or under its own dimensions, and concludes that Jesus' body is in the sacrament "in the way characteristic of substance, that is, in the way in which a substance is contained by dimensions."<sup>33</sup> However, a substance plainly is contained by its dimensions precisely in the sense that they are an accident determining it to be just the size it is, and Aquinas again at once excludes this possibility with respect to the dimensions of the consecrated host: "Yet the substance of Christ's body is not the subject of those dimensions, as the substance of bread was."<sup>34</sup>

How important and how difficult it is to determine what Aquinas could mean by *contained* become very clear in his treatment of the truth of "This is my body." He explains that the words express a practical truth; this divine expression brings about, rather than describes, what it refers to.<sup>35</sup> The sense is: Let this be my body. But does *this* refer to the bread, Jesus' body, or what? Aquinas answers that *this* does not refer to "the term of the conversion so as to mean 'The body of Christ is the body of Christ' nor to what was there before the conversion--the bread--but to what is common to both, namely, to what is contained in general under these species."<sup>36</sup> And by that final phrase he means, *what substance is contained under these accidents*, as his reply to an objection makes clear: "The pronoun *this* does not point out the very accidents but the substance contained under the accidents, which first was bread and afterwards is the body of Christ--which, though not informed by these accidents, still is contained under them."<sup>37</sup>

This answer has perplexing implications. It makes sense only if *what is contained* has a clear and unambiguous meaning when it refers in general to the two realities that are successively contained--namely, to the bread and to Jesus' body--and thus only if in some one sense of *contained* both the bread and Jesus' body can be said truly to be contained under the species. When Aquinas says the body of Christ is present in the Eucharist "in a certain special way that is proper to this sacrament,"<sup>38</sup> he either does or does not mean to exclude all sameness of meaning between *what is contained* said of Jesus and of the bread. If he does mean to exclude all sameness of meaning, his answer to the question about the meaning of *this* in the formula of consecration is incoherent. But if he allows some one sense in which both the unconsecrated elements and Jesus can be truly said to be contained under the accidents, what can that unambiguous sense of *contained* be?<sup>39</sup>

*What is contained* would have the same meaning if it referred in general to the subject of apparently continuous accidents in describing a change by which a perceptible object becomes a substantially different perceptible object: Let this be Lazarus alive and well, where *this* points out in general two different substances, the corpse and Lazarus himself, contained under the accidents they really do have and seem to share. But Aquinas denies that *what is contained* refers in that way in the case of the Eucharist, since he holds that Jesus is not the subject of the apparently continuous accidents.

Of course, it is a matter of faith that Jesus' body and blood really are present under the species and contained in the sacrament. That substantial presence and availability imply some real connection between Jesus and the sacramental species. But, as has been explained, Aquinas holds both that the accidents that constitute the species are accidents of nothing and that all of Jesus' own accidents are present in the way characteristic of substance, with the result that no accident or group of accidents of either set can help account for Jesus' being present in the sacrament and contained under the species. Within this theology, I do not see how one can avoid thinking of Jesus and the sacramental species as if they were two altogether separate entities, metaphysically and physically isolated from each other. But that view precludes finding any sense in which Jesus can be said to be *present* under the species and *contained* in the sacrament.

Besides the preceding problems in Aquinas's accounts both of the accidents that remain after the consecration and of Jesus' accidents as present in the sacrament, there is, it seems to me, a problem in his account of transubstantiation itself.

Aquinas contrasts transubstantiation with other cases in which something comes to be. In other cases, even if the change is of one substance into another, the material of the former contributes to the latter. For example, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the material that made up the corpse was miraculously reconstituted into Lazarus's again-living

self. That material was the underlying subject of the change. Aquinas holds that in transubstantiation there is no underlying subject; transubstantiation, he thinks, is in this respect like creation out of nothing, where *nothing* signifies the absence of any antecedent reality rather than material out of which something comes to be. However, unlike creation and like substantial change, transubstantiation involves a succession of two different realities--first the bread and wine and then Jesus' body and blood, as first the corpse and then Lazarus revived.<sup>40</sup> So, on Aquinas's view, in transubstantiation this whole (the whole substance of the bread and wine) is converted into that whole (the whole substance of the body and blood of Christ) in the sense that nothing of the former (no common material) persists, and only the accidents that belonged to bread and wine remain.<sup>41</sup>

In some other cases in which something comes from something else, there is no problem finding the sense in which one says meaningfully that the *whole* substance of the former becomes the latter. When speaking of Lazarus's dying, one cannot correctly say his whole substance changed into the corpse: his soul survived apart from it. But in speaking of Lazarus brought back to life, it surely is meaningful, and it seems correct, to say that the whole substance of the corpse became Lazarus's again-living self, in the sense that all the material of the corpse was reconstituted into the living body of Lazarus, with no residue left behind in the tomb to continue corrupting. And if Lazarus were still pallid and malodorous as he emerged from the tomb, one might have said that, though he was a substance entirely different from the corpse, some of its accidents remained in him. But since, according to Aquinas, no common material persists through transubstantiation, he holds that one cannot accurately say the bread and wine *become* the body and blood of Christ.<sup>42</sup> So, in saying that the body of Christ comes from the bread and that the substance of the bread is converted into Christ's body--things Aquinas holds can rightly be said<sup>43</sup>--one can only mean, on his view, that the bread was the antecedent for Jesus' coming to be in the sacrament by a process in which that antecedent contributes nothing whatever to what follows from it.

Of course, even on Aquinas's view, the bread and wine are necessary antecedents both because Jesus used them when he instituted the sacrament and because they leave behind accidents that serve as the sacramental sign under which Jesus is present and in which he is contained. But those requirements could have been met by saying that the bread and wine are annihilated and replaced by Jesus' body and blood. And this way of putting matters might seem a more accurate account of what Aquinas thinks is happening: first one reality is there and then it no longer exists, its place taken by a second reality that has nothing whatever in common with the first. (Of course, the accidents that previously belonged to the first reality remain, but on Aquinas's view they in no way belong to or determine the

second reality.) But Aquinas rejects any account involving annihilation, because he thinks it would require Jesus to take the place of the bread and wine by moving from heaven into the elements and so being in as many different places as there are consecrated species-- something he considers impossible.<sup>44</sup> So, he maintains that the consecration of the bread and wine converts their substance into Jesus' body and blood without their contributing anything whatever to the reality of his substantial presence in the sacrament, and he says that this conversion, though beyond the power of all created causes, is brought about by God's infinite power.<sup>45</sup>

If it is meaningful to talk about a conversion of one substance into another in which nothing of the first contributes to the reality of the second, God no doubt can bring it about. But the very idea of converting *this* into *that* seems to me to imply that something of the former contributes to the reality of the latter. So, it seems to me that Aquinas's account of transubstantiation is unintelligible. And since the unintelligible is nothing--neither real nor even possible--not even God can bring it about.

Among the objections to his view that Aquinas considers<sup>46</sup> is one that comes close to formulating this problem in Aquinas's account of transubstantiation. The objection is that a conversion is a change, and every change needs a subject (something that undergoes it) which initially can be what it will become and then, by changing, actually is that. But, the argument continues, there can be no subject underlying the substance of the bread and the body of Christ. So, the objection concludes, the whole substance of the bread cannot be converted into the body of Christ.

Aquinas begins his reply by saying that the objection deals with substantial change which presupposes matter that is transformed from *this* into *that*, and so is irrelevant to transubstantiation, in which the whole substance is converted. This is an effective response, given Aquinas's view, to the objection as stated. But he goes on: "So, since this substantial conversion implies a certain order of the substances, one of which is converted into the other, the conversion is in both substances as in a subject, just as order and number are in both."<sup>47</sup>

This answer seems to me to involve a confusion between logic and reality. Logically, the concepts of bread and of Jesus' body can serve together as the subject of *conversion*, functioning as a two-term relational predicate (just as those concepts can serve together as the subjects of ordering and numbering relational predicates). But if, as Aquinas maintains, there is no real continuity between the bread and Jesus' body present in the sacrament, then the two substances share nothing that could make them be together the subject of anything real. Yet transubstantiation is a real conversion.<sup>48</sup>

### **III. A Hypothesis about Jesus' Substantial Presence in the Eucharist**

To provide a context for the hypothesis I shall propose, it would be helpful to sketch my theology of the Eucharist as a whole. But to limit the length of this article, I only list the points that would be developed in such a sketch.<sup>49</sup>

- (1) The sacraments of the new law are not only signs or symbols but cooperative actions, and their being as signs and symbols is best understood in light of their reality as divine-human cooperation in establishing, maintaining, and perfecting covenantal communion of human persons both with the divine persons and with one another.
- (2) The participation of ministers and recipients in the sacraments always is subordinate, because their cooperative actions and all the sacraments' benefits depend entirely on the Holy Spirit's action in the sacraments, which itself always presupposes God's unilateral, salvific initiative and Jesus' uniquely adequate and acceptable human response to it.
- (3) At an early age, Jesus committed himself to carry out the mission his Father gave him. In fidelity to that commitment, he chose to go up to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover with his disciples despite foreseeing suffering and death as side effects of doing so.
- (4) In carrying out that fateful choice--that is, in celebrating the Last Supper--and in freely accepting and experiencing the side effects of doing so, Jesus gave himself completely to his Father, who accepted this sacrifice and responded to it by raising Jesus from the dead and anointing his disciples with the Holy Spirit.
- (5) Jesus' celebration of that Supper with his disciples and his perfect sacrifice in celebrating it both fulfilled the Old Covenant and transformed it into the New Covenant, which brings about familial intimacy among the divine persons and human persons. Fallen human beings are drawn into the new covenant by Jesus' human friendship toward them, the gift of faith, and the Holy Spirit's action, by which they are made children of God.
- (6) In establishing the new covenant during the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist: cooperating with the Holy Spirit, he changed bread and wine into his body and blood, and shared these as food and drink with his disciples. He did so in order to join them to himself and enable them to share in his perfect sacrifice and in the benefits of the Father's response to it.
- (7) Since human free choices to which a person remains committed persist as self-determinations, and choices to cooperate similarly persist as interpersonal bonds, Jesus' sacrifice persists, and his disciples' solidarity with him in it also persists provided they remain faithful.

- (8) Within the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus provided for its continual celebration so that this cooperative action would be and, in fact, is one in which his disciples can participate as an ongoing assembly until the end of time.
- (9) Since his ascension, Jesus has exercised his priesthood in heaven. But to join his disciples to himself and to make his action available for their participation, Jesus must be really and truly with them in several ways, including physically. Therefore, Jesus continually makes himself substantially present under the sacramental species.<sup>50</sup>

This theology locates Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist in the dynamic context of the intimate communion of the new covenant, which the Eucharist sustains and builds up with a view to its perfection in heavenly fellowship.

Having criticized Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist, I now sketch out an alternative.

Except for the problem about transubstantiation, all the problems with Aquinas's view pointed out in the previous part stem from the supposition that after the consecration the accidents that belonged to bread and wine continue to exist without a subject. That supposition must, I think, be denied. Denying it, however, might seem to have been definitively precluded by the Council of Constance.

Believing that the consecrated elements remain bread and wine, John Wyclif (1330-84) denied that the accidents remain without a subject. That denial was included in two lists of his propositions condemned by Constance (1415). The first proposition in the first list is that the material substance of the bread and wine remains in the sacrament,<sup>51</sup> while the second is: "The accidents of the bread do not remain without a subject in the said sacrament."<sup>52</sup> In the second list, the first and fourth of Wyclif's propositions assert that after the consecration the host is true bread by nature and Christ's body in only a figurative sense; the second and third characterize the supposition of accidents without a subject as heresy and assert that its proponents can neither argue for it nor make sense of it, and that they will never make a case for it to faithful Christians.<sup>53</sup>

Despite Constance's condemnations of Wyclif's propositions, it nevertheless seems to me it would be a mistake to think the Council's teaching absolutely excludes the view that the accidents remaining after the consecration are in a subject. As we have seen, Wyclif took that position in holding that both the substance and the accidents of bread and wine remain--in other words, denying Catholic teaching about transubstantiation, which Lateran IV had already proposed definitively.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Constance and Martin V condemned the list of Wyclif's propositions collectively with a series of alternative theological notes ranging from *heresy* to *offensive to pious ears*,<sup>55</sup> and pious ears no doubt were offended by Wyclif's effrontery in charging faithful Catholics with heresy. Then too,

in the bull, "Inter cunctas" (1418), which expressly endorsed Constance's first condemnation of Wyclif's propositions, Martin V supplied a set of questions to be put to Wyclifites and Hussites, and the questions bearing on the Eucharist do not raise the issue of the accidents remaining without a subject. Indeed, Pope Martin's questions speak only of a veil and of appearances rather than of accidents.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, in their teachings on the Eucharist, Lateran IV, Florence, and Trent never mention accidents but instead speak of appearances, and the Church's ordinary teaching generally has echoed the conciliar documents. Though a substance's appearances are among its accidents, the two are conceptually different, and not all accidents are appearances. By using only the concept of appearances, Church teachings have focused on what is true, appearances notwithstanding--this now is Jesus' body and this now is his blood, and no bread or wine remains here. In this way, Church teaching has not invited the difficult questions Aquinas tries to answer about the subject of the appearances and the other accidents that belonged to the bread and wine, and about how Jesus' accidents are present in the Eucharist. Therefore, it seems to me, neither any definitive teaching of the Church nor the constant and very firm teaching of the ordinary magisterium includes Aquinas's problematic statements that, after the consecration, the accidents that belonged to bread and wine remain without a subject; that those accidents nevertheless can do whatever they could do if the substance of bread and wine still remained; and that Jesus' own accidents are present in the Eucharist in the way characteristic of substance.

Of course, to faithful Catholics who think about these matters, these statements are likely to seem, as they perhaps seemed to Aquinas, logically inescapable, though difficult, implications of the truth of faith about the Eucharist. But I suggest that this seeming necessity results from considering what the Church does teach *along with* various plausible presuppositions that seem to pertain to common sense or that have been drawn directly or indirectly from Aquinas by most such Catholics. I think some of those plausible presuppositions can be replaced.

Still, that is not the case with presuppositions that pertain to faith. Thus, I in no way propose to replace the presupposition that the bread and wine no longer exist after the consecration. Not only Trent's solemn definition but the constant and very firm teaching of the ordinary magisterium and the consensus of faithful Catholics through many centuries exclude the view that the reality of bread and wine, as distinct from their appearances, remains after the consecration.

Among those who hold that excluded view, many have reduced Jesus' presence in the Eucharist to mere symbolism, while even for those who resist doing that, the view implies either that one and the same thing is both bread and Jesus' body or that the Eucharist

somehow involves bread and Jesus' body as two separate things. The former is impossible, because the same thing cannot be both nonliving (as bread is) and living (as Jesus' body is). As for the latter, any attempt to say how the two supposedly separate realities were related to each other would end in unintelligibility similar to that into which Aquinas falls in trying to relate the accidents which constitute the species, thought of as existing by themselves, to Jesus' body and blood, somehow contained under those accidents.

The principal presupposition I do consider replaceable is that the appearances of bread and wine and the other accidents that formerly belonged to them cannot remain after the consecration as accidents of Jesus' body and blood, and so as his accidents. But how can Jesus be determined by a set of accidents that includes the appearances and other characteristics of bread and wine? The answer might require a theology explaining Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist along the following lines.

- (1) The conversion of the whole substance of the bread and the whole substance of the wine is their substantial change without residue--that is, all their material is transformed into Jesus' body and blood much as all the material in his corpse was transformed on Easter morning into his gloriously risen body.
- (2) New parts of Jesus' body and blood are the immediate term of the transubstantiation of bread and wine.
- (3) These new parts are integral to Jesus' glorified humanity, so that by them and with them the whole Christ is present in the Eucharist.
- (4) By means of these new parts, Jesus makes it possible for his disciples to cooperate with him in his ongoing self-offering to the Father, gives himself to them in holy Communion, makes them members of his glorified body, and nurtures their life in him.
- (5) The accidents that belonged to bread and wine and that remain after the consecration become accidents of Jesus by being accidents of the new parts of his body and blood into which the bread and wine have been transubstantiated.
- (6) Jesus' other accidents are not perceptible by us, but they remain operative in him rather than being present only in the way characteristic of substance.

This hypothesis avoids the difficulties in Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist. There are no accidents after the consecration that are accidents of nothing, and there is no need to suppose that anything is brought about by, or comes to be from, a set of such accidents. Jesus is contained in the Eucharist, as I shall explain, both by really being where the species are and by being the subject of the appearances and the other accidents that previously belonged to the bread and wine. In receiving the Eucharist one eats and drinks, chews and swallows, Jesus' body and blood. The pronoun *this* refers to

Jesus' body and blood in the Eucharist in the same way it refers to any other particular entity. Transubstantiation has a subject, namely, the material of the bread and wine, which are substantially and totally changed into parts of Jesus' body and blood.

Is this proposal viable? Formulations similar to some of Aquinas's statements were used by the Council of Trent in defining relevant truths of faith, particularly in the first two canons, quoted in part I above, of its decree on the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist. Is the proposed hypothesis consistent with those truths?

Plainly, the first two canons of Trent's decree on the Eucharist are formulated in language reminiscent of Aquinas's, and many if not all of the Council Fathers probably understood those canons in the light of his theology. Still, Trent's formulation in the second of those canons markedly differs in one respect from Aquinas's theology. Whereas Aquinas had said that the whole substance of the bread is converted into the whole substance of Jesus' body and the whole substance of the wine is converted into the whole substance of Jesus' blood,<sup>57</sup> Trent says the conversion is of "the whole substance of the bread into his body and the whole substance of the wine into his blood"<sup>58</sup> without qualifying *body* and *blood* by *the whole substance of*. The Council's formulation clearly means that the conversion called "transubstantiation" is into the substance of Jesus' body and the substance of his blood; but it leaves open the possibility that the whole substance of his body and blood is not the immediate term of the conversion.

Even in the respects in which there is no such significant difference in formulation, I do not think Trent's teachings on the Eucharist should be interpreted as asserting everything that various Council Fathers--who meant to allow for some theological differences among themselves and their theological advisers--may have believed about the matters the canons address or may personally have meant to assert. Rather, what the canons assert ought to be determined by interpreting them in a way that accounts reasonably for their actual text considered in its historical context.<sup>59</sup> Unless this standard of interpretation is used, there seems to be little if any room for the sort of dogmatic development that, in respect to other doctrines, has been recognized as legitimate and desirable in various documents of the magisterium.

I have not done the necessary historical research to apply that standard with care and precision, and I lack not only the time but the competence one would need reasonably to undertake that project. So, though the following interpretation of Trent's teaching seems to me reasonable, it might well be unsound.

Both of Trent's first two canons on the Eucharist reject as false certain statements people might make, and insist on the truth of certain statements people might deny. The first canon excludes saying that Jesus is in the Eucharist only as in a sign or symbol or by

his saving power; the second excludes saying that the substances of bread and wine remain along with the body and blood of our Lord. One surely could adopt the hypothesis I am proposing without making or implying either of those statements condemned by Trent. The problem, if there is one, will be in rightly interpreting Trent's articulation of the truths on which it insists, without discovering that its teaching falsifies the proposed hypothesis.

In the first canon, Trent asserts that the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained in the sacrament of the Eucharist. What meaning consistent with the proposed hypothesis can *contained* have here, such that reading Trent's statements with that meaning will preserve the truth that the Council holds must not be denied?

The undeniable truth of faith about the Eucharist, it seems to me, includes at least the following propositions. (1) Before the consecration, one can point to the elements and say: "This is bread and this is wine"; after, one pointing to the elements ought to say (with the same sense of *this is bread and this is wine*) "It is false that this is bread and this is wine." (2) After the consecration, if one points to the host and to what is in the cup, one speaks the truth only if one affirms "This is Jesus' body and this is his blood," using *is Jesus' body* and *is his blood* in the same sense they would have had if used by the Beloved Disciple, standing beneath the cross and saying to himself: "Just as he said, here is Jesus' body being given and here is his blood being poured out."<sup>60</sup>

In perfect consistency with those essential propositions, the meaning of *contains* is easy to specify on the proposed hypothesis: By virtue of the words of consecration the sacrament contains Jesus' body and blood, meaning by *contains* that (1) despite appearances the host is not bread but part of his body, and what is in the cup is not wine but part of his blood; and (2) though seeming to be accidents of bread and wine, the appearances inhere in those parts of Jesus' body and blood. In other words, Jesus' body and blood are contained under the eucharistic species in the same way other substances are contained under their own accidents. That is so, on the proposed hypothesis, because the appearances of bread and wine that remain are Jesus' accidents.

But on the proposed hypothesis, how can the *whole* Christ be contained in the sacrament? The answer must start from Trent's (which also was Aquinas's) explanation: Due to the natural concomitance of the parts of Jesus' humanity and to the hypostatic union of his humanity with his divinity, the whole Christ is present under both species, rather than his body alone under the appearances of bread and his blood alone under the appearances of wine.<sup>61</sup> In accord with that explanation, one can say, on the proposed hypothesis, that the parts of Jesus' body and blood into which he changes the bread and wine are not separated from him, like specimens taken for laboratory studies. Rather, they are integral to his glorified humanity, and his humanity is hypostatically united with his divinity. Therefore,

in the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus delivers his whole self--body, blood, soul, and divinity--to the Father in sacrifice and to his disciples in Communion. So, in saying that both of the sacramental species contain the whole Christ, one can mean by *contain* that, by the parts of Jesus' body and blood that appear to be bread and wine, he truly delivers his whole self, rather than giving only those parts of himself. The adequacy of this understanding of "The whole Christ is contained" is supported, as will be shown, by the analogy between the Eucharist and marriage.

In the second canon of its decree on the Eucharist, Trent asserts what it says is fittingly called "transubstantiation": the wonderful and unique conversion of the whole substance of the bread into Jesus' body and the whole substance of the wine into his blood, only the appearances remaining. What meaning consistent with the proposed hypothesis can *conversion* have here, such that reading Lateran IV's and Trent's statements with that same meaning will preserve the truth on which the conciliar teachings insist? In this context, *conversion* must mean at least: whatever it is that consecrating does, so that, after the consecration, what still appears to be bread is not bread but is Jesus' body and what still appears to be wine is not wine but is Jesus' blood (in the realistic sense specified in the two paragraphs before the preceding one). On the proposed hypothesis, this conversion is the substantial change of the bread and wine into parts of Jesus' body and blood.

But if that conversion is a substantial change, in what sense is it a unique conversion? It is unique in that, while all other substantial changes of bread and wine are brought about by natural causes and/or result in natural realities, this conversion is not brought about by natural causes, but at each Mass by Jesus' act of consecrating together with the action of the Holy Spirit, and it does not result in a natural reality, but in bodily parts of the incarnate Word, preternatural parts that exist by his divine being.

Again, if the conversion is a substantial change, how is it a conversion of the whole substance of the bread and of the wine, rather than an exchange of the substantial forms of bread and wine for those of Jesus' flesh and blood? Substantial change never is a mere exchange of substantial forms. Forms do not substantially change; individual substances do. And when a substantial change--whether the return to life of Jesus' corpse or the transubstantiation of the bread--leaves behind none of the material that belonged to the thing that changed, the whole substance of that thing truly is changed into the substance resulting from the change.

Jesus' preaching and teaching as presented in the Gospels plainly declare that he desires to unite his disciples with himself and one another in an intimate communion comparable to that of marriage. The Gospels and St. Paul's writings make it clear that the sacrament of the Eucharist contributes to the carrying out of those intentions. So, some aspects of

marital communion throw light on the mystery of the Eucharist. Of course, the analogy is limited, but it helps clarify two things: how Jesus' whole self is present in the Eucharist through the transubstantiation of bread and wine into parts of his body and blood; and how Jesus really incorporates his disciples and forms them into his one body, without thereby losing his own human individuality or depriving them of theirs.

In marriage, a man and a woman become one flesh. Though *become one flesh* refers to more than sexual activity, the nucleus of the married couple's one-flesh unity is intercourse suited of itself for reproduction together with the natural consequences of such intercourse. Biologically, an individual animal of a sexually reproducing species, whether male or female, is from birth complete with respect to most functions: nutrition (though babies being suckled are an exception), growth, sensation, emotion, local movement, and so on. But with respect to reproductive functioning, male and female individuals are incomplete, since each is only a potential part of a mated pair, which alone is the complete organism naturally capable of reproducing sexually. This is true also of a man and a woman: As mates who engage in intercourse suited for reproduction, they complete each other and become an organic unit. It is literally the case that they become one flesh--that is, the single subject of a unitary and indivisible bodily function. Far from being merely metaphorical, their becoming one flesh is both as real as and more basic than the flesh-and-blood fellowship of natural siblings, who are linked organically, but only indirectly, by having emerged from the same parental one-flesh unity.

When intercourse carries out a couple's mutual consent to marriage, they become one not only as animals but as rational animals. Sharing in a covenantal communion no less real than the individual identities that differentiate them, the spouses become, as it were, one new person with respect to their whole common life and especially, when intercourse is fruitful, with respect to having and raising children. Still, the communion of husband and wife in respect to what unites them by no means need negate or diminish their individual personalities but rather can and should fulfill them.

Consequently, while the functioning of a married couple's complementary reproductive capacities is an essential principle of their one-flesh communion, the occasional intimate contact of genital organs does not by itself constitute their permanent one-flesh communion as a married couple. Rather, those organs give their bodies as wholes a nuptial meaning, so that the spouses as whole persons are both united and distinguished in the mutual fulfillment of all their complementary potentialities.

These features of marriage suggest how Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist might be understood.

By eating and drinking, both before and after the Resurrection, Jesus transformed nonliving substances into his flesh and blood. Analogous to this natural process is the

preternatural process of transubstantiation, in which he appropriates bread and wine, and substantially changes them by making them parts of his body and blood. These parts make it possible for his disciples to receive him into themselves, and for him to join their bodies to his own, incorporating them as members into his own glorified body. Thus, the body and the blood that Jesus makes available in the Eucharist are preternatural, bodily organs of a unique sort. Unlike genital organs, they are not specified by a single natural function that grounds the communion of persons. Rather, Jesus' eucharistic flesh and blood bring about a real sharing in the whole life of his glorified body. So, by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, his disciples become members of his body, have his life in them, and are continually nourished, with the result that they will never die--that is, they will live forever, even though they do die with respect to the natural life proper to them as children of Adam and Eve.

As with the one-flesh union of marriage, the bodily unity to which the Eucharist gives rise is an essential principle of the communion of the whole persons involved in the relationship. By his eucharistic, preternatural organs, however, Jesus makes it possible for his disciples to share, with him and one another, not just in the mutual fulfillment of complementary potentialities but in the everlasting life of the heavenly kingdom, including Jesus' life with his Father and their Spirit. Still, like the sublime communion of the Trinity and the one-flesh communion of a married couple, the one-flesh communion among Jesus and his members--his communion with each and every one of them and their communion, as his bodily members, with one another--takes nothing from their individual personalities but rather perfects them.<sup>62</sup>

This understanding of the Eucharist harmonizes well with a plausible account of the sense in which an ordained minister acts *in persona Christi* when celebrating the Eucharist.

*In persona Christi* plainly means at least that a celebrant, like a proxy or a person exercising a power of attorney, is an agent whose authorized acts count as acts of the person in whose place the agent acts. But since the eucharistic sacrifice is not entirely separate and distinct from the sacrifice of the cross, Jesus himself must somehow personally be carrying out in the Eucharist the same self-sacrificing, obedient choice that resulted in his passion and death.

Moreover, Jesus by the Eucharist establishes and nurtures bodily communion with his disciples--that is, with those who, having heard his gospel, have believed in him and been baptized. Thus, the Eucharist is related to baptism's mutual commitments of revelation and faith as marital intercourse is related to marital consent. While a couple might consent through a proxy to marriage, spouses must consummate their marriage in person. Therefore, Jesus must somehow personally bring about the bodily communion his gospel promises to those who believe.

As a human individual, Jesus cannot personally carry out in the Eucharist his human choice of self-sacrifice to the Father and his self-giving to his disciples unless the utterances and gestures that constitute the sacrament--that is, make up its "form"--do not merely quote or mimic his utterances and gestures but actually are his. In order personally to carry out his human choice, Jesus ordains ministers: he capacitates some men who already are members of his body to serve as living extensions of his own lips and hands in performing his utterances and gestures.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Jesus is really, truly, and dynamically present in the ordained when, but only when, they are doing precisely what he has authorized them to do on his behalf. He is not substantially present in the ordained as he is in the Eucharist; his ministers are not transubstantiated but remain the men they were, acting in Jesus' person only by cooperating with him by both intending and doing exactly what he wants.<sup>64</sup>

Unlike candidates for ordination, bread and wine are subhuman entities, incapable of cooperation and interpersonal communion, incapable of sharing in Jesus' resurrection life. So, if they remain what they are, they cannot serve as Jesus' eucharistic, preternatural organs. The bread and wine must be substantially changed, the bread becoming a part of Jesus' body and the wine a part of his blood that substantially exist, as do his human soul and all his other flesh and blood, by his one and only existence,<sup>65</sup> which is uncreated, divine life.

The foregoing account of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist implies that he is really located simultaneously at least wherever the consecrated species are located. Aquinas thought Jesus could be located in this world only if he left heaven and could be located wherever the eucharistic species are only by being in many places at once--things Aquinas thought impossible. But for Jesus to be located wherever the eucharistic species are located can be understood in a way that seems coherent.

Jesus is God, and God is everywhere. But where is Jesus as man, risen and glorified? In heaven. Where is heaven? Neither anywhere in the spatial-temporal continuum that is the physical universe nor somewhere outside it, if *in* and *outside* are used as they are in referring to spatial relationships within the universe. Yet Jesus promised to be, and certainly really is, present in this world in many ways: in his disciples and the least of his family, in the midst of every small gathering of his disciples, with his worldwide Church, in his word being preached and taught, in his ordained ministers everywhere as they act in his person, as well as in the consecrated species, both during every Mass and afterwards, wherever they are reserved or transported. How does he do it? By being in a single place that embraces at least the whole expanse of the human world. And that place is heaven. It is not many light years away from our world but is another dimension, a different order of reality, yet related to our world in such a way that Jesus, while remaining always in heaven,

can be manifoldly present here, really yet for the most part invisibly, and, when visibly, almost always unrecognizably.

The conditions of the physical universe no longer limit Jesus' risen body. Though truly his own, it now is spiritual rather than natural.<sup>66</sup> After his resurrection, Jesus entered a room whose doors were locked. So, Jesus' body can be in the same place as other things. A natural human body can be only so big, and is structured appropriately for human life as we now live and experience it; but that is no reason for excluding the suggestion that Jesus' risen body is no longer limited by its dimensions as natural human bodies are, and is structured very differently, in a way appropriate for his life as Lord in glory.

Moreover, there is no reason to suppose that capacity of Jesus' body to be present wherever the consecrated species are present prevents him from being wholly present in every part of himself. There is a real sense in which even we human persons are wholly present in each part of our natural bodies, and the divine Word surely is no less present in every part of his risen, spiritual body. And though in a natural human body only certain parts, which are spatially related to other parts in definite ways, are used in various acts of communication and social interaction, one can suppose that the structure of Jesus' risen body enables him to use its spiritualized capacities and preternatural organs in doing what is appropriate according to each of the ways in which he makes himself present in our world.<sup>67</sup>

In sum, the hypothesis I propose is this. What seem to be bread and wine on the altar after the consecration of the Mass actually are parts of Jesus' body and blood. By appropriating the bread and wine, and incorporating their material into himself, Jesus has substantially changed them, so that they really have become such parts. Being integral parts of Jesus, they exist by his divine being. In and by these visible, preternatural organs of his glorified body, Jesus offers his whole self in sacrifice to the Father and gives his whole self to his disciples, so as to join them to himself, sustain them by his divine life, and unite them with one another in bodily communion. The appearances and other characteristics left behind when the bread and wine pass away actually are accidents of these visible organs of Jesus, and, as such, really are accidents of his without being accidents of the rest of him, just as the blackness and the thinness of a person's hair are accidents of that person even though he or she may be fair skinned and quite hefty. Even while making himself present and available to us in the Eucharist, Jesus remains in heaven, which is another dimension, an order of reality that somehow includes our whole world and yet is distinct from it. So, except for the appearances and other characteristics left behind by the bread and wine, Jesus' accidents are beyond our experience, yet they continue to exist in him as accidents and make him, insofar as he is man, be as he now is: risen and glorious.

#### IV. Anticipated Objections and Lines for Further Inquiry

The preceding part includes the essential features of the theological hypothesis I am proposing. To forestall misunderstandings and strengthen the grounds for entertaining it, I now respond to some likely objections. I also indicate some lines for further inquiry--that is, both research into primary sources, where needed, and the gathering up of relevant and sound theological works, both of classical theologians and of recent and contemporary scholars.

Objection 1: The proposed account of Jesus' substantial presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist seems inconsistent with the teaching of Florence and Trent on these matters. Even if they do not expressly say so, those Councils seem to mean that transubstantiation converts the whole substance of the bread and the wine in Aquinas's sense of *converts the whole substance*, and that the conversion is immediately into the whole substance of Jesus' body and blood, not parts of them. Moreover, on the proposed account, Jesus acquires new parts by transubstantiation. But *The Roman Catechism* teaches that the conversion is "without any change in our Lord, for he is neither generated, nor changed, nor increased, but remains entire in his substance."<sup>68</sup>

Reply: As I said above, I cannot do the research required to settle the issues this objection raises about the meaning of the conciliar teachings. I hope those with appropriate skills and time will do the research necessary for a sound exegesis of the relevant documents.<sup>69</sup> In my opinion, the subject matter of the needed research is vast: the sources and witnesses in sacred Scripture to the Church's doctrine on the Eucharist; various sources of evidence regarding the Church's faith, including works of the Church Fathers, liturgical texts, official teaching documents, and canon law up to Florence and Trent; the theologies of the Eucharist in the works of all the theologians considered orthodox by the Fathers at those councils and their theological advisers, not least the theologies in all the works of Aquinas and his commentators up to the time of those councils; the challenges perceived by the Council Fathers as being posed to the Church's received faith about the Eucharist; and the histories of Florence and Trent themselves.

Even without doing any research, however, one can set aside a view incompatible with the proposed hypothesis that probably is widely shared by pious Catholics, including those who understand and accept Aquinas's theology, when they engage in worship rather than in theological reflection. To the devout, the meaning of saying Jesus is present under the species and contained in the sacrament can seem clear thanks to the imagery suggested by *present under* and *contained in*. Someone who believes in Jesus' substantial presence might imagine that, just as one might open the tabernacle and find a ciborium in it and then open

the ciborium and find hosts in it, so one would find Jesus himself--the whole Christ--within the hosts if one could only open them. The accidents are imagined as being a sort of metaphysical analogue of the tabernacle and the ciborium, an ultimate enclosure concealing the whole Christ--a container that cannot be opened. If this imagery were veridical, however, Jesus would be *located* in the place where the species are, and so at least one of the accidents that makes up the species would characterize him. And that implication is incompatible with Aquinas's theology, which excludes the possibility that any of those accidents characterizes Jesus.<sup>70</sup> Thus, setting aside that confusing imagery and any view based on it, what Florence and Trent did intend to teach about the whole Christ's being present under the species and contained in the sacrament will no longer seem so clear, and Aquinas's theology no longer will seem to make sense of the teaching; while the meaning of *present under* and *contained in* suggested by the proposed hypothesis will no longer seem obviously at odds with the conciliar teachings. In fact, it may begin to seem a more likely account of those teachings than any that can be drawn from Aquinas's theology.

Similarly, if one takes seriously the difficulties in Aquinas's account of transubstantiation, articulated toward the end of part II above, the meaning the proposed hypothesis suggests for *conversion* will no longer seem obviously unacceptable and may begin to seem quite plausible.

As for the *Roman Catechism's* assertion that transubstantiation does not change our Lord and, in particular, that he does not increase due to it, that proposition is part of an explanation of transubstantiation for "those who are more advanced in the knowledge of divine things."<sup>71</sup> So, it seems to pertain to theology rather than to faith.<sup>72</sup> Of course, it is true that transubstantiation neither changes Jesus insofar as he is God nor detracts from the fullness of his glory as man. But it also is true that the glorified Jesus is increased by the sacraments: they really transform the people who receive them into members of his body.<sup>73</sup> Why suppose that Jesus cannot acquire by transubstantiation real, though temporary, additions to his body and blood to serve as organs for bringing about his permanent acquisition of new members?

Objection 2: In the decree "Post obitum" (14 December 1887), the Supreme Congregation of the General Inquisition condemned forty propositions of Rosmini.<sup>74</sup> That decree was confirmed and ordered published by Leo XIII and expressly reconfirmed by him in a letter (1 June 1889) to the Archbishop of Milan.<sup>75</sup> Among the condemned propositions were three offering a conjecture about transubstantiation somewhat similar to the hypothesis proposed in part III, above:

29. I do not think the following conjecture is at variance with Catholic doctrine, which alone is truth: In the eucharistic Sacrament, the substance of the bread and

wine becomes the true body and the true blood of Christ, when Christ makes it the term of his sentient principle, and vivifies it with his life; similar to the way in which bread and wine are truly transubstantiated into our flesh and blood, because they become the term of our sentient principle.

30. After transubstantiation, one can understand that there has been added some part to Christ's glorious body, a part incorporated into it, undivided and equally glorious.

31. In the sacrament of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ are present *by the power of the words* only in the measure which corresponds to the amount of the substance of bread and wine that is transubstantiated; the rest of the body of Christ is there *by concomitance*.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, the Catholic Church's supreme teaching authority already has examined the proposed hypothesis and rejected it.

Reply: It is true that a hypothesis apparently similar to the one I am proposing was advanced by the priest-philosopher Antonio Rosmini-Serbati in at least two of his unfinished and posthumously published works.<sup>77</sup> True, too, the three quoted propositions, drawn from one of those posthumous publications, were condemned.<sup>78</sup> For three convergent reasons, however, I do not think that condemnation should exclude from consideration the hypothesis I am proposing.

First, while "Post obitum" says Rosmini's delated propositions were examined because they "did not seem at all consonant with Catholic truth" and while the decree "rejects, condemns, and proscribes" the forty propositions collectively, it does not say any of them is inconsistent with a truth of faith or with Catholic doctrine.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the Congregation and Pope Leo may well have considered the relevant propositions to be nothing worse than dangerous errors in theology, and such a judgment could have been either theologically mistaken when made or else undermined by intervening developments in the Church's teaching as well as in theology.

Second, "Post obitum" not only condemned forty propositions drawn from Rosmini's works but forbade anyone to conclude that his other teachings are in any way to be approved.<sup>80</sup> Then, in a letter sent with the decree, Cardinal Monaco not only directed bishops to induce those who favored Rosmini's views to submit to the Holy See's judgment but urged them chiefly to see to it that the minds of the young, especially of seminarians, "be nourished with the genuine doctrine of the Catholic Church drawn from the pure founts of the holy Fathers, Church Doctors, approved authors, and chiefly from the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas."<sup>81</sup> This sweeping demand for reserve with respect to Rosmini's teachings and pointed exhortation to look elsewhere suggest that "Post obitum"

may well have been mainly directed toward the pastoral goal of driving Rosmini's thought out of Catholic seminaries, to make way for the renewal based on Thomism that Leo had called for in *Aeterni Patris* (4 August 1879). If so, the decree is no longer relevant.<sup>82</sup>

Third, without mentioning the 1887 decree condemning Rosmini's thought, John Paul II on two recent occasions has signaled Rosmini's rehabilitation. In his encyclical, *Fides et ratio* (14 September 1998), he makes the point that the fruitful relationship between philosophy and the word of God, which was shown by the experience of the great Christian thinkers of times past, also is manifest "in the courageous research pursued by more recent thinkers," among whom he mentioned Rosmini.<sup>83</sup> Less than two weeks later, in an address on 26 September 1998 to the general chapter of the Institute of Charity, which Rosmini founded, the Pope spoke favorably of the priest-philosopher's thought and teaching:

Your founder stands firmly in that great intellectual tradition of Christianity which knows that there is no opposition between faith and reason, but that one demands the other. His was a time when the long process of the separation of faith and reason had reached full term, and the two came to seem mortal enemies. Rosmini, however, insisted with St. Augustine that "believers are also thinkers: in believing they think and in thinking, they believe. . . . If faith does not think, it is nothing" (*De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, 2, 5). He knew that faith without reason withers into myth and superstition; and therefore he set about applying his immense gifts of mind not only to theology and spirituality, but to fields as diverse as philosophy, politics, law, education, science, psychology and art, seeing in them no threat to faith but necessary allies. Rosmini seems at times a man of contradiction. Yet we find in him a deep and mysterious convergence; and it was this convergence which ensured that, although very much a man of the nineteenth century, Rosmini transcended his own time and place to become a universal witness, whose teaching is still today both relevant and timely.<sup>84</sup>

While by no means an endorsement of Rosmini's propositions about transubstantiation and Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist, this statement surely suggests that "Post obitum" no longer should deter faithful Catholic theologians from considering ideas along the lines of those articulated by the three propositions it condemned.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, I think Rosmini's work on the Eucharist deserves careful study by scholars with the competence and time to master its presuppositions in his very original and complex theological and philosophical thought.

Objection 3: For the sake of argument, I grant both that the consecrated host and the consecrated contents of the cup are preternatural parts of Jesus and that the accidents that belonged to bread and wine are now accidents of those parts. Still, Jesus' eucharistic parts

are very different in both appearance and physical-chemical structure from any human solid tissue and blood we know of. Indeed, it seems that they have nothing in common with ordinary solid tissues and blood except that they are, respectively, solid and liquid parts of a complete living body. Therefore, it seems that, on the proposed hypothesis, the two species are distinguished from each other and called "body" and "blood" solely for the sake of symbolism. That view, however, would be incompatible with Trent's definitive teaching.

Reply: The eucharistic sacrifice is, in different respects, both distinct from and the same as the sacrifice of the cross. The two eucharistic species not only contain the risen Jesus substantially but symbolize him slaughtered. In consecrating, Jesus changes bread into his body and wine into his blood for the sake of this symbolism. Still, he gives his disciples his whole self, whether they receive his eucharistic body or blood or both. So, the two sorts of parts seem to function in the same way to make Jesus' disciples members of him and one another.

However, it does not follow that the two species are distinguished solely for the sake of symbolism. If the accidents that remain become accidents of Jesus' eucharistic parts, differences between those accidents that belonged to the bread and those that belonged to the wine--especially between being solid and liquid--constitute some basis for distinguishing Jesus' body from his blood. Then too, Jesus' unity must be considered. If his eucharistic body and blood are in fact parts of him integral to his glorified body, those parts must be joined to his other parts (which we do not perceive) to make up a living whole (whose functioning we cannot examine). One can suppose that, in converting bread and wine into those eucharistic parts, Jesus joins each sort of eucharistic part to the other parts of his glorified body in such a way that there is in his body as a whole a more-than-symbolic basis for the distinction between his eucharistic body and blood.

This supposition is not excluded by the fact that Jesus' eucharistic body and blood differ in appearance and physical-chemical structure from natural, human solid tissues and blood. There is considerable diversity in appearance and structure even among the various tissues that naturally make up the solid and liquid parts of a living human body. Still, any solid tissue is part of one's body rather than one's blood, and all the body's vital fluids might well be grouped together as forms of blood.<sup>86</sup>

Objection 4: But why does Jesus say: "This is my body" and "This is my blood" rather than "This is *part of* my body" and "This is *part of* my blood?"

Reply: *Blood* very often is used without qualification to refer to a portion of one's blood. Without exsanguinating, a donor might point to the contents of a container and accurately say: "That is my blood." *Flesh* very often is used similarly, and *body* seems to be used in the institution narratives with the same meaning as *flesh* in the Johannine bread-

of-life discourse (Jn 6:51-56).<sup>87</sup> Then too, *body* itself is sometimes used without qualification to refer to part of the body.<sup>88</sup>

Moreover, Jesus gives his whole self in the Mass both to his disciples and to the Father by and with the parts of himself that appear to be bread and wine, and this sacramental self-giving represents, perpetuates the memory of, and applies the saving power of the sacrifice of the cross, during which Jesus' body was drained of its blood. Therefore, although, on the present hypothesis, Jesus in consecrating changes bread and wine only into parts of his gloriously risen self, still he very appropriately says: "This is my body which will be given up for you" and "This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant."

Objection 5: If all the material of the bread and wine really remains after transubstantiation and still has all the accidents that characterize bread and wine, it hardly makes sense to say that the whole substance of bread and the whole substance of wine have changed. Indeed, this story sounds, in different respects, suspiciously like both Luther's view, which excluded transubstantiation, and a subtle version of transfinalization.

Reply: In sexual reproduction, all the material and almost all the accidents that characterize the ovum persist through the substantial change that occurs when it is fertilized. Still, the whole substance of the ovum changes into an entirely new human individual, none of whose material or accidents belong any longer to his or her mother. Thus, just after the Holy Spirit miraculously fertilized Mary's ovum, the divine Word's tiny body included all that cell's material and had most of its accidental features; yet the incarnate Word was a new human individual, in whom remained nothing of the substance of his mother. Similarly, though the material of bread and wine and the accidents that belonged to them remain after the consecration, the whole substance of bread and wine is changed into Jesus' body and blood, so that nothing of the reality of bread or wine remains in the Eucharist.

For that very reason, I deny Luther's view that the substance of bread and wine remains after the consecration and affirm, as Trent requires, that only their appearances remain. Still, like Luther, I have problems with Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist. Research on both Luther's teaching on the Eucharist and theologies in his tradition might well suggest ways in which the hypothesis I propose--assuming it is found consistent with Catholic teaching--might eventually be helpful in Lutheran-Catholic ecumenical dialogue.

Though I could be mistaken, I do not think any proponent of transfinalization has said what I am proposing. I am not suggesting that Jesus, in consecrating, puts bread and wine to such a radically new use that they become things of a different kind. Rather, I am suggesting that Jesus changes bread and wine into parts of his body and blood so that he can

use what had been the materials and accidents of bread and wine in a radically new way. Still, like transfinalization theories, the hypothesis I am proposing focuses on the function of the Eucharist and on interpersonal relationships, which are hardly central in Aquinas's theology and are not integrated by Trent with what it teaches about Jesus' substantial presence. Research on the works of theologians who proposed and promoted the theory of transfinalization might well be fruitful for developing and refining the hypothesis I propose.

Objection 6: A sound theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist must account for it at the Last Supper as well as at post-resurrection Masses and in the Blessed Sacrament reserved. Whatever difficulties Aquinas's theology involves, the Last Supper poses no special difficulty for him. By contrast, the proposed hypothesis refers to attributes of Jesus' glorified body to deal with problems that result from its statements that (a) the accidents that belonged to bread and wine become accidents of Jesus, and (b) in his eucharistic presence, Jesus' other accidents exist in the way characteristic of accidents. So, the proposed hypothesis cannot account for Jesus' substantial presence in the sacrament at the Last Supper, when Jesus' body was not yet glorified. Therefore, it is unsound.

Reply: Since I think some statements essential to Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist are either incoherent or devoid of clear meaning, I concede that the Last Supper poses no special difficulty for him. And I grant that it does pose difficulties for the hypothesis I am proposing.

The objection indicates two such difficulties: (1) If Jesus' body and blood in the Eucharist are preternatural organs by which he incorporates his disciples' bodies into his own body, these organs must have functioned at the Last Supper despite being some feet away from his not-yet-glorified body; (2) they must have united all who received at the Last Supper with the whole Christ and one another despite both the disparate locations of the parts of Jesus' body and blood that, according to the hypothesis, he distributed and the definite and very limited location of his not-yet-glorified body.

The assumptions underlying the two difficulties are questionable, both theologically and empirically.

While the New Testament makes it clear that Jesus' risen body had characteristics not apparent before his death, it also narrates occurrences--the transfiguration being the most striking instance--indicating that Jesus had mysterious bodily attributes and powers during the years of his ministry. From his conception in Mary's womb, the whole of the incarnate Word, and hence his body, existed by his divine being, and his existing by divine being, which is life immortal, seems to be the principle of Jesus' glorification. While doubting that the New Testament supports the view that Jesus' body always enjoyed a glory that he concealed, I think it theologically unsound to distinguish as sharply as the objection assumes

to be warranted between attributes and powers that pertain to the glory of Jesus' risen body, and extraordinary bodily attributes and powers--perhaps only some of which he manifested directly--that he had during his ministry.

As was explained in part III, the one-flesh communion of marriage provides a model in some respects for the communion Jesus establishes through the Eucharist. The nucleus of marital communion is not being permanently joined, as Siamese twins are, but rather joining in a single, indivisible function. While the intimate contact of the spouses' genital organs very clearly manifests their one-flesh unity and allows them to experience it, other parts of their cooperation in having and raising children contribute greatly to their unity as whole persons. And most activities pertaining to those other aspects of their cooperation do not involve physical contact between them and do not even require that they be near each other.

Moreover, the apex of the indivisible reproductive function in which a married couple join is, in fact, fertilization, which may occur when the spouses are miles apart. Just before fertilization occurs, the ovum and the sperm that has begun penetrating it are not yet changed into a new individual; and the sperm is not part of the wife's body though located and functioning within it. Instead, that sperm is a part of the husband's body--the part of himself by which he begets his child.

To be sure, the natural reproductive process and the preternatural working of the Eucharist are essentially different. I do not suggest that one can give a scientific account of how Jesus, whether at the Last Supper or today, incorporates his disciples' bodies into his own glorified body and shares his divine life with them. Still, I think the analogy shows that it is empirically unwarranted to assume, as the objection does, that a theology worked out along the lines of my hypothesis could not account for the Last Supper.

Objection 7: The view that the accidents that remain after the consecration are accidents of Jesus himself is excessively realistic, and this has two bad effects. First, the proposed hypothesis has the aura of science-fiction, and so it would impede rather than support belief in the truths of faith it is meant to explain. Second, it cannot sufficiently distinguish between the appearances that constitute the sacramental sign and the reality they contain, with implications that are hardly fitting. On Aquinas's view, when consecrated hosts corrupt so that they no longer seem to be bread and the consecrated contents of a chalice are diluted to the point that they no longer seem to be wine, the sacramental sign no longer exists, and so Jesus no longer is substantially present. On the proposed hypothesis, Jesus' parts contained in the sacrament have the physical-chemical structure of bread and wine. It follows that Jesus remains substantially present as long as molecules of what had been bread and wine remain, even after there remains nothing that could reasonably be regarded as

bread or wine. This means that living parts of Jesus, though integral to him, are widely scattered in places, some quite unseemly, where they cannot function. Moreover, on Aquinas's view, not Jesus but only the species are broken and divided, and only the species corrupt by going bad if kept too long under unsuitable conditions or pass away by nourishing those who consume and digest them. On the proposed hypothesis, parts of Jesus present in the Eucharist are broken and divided, and go bad or are digested, which implies that Jesus' risen and glorified body is undergoing an endless passion.

Reply: While good science-fiction avoids conceptual incoherence, it challenges common sense with imaginative suppositions and descriptions exceeding the possibilities of current technology but in harmony with current science about the structures and processes of the natural world. Like science-fiction, the proposed hypothesis is intelligible but challenges common sense with its imaginative suppositions and descriptions, and with its references to contemporary science. But unlike science-fiction, whose technological fabrications are meant to entertain, the proposed hypothesis uses imagination only insofar as seems necessary to account for the data of faith about the Eucharist. True, a less realistic account requires little or no such use of imagination. But if key expressions in that less realistic account lack intelligibility, the account makes the truth of faith seem unintelligible, and so impedes belief in Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist. It may even move people to develop or adopt views that reduce the sacrament to mere symbolism.

The proposed hypothesis can and does distinguish between the appearances that constitute the sacramental sign and the reality they contain. As in other cases where appearances can be deceiving, the appearances are *part* of the reality: some of the reality's accidents that lead people who are not informed to think it a reality of a kind different than it is. The appearances of bread and wine remain and constitute the sacramental sign; the realities, which include those appearances considered insofar as they are Jesus' accidents, are parts of his body and blood. But while the proposed hypothesis distinguishes the appearances that constitute the sacramental sign from the realities they contain, it does not separate the two. It thus avoids the difficulties that follow from Aquinas's theology, according to which, as I showed, Jesus is present in the Eucharist as a reality metaphysically and physically isolated from the accidents that contain him.

According to the proposed hypothesis, the preternatural organs that Jesus acquires and uses in the sacrament of the Eucharist must still *appear to be* the bread and wine that were brought up to be consecrated, so that his disciples can identify his flesh and blood, join in his self-sacrifice, and receive and worship him. The proposed hypothesis entirely agrees with Aquinas's view that, when that particular set of appearances no longer exists, Jesus no longer is substantially present.<sup>89</sup> However, not all particles with the physical-chemical

structure of the molecules that make up bread and wine are parts of anything that could be the sacramental species; many are too mixed with other sorts of particles to constitute instances of what would appear to be bread or wine.<sup>90</sup> Thus, when consecrated hosts decompose or the consecrated contents of the chalice are so greatly diluted that their appearances no longer can be regarded reasonably as the appearances of bread and wine, the molecules that had constituted parts of Jesus no longer do so. Consequently, the proposed hypothesis and Aquinas's theology have similar implications as to Jesus' flesh and blood being widely scattered in unseemly places.

Unlike Aquinas's theology, however, the proposed hypothesis admittedly does imply that parts of Jesus--and not merely the species--are broken and divided, consumed and digested, and sometimes negligently allowed to spoil or even deliberately abused and violated. Still, while those parts are integral to Jesus risen in glory, he has fashioned them for their specific function. One need not suppose that they share all the characteristics of the other parts of his glorified humanity or that what happens to them affects Jesus--for example, by causing him pain--as his passion did. In any case, whatever bodily suffering Jesus is spared by a less realistic theory of his presence in the Eucharist is far less serious than the spiritual suffering he cannot be spared by any orthodox theology, for on any such theology we profane the body and blood of the Lord if we eat his bread or drink his cup unworthily.<sup>91</sup>

In the end, the proposed hypothesis must be evaluated by whether and how well it fits the requirements of faith. If it does that well, its so-called unseemly implications should no more be counted against it than unseemly implications of a realistic understanding of the Incarnation count against any sound theology of it.

Objection 8: St. Thomas Aquinas not only is one of the greatest theologians but perhaps the most clearheaded and logically rigorous. His treatment of the Eucharist in the *Summa theologiae* was a product of mature genius, and he obviously worked hard on it. It is hardly credible that his thought in it lapses into incoherence or meaninglessness.

Reply: Aquinas was absolutely committed to the received faith--to all the truths the Catholic Church had held and handed on to him. But in his day, reflection employing Aristotle's concepts and theories raised new questions about many truths of faith, including those concerning the Eucharist. He set out to answer those questions within an Aristotelian perspective, expanded and corrected insofar as he thought necessary by subsequent inquiry and divine revelation.

In his treatise on the Eucharist, Aquinas often examines and rejects others' opinions until he gathers together what he thinks can and must be said, and accepts this as his own view. In this dialectic, he proceeds with various limitations, two of which are especially

relevant. His philosophy, developed mainly from Aristotle, includes a view of nature in some respects mistaken or overly narrow--for example, in its views of space and place. And the theological sources with which he works apparently focus on *how* Jesus is present in the Eucharist rather than *why*, with the result that their problematic offers limited possibilities.

In this situation, Aquinas simply could not think of some things that can be said and some ways of saying what must be said. As a result, he could find no alternative to stretching and bending key notions. The strain on them proved too great, and they broke apart. Perhaps Aquinas was aware of this collapse. If so, he trusted his faith more than his reason. I do not criticize him for that.

I was the last child in a large Catholic family, whose piety centered clearly and intensely on the Mass. Well before I went to school, I was told and I believed that, when my parents and brothers and sisters went to Communion, they were receiving not a bit of ordinary food but Jesus, and I wondered what that would be like. One day, when my second-grade teacher was preparing the class for first Communion, she gave us a lesson on Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, using as her prop a candy wafer in lieu of a host; the lesson led me to think of the host as a small package in which Jesus is enclosed. When Sister finished, she asked if we had questions. The other children did not, but, wishing to contribute, I said: "That is so little, how could Jesus fit in it?" I do not remember the details of her reply, but Sister concluded that I lacked faith in Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist and told me I could not make my first Communion.

As soon as I arrived home with the bad news, a family conference was held, and one of my sisters took me at once to see the pastor, a kindly old Jesuit whom I liked. I told him about Sister's decision and my question that led to it. He responded: "I don't see how Jesus can fit in there either. But we don't have to see how he does it as long as we believe he's really there." I said: "I *know* he's there." Father overruled Sister's decision, and I have been receiving Communion all my life, confident that Jesus is really there yet still puzzling over how he manages it.

Now I think I see how he does it. Nevertheless, I am ready to be shown or to be taught authoritatively that the alternative theology I have sketched out is inconsistent with Catholic faith. If that should happen, I do not expect to experience it as a major setback. And I hope, by God's grace, to continue believing what the Catholic Church believes and teaches, even if it becomes clear that some statements of which I cannot make sense are necessary to express that faith.<sup>92</sup>

### Notes

1. See, for example, Edward J. Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1998). The view I share is expressed succinctly in a summary passage (149-53) under the heading "The Value of the Theory of Transubstantiation." But the alternative theology of transubstantiation briefly proposed in a later passage (180-83) seems to me unacceptable. Still, one should bear in mind that the problems I shall deal with are secondary in Kilmartin's enquiry: his main concern is with the theology of eucharistic sacrifice.

2. DS 802. The translations of this and subsequent quotations from documents of the magisterium are mine.

3. DS 1321-22.

4. DS 1651.

5. DS 1652.

6. See DS 1653.

7. DS 1640.

8. DS 1642: "Because Christ our redeemer said that what he was offering [to those present at the Last Supper] under the appearance of bread was truly his body (see Mt 26:26 ff.; Mk 14:22 ff.; Lk 22:19 f.; 1 Cor 11:24 ff.) . . ."; cf. chap. 1, DS 1637.

9. DS 1638.

10. The Church's teaching since Trent has developed the last point, and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1396, makes it clear that this symbol brings about what it signifies: "*The unity of the Mystical Body: the Eucharist makes the Church*. Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body--the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body. [Note omitted.] The Eucharist fulfills this call."

11. DS 1740.

12. DS 1741.

13. See DS 1740.

14. See *Summa theologiae* (hereafter cited as *ST*) 3, q. 77, a. 1.

15. See *ibid.* a. 2.

16. *Ibid.* a. 3. The translations of this and subsequent quotations from *ST* are mine.

17. See *ibid.* aa. 4-5.

18. *Ibid.* a. 5.

19. See *ibid.*

20. See *ibid.* a. 6 c. and ad 3.

21. See *ibid.* q. 78, a. 3 ad 1; q. 82, a. 3 ad 1.
22. *Ibid.* q. 75, a. 1 ad 3.
23. See *ibid.* q. 76, a. 5 ad 2.
24. See *ibid.* a. 1.
25. See *ibid.* a. 5 ad 1.
26. *Ibid.* a. 4 c.
27. See *ibid.* ad 1.
28. See *ibid.* c. and ad 3.
29. I am not asking how accidents can *be* without a subject but how they can be the *kind of entities* they are without determining a subject in the specific way each sort of accident does. So, I am not arguing: "Since the very definition of an accident is to be in a subject, the accidents that remain cannot be without a subject." Aquinas takes up that objection and answers it by saying that, since being is not a genus, existing cannot be essential to either a substance or an accident; and, though existing in a subject is suitable for accidents, God can and does keep these accidents in existence without their inhering in any subject (*ibid.* q. 77, a. 1 ad 2). This answer, even if sound, is irrelevant to my point.
30. *Ibid.* a. 7 ad 3.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.* q. 76, a. 1 ad 3.
33. *Ibid.* a. 5 c.
34. *Ibid.*
35. See *ibid.* q. 78, a. 5 c.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.* ad 2.
38. *Ibid.* q. 75, a. 1 ad 3.
39. Someone might object that Jesus' body and blood are said to be contained under the accidents in an analogous sense, so that, while *contained*, in speaking of the relationship between the accidents that remain and the body and blood of Jesus, has only partly the same meaning as in the word's other uses, that partial sameness of meaning is sufficient to make intelligible Aquinas's phrase: *the substance contained under the accidents*. But even if Aquinas means to use *contained* analogously, he offers no account of the basis of the analogy. Of course, Lateran IV states that Jesus' "body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine," but that truth of faith only poses for theological reflection the question of what *contained* means in this context. Lateran IV's statement certainly is intelligible in itself and meaningful; but Aquinas's theological reflection on it, which excludes the usual meanings of *contained* in interpreting

it, becomes unintelligible when he fails to provide an account of the unity of meaning of *contained*. That word must have at least partly the same meaning when it is used, as in the phrase in question, to refer at once to the relationships--which on his account are very different--between (1) the accidents of bread and wine with their substances, and (2) the accidents that formerly inhered in bread and wine with the substance of Jesus' body and blood.

40. See *ibid.* q. 75, a. 8.

41. See *ibid.* a. 4 c.; a. 8 ad 3.

42. See *ibid.* a. 8 ad 1.

43. See *ibid.* a. 2 c.; a. 8 ad 1.

44. See *ibid.* aa. 2 and 3.

45. See *ibid.* a. 4.

46. See *ibid.* obj. 1.

47. *Ibid.* ad 1.

48. If, as I have argued, key statements in Aquinas's theology of Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist lack intelligibility, that defect is in no way mitigated by the fact that departures from ordinary meaning often are necessary in theology, which, after all, deals with transcendent realities. The terms in which some truths of faith are stated refer to uncreated realities: divine persons, the divine nature and attributes, uncreated grace, and so on. The predications in such truths are peculiar, because the way of negation excludes the ordinary meanings of words when they are used to refer to transcendent realities. Nevertheless, the various relationships of creatures to God provide a ground, real though attenuated, for the unique meanings of the terms of the statements of such truths of faith and of theological reflections on them. Other truths of faith are stated in terms that refer to created realities--for example, Jesus' human nature and human acts, and his suffering, death, and burial. The predications in such truths usually are logically common and familiar ones. The terms in which truths of faith about the Eucharist are stated refer to created realities: bread and wine, and their accidents; Jesus' body and blood, and his accidents; the conversion of the whole substance of bread and wine into Jesus' body and blood; the persistence of the appearances of bread and wine after that conversion; Jesus' act of self-offering to the Father; Jesus' incorporation of his disciples into his glorified body; and so on. Some of the terms in which these truths are stated are used with their ordinary meanings. If the avoidance of error and incoherence requires that some be used with a unique meaning, a satisfactory theology must make clear how that meaning is grounded. While a theological attempt that does not meet this requirement can accurately restate truths of faith, it cannot yield the understanding theology seeks.

49. For some development of these points, see Germain Grisez et al., *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. 1, *Christian Moral Principles* (Quincy, Ill.: Franciscan, 1983) 46-58, 229-41, 459-69, 527-42, 725-35, 789-99, 813-22.

50. Jesus' several ways of being really present to his disciples have been mentioned in recent documents of the magisterium and discussed by some theologians; for a summary of that literature and an argument showing the matter's importance for eucharistic theology, see Michael G. Witzak, "The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Liturgy," *TS* 59 (1998) 680-702.

51. See DS 1151.

52. DS 1152; text and translation of the conciliar document: Council of Constance, sess. 8, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. *Nicea I to Lateran V*, ed. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown, 1990) 1:411. This conciliar act was confirmed by Martin V, *Inter cunctas* (22 Feb. 1418).

53. See Council of Constance, sess. 15, in Tanner 1:422.

54. F. Jansen, "Eucharistiques (Accidents)" in *Dictionnaire Théologie Catholique* 5:1399-1413, recounts condemnations of Wyclif's position both in England before Constance and at the Council, and concludes (1413) that a faithful Catholic cannot deny "the proposition of the great doctors of the scholastic age: *In the sacrament of the altar, the accidents remain without a subject.*" However, Jansen's review makes it clear that Wyclif's denial of that proposition was understood as contrary to transubstantiation, and Jansen himself says (1412) "it is certain that it [denying the proposition] is heretical *to the extent that* [emphasis added] it implies the negation of transubstantiation" (translation mine).

55. For Constance, see Tanner 1:414, 421; for Martin V, see DS 1251.

56. See DS 1256-57.

57. See *ST* q. 75, a. 4 c.

58. DS 1652.

59. Two very important elements of that historical context are: (1) the Council's intent to reaffirm what always had been the Church's convictions; and (2) the challenge to traditional faith regarding the Eucharist presented by the various reformers' teachings as those were understood by the Council Fathers and their theological advisers.

60. The predicates, *is Jesus' body* and *is his blood*, are used in the same sense if and only if one affirms that the same human individual's--that is, Jesus'--body and blood are referred to in both cases (see DS 1083, 1256). It is not necessary that the molecules and atoms in them be the same: the predicates truly applied to Jesus' body and blood throughout his life even though few if any of the molecules and atoms in Jesus crucified were in the

embryonic Jesus. For an analogous reason, it also is unnecessary that Jesus' body and blood be in the same condition in the Eucharist that they were in while he hung on the cross: since the same Jesus who suffered and died is now risen, the same body and blood are now in glory.

61. See DS 1640.

62. Of course, insofar as Jesus is God, he cannot be perfected, but insofar as he is a human individual, he also enjoys fulfillment in the communion he brings about through the Eucharist.

63. That permanent capacitation is at least part of the "character" conferred on recipients of holy orders.

64. Of course, insofar as the ordained are Christians, they too can share in the intimate and enduring communion that Jesus makes available to every disciple.

65. See *ST* 3, q. 17, a. 2. The hypothesis I propose is different from the one rejected by the Holy Office on 7 July 1875 (see DS 3121-24). The latter proposal was that the *natures* of bread and wine remain, but cease to be substantial because they are united with Christ. My proposal is that the bread and wine are changed substantially, so that only accidents that belonged to them remain--now as accidents of parts of Jesus' body and blood.

66. See 1 Cor 15:44-49.

67. Even if Aquinas's theology is thought to account satisfactorily for Jesus' substantial presence under the appearances of bread and wine, it plainly does not account for (and, indeed, implicitly excludes a realistic account of) Jesus' other ways of being present in our world. As a result, those who accept that theology are disposed to reduce these other ways to metaphor and symbol--combined, perhaps, with Jesus' divine omnipresence.

68. *Catechismus ex decreto Ss. Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos*, trans. J. Donovan (Rome: Propaganda, 1839) 455 (§41 of the chapter on the Eucharist).

69. Someone might suggest that E. Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968) 25-86, already did the research and provides an exegesis of Trent sufficient to show that "the true reality in the Eucharist is no longer bread, but simply the body and blood of Christ in a sacramental form--that is the content of the Tridentine dogma" (85). Schillebeeckx does provide some helpful data about Trent's teaching, but he simply assumes rather than shows that nothing beyond what he identifies as the "content of the Tridentine dogma" is definitively asserted by Trent about Jesus' substantial presence in the Eucharist.

70. See *ST* 3, q. 76, a. 5.

71. *Catechismus ex decreto Ss. Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos*, loc. cit.

72. The *Roman Catechism* summarizes much of Aquinas's theology of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist. By contrast, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* deals (see especially

nos. 1373-81) with the presence of Christ in the Eucharist with very little theological elaboration.

73. See 1 Cor 6:15, 10:17, 12:13, 12:27; Eph 1:22-23, 4:12, 5:30; Col 1:18.

74. See *Acta sanctae sedis* 20 (1887-88) 397-410; DS 3201-41.

75. See *ibid.* 21 (1888-89) 709-10.

76. DS 3229-31 (translation mine). Proposition 32 also concerns the Eucharist, but, being irrelevant to the issues I am treating in this paper, it will not be discussed here.

77. The condemned propositions were drawn from: Antonio Rosmini-Serbati, *L'introduzione del Vangelo secondo Giovanni commentata* (Turin: Unione, 1882) 285-86. Rosmini more fully developed the hypothesis in another manuscript (first published in 1884 in an edition unavailable to me): *Antropologia Soprannaturale*, ed. Umberto Muratore, 2 vols. (Rome: Città Nuova, 1983) 2:308-99. Besides scholarly, priestly, and other activities, Rosmini (1797-1855) founded the Institute of Charity; on his life, see Claude Leatham, *Rosmini: Priest and Philosopher* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New City, 1982).

78. Rosmini's thought was distorted in some important respects by how the three propositions were removed from their context in his work and formulated for condemnation; for a brief explanation of that distortion, see Giorgio Giannini, *Esame delle Quaranta Proposizioni Rosminiane* (Stresa, Italy: Sodalitas, 1985) 103-13.

79. See *Acta sanctae sedis*, 20 (1887-88) 398.

80. *Ibid.*: "quin exinde cuiquam deducere liceat, ceteras eiusdem Auctoris doctrinas, quae per hoc decretum non damnantur, ullo modo approbari."

81. *Ibid.* 397 (translation mine).

82. For some of the historical background to "Post Obitum," see Remo Bessero-Belti, *The Rosminian Question*, trans. John F. Morris (Loughborough, England: 1992) especially 64-94.

83. See *Fides et ratio*, 74, *Acta apostolicae sedis* 91 (1999) 62-63; *L'Osservatore Romano* [Eng. ed.], 14 Oct. 1998, X-XI (insert). Of course, the Pope should not be understood as endorsing every view of the authors he mentions.

84. "Holy Father to the Rosminians," *L'Osservatore Romano* [Eng. ed.], 7 Oct. 1998, 6.

85. Of course, since the condemned propositions in some ways diverged from Rosmini's authentic positions, he might be entirely vindicated and even, eventually, canonized without the Holy See's admitting any mistake in condemning the propositions listed in "Post Obitum."

86. As a matter of fact, though lymph differs in structure and appearance from what we usually call blood, it contains blood cells.

87. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966) 198-201, argues that *flesh* probably is the more literal and *body* the freer translation of the Semitic word Jesus used at the Last Supper.

88. By contrast with one's head, the part of oneself from the neck down is one's body; exclude also the extremities, and the remaining part of oneself still is one's body. And, as some vegetarians and promoters of animal rights like to point out, to consume a portion of beef stew, bacon, or fried chicken is to eat the body--that is, the flesh--of a dead animal.

89. See Aquinas, e.g., *ST* 3, q. 77, a. 8.

90. Even where all due care is taken, the earth into which a sacrarium drains might well bear an imperceptible residue of what an investigator using current techniques of laboratory analysis would report to be traces of bread and wine. One might then ask: "Are these traces Jesus' flesh and blood?" I think that question no more and no less puzzling on the hypothesis I am proposing than it is on Aquinas's theology.

91. See 1 Cor 11:27.

92. I thank Joseph Boyle, Denis Cleary, John Finnis, Jeannette Grisez, James T. O'Connor, Peter F. Ryan, Russell Shaw, and Alan J. Torrance for their comments on one or more drafts of this article and/or for other sorts of help with its preparation. Please note that none of them is to be regarded as a coauthor and that some disagree with my criticism of St. Thomas, the hypothesis I propose, or both.