

Essay on the Relation of Faith to Reason

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The following essay, published here for the first time, was written by Donald Keefe in 1993 as a response to a position paper he refers to as DFF, in which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith laid out some of the themes that would comprise the heart of John Paul II's encyclical letter, Fides et Ratio. One theme that attracted Keefe's particular attention was the idea of intellectual evangelization, of belief addressing unbelief in the arena of contemporary thought and culture. However, Keefe cautions, one must not be too quick to assume, as the DFF does, that metaphysics as such can provide the common ground necessary for the conversation to take place. Even a philosophy of being must first be converted before it can produce the language needed for a discussion that will accommodate the claim, insisted upon by the gospel, that the freedom that defines the human as personal can have no other basis than the fact of its having been created by the Father, through the Spirit, in the Son to whom everything has been given, Jesus Christ, who in turn gives unreservedly everything he has received back to the Father, and does so Eucharistically, that is, in and through the individuals in their historical lives who in free exercise of will have been united in one life with him.

Preamble: The Historical Unity of Natural Reason

Postulate: The doctrine set out in the document here under inspection (hereafter, DFF) is to be understood as in full agreement and continuity with the *historical* moral doctrine of *Veritatis Splendor* and with the *historical* anthropology which John Paul II has taught since his accession to the papacy as in *The Original Unity of Man and Woman*. His emphasis in that early document upon the primordially of the human nature upon which his anthropology relies is repeated in *Veritatis Splendor*, and should be presupposed in the DFF. "Nature" as primordial is therefore not the abstract *animal rationale*, but rather is humanity in its integrity, an integrity now historically actual only in the realism of the sacramental worship of the Church. Thus is to be explained the Eucharistic emphasis of *Veritatis Splendor*.¹

¹ In the second paragraph of the Statement of Archbishop Quinn on the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* of Pope John Paul II, Archbishop Quinn has most perceptively remarked that:

A supremely important emphasis in the Encyclical is that the foundation of Christian morality does not lie in moral precepts, however valid and universal. The ultimate foundation of Christian morality lies in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. For the Christian, the ultimate imitation of Christ, as Paul makes so clear, does not lie in the replication of his earthly life, but in the ever deepening communion with his death and resurrection. The precept, "do not be conformed to this world," cited by the Pope, finds its correlative in "Be conformed to the death and resurrection of Jesus." This focus on the Paschal Mystery as central to all moral theology is a welcome and positive emphasis of the Encyclical.

This Eucharistic emphasis is foundational for a theological understanding of the Encyclical.

In sum: the objective reality, human nature, which underlies the Pope's historical nuptial anthropology, has a sacramental objectivity in history. It is this sacramental objectivity of human nature—nature neither as empirical, nor as abstract—that underlies at once the historical morality taught in *Veritatis Splendor*, and the case presented in DFF for a free and morally responsible historical rationality and for a realistic metaphysics.

This papal anthropology, together with the sacramental interpretation of historical objectivity that is inseparable from it, are unfamiliar to the Catholic academy, whether philosophical or theological. The assumption that the substantially graced character of creation should be understood to be simply historical: viz., fallen and redeemed, has entered little into Catholic philosophical and theological speculation. Insofar as contemporary Catholic scholars are possessed of any speculative training in philosophy and/or theology, the great majority of them understand the relations between nature and grace, reason and faith, philosophy and theology, as St. Thomas understood them.

St. Thomas had provided a metaphysical analysis of the relation of nature to grace within the static and nonhistorical act-potency context provided by the Aristotelian metaphysical analysis of the transcendently necessary relations composing material being. St. Thomas took for granted that nature and grace are comprehensible in terms of the substance-accident analysis, in which one of the related terms, grace, stands as the accident to the other, nature. Although St. Thomas had quite clearly intended what may be described as a baptism of Aristotelianism in the *Esse-essentia* relation which he postulated both to account for the freedom of creation and the Personal unity of the Word made flesh, nonetheless he quite uncritically deployed the deterministic Aristotelian substance-accident analysis to control the *free* relation between nature and grace and thereby imposed an analytic determinism upon their theological meaning.

Thus analytically normed, there was no rational exit from the paradox posed by the Thomist theology of grace, for it required substance to be a positive potency for that which by definition could have no positive analytic potency: grace.

The paradox arose out of a metaphysical impossibility, which the Thomist theology of grace has never been able systematically to transcend. Doctrinally, we must speak of human nature as it historically and concretely exists, viz., as the free prius of all *conversio ad Deum*, but the Thomist analysis transposes this positive historical relation—between the before and after of free conversion—to the determinist Aristotelian context of simultaneous act-potency causality, which cannot deal with a free event, and so cannot deal with grace.

Even today, when metaphysics is no longer in vogue, the bulk of Catholic scholars understand the relations between the polarities of nature and grace to be as static as that unbaptized substance-accident relation is—for that latter relation was excogitated to deal with the necessary

intrinsic causes governing the mutability of physical objects; i.e. it deals with unfree “things,” rather than with the historical freedom of human acts, which can have no necessary causes, and which are only deformed by such an analysis.

The novel *Esse-essentia* relation excogitated by St. Thomas never was used by him to free the other analyses of created being (substance-accident, matter-form), whose theological application could in consequence uphold the faith of the Church only at the cost of metaphysical incoherence. This incoherence, as in the supposition of a meaningless Eucharistic accident unrelated to a subject of inherence, was defended even by St. Thomas, but on grounds which could only induce the nominalist supposition that metaphysical terms have a radically empirical denotation.²

² This analysis is extended in *Covenantal Theology: The Eucharistic Order of History, I: Method and System in Theology; II: The Metaphysics of the Covenant* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991): II, ch. 5. St. Thomas had anticipated the nominalist anti-intellectualism in the *Summa theologiae*: see *Summa theologiae* III^a, q. 75, a. 4, obj. 3 and reply, which is worth quoting in full:

Praeterea, quae sunt secundum se divisa, nunquam unum eorum fit alterum, sicut albedo nunquam fit nigredo, sed subiectum albedinis fit subiectum nigredinis, ut dicitur in I *Physic*. Sed, sicut duae formae contrariae sunt secundum se divisae, utpote principia formalis differentiae existentes; ita duae materiae signatae sunt secundum se divisae, utpote existentes principium materialis divisionis. Ergo non potest esse quod haec materia panis fiat haec materia qua individuatur corpus Christi. Et ita non potest esse quod substantia huius panis convertatur in substantiam corporis Christi.

Ad tertium dicendum quod virtute agentis finiti non potest forma in formam mutari, nec materia in materiam. Sed virtute agentis infiniti, quod habet actionem in totum ens, potest talis conversio fieri, quia utrique formae et utrique materiae est communis natura entis; et id quod entitatis est in una, potest auctor entis convertere ad id quod est entitatis in altera, sublato eo per quod ab illa distinguebatur.

Objection 3. Further, when two things are diverse, one never becomes the other, as whiteness never becomes blackness, as is stated in *Phys. i*. But since two contrary forms are of themselves diverse, as being the principles of formal difference, so two signate matters are of themselves diverse, as being the principles of material distinction. Consequently, it is not possible for this matter of bread to become this matter whereby Christ’s body is individuated, and so it is not possible for this substance of bread to be changed into the substance of Christ’s body.

On the contrary, Eusebius Emesenus says: “To thee it ought neither to be a novelty nor an impossibility that earthly and mortal things be changed into the substance of Christ.”

Reply to Objection 3. Form cannot be changed into form, nor matter into matter by the power of any finite agent. Such a change, however, can be made by the power of an infinite agent, which has control over all being, because the nature of being is common to both forms and to both matters; and whatever there is of being in the one, the author of being can change into whatever there is of being in the other, withdrawing that whereby it was distinguished from the other. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominica Province, in five volumes (Allen, Texas: Christian Classics, 1981), vol. 5, pp. 2443-44.

This theological postulate infers from the rationalized omnipotence of God the instability of any immanent intelligibility in finite being, a doctrine common to the Nominalist, the Reformation, and the Moslem theology. It is entirely inconsistent with Catholic Sacramental realism.

The result is that Magisterial documents written from a historical viewpoint, such as DFF, will not be understood by the academic audience to which they are directed. Rather, and as a matter of course, they will be understood in that nonhistorical Thomist context which insists upon reading Paul in Rom 1:15-19, Vatican I's *Dei Filius*, and Pius XII's *Humani Generis*, all as incorporating the timeless viewpoint of the Thomist manuals in use a generation or two ago.

“Nature” then becomes the equivalent of a substantial creation simply ungraced—because its reality is at the level of substance—and “grace” becomes the accidental correlative of that natural substance, to which in some metaphysically inexplicable way it is seen to be in some positive potentiality. Reason, then, will be understood to be natural in that nonhistorical sense (for there is no ungraced historical creation) and faith will be an accidental gift, grafted somehow on to natural reason, again in a fashion simply defeating any metaphysical analysis.³

I have spelled out the incoherences of this and similar mistakes at length, and cannot repeat that exposition here.⁴ Suffice it for now to say that such a “Thomist” interpretation of the DFF will defeat its purpose from the outset and render its projected evangelization of the learned simply impossible. Such Thomism cries aloud for a refutation—one so obvious as to prevent any serious hearing of its viewpoint from a philosophically sophisticated audience. It is not accidental that today's dissenters are so quick to refer to St. Thomas as providing the authority for their secularization of Catholicism: the classic Thomist analysis of nature-grace as substance-accident, with its postulate of an ungraced creation, is now used precisely to underwrite that secularization, and the correlative dehistoricization of all that is of grace. No student of his thought is likely to associate such views with St. Thomas himself, but the rigorous development of the *logic* of his nonhistorical act-potency metaphysical analysis of nature and grace, of faith and reason, can easily find support there for such dissent.⁵

³ It is interesting, in this connection, that Karl Rahner, the most famous exponent of “transcendental” Thomism, never offered any Thomist metaphysical analysis of the “supernatural existential” upon which much of the Heideggerian component of his theological speculation relies. See, e.g., his critique of Hans Küng's *Rechtfertigung*: “Questions of Controversial Theology on Justification,” *Theological Investigations* IV, 210-218.

⁴ *Covenantal Theology, II: The Metaphysics of the Covenant* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991) sets out the lineaments of a historical Thomism and of a historical Augustinianism, each converted from its methodologically-induced nonhistoricity by the subordination of its method to the Eucharistic representation of the institution of the New Covenant on the cross as the unique and sole possible prime analogate of a historical metaphysics.

⁵ We may cite as examples of this mentality, first Bernard Häring's critical review of *Veritatis Splendor* in the *National Catholic Reporter* 30/3 (Nov. 5, 1993) in which we read:

Because natural law “is open to eyes of reason,” we should reason together gently and patiently as we consider the case “on either side” (Rom 2:12, 16). The hierarchical constitution of the Church cannot contradict or disallow this approach in any matter that concerns the law written in our hearts and calling for a response from our conscience. (15)

A Preliminary Overview of Reason as Historical

The truly historical treatment of the relations between reason and faith, between nature and grace, and between philosophy and theology, must respect the free order of salvation history: this is the ordered free unity of the Old Covenant, the New Covenant, the Kingdom of God. The free integrity of this order is the consequence of the risen Christ's Lordship of history—a Lordship which is identical to his Eucharistic immanence in our history. It is by this sacramental immanence that the risen Christ transcends all localization in space and time, and in so doing transcends redemptively the past, the present and the future, giving them that sacramental unity which is salvific, and free.

Therefore, we must treat human nature and natural reason in their concrete historicity, viz., as possessing the Eucharistic order by which alone they are historical, and free, and responsible. Because this order, this freedom and responsibility are historical, they are found at the three levels of actuality which comport with the three levels of actuality of the history of salvation: the Old

Only the historicity of the “law written in our hearts,” and its consequent historical mediation by the teaching Church, can exclude Häring's postulate of a moral truth abstracted from historical concreteness. An equivalent postulate, that of a nonhistorical, abstract, ungraced human nature, from which proceeds those human acts whose morality is then their being placed in a still-nonhistorical context of relative benefits and disadvantages, is evident in Fr. Richard McCormick's similar review, “*Veritatis Splendor* and Moral Theology,” in *America* 169/13 (Oct. 30, 1993), 8-11:

It is impossible in a brief space to give a fair summary of the developments that are described by the term “proportionalism” or an adequate account of the differences that individual theologians bring to their analyses. However, common to all so-called proportionalists is the insistence that causing certain disvalues (nonmoral, premoral evils) in our conduct does not by that very fact make the action morally wrong, as certain traditional formulations supposed.

In Fr. McCormick's view, the acts under consideration are of themselves nonmoral or premoral: therefore, they clearly can have no *inherent* moral significance; the moral agent in view is not then understood to be possessed of a sacramental significance and dignity which might be profaned from within, in the manner of a whited sepulchre. From this stance, the actions of men must languish in pre-moral limbo until such time as a calculus of proportional benefit and damage is applied to them, according to canons themselves indefinitely debatable. But at some point in the discussion one may say of, e.g., a falsehood, that with more or less probability, depending upon the academic climate of the day, it is or is not more or less culpable, as occupying a point somewhere on one limb or another of the bell-shaped curve of a nonhistorical moral calculus which finishes by becoming actuarial.

But the moral quality of our existence is historical, proper to men and not to abstractions; morality is intrinsic to men as historical, as images of God, and cannot rest upon such extrinsic norms as Fr. McCormick would suggest—which finally are only one more mask for an elitist utilitarianism warranted not by reason but by power. Both of these theologians of nonhistorical morality rely upon the abstract Thomist understanding of nature and natural reason for their dissent to the Papal encyclical: the former relies upon it to deny any jurisdiction of the Magisterium in matters knowable by natural rationality, the latter to affirm the moral insignificance of human acts as such, which he holds to be pre-moral until an extrinsic assessment of proportionate good and evil effect is imposed upon them. Both thus postulate the Thomist dehistoricization of nature to deny the inherently graced and intrinsic, sacramental, significance of human existence in history, which of course under this treatment must cease to be salvific—a high price to pay for school loyalty to an entirely outworn metaphysics.

Covenant, the New Covenant, the Kingdom of God. Because we are concerned with viatory humanity, the present treatment must be limited to the viatory dimension of our fallen history: i.e., the Old Covenant and the New.

Natural Reason in the Old Covenant

The metaphysical standing of the *trahi a Deo*—insofar as it has not been identified with the *lumen fidei* which is, rather, its free effect—has been very largely ignored by systematic theologians, although its universal reality, as the condition of possibility of formal infidelity, and so of formal faith, was established by St. Thomas.⁶ As the condition of intellectual and moral freedom in the face of the Christian revelation, by which it is possible to speak of the moral guilt of the unbelief vis-à-vis the Christ, whether by Jews, Moslems—or Christians—the *trahi* cannot be understood as an ontological accident: were it so regarded by an act-potency analysis of faith, it would be information, a positive articulation of the Christian faith, which of course it is not. In any event, there is obviously no universal distribution of such information. We are forced to conclude to the substantial character of the *trahi a Deo*, for its reality does not conform to that of an accident: viz., it is direct rather than reflex consciousness; its metaphysical standing is that of nature, or substance, rather than an *operatio*, or second act, of a nature considered as first act; in Augustinian terms, we may speak of an enlightenment of the mind and an inspiration of the will, by which the person is presented with the reality of Christ as the object to which his mind is spontaneously drawn, but drawn freely, not compelled. To repeat, and on the authority of St. Thomas, the *trahi* explains the sinfulness of infidelity; it can do so only when recognized as a universally distributed direct (not reflex) knowledge of the revelation, one given wherever men are found. Only a substantial grace, given at the level of creation, has this universality; only a substantial grace, a gift of truth prior to any affirmation of the faith, can explain what St. Thomas saw to need explanation, the moral quality of infidelity, as taught by Paul in Rom 1:15.

The universal capacity and moral obligation of man to know God is of course the doctrine defined at Vatican I. Because this is a moral free knowledge, not a knowledge which compels assent, its refusal cannot be due to a mere failure in logic consequent upon the clouding of the intellect by original sin: logical mistakes are not morally significant. Neither can it be a moral

⁶ For a clear analysis of St. Thomas' notion of the doctrinally (not philosophically) indispensable reality to which he refers sometimes as the *trahi a Deo*, sometimes as the *interior instinctus Dei*, sometimes as the *interior instinctus ad credendum*, see Roger Aubert, *Le problème de l'acte de foi: Données traditionnelles et controverses récentes*, 3^e édition (Louvain: E. Warny, 1958) 43-71, esp. 65 ff. Aubert's discussion refers to *ST* ii^a ii^{ae}, q. 2, a. 9, ad 3; q. 5, a. 1; q. 8, a. 4, ad 3; q. 10, a. 1, ad 1; *Comm. in Ioann.* V, 6, 8-9; XV, 5, 4 and *Quodl.* II, a. 6, ad 1 & ad 3. This is also the subject of Max Seckler's doctoral dissertation, *Instinkt und Glaubenswille nach Thomas von Aquin*, which concludes by avoiding the question of whether the *trahi a Deo* is grace or nature. See also Edward Schillebeeckx's favorable criticism of this work and approval of its conclusion: *Revelation and Theology* II, ser. Theological Soundings; trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968) at 32-54. Of course, the question cannot be avoided, and the answer is simple enough: given that the DFF deals with historical natural rationality as *ad salutem*, the *trahi a Deo* clearly must there be understood to be a universally distributed *gratia Christi*, given wherever man is found.

failure attaching to a supposed unwillingness to accept the doctrine of the Church, for it obtains where that doctrine has not been preached. The infidelity which needs explanation is the refusal, possible to any adult human being anywhere, to submit to the authority of God revealing himself: this universal possibility must have a universal explanation, which only the postulate of the *trahi a Deo* can provide.

Upon that postulate we proceed. Its first consequence is that in the Old Covenant period, there is no adult condition of a neutral or pre-moral consciousness, wherein there would be neither a positive nor a negative response to the moral obligation to affirm the Lord of history who is presented continually to the historical conscience by the *trahi a Deo*, a gift which can be accounted for only as the conscious dimension of our creation in Christ, and of our consequent metaphysical dependence upon him in the order of truth, as in the order of the one, the good, and the beautiful. Consciousness in the Old Covenant, as everywhere and always, is moral consciousness, informed and specified by the *trahi a Deo* toward the source of our being, who is the historical God of the Covenant, the Lord of history. By the immanence in consciousness of that gift of the Light that is Christ, however veiled, reason is historical, therefore free, therefore moral, and exists dynamically, in second act or *operatio*, either as *aversio a Deo*, or as *conversio ad Deum*. There is no middle ground on which to stand.

The *trahi a Deo* is experienced as an ontological hunger, to use Eliade's term. It is a hunger for unity, goodness, and truth, and insofar as intellectual, it draws one continually toward a historical consciousness, one entailing, finally, the affirmation of the Lord of history who is the source of the *trahi*. Out of this historical consciousness of the presence of God to oneself arises that inquiry which seeks to possess always more of that historical mystery, the *telos* of all historical consciousness, than at any moment one has grasped or seen. This historical *quaerens* or inquiry proceeds only from a free consciousness, one formed by and converted to the truth appropriated in the historical affirmation of the Lord. The inquiry, a *fides quaerens intellectum*, articulates the indigence of that historical consciousness, not its possession of truth—whose expression can never be theoretical as the articulation of *quaerens* always is—but rather its dynamic lack of truth: its question. The *quaerens intellectum* is therefore a *speculum* of the consciousness: it mirrors its emptiness, by constructing, by attempting to render coherent and intelligible, its freely immanent historical question. This question, insofar as it proceeds from the *conversio ad Deum*, is always historical, always open upon the mystery, and therefore is always dissatisfied before any closed, nonhistorical representation of its hunger. Hence, from the sixth century B.C. onward, the rational attack upon the cosmological mythology.

***Aversio a Deo* in the Old Covenant**

The *aversio a Deo* that is infidelity is historical only in the sense of being a flight from history. It occurs in that graced historical continuum in which pagans are led—by the *trahi a Deo*—

to affirm an ever more explicit belief in the Lord of history, corresponding to the level of historical revelation which is actual in the period and culture in which they live.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish in the Old Testament between the situation of the Jewish people, and the situation of those pagans of “the nations”—the Gentiles—who are not descendants of Abraham and Sarah, but whom the Old Testament nonetheless considers to be en route to salvation by the Lord of history, and thus to be within the history of salvation.⁷

In principle, no pagan is excluded from this salvific history. The universality of the Old Covenant soteriology is doubtless a continuing discovery, a matter of development of doctrine, but by the time of Isaiah in the eighth century, even the enemies of the elect people are seen to be subject to the salvific will of the Lord of the Covenant.

The Properly Pagan *aversio a Deo*

The pagan *aversio* is simply the historical *status quo ante* of historical natural reason; it is the spontaneous operation of the fallen consciousness: it amounts to the fallenness, the *peccatum originale originatum*, found universally in fallen historical consciousness. By reason of its fallenness, that consciousness is divided—we have here to do with the *duplex amor* of Augustine’s anthropology. The initial spontaneous personal expression of the fallen and fragmented consciousness is universally an *aversio a Deo*, as Gen 3:8-10 witnesses. A graced conversion is possible only by reason of the immanence in the fallen mind of the *gratia Christi* that is the *trahi a Deo*, a substantial or created grace at once cognitive and affective, at the most basic level of consciousness, that which is prior to any division between the desire for truth and the desire for good. The *trahi* is the presentation of the universally-given motive for such conversion, for such faith, i.e., the obscure presence to the mind of the risen Christ who Augustine found to be *intimius intimo meo*.⁸ This substantial grace presents a universally experienced, standing temptation toward *conversio*, away from the spontaneous *aversio* inherent in fallenness as such. At the same time the same fallen and historical consciousness experiences its own dynamic fragmentation, whose drive toward nonbeing presents a continual temptation to affirm and corroborate that fragmentation, and that finality. Hence there is in each of us the experience of “two loves,” set out in Augustine’s *Confessions* as a universal and inescapable dichotomy in fallen consciousness, whether it be in a state of *aversio* or *conversio*.⁹

⁷ As H. U. von Balthasar has observed, all of paganism is historically assimilated to the Old Testament, and thereby to Christ and the Kingdom of God; the “pagan saints” of the Old Testament are not outside the single history of salvation. See von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, I: *Seeing the Form*; trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis; ed. Joseph Fessio, S.J. and John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; New York: Crossroad, 1982), 647.

⁸ Augustine, *Confessiones*, 3.6.11.

⁹ See Augustine, *Confessiones*, 8.5.

The *aversio a Deo* proper to the pagans of the Noachic covenant in the Old Testament is thus a personal, deliberate, conscious rejection of, or turning away from, that illumination and inspiration, the *trahi* which, intrinsic to historical consciousness, is at the same time a continual temptation to *conversio ad Deum*, to the worship of the history-transcending Lord of history. Because it is concrete and historical, this *aversio a Deo* is necessarily a rejection precisely of the One God, the One Lord of history, the God of Abraham, Moses and David: for there is no other. However, this pagan infidelity is not and cannot be an explicit rejection of the Lord of history, for He is revealed only at the level of the Noachic covenant, the level witnessed to by the order of the world and by the personal conscience, not the order of the historical revelatory event, not then of history.

Rather, that *aversio a Deo* which is possible to and presumably actual within “the nations” is a freely willed perdurance in that condition of sin which Paul reprobates in Rom 1. Its existential spontaneity finds religious expression in the nonhistorical myths and cults which are or conduce to idolatries, whether directed originally to artifacts or finally to a man, often the self. All of these myths and cults recite and/or enact a flight from history, an ongoing negation of all historical responsibility toward history and the Lord of history. The pagan *mythos* understands salvation in terms of that flight, which seeks the end of history, understood as its radical negation. Salvation is achieved in the cultic extinction of the concrete historical self, by the immersion of the finite and conditioned self in the unconditioned Absolute, whether perceived as divine or as human.

These nonhistorical myths and cults find their reflex or speculative expression in the non-historical philosophical systems which work out the implications of the nonhistorical divinity of the myth, who upon examination is discovered to be, as a matter of logical necessity, a *deus otiosus*, a divinity unconcerned with whatever is not divine. The rational discovery of the *necessary* absence of divinity from history is the prelude for the speculative apotheoses of man which form most of modern and post-modern secular philosophy, and the practical apotheoses of man which, having ordered the bulk of the contemporary politics, then proceeded to dehistoricize the new divinity with the same immanentist logic which inexorably had dehistoricized the original *deus otiosus*.

The Jewish *aversio a Deo*

The *aversio a Deo* which is the infidelity of the People of God to the Old Covenant, as it is recited in the Old Testament, contrasts with the pagan *aversio* by being specifically historical; the Jewish *aversio* is a refusal of the historical revelation of the Lord of history, and of the unity of the historical worship of Him by the covenanted people at their one altar of sacrifice prescribed by the Mosaic Law (Deut 12). This refusal found various expressions from the Mosaic Covenant onward, the most explicit of which is the Northern Kingdom’s rejection of the Temple worship,

and the continual succumbing by the Jewish people to the temptations to idolatry presented by the Canaanite altars and cult.

Throughout Old Testament history, the prophetic condemnation of false worship bears not only on formal violations—by rulers and priests as well as by the ordinary people—of the Deuteronomic law, but equally upon the exteriorization and dehistoricization of cultic and moral law by the rich, the powerful, by the Scribes and the Pharisees, which we find excoriated from Nathan down to the Synoptic Gospels. A comparable exhibition of distrust of and alienation from the Lord of history led to the search for guarantees against disaster in alliances with Assyria and Egypt, alliances which Isaiah condemned in the eighth century and Jeremiah in the late seventh and early sixth centuries.

The intellectual inversion proper to the Jewish *aversio a Deo* in the Old Testament found no theoretical expression comparable to the dehistoricized rationality of the pagan philosophies. Its systematic flight from history is rather found in the rationalization of the Mosaic law, out of which arose the academic dehistoricizing juridicalism which infected the Covenantal morality in the Judaism of the post-exilic period; the same infidelity found expression in the conversion of upper-class Jews to the circumambient Hellenistic culture which is condemned in the Maccabean history, and which continues in the Sadducees and Herodians down to the New Testament period.

The Pagan *conversio ad Deum*

The pagan *conversio* is that worship, that lifting up of the mind and heart to God, by which the pagan people in Old Testament times responded to the *trahi a Deo* and came to recognize the Lord of history in the things that He has made. In the milieu of the Noachic covenant to which this conversion is particularly applicable, viz., that in which one may speak of the sanctity of Melchisedech, this conversion does not entail entry into the Old Covenant: the pagan does not become the proselyte. However, under the historical urgency of the *trahi a Deo*, conversion to the worship of the Lord of history is concrete in the rejection of the pagan myth and ethic, and of the culture it has formed; this conversion to the Lord of history is yet more explicit in such criticism of the pagan mythology and ethic as proceeds under the criterion of “The Most High God” whom Melchisedech served.

It is not without importance that from the second to the fifth century the Fathers found in Stoicism, Platonism, and to a lesser extent, in Aristotelianism, matter of significance for Christian theology, and understood themselves to be in continuity with the thought of Zeno and Plato while turning their speculation to Christian purposes. It is clearly impossible to determine to what extent such pagan thinkers were in fact in a condition of *conversio ad Deum* in the historical sense we have attached to that term, but it is striking that contemporary efforts similarly to exploit theologically such post-Christian philosophers as Kant, Hegel, and Marx have failed so notably, while the

ongoing conversion of Platonism and Aristotelianism, by the Augustinian and Thomist schools, remains a vital and even indispensable Catholic project.

The Jewish *conversio ad Deum*

The Jewish *conversio* must be dealt with at two levels: the first level is that proper to observant Jews who accept and live according to the Old Covenant; this group must include the former proselytes, pagans who have become members of the covenanted people Israel, and who fulfill the requirements of the Law. Such *conversio* finds its full expression in the Temple worship and in fulfilling the other prescriptions of the Law.

This first level of conversion to faith in the Lord of history is transcended, under the impulse of the *trahi a Deo*, to attain that ultimate level at which the believing Jew affirms the Lord of history to be Jesus, the Christ. At this level, the sacrifices offered at the one altar of the Old Covenant are transcended and fulfilled by the One Sacrifice of the New Covenant.¹⁰

Excursus upon the Historicity of the Reason-Faith Relation

The reason-faith relation is concrete as the nature-grace relation is: i.e., it is given concretely in salvation history. The statements of the Church's Magisterium on this relation are not concerned with an abstract and theoretical rationality such as is summed up in whatever system of epistemology. The teaching office of the Church is intent upon affirming the universal human responsibility to know and love God, and so with affirming the antecedent rational possibility of the free event of conversion, the free refusal of conversion to the historical truth, and consequently also upon affirming the moral malice of infidelity. These were Paul's concerns in Rom 1; they were the concerns of Vatican I in *Dei Filius*, of Vatican II in *Dei Verbum*, and remain the concerns of the DFF.

When the Magisterium has referred to the reason-faith relation, as the Fathers of Vatican I did in *Dei Filius*, and Pope Pius XII in *Humani Generis*, and Vatican II in *Dei Verbum*, the standard scriptural reference is to Romans 1:19-20, wherein Paul is obviously speaking of the universal situation of historical humanity: that of our responsible or moral freedom to affirm the truth of God's reality. This situation of intellectual freedom and consequent moral responsibility for the truth, which in sum is our historicity, is axiomatic in Romans, for Paul draws moral conclusions from the a priori supposition of a universally-given capacity in man to know God. Man knows

¹⁰ This transcendence of the Old Law by the New is the theme of the Letter to the Hebrews. Louis Ligier, S.J. has explored this profoundly historical linkage between the expiatory sacrifice of the Old Law and One Sacrifice of the New Covenant in *Péché d'Adam et péché du monde: Bible, Kippur, Eucharistie: I: L'Ancien Testament; II: Le Nouveau Testament*; ser. Théologie 43, 48 (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1960, 1961), a study of enormous importance for all Catholic theology.

God, in effect, by choosing to know God. Clearly, this knowledge is free; its refusal is sinful and has destructive consequences in human history, personal and communal. A mere failure of proper inference, as from the world to its creator, is not in issue, for this would be not sin, but only a mistake: doubtless it is a stupid one, but still it would be only a mistake, not the damnable refusal to see which Paul affirms it to be.

The historicity, the moral freedom, which is proper to the reason-faith relation is also proper to the nature-grace relation, and so to the philosophy-theology relation. Each of these relations should be understood to be concrete as historical, as a free event consisting of a “before” and an “after” whose relation is coherent and intellectually assessable, but nonetheless free. It is free because the later situation, the “after,” is in no sense deducible from the former, the “before,” but is so integrated with the former as for the former to achieve its reality, its autonomy, only in that relation: the prime Event of this historical event-analogy is always that of the One Sacrifice by which institution is achieved the transitus from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, wherein the Old is not subsumed by the New, but fulfilled, made to be truly itself, the *sacramentum tantum* of the New Covenant, which is itself the *res et sacramentum* of the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

Thus the relation may be understood, and in fact can only be understood, when it is seen to be historical in this precise sense, as illustrated by and in analogy with the ordered free relation of the Old Covenant to the New. This ordered freedom has as its cause, its ordering principle, the Eucharistic sacrifice, for there is no other free order, no other free ordering principle, immanent in creation. All surrogates for it which our self-sufficient rationality may forge fail of coherent order as well as of freedom; this was proven conclusively by Kurt Gödel more than sixty years ago,¹¹ but it was intimated more than two millennia earlier by Aristotle’s insistence upon the potentiality inseparable from human understanding.

Because the relation of reason to faith, of nature to grace, and of philosophy to theology, is historical, its intelligibility cannot be summed up in a statement of its intrinsically necessary causes or conditions of possibility, for it has none: as free it is *ex nihilo*, lacking all *antecedent* possibility, all potentiality intrinsic to the *status quo ante*. We have to do with a free event possessed of a free intelligibility, which is to say, with a moral event, and so with grace, with *gratia Christi, gratia capitis*.

Therefore, following the general tenor of Church teaching on the subject, we will here understand “reason” as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [hereafter, *Catechism*] and as *Veritatis Splendor* do, in a meliorative sense, that of the innate and universally-given human situation

¹¹ Ernest Nagel, and James R. Newman, *Gödel’s Proof* (New York: New York University Press, 1958).

of intellectual freedom whose proper expression is that of personal conversion to saving faith in God, the Lord of history. It must be noted, and this with emphasis, that such “reason” is grounded in the “nature” which Pope John Paul II has, in *Veritatis Splendor*, repeatedly affirmed to be primordial.¹² But that primordial integrity is available to us only sacramentally, and finally Eucharistically.

In this dogmatic sense of “reason,” the refusal of conversion is tinged with irrationality: reason is fulfilled in faith, and the intellectual *non serviam* that is infidelity is not only sinful, but as an expression of the mystery of iniquity, is simply without any possibility of rational justification. It must follow, as Kurt Gödel has shown, that every attempt to systematize the *non serviam* will fail, for each must embody that refusal of objective historical truth which, because it is per se a rejection of history and of the good creation, has no intrinsic coherence and intelligibility which might be articulate in a systematic and rational construct: i.e., in a philosophy or a metaphysics. To repeat, the logical incapacity of formal logic—the single criterion of the “autonomous rationality” of the Enlightenment—to achieve coherent expression has been proven by Gödel. This catastrophic failure of the foundation for all secular optimism may also be seen to be verified historically by the similar failure of all of the great pagan and neopagan philosophers of the ancient or the modern world to achieve systematic unity: their systems invariably represent flights from history to an Absolute truth which is absolute simply because it cannot be mediated by any historical articulation. It is obvious that a nonhistorical Absolute cannot be the integrating cause, the prime analogue, of any historical systematization of historical being.

Because the infidelity that is *aversio a Deo* is sinful, conversion from non-faith to faith is an objective moral obligation, one inherent in historical nature. Consequently it is, a priori, a moral possibility. Therefore we must accept, as implicit in the freedom of the relation—a freedom historically revealed in Christ’s “Who do you say that I am?”—of reason to faith, of unbelief to conversion, that the antecedent or “natural” situation of unbelief or infidelity is graced, and that therefore the universal historical situation of “nature” is not to be understood in the classical Thomist sense, as though it betokened the absence of grace. Henri de Lubac has long since pointed out the absurdities which flow from such a value-free *natura pura*.¹³

¹² *Veritatis Splendor* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), at 5, 17, 78, 84, 101, 122, 167-68. The consequently Eucharistic foundation of Christian morality is set out at 35-36.

¹³ Particularly in *Surnaturel*; ser. Théologie 8 (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Mouton, 1946), “Le mystère du surnaturel,” *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 36 (1949) 89-121, and *Le mystère du surnaturel*; ser. Théologie 64 (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Mouton, 1965): *The Mystery of the Supernatural*; trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967).

Rather “nature,” and “natural reason” are to be understood as merely the concrete historical prius of conversion, of faith. This prius is “natural” in the sense of innate;¹⁴ universally given as a constitutive element of concrete human nature wherever it is found. The universal distribution among men of this intellectual prius, this free rationality, does not prevent its being a grace, a gratuity; its universality prevents only that this gratuity be accidental in the Thomist sense of that term. Creation is in Christ, so Paul insists. This term, “Creation in Christ,” is not to be understood in the sense that the Creator is the nonhistorical, pre-human Word, as is often thought, a point to which we shall return. Creation in Christ is graced as a matter of definition, and because creation bears on substance, not accidents, creation is graced substantially, therefore historically, for creation in Christ is historical: it terminates in the free institution of the New Covenant, as fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.

The Vatican I declaration of the existence in every human being of “natural reason,” meaning the universal concrete moral capacity to reach a (salvific) knowledge of God, does not ignore or prescind from the Fall. The human *ratio* is fallen, and therefore turned in upon itself in a spontaneous *aversio a Deo* which, however little a personal decision, is nonetheless a willed dynamic and personal self-distancing from God, and therefore must be understood, by a legitimate analogy, to be sin: *peccatum originale originatum*.

The *Catechism* points out in its first section that this condition, which corresponds to that of men living under the Noachic covenant, does not stand in the way of the achievement of high sanctity. We must then suppose that, entirely apart from Baptism, persons so situated may come to a knowledge of God that is in fact salvific, and that they do so under those circumstances which Vatican I terms “natural,” since the persons concerned know nothing of the biblical revelation which culminates in Christ.

But since this sanctity implies an antecedent conversion from the state of original sin *passive spectatum* to the fidelity apart from which there is no salvation, it then becomes difficult to consider both poles of the transitus from infidelity to fidelity as “nature” without importing an ambiguity into the reason-faith and the nature-grace relation. In the first section, an attempt has been made to reduce this ambiguity to some clarity. Here it must be enough to avoid that lurking ambiguity by recalling, and emphasizing, that “nature” is concrete and historical, and therefore is the object of the discussion in *Veritatis Splendor* only insofar as it is understood as historical as defined by the only history there is, the history of salvation in Christ. Any other use of “nature” or of “history” is consequently nonhistorical by definition, because it is abstracted from salvation history, to become merely ideal, without theological interest.

¹⁴ This historical sense of nature and of the natural knowledge of God is further underwritten by the use in *Humani Generis* of “*nativa*” as the equivalent of “*naturalis*.” see DS §3875. For a fuller development of this interpretation, see D. J. Keefe, *Thomism and the Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 72-76.

Summarily, “nature” is of theological interest only as historical: i.e., only insofar as it is positively related to “grace” in the moment or condition of conversion. The same emphasis obviously applies to the historical relation of reason to faith, and of philosophy to theology. When these are taken out of their free historical integration, they are immediately dehistoricized, made ideal, and so are falsified.

At the same time, it must also be supposed that since this natural conversion is free, its absence, while unnatural and unreasonable, leaves the sinful infidel in full possession of his intellectual faculties, as free to “philosophize” as the converts are. The results of such abstract philosophizing, however, are not historical, and so are not philosophical in the only sense that is valid: the quest for objective historical wisdom. The objective and comprehensive truth, the “wisdom” that is the object of the philosophical *eros* insofar as that quest is historical and authentic is that which is given in Christ, whether actually or proleptically. Otherwise, the philosophical *quaerens intellectum* has as its *telos* that nonhistorical absolute truth of which nothing can be said: philosophy in this abstract sense represents the wholly false *sacrificium intellectus* that is the idolatrous offering up of the mind to a false god, a divinity which is only the apotheosis of one’s own vacuity: without Him we can do nothing.

However, as a matter of fact it is not really possible to distinguish, as among the pagan philosophers, the infidel whose *quaerens* actually is fed by the *aversio a Deo* which refuses conversion to historical intellectual freedom and so remains locked into a state of dehistoricized and idealized “nature,” from the presumptively actual convert from paganism to the freedom of historical rationality.

While none of the assured converts, the “pagan saints” of the Old Testament, have left us any philosophical statement, it is fair to say that, among the pagan philosophers whose works we have, none explicitly understood divinity except as nonhistorical and ideal, remote from contamination by historical freedom as a matter of definition—for the purification of the divinity of the myths from corruption by history was the first object of the pagan *ratio*, once it had passed from reliance upon *mythos* to reliance upon *logos*.

Yet one can hardly conclude, from this failure of pagan systematic thought to reach an explicit historicity, to the absence of a historical *conversio ad Deum*, whether, say, in the Socrates of the *Phaedo*, in Plato himself, or in Aristotle who was his pupil. Even so, it remains true that these pagan seers all take for granted a soteriology whose systematic expression amounts to a rational flight from history; universally, insofar as the record serves us, they understand history to be irredeemable.

The logic of this radically pessimistic supposition controls, e.g., all of Aristotle’s “theology,” as it did that of Plato before him, and Zeno and Plotinus after him. The viewpoint of Indian

and Chinese philosophy is similar: the immanence of the divine in history is *eo ipso* its fragmentation into a multiplicity of gods and a consequent polytheism, the rational purification of which drives to the nonhistoricity of divinity as the Absolute, and so of the nonhistoricity of the prime Unity, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty of being, *qua tale*.

Such philosophies are inevitably dualist, understanding the principle of evil to be matter, in the sense of spatio-temporal differentiation, and concluding that salvation from evil must be by way of a flight from all that is thus differentiated, therefore, to be had only by attaining a nonhistorical identity with the nonhistorical divinity. This conclusion is common to all the great pagan religions in their more intellectual expressions, such as is found in the Upanishads or in the monastic Hinayana (Theravada) Buddhism in the East, or in the Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and Neoplatonism of the Western seers.

The nonhistorical or antihistorical, and thus pessimistic, pagan religions therefore must oscillate between a popular idolatry and an esoteric nihilism; the academic metaphysics and the moral systems derived from the rationalization of the pagan *mythos* emphasize the latter, rationalizing, alternative: of the prime analogate, the goal of all speculative thought, they commonly agree either that Nothing must be said, or that one must return to the mythic level of wisdom, as Plato does in the Myth of Er in the *Republic*, or as Zeno does in his notion of a cyclic *ekpyrosis*.

The resulting ethic is inevitably one of conformity to this ideal absolute, and so of personal irresponsibility in history: morality is servile, as a matter of definition. This servile morality tends toward a radical self-denial, pushed even to the point of personal annihilation, while the correlative philosophy of god, the pagan theology, can do no more than ring changes upon the ineffability of divinity as the nonhistorical absolute.

Lacking any historical revelation by which the freedom and historicity of truth, of the moral good, and of objective reality *tout court* might be known, the pagan philosophers whose works we know could only work out the immanent rational implications of their fallenness, which is to say, of the servitude of fallen reason to futility. We cannot infer from this failure any personal *aversio a Deo*; rather, we have every reason to suppose their quest for wisdom to be itself historical, a working out of the historical existential of the *trahi a Deo*, experienced as a *quaerens intellectum*, as intellectual indigence and ontological hunger, and hence to be salvific, however little the historicity of the *trahi a Deo* found or could find a rational development. Without the revelation to them of the immanence of God in history, the pagan *quaerens intellectum* could only seek him outside of history, as the nonhistorical Absolute. It must always be remembered that there could be no historical quest for that Absolute, were He truly absent from history.

Nonetheless, because there can be no continuity between contradictories, there can be none between their philosophical systems and the Christian affirmation of faith in the Lord of history.

For the transcendence of history by the Lord of history is not, as the pagans thought and the neopagans yet think it to be, in function of his absence from history, but rather is exercised by the free immanence of the risen Christ within history, achieved by the historical life, death and resurrection of the eternal Son, in obedience to his mission from the eternal Father to give the *Spiritus Creator*. The goal of that Mission is the institution of the New Covenant, which transcends and orders history only as the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

If Christianity is to take advantage of the pagan theologies, or philosophies of god, as representing instances of “the spoils of the Egyptians,” it can do so only by their radical conversion to historicity, apart from which conversion they only deny, absolutely, what the Christians affirm, unconditionally.

Let it be said again: this conversion is radical, and could not be more so, for it is systematic, or methodological; it is an intellectual conversion from a prime unity, goodness, and truth, conceived by paganism as the nonhistorical absolute, to the prime unity, goodness, and truth who is the historical God of the Covenant, who by his sending of the Son to give the Spirit, is not absolute, but is in free, substantial, Covenantal, and finally nuptial relation to the good creation. It must be recognized that the pagan absolute being cannot possibly serve as a prime analogate of historical being—of historical unity, goodness, and truth—for the analogy of being bespeaks a relatedness founded on causality. That relatedness is denied a priori of the nonhistorical divinity. The creation which is created in Christ is one whose unity, goodness, and beauty are founded in its freedom, viz., the nuptial free order of its creation in Christ, whose creative Lordship is by his Eucharistic immanence: if this is denied, we are again faced with the impossible problem of an Absolute who is at the same time the Covenantal Lord. St. Thomas could not solve this, nor can we.

Because in any philosophical system, the prime analogate is by definition transcendent to all being, Christian theology insofar as metaphysical has here to do with the conversion of pagan “theological” wisdom to the Christian faith in the God revealed in Christ, immanent in the Eucharist. This is also the conversion of the pagan pessimism, which equates the divine transcendence with divine remoteness, to the Christian’s optimistic appropriation of the revelation that the Lordship of Christ is precisely historical, exercised by his sacrificial and redemptive immanence in our fallen history. By this immanence, which can only be Eucharistic, he has transcended and continues redemptively to transcend that fallenness utterly by freely integrating it through his taking its fallen historicity to himself: Christ is the *Logos sarx egeneto* precisely as freely submitting to our fallenness, to our death.

For the Johannine Prologue indeed distinguishes two states or stages of the *Logos*, but not as between eternity and history: the dichotomy between the “before” and “after” of *Logos sarx egeneto* is between a condition of Christ’s primordial human pre-existence to the “world” and to “flesh,” and the condition of Christ’s human immanence in the fallenness which “world” and “flesh” denote. In both of these stages, *Logos* refers to the Man in whom the Mission of the Son

terminates—for the Fall is not implicit in the Mission of the Son to give the Spirit, as the *propter peccatum, sensu negante* notion of the “motive” for the Incarnation implies. Any reading of the Prologue which would deny or ignore the reference of its first verse to the primordially of Jesus (which is explicitly affirmed by Paul in Phil 2:5-12) would defeat the Chalcedonian definition of the personal unity of the Christ, who is ever “one and the same,” regardless of which of his titles is in use.

It is the faith of the Church that Christ’s Covenantal Lordship over the fallen historical creation freely and redemptively integrates its otherwise unfree and fragmented time and space into the free unity of Old Covenant, New Covenant and Kingdom of God, by which integration our history is salvific, the good creation which even as fallen, objectively mediates the glory of God, however veiled, obscurely, and enigmatically.

Consequently, a Christian “philosophy of God,” or a systematic/speculative theology, can have no other prime analogate than that Lord, whose dominion is the intrinsic free historical cause of the consequently free unity, goodness, truth, and beauty of all creation, a creation freed from its servitude by his free obedience (Rom 8:19-25). If Christian philosophy should insist upon retaining *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* as the Name of the prime analogate,¹⁵ let that naming be understood *sensu aiente*, as not barring identification with the historical Lord of the Covenant, but in fact as tacitly affirming that identity, quite as, e.g., the Christian reading of the seventh chapter of Isaiah understands the sign given Ahaz to refer to Christ.

In the concreteness of the salvation history achieved in Christ, this prime analogate can only be Eucharistic: as a matter of definition, the historical and Covenantal Lordship of Christ is not conditioned by or submitted to the fragmentation of time. Were it so submitted, the redemption worked by Christ, his institution of the New Covenant, would become merely a past event, a moment in the history of the Roman occupation of Judea which would be ever less accessible across the passage of the centuries. Jesus would inexorably assume the features of the “Jesus of history” limned by the liberal theology of the nineteenth century in utter dissociation from the “Christ of faith.” With the unity of the historical Jesus and the risen Lord thus compromised, the divinity of Jesus becomes problematic and finally deniable, as it has become for the Reform by reason of its rejection of the historicity, the sacrifice-event, of the Eucharistic immanence. By this *sola fide* denial of the Eucharistic event of the offering of the One Sacrifice, Christ’s Eucharistic immanence

¹⁵ The DFF refers us in this connection to the classic “proof text,” Ex 3:14. It is unfortunate that this text has commonly been interpreted in highly inapposite absolute terms by a rationalized Thomism which, having understood God as the rationalized Absolute, inherited from Greek metaphysical thought, can permit no relation from God to what is not God. But Ex 3:14 names, not the rationalized absolute of the *Summa theologiae* I^a, q. 13, a. 7, c., but the Lord of the Covenant, who loved us first, and whom we know only by His free initiative. In short, if “*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*” is to serve a Catholic metaphysics, the term must be understood historically: i.e., as the historical prime analogate of the historical creation.

becomes a mere static presence, inevitably subjectivized: a nonhistorical “presence” can only be subjective.

Christ’s concrete immanence in history is transcendent to all localization in time and space precisely because his Lordship is actual and effective only in and by the Eucharistic representation, the objective anamnesis, of his One Sacrifice, the institution of the New Covenant, and of the redemptive outpouring of the Spirit whose first fruits is Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. To repeat: absent his institution of its Eucharistic representation, Christ’s One Sacrifice would be merely the past event which the liberal theology and the Modernism of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century made of it, incapable of the historical transcendence which is his Lordship of history and the cause of our redemption.

Therefore the prime analogate of a Christian metaphysics, whether as philosophy or theology, is—and cannot be other than—the Eucharistic representation of the event of the One Flesh of the New Covenant. The Eucharistic sacrifice is the sole ordering principle, the radical cause, of salvation history, the good creation whose goodness is its historicity, the freedom in which the achieved Kingdom of God is effectively signed by the Eucharistically integrated Old and New Covenants.

Any contemporary, post-Christian refusal, however implicit, of this uniquely historical prime analogate must return the resulting system of metaphysics to a pagan format: that of an *infidelitas quaerens intellectum*. That metaphysics could only construct a pseudo-reality; it would articulate a quest for the nonhistorical *verum* which such a formally unbelieving mind must suppose—falsely—to be immanent in nonhistorical rationality.

Metaphysical speculation, so deployed, is clearly not the “natural reason” of which the DFF would speak. Such a philosophy, whose prime affirmation is of an unreal, nonhistorical absolute reality, could not be in search of wisdom, for it would canonize the nonhistorical *aversio a Deo* which, concretely, is infidelity in the formal or technical sense. This *aversio* from the Lord of history, insofar as contemporary, could no longer be innocent, as is, e.g., the theology of Plato or Plotinus, for the contemporary unbelieving philosopher would have freely rejected the historical revelation, which had placed the alternative free option of fidelity to the Lord of the Covenant before him, and with this, the option of a metaphysics of objective historical reality.

Consequently, the post-Christian stance of such a conscious infidelity, *as systematized*, is not open to conversion, in contrast to, say, Plato’s philosophy, which manifestly *is* open to conversion. Further, any such attempt to convert a post-Christian philosophy embodying a refusal of the historical prime analogate would have in principle already been refused by the philosopher in question. That refusal could not but connote the founding of his philosophy upon a nonhistorical, merely ideal, prime analogate, one which would correspond to the situation of a reason fallen from graced freedom, but unredeemed by conversion to faith in Christ, and as unredeemed, incapable

of appropriating the intellectual freedom of the revelation given in Christ. We speak here of the capacities of the philosophical system; the philosopher can always, under grace, change his mind.

In consequence of the obduracy of its *non serviam*, such a rationality of *aversio a Deo* must remain in servility to its own immanence, which must become the a priori cause of whatever wisdom it might claim—and claim falsely, for it would not be a *quaerens sapientiam*, but rather *insipientiam*: it is the fool who has said in his heart that there is no God.

The evangelization, which the DFF projects, of Western consciousness by Catholic philosophers need not, perhaps, overtly contemplate so radical a conversion of the pagan wisdom to the Eucharistic prime analogate, even as tacit. This must be said, even though the criteria which the DFF provides for a truly objective and metaphysically realistic philosophy, or natural knowledge at once of God and of morality, finally demand no less.¹⁶ Before proceeding to infer the fundamentally theological and Christocentric character of all realistic metaphysics, and proceeding to announce the conversion of philosophy to theology *tout court*, we must examine further what is entailed in the assertion of the historical prime analogate.

If we make the prime analogate of all historical free rationality to be the Eucharist simply, we are in some danger of prescinding from the historicity of the Eucharist. While the Eucharist is in fact the ordering principle of salvation history, it is so as itself historical, as possessing historical antecedents. These antecedents are those sorrowfully recited by Paul in Rom 9:4-5:

They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of them, according to the flesh, is Christ.

Only in this context of Old Covenant history is the Eucharistic sacrifice, the sacramental institution of the New Covenant, intelligible, for the Old Covenant is still its *Sitz im Leben*, even though today the Catholic use of the Old Testament as a Christian resource is little in honor among exegetes.¹⁷

¹⁶ H. U. von Balthasar has reminded us that St. Bonaventure identified metaphysics with Christology: *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, II: *Studies in Theological Styles: Clerical Styles*; trans. Andrew Louth, Francis McDonough and Brian McNeil C.R.V; ed. John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; New York: Crossroad, 1984) at 329, citing Bonaventure's *Hexaemeron* 1, 12-13 (V, 331ab): "Christologus verus metaphysicus." But this is a highly compressed assertion, whose truth needs considerable unpacking.

¹⁷ E.g., the Catholic Biblical Association study of the New Testament basis for the nonordination of women so isolated the New Testament from its *Sitz im Leben* in the Old as to evacuate the institution narratives of all Covenantal reference, thus allowing the inference that the sacrificial character of the Mass, written into the Servant Christology with

But the Old Covenant is itself not understood until we recall that its historical roots are in the pagan Near-East of the late third and early second millennium. In fact, it is constituted by the conversion of the pagan cultus to the worship of the Lord of history, as we have seen von Balthasar observe. This conversion is the first free exercise of what the DFF terms natural reason, i.e., historically graced reason. Its condition of possibility is that *trahi a Deo* which St. Thomas saw to be an a priori necessity for such conversion. Since this *trahi* is present in the pagan peoples long before Abram was called from Haran to become Abraham, the founder of the people Israel, we must suppose it to be salvific in them also, but only as drawing them into the history of salvation—for “salvation is from the Jews” (Jn 4:22). In other words, this universally distributed grace, given even to the pagans, is historical, given Covenantally and distributed universally through the Eucharistic transcendence of history. While this grace has no other finality, no other adequate response, than faith in the revelation who is Christ, that faith can be explicit only to the extent of the historical revelation of his mystery, at once veiled and revealed in history. Thus must be explained the emphasis in the *Catechism* upon the sanctity of Abel, Melchisedech, Noah, Job, and Daniel (Gen 14:18-20; Heb 7:1-10; Ezek 14:14, 20).¹⁸

The natural knowledge of God possessed by the extra-Covenantal “nations” is therefore also historical, and so is a historical and valid *quaerens verum*, for its finality is Christocentric. This *quaerens* tends toward an ever fuller and more explicit conversion, but does so outside the Covenantal community of Israel. Nonetheless, this *quaerens* is a faith-response to the historical revelation which founds the *trahi a Deo*, however obscure and enigmatic. Any systematization of it, any “natural theology” of the knowledge of God so gained, is a response to the *trahi a Deo*, the historical grace whose inherent dynamism draws those who do not resist it across all the obscurities of their history to a faith-affirmation, comparably veiled but nonetheless real, not defeated by their history, of the Lord of history. For Christ, the Lord of history through his Eucharistic immanence in history, is the implicit historical prime analogate of every historically graced *quaerens verum* and, on the authority of Rom 1:15-19, we have no reason to deny the reality of that quest among the pagan peoples.

which the four institution narratives are permeated, is nonetheless a late extra-scriptural notion, unknown to the primitive Church: see the “Report” received by the Catholic Biblical Association (C.B.A.) from the task force appointed by it to examine the merits of the Vatican rejection of ordination of women, “Women and The Priestly Ministry: The New Testament Evidence,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 608-613, 616. The task force’s conclusions can be accepted only if its members were justified in understanding their “task” to be set by a strictly literal reading of the phrase “New Testament evidence” in the title of their report, and thus were required a priori to impose upon their exegesis the absurd nonhistorical isolation, indistinguishable from Marcion’s heresy of the second century, of the New Testament from its *Sitz im Leben* in the Old Testament. This is to carry the stress of *Divino afflante Spiritu* upon the primacy of the literal sense rather further than the authors of that document intended. As it stands, the “Report” represents an abdication of serious biblical scholarship, but since its publication the notion that the Tridentine doctrine on orders has no scriptural base has entered into the conventional theological wisdom in the United States.

¹⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Article 1, §ii, at 58.

This conversion to historical consciousness must remain latent, veiled, among the people of “the nations,” those uncovenanted “Gentiles” who stand apart from the elect people, and are even their enemies. We have seen that because the “natural knowledge” of God available to “the nations” cannot attain to explicit recognition of the immanence of God in history, and so of the mediation of God in the events of history, its systematic metaphysical expression can only fail to be historical. Standing outside the Old Covenant tradition of the faith of Abraham, knowing nothing of the historical election of Israel, the Gentile response to the *trahi a Deo* is too obscure in its historicity to find expression in the affirmation of the historical prime analogate which would deliver their speculation from its immanent logical necessities.

Thus the philosophies of the high pagan cultures—the Greeks, the Romans, the Indus valley civilizations, the Chinese—fell back into the immanentist and necessitarian logic which, left to its own devices, transforms, e.g., the “most high God” of the high priest Melchisedech, into the kind of nonhistorical *deus otiosus*, remote from the world, who has on the one hand long been fragmented, by historical immanence, into the multitudinous idols of the popular pagan cultus, and on the other, reduced to the Void of absolute transcendence by pagan mysticism.

Nonetheless, the pagan peoples live, as we do, in the only history there is, that which mediates the salvation won by Christ on the cross. Their philosophies are inadequate to their factual historical experience, as the recitals of probably genuine mystical experiences of God by seers such as Plotinus reveal: frequently if not invariably, they describe their experience as impersonal absorption into the Absolute, but at the same time, at least in Greece, the great tragedians celebrated a human dignity, say in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus*, which refuses that logic’s immanent drive to “the abolition of man.” The existential actuality of their historical *experience* of the *trahi a Deo* can only be Covenantally ordered, for union with God does not annihilate the humanity of which Christ is the Head and for whom he died: rather it redeems them and gives them eternal life. However, the actuality of this historical *telos* of this *trahi* must be revealed if it is to be affirmed intelligibly; such a *telos* cannot be made systematically intelligible by a mind which knows no exit from the necessary inferences of its own fallen rationality, a mind to whom the historicity and freedom of truth has never been revealed.

This first conversion from the nonhistorical pagan cultus of “the nations” is then to an obscure faith in the Lord of history who in fact revealed himself only to the Jews from whom is salvation: to Abraham and to Moses, to the prophets, to David, finally to Mary, the final expression of the people Israel, whose immaculately created Wisdom, under the creative outpouring of the Spirit, conceived her Lord.

At the level of the people of “the nations,” that historical mediation of the revelation is only latent: as the *Catechism* puts it, it is given through the human encounter with the world, and with that depth of human self-awareness which is the conscience. But the world of human experience is concretely historical, and so is man’s moral and salvific encounter with the historical world.

This encounter is simultaneous with the existential self-awareness that is the moral conscience; to paraphrase Augustine, God is there more intimate to each of us than each of us is to himself.¹⁹ Immanent in history, signed by the creation, and present to each human being as a graced illumination of his very substance, Jesus the Christ is the salvific Lord of the history, enlightening every man born into the world. As Paul insists, God can be known adequately by each of them; that adequate knowledge is moral, and therefore is graced, the *trahi a Deo* which, *for all*, is *ad salutem*.

Therefore, any conversion to the Lord of history is proleptically a conversion to faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the end to faith in Christ. However, because in paganism that “natural knowledge of God” is obscure, clarified by no event of revelation, it finds no expression in the speculative thought of the pagan philosophers, whose sole rational tool is the logic which gradually emerges from the primitive dialectic, but which remains locked into the determinism of that dialectic, the spontaneous immanent rationality of the fallen mind. The *trahi a Deo* has continually driven such pagan thinkers, first to criticize the inadequacies of the nonhistorical *mythos*, ultimately to displace the *mythos* with a *Logos* of the divine, i.e., a theology, and then to criticize the insufficiencies and inconsistencies in each other’s drive for logically coherent “talk about god.” However, as is evident in the classic stand-off between the Platonic phenomenology and the Aristotelian analytic, or in the radical insolubility of the similarly classic problem of the one and the many, the incoherences of immanent rationality were incapable of human resolution; we have learned from Gödel that they will always remain so: the problem of the one and the many still has no a priori solution, and while Plato was correct in insisting that his ideal Forms were indispensable to philosophy, he himself was never able to integrate them: their mathematicization also failed.

Among the people Israel, the conversion of the natural reason also is to Christ, but still to the Christ of history: the Christ prophesied in the Old Testament, not yet revealed in the New. The believing Jew accepts the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah wholly, but does not and cannot understand it in its full historicity, which waits upon the revelation that Jesus is the Lord. Consequently, any systematization of this incomplete yet salvific Old Covenant faith in the Lord of history is exceedingly difficult to achieve, for to such a systematic effort the “particularity” of the historical mediation of God in the Old Covenant confronts fallen rationality, as fallen in the Jews as in their pagan antecedents. This particularity, which in the extreme form it takes in the New Covenant (the Eucharist) will become the standing scandal of Christianity for nonbelievers, confronts the spontaneous conviction of fallen reason that the historical particular cannot mediate the divine: *finitum non capax infiniti*, as the Calvinists continue to insist.²⁰ The antecedent possibility of such historical mediation of the universal salvific will of God cannot be shown; as *ex nihilo sui*

¹⁹ Augustine, *Confessiones*, 3.6.11.

²⁰ For the continuing influence of this axiom in Calvinist Protestantism, see Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*; trans. A. V. Littledale (Westminster, MD.: The Newman Press, 1956).

et subjecti, it can have no antecedent possibility, yet fallen rationality has no other criterion for truth than its own immanent logical structure, whose determinism it therefore must impose upon reality as the antecedent condition of all intelligibility.

While the Old Covenant is a concrete historical relation of God to Israel, one which is proleptically marital, the historical unity and concreteness of that nuptial covenant remains problematic until the institution of the New Covenant. The historical expectation of the Messiah is grounded in the prophetic promise to David, but over the centuries of its disappointment by the sinful successors to the throne of David, the hope for a Messiah became more and more thrown into the future, finally to become eschatological, and in some degree dehistoricized. This development could only invite the systematic dehistoricization of the Messianic hope, whether by political efforts to “immanentize the eschaton,” or by its reduction, under the influence of Hellenistic speculation, to a variant of the Platonic eros toward the ideal Good. Something of the latter sort is visible in Philo’s dehistoricizing, Middle Platonic interpretation of the human imaging of God.²¹

The eschatological distancing of the Messianic hope from historical fulfillment is an echo of that tension in the Old Testament where on the one hand, in Hosea, Isaiah, and the Wisdom literature, there is repeatedly asserted a bridal relation between God and Israel, while at the same time the prophets abhor any suggestion of sexuality in God. Here again, in the latter chapters of Isaiah, the consummation of the Covenantal union is thrown forward to the eschaton. Similarly, the many Old Testament “titles” which the New Testament will apply to Christ in their fulfilled sense have no historical point of convergence in the Old Testament; they wait upon a history-transcending integration.

Thus when Philo put the dominant Platonic philosophy of his time to the service of *fides quaerens intellectum*, he did not find its dehistoricizing import problematic. Philo used it without any systematic principle for its conversion to historicity, and without much recognition of the incongruities resulting. Yet Philo was a devout Jew, a member of the large and vital Jewish community in Alexandria which two or three centuries before him had produced the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. His work had a very great influence upon Christian theology by way of Clement, Origen, the Cappodocians, and Ambrose, for the Platonism which Philo had exploited for his own theological purposes certainly represented also for the Fathers such as Clement and Origen a clear instance of “spoils of the Egyptians.” But in patristic hands, particularly Augustine’s, Platonism underwent a gradual conversion to sacramental historicity. The historical revelation of the Lord of history had been achieved in its unsurpassable fullness in the institution of the New Covenant, and the sacramental historicity of the Christian celebration of that Event over the centuries transformed Christian Platonism into a phenomenology of existence in Christ.

²¹ For the influence of Philo’s Platonism on Christian thinkers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ambrose, see G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1959) esp. pp. 85, 114, 142, *et s.v.*

This theological development did not proceed without reverses and mistakes, but the temptations toward a dehistoricizing “spiritualization” of the Revelation, as well as of its Eucharistic celebration, which appeared sporadically among the Christian Platonists from Origen onward were never triumphant over their faith that Jesus is the Lord and, precisely, the Lord of history. The influence of Neoplatonism upon the thought of the Cappodocians as upon that of Augustine and Ambrose, is profound and lasting, but the Christian faith in the Lord of history transformed their Platonism into a theology of Christ: a transformation which Platonism did not, nor could have, received at Philo’s hands.

The Implications of Historical Rationality for Philosophy and Theology

By way of resumé, we must distinguish the three historical stages of natural reason: that of “the nations,” that of the Old Covenant, and that of the New Covenant. In each stage, natural reason is graced by the Eucharistic immanence of the risen Christ, the Lord of history: this grace is best understood as the Thomist *trahi a Deo*.

In the first (pagan) stage of natural reason, this grace draws the pagan, as it did Abram, toward faith in the Lord of history, as revealed in the world (which is the concrete and therefore the historical manifestation of the glory of God) and in his own subjectivity (the *trahi*), but does not do so Covenantally except in that most remote sense of the Noachic covenant, whose sign is of cosmological import rather than redemptive: the recovery of the earth from the chaos of the flood, the restoration of the regular cycle of seasons.

In this first stage, which is that of the great pagan philosophical systems, there is no possibility of constructing a theoretical or metaphysical natural theology which would not presuppose the nonhistoricity of God. The concrete immanence of God in history is conceivable only in a world in which Christ has been preached; the paradox of God immanent in history is otherwise insurmountable by rational thought, which cannot transcend its own nonhistoricity, its own fallenness. Nonetheless, because these systems were written in innocence, they are convertible to historical truth; they may be seen by Christian thinkers as the Fathers saw them, as spoils of the Egyptians, as potential theologies, capable of expressing a historical *quaerens*.

In the second (Old Covenant) stage of natural reason, the same historical grace draws the historical natural reason of the Jewish people toward faith in the Lord of history. At this stage, however, the *trahi a Deo* is supplemented by historical events which unveil and reveal the historical immanence of the Lord, who is thereby known to be the Lord of history. God reveals himself,

in the history of his chosen people, to be their God,²² to be in a concrete, Covenantal, and historical relation to them as the saving Lord of their history. The absence of the absolute pagan divinity from history, presupposed in all of paganism, has been overcome by the historical initiative of God as the Lord of history. The veil over the natural knowledge of God among “the nations” has been lifted, but not entirely: the paradox of the salvific presence of God in the Old Covenant history is affirmed as true by the covenanted people, but the revelation remains paradoxical in its Scriptural record, and cannot be made coherent. That transcendent unification of the historical revelation waits upon the Christ, as does any intrinsically coherent metaphysical account of the Old Covenant rationality which seeks him, the still inchoate but explicitly historical *fides quaerens intellectum*.

The third stage of natural reason is that of the New Covenant, of the Catholic Church. It is only at this stage that historical reason, the *fides quaerens intellectum*, can affirm a concretely historical and free prime analogate of being, for the intelligibility of being attains complete historicity only in the institution of the New Covenant. All the pre-Christian systematizations of historical rationality fail for lack of a prime analogate of being which can support, precisely, the freedom of that rationality.

We may observe this failure in the reductively idealist and finally incoherent philosophies of such pagans as Plato and Aristotle, as well as in the Upanishads and Lao Tzu.²³ The Old Covenant revelation also lacked the full historical unity and concreteness which would have permitted such a metaphysical integration of history, or have freed Old Covenant morality from the legalistic interpretation given it by late Judaism. Even if we suppose Maimonides to have discovered the real distinction between essence and existence a century before St. Thomas, it remains true that (like St. Thomas) he did not understand this relation to be Covenantally ordered, which is to say, to compose a before and an after into the free unity of a concrete historical event, whose freedom is that of conversion to the Covenantal faith.

It is only in the institution of the New Covenant, in the history-transcending life, death and resurrection of Christ, that the preliminary and insufficient covenants recited in the Old Testament

²² Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out in an early work that the name of God revealed in Ex 3:14 should probably be understood as connoting a personal relation between God and the believer, rather than simply as the assertion of transcendence implicit in “I am Who Am.” See Ratzinger’s *Introduction to Christianity*; trans. J. R. Foster (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 82-93.

²³ For brief surveys of Upanishadic wisdom, see *Sources of Indian Tradition*, I; ser. Introduction to Oriental Civilizations; Gen. Ed., Wm. Theodore de Bary; compiled by A. L. Bashan, R. N. Dandekar, Peter Hardy, V. Raghavan, Royal Weiler (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966) 24-34; Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas, I: From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 239-246, and *The Great Asian Religions: An Anthology* compiled by Wing-tsit Chan, Ismail Ragi al Faruqi, Joseph M. Kitagawa, P. T. Raju (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1969), 30-51. For a sketch of the Taoist dualism, see *The Great Asian Religions*, 150-178, and *The Way of Lao-Tzu* (Tao-te ching), trans., with introductory essays, comments, and notes, by Wing-tsit Chan, Professor of Chinese Culture and Philosophy, Dartmouth College; ser. The Library of Liberal Arts (New York, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, n.d.).

reach the historical unity and concreteness which, only from that vantage point, may be seen to have been theirs proleptically. A free intellectuality and a free morality have their sole vindication in the One Sacrifice of Christ, but only if the One Sacrifice is so offered as to transcend history, as freely to integrate its freedom: only thus can it be understood to be the free prime analogate of free being.

Only the Eucharistic representation of the One Sacrifice allows this free transcendence, as has been seen. Hence, only in the Eucharistic worship, at once anamnesis, celebration, sacrifice, sustenance, and communion, is there available the historical prime analogate which natural reason requires in order that it be free, that it be historical, and that it understand reality to be free and historical. Only this prime analogate can sustain a rational inquiry which would be experimental in principle. And only this prime analogate can sustain a morality which would be responsible in principle: not an impersonal and irresponsible servility to an impersonal, nonhistorical or ideal cosmic order, a deterministic categorical imperative which regulates but does not free society.

What has already been said of the natural knowledge of God among the Gentiles is true a fortiori of that knowledge of God which relies upon the Old Testament revelation. This revelation is of course incomplete, as must be the knowledge of God derived from it; as de Lubac has somewhere written, the Old Testament is to the New as nature is to grace. De Lubac wrote out of his profound acquaintance with the patristic tradition, where he discovered that order of history in which the Eucharist integrates, in a free dynamic unity, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the achieved Kingdom of God.²⁴

Theological Implications of the Historicity of Nature and Natural Reason

Even at first glance, the tacit conversion of pagan rationality to the historical prime analogate that is the Eucharist must bar the existence of that irenic common ground between Catholic and non-Catholic or non-Christian scholars which the DFF's philosophical evangelism seems to require: viz., a peaceful zone in which the Catholic Christocentrism of rationality can be presented to a receptive if unbelieving audience. For the dichotomy between the historical and the nonhistorical prime analogates of being—of unity, truth, goodness, and beauty—cannot be suppressed, even by tacit means. More and more it is seen to divide the Western consciousness into two directly opposing communities of discourse.

²⁴This insight into the order of salvation history is first developed in *Corpus mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Église au moyen âge. Étude historique*; 2^e édition, revue et augmentée; ser. Théologie 3 (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1949); it is summarized in *L'Écriture dans la tradition* (Paris: Aubier, 1967), [English translation, *The Sources of Revelation*, trans. Luke O'Neill (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968)], and fully developed in *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture* I-IV; ser. Théologie 41 (part 1 and part 2) 42, 59 (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1959, 1961, 1964).

One of these communities, celebrating the imminent arrival of the New Age,²⁵ seeks what has been called the immanentization of the eschaton: this rationalist soteriology-by-dehistoricization imports a utopian flight from historical particularity, a renewed Gnosticism of the sort which has tempted the West since Joachim di Fiore's Trinitarian errors inspired the Spiritual Franciscans' dissent to all ecclesial institution.

The other community of discourse is Covenantal, committed to free historical rationality in the sense described in the preceding pages. Members of this community are well aware that the New Age Gnostic revival can only construct one more cage for the Gnostic, whose native habitat it is. But today, large numbers of people have come to prefer the safety of the cage to the perils of what has begun to resemble a jungle outside it.

Twenty-five years ago, David Tracy, a University of Chicago theologian and former student of Bernard Lonergan, operating under the common misconception of "nature" as abstract, as nonhistorical, as a simply ungraced created reality, mapped out the topography of such a "natural" ecumenical meeting place as that view of nature affords. Its high ground, indeed its total acreage, turned out to be occupied, a priori, by secular modernity. Tracy took for granted the humanistic postulates of modernity, which are simply those of the Enlightenment. These he assumed to be "natural," in the sense of ungraced, ideal, and therefore universal necessities of thought; their universality is nonhistorical, being simply their abstraction from history. However, Tracy understood them to be, insofar as "natural," the common possession of a value-free humanity, whose intellectual community consists in their conformity to the canons of this "natural" reason. Thus he concluded—fulfilling Tertullian's pessimistic assessment of the possibility of ecumenical discussion between Christianity and the secularity of his day—that modernity's postulate of dehistoricized rationality must govern all future ecumenical discussion with modernity.²⁶

This was very much the stance of Lonergan, who had frankly turned over the historicity of the Church's tradition to the dehistoricizing rationalism of what he termed "philology," meaning by that word the entire range of the Enlightenment's version of historical criticism.²⁷

It is evident that such a dehistoricizing "historical criticism" can only confirm its own a priori: whatever is true is true necessarily, with the consequence that history cannot mediate the

²⁵ Philip G. Davis, in "The Goddess and the Academy," *Academic Questions* (Fall 1993): 49-66, has provided a most valuable and informative survey of the historical background of the New Age movement, one which casts a brilliant light upon its contemporary appropriation by radical feminism.

²⁶ *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York, Seabury Press, 1975). For a discussion of Tertullian's axiom, see Étienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 5-15.

²⁷ Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Philosophy of God and Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973) at 32; see also *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) at 278, 312-330, and *Doctrinal Pluralism*, ser. Père Marquette Lectures (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1971).

grace of God, which is by definition free. History having been evacuated by the secular academy of all significance whatever, those who choose to live in such an intellectual milieu, still drawn by the *trahi a Deo*, must seek Him in an eschaton which is nonhistorical, without any historical mediation: on this barren ground, Gnosticism has always flourished. The popularity of the New Age movement is not surprising.

On the other hand, should the historical view of “nature,” as preemptively graced, be normative for such a discussion, then it cannot but bar the rationalist immanentism only by loyalty to which the contemporary intellectual may claim academic respectability.²⁸

The same point can be made in another fashion: for a secular scholar even to enter into such a discussion as is entailed in the prospect of a Christian conversion of natural reason in its

²⁸ For an expression of Catholic enlistment in this academic secularism, see the review article, “The Apostolic Origins of Clerical Continence: A Critical Appraisal of a New Book,” *Theological Studies* 41 (1982): 693-705, by Roger Balducelli, O.S.F.S., in which the French original of Christian Cochini’s study, *Origines apostoliques du célibat sacerdotal*, is examined; see also, in *Theological Studies* 52 (1991): 738-39, George T. Dennis’ derivative and dismissive review of the Ignatius Press translation of Cochini’s study. Balducelli simply dismisses religious faith as a basis for historical judgment, while remaining supremely uncritical of the comparably arbitrary quality of the fashionable postulatory atheism grounding his own methodology:

Cochini also unveils the principle the application of which will allow historians to exploit methodically the possibility of an unrecorded teaching and evoke out of later, nonapostolic utterances the historical certainty that clerical continence is in effect entitled to claim apostolic origins. He stipulates that to the extent to which we can ascertain that a doctrine or a discipline is effectively observed “by the whole Church” and “has always been observed,” we have the right to think that the point of departure of that doctrine or discipline is located in the age of the apostles (78). For the sake of convenience, this stipulation is made into a principle, and the principle is named “principle of spatial-temporal universality” (85), where “spatial” points to the fact that the whole Church subscribes to a given doctrine or discipline, and “temporal” refers to the fact that the whole Church has done so always.

What response is this principle likely to elicit from historians concerned with the integrity and credibility of their discipline? Can they agree in principle that the spatial-temporal universality of a discipline that first bears witness to its own institutional existence in the fourth century was in fact willed into existence by the apostles, even if these bequeathed to posterity no public evidence of any such act of their will? Only a special kind of historian, I believe, can afford to answer this question in the affirmative. This is the historian who at that critical moment when the act of knowing is about to come to fruition in judgment can in good conscience call upon a conviction to which historians qua historians have no access. This is the believer’s conviction that the Christian Church is indefectibly faithful to the normativeness of her own origins, and cannot therefore subscribe universally and always to an institution unless the authority of an apostolic enactment stand at the origins of it. It is only on the strength of such a privileged conviction that the universality of an institutional discipline can be construed as evidence of the apostolic origins of the same. But since this conviction is available only to believers, an assertion made on the strength of it does not constitute an act of historical knowing, and public validity is not, in consequence, one of the qualities that assertion is entitled to claim of itself. (695-696)

historical sense would be for him to accept, however provisionally, the historical notion of reason as effectively graced, thereby freely in quest of a free truth. Such acceptance, however conditional, would connote the legitimacy of such a conversion, and finally, the incompleteness, at best, of the merely “natural” nonhistorical rationality which is the single alternative to such conversion to the historicity of truth. But the discussion would then be entirely irrelevant and uninteresting to the advocate of resolutely secular rationality; to enter upon it would be for him to accept as a rational possibility its context of Christian historicity—a context whose intelligibility he cannot accept and remain secular, in the sense of guided by the nonhistorical, secular, and humanistic postulates of the Enlightenment.

As is evident in the work of contemporary Catholic exegetes and Church historians, it is very difficult to persuade even Catholic scholars of the proven bankruptcy of the autonomous and dehistoricizing rationality of the Enlightenment: in fact, it is Catholic scholars, late comers to this humanist rationalism, who are today among its most inveterate defenders and advocates.²⁹

Yet it is alone this radical conversion from the nonhistorical absolute (e.g., the absolute *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* of the Thomist tractates) to the historical prime analogate (i.e., the Eucharistic sacrifice) that can satisfy the criteria set by the DFF for a Christocentric rationality. For such a rationality must above all be free: a free *quaerens intellectus* into a historical mystery which, as Augustine wrote, is ancient and yet forever new. Only a free truth, freely sought, can be thus always new, always fresh, continually fascinating, and only a free mind can seek to appropriate its mystery, which is its freedom. But the systematic expression of the free inquiry (*fides quaerens intellectum*) into the freedom of that revealed truth must be more than nominal; it must be intrinsic and constitutive of man—which is to say, it must be metaphysically, historically, objective—and only that order of being is free whose source is the One Flesh, the New Covenant instituted by the One Sacrifice of Christ. There is no other free intelligibility than that which is at once Trinitarian, nuptial, and Covenantal.

Abstracted from its free relation to the New Covenant, the Old Covenant, it must be said again, is insufficiently unified to provide a prime analogate of historical being. However, when

²⁹ The programmatic dehistoricization of Christology which John Meier, on explicitly Enlightenment grounds, argues for in his recent work, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, I: The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York, London: Doubleday, 1991), offers another parade example of this mentality: see the review article in *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter* 15/3 (June, 1992) 20-27. Fr. Stephen Scherrer, M.M., has cited a number of well-known scholars, mostly Protestant, who have come to reject Enlightenment historicism in favor of a doctrinally-informed historical reading of the text as the only legitimate biblical exegesis; see “Biblical Studies: Where Did We Go Wrong?” *Saint Jerome Publications News: A Scripture Newsletter*, 1/3 (December, 1992): 1-6, “Towards a New Consensus,” *Ibid*, 2/6 (April, 1993) 1-4, and “The So-Called Historical Israel of the Historical-Critical Method, and the Historical Biblical Revelation of Salvation History,” *Saint Germaine Publications I/III* (1992): 1-22. Cardinal Ratzinger made the same point in his Erasmus Lecture, “Foundations and Approaches to Biblical Exegesis,” *Origins* 17 (1988): 593-602.

seen in the historical relation to the New Covenant by which its own meaning is actual in history, its integration is entirely proleptic: it is prophecy, not fulfillment, and the *fides quaerens intellectum* cannot rest in it: the *trahi a Deo* draws the historical reason to the Christ. When that futurity is rejected, so is the historicity of the Old Covenant, whose cultus must oscillate between legalism and humanism. This is not to deny the legitimacy of the synagogue worship or the historical piety of the Jewish people; it is only to insist that the single *telos* of their worship is the Lord of history, the Christ, who by his Eucharistic immanence in history draws the Jewish people to himself.

The historical prime analogate, as the freely immanent free cause of the free order by which the unity, goodness, truth, and beauty of creation are free, can be actual, insofar as free, only as a prime event, for only events are historical, and thereby are free. This prime historical Event, the historical prime analogate, can only be the *historical* term of the Father's sending of the Son to give the Spirit, by which God is freely immanent in man, in Personal unity with humanity. The freedom is bipolar, Covenantal: the created correlative to the Mission of the Son is his human welcoming, his conception by the sinlessly free *Theotokos*, the second Eve who accepted her high destiny in the "Let it be done to me according to your word" uttered at the Annunciation. Her supreme act of worship, by which her Lord is immanent within her, is the antetype of the Mass, the central act of the Church's worship, by which the second Adam is present to his bridal Church, the second Eve.

The prime Event, the *Logos sarx egeneto*, is always nuptial, the Covenantal union in One Flesh of the second Adam and the second Eve. This union, the New Covenant, is the created term of the Trinitarian Missions. The Event of the institution of the New Covenant, the One Flesh of the second Adam and the second Eve, is inseparable from its sacramental and historically objective representation in the Mass.

No nonhistorical prime analogate can be thus free, and thus capable of ordering a free rationality. For a nonhistorical prime analogate can only be the absolute, which in turn cannot but be self-enclosed, locked into its immanent perfection, incapable of relation to what is not itself. This pessimism has been worked out to its last consequence in too many times and places, by too many men of genius, to be longer in doubt. At the same time, no other historical and free prime analogate is conceivable than the Eucharistic immanence of the One Sacrifice of the Christ, whose mystery, given in revelation and appropriated in faith, can alone integrate the world and the history of man. That this historical prime analogate has the objectivity of a sacramental sign is no more than the index of its historicity: no prime analogate can be empirically available and retain its primacy.

By this Eucharistic immanence of the Lord of history, the grace of Christ transcends the entire creation, precisely as *gratia capitis*. This doctrine began to become clear in the medieval discussion of the Immaculate Conception, which requires that transcendence, as Duns Scotus had

seen.³⁰ We may now see, as St. Thomas saw in the latter pages of the *Summa Theologiae*, that “nature,” as historical, must be graced if it is to be held guilty of a subsequent infidelity, in accordance with Rom 1:15-19; if St. Thomas did not yet understand that universal grace, the *trahi a Deo*, to be *gratia Christi*, his failure should not prevent our doing so, for there is no other universal grace than this, the *initium fidei*.

Catholicism knows and can know nothing of an *extra Calvinisticum*, for there is no other name by which we may be saved than Christ’s, as we have no other judge than he, and are judged by no other law than his. If the grace of the risen Christ does not pervade creation from “the Beginning,” (Jn 1:1; Mt 19:8; Mk 10:6; cf. Rom 8:22-23; Eph 1:3-14, 22, 3:11; Col 1:15-17), then we are in fact driven back to that allegedly Calvinistic “extra” which denies the universality of the grace of Christ, and thereby the salvific adequacy of the sacrifice of the Cross. Catholicism cannot accept this inference from *finitum non capax infiniti* and remain itself: the Church knows no other grace than that which is *gratia capitis*. Any alternative or supplementary mediation of salvation relativizes the One Sacrifice, and thereby the One Flesh of the New Covenant. Thus relativized and inevitably historically conditioned, the grace of Christ would not transcend history, and so would have no application to the sanctity of Noah and Melchisedech upon which the Catholic tradition insists.

Since the Scotist perception of the retrospective effect of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection in the context of Mary’s sinlessness, and yet more so since the definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, it has become impossible to reject the plenary historical character of the grace of Christ, his dominion, as risen, over all historical reality, which is to say, his primordially. He is Alpha as well as Omega, the Beginning and the End.

All that now remains to be achieved, in order that a truly Christocentric metaphysics be possible, is the recognition of the Eucharistic institution of the New Covenant as the means by which this transcendence of all history by the grace of Christ is actual. *Eo ipso*, this is to understand the Eucharist as the prime analogate of objective being: i.e., of being in its free, historical, and therefore sacramental manifestation.

It is most unlikely that any nonbeliever will be in a position to enter into a dispassionate discussion of the implications of such an ultra-Catholic foundation for metaphysics; we may suppose that its affirmation would receive nearly as much resistance from our separated brethren.

³⁰ Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, tomus decimus quartus, editio nova (Paris: Vives, 1894), *In IV Sent.*, III, dist. 7, q. 3, at 354, scholium.

Further, for as long as philosophers and theologians alike take for granted the prevailing affirmation of an absolute or nonhistorical prime analogate, and are complacent before the incoherences consequent upon it, by that fact they also will have rejected a priori, at least by implication, the arguments here indicated for the metaphysical primacy of the Eucharistic representation of the New Covenant. It is evident that metaphysics cannot at once serve two mutually exclusive prime analogates; it should be equally clear that to enter freely into metaphysical speculation requires a free prime analogate, which is to say, a historical prime analogate, a prime free Event. No other than the Eucharistic Sacrifice is conceivable.

We have here argued that the *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* need not be understood as a nonhistorical absolute, unrelated and unrelatable to all but itself; in fact, that view of the prime defeats its purpose, which is the integration of reality precisely by transcending it, which for historical reality can only be a historical transcendence, requiring that immanence of God in history which is freely relational: Covenantal, in fact. It is perhaps not necessary for philosophy explicitly to identify the prime analogate as the Eucharistic Lord: what is necessary is the maintenance of that proleptic stance toward the full historicity of reason which we find in the Old Testament. While philosophy so viewed is hardly what most Catholic philosophers have in mind as their task, there are some few who do seem finally to have accepted it.³¹

³¹ The confessional ground of all metaphysics was insisted upon by Étienne Gilson long since: see his *Introduction à la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris: Vrin, 1960) 223, and *Le philosophe et la théologie* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), 18, 87-88. A citation from another of Gilson's works, "Les recherches historico-critique et l'avenir de la scolastique," *Scholastica ratione historico-critica instauranda* (Rome: 1951), appears at the head of de Lubac's *Le mystère du Surnaturel*:

Accablée sous plus que cinq siècles d'alluvions, l'ignorance de soi est le mal le plus grave dont souffre le Scolastique. Pour la rendre à elle-même, écoutons le conseil d'histoire: Retour à la théologie. *Le mystère du surnaturel*, 142.

For the citation of and commentary on this text by Gerald Smith, S.J., see H. de Lubac, *Lettres de M. Étienne Gilson* adressées au P. Henri de Lubac et commentées par celui-ci (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986) at 167; see also 97-99, where de Lubac summarizes and comments upon his own early (1936) analysis of the running disagreement between Maritain, Blondel, and Gilson over the nature of the relation between Christianity and philosophy. He observes that Gilson's emphasis upon the factual historical indebtedness of philosophy to Christianity had raised and left unresolved the question of whether a "philosophy" thus informed by Christianity should still be called philosophy. It is this dilemma, acutely felt in Neothomist and Augustinian circles for more than half a century (see e.g., George Klubertanz, S.J., "Metaphysics and Theistic Convictions," *Teaching Thomism Today: The Proceedings of the Workshop on Teaching Thomism Today* conducted at The Catholic University of America, June 1 to June 26, 1962; ed. George McLean, O.M.I. [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962], 271-306), that the present essay intends to resolve by pursuing the classic proposition, summarized by Anselm, that Catholic intellectualism is faith seeking an understanding, together with the supplementary insight, voiced by Gilson as by many others, that the rationality of this understanding is at once freed from the immanent necessities of the autonomous mind, and underwritten as historical, by its conversion to the free rationality of the historical faith as mediated by the Church's worship of the Word made flesh. This essay, therefore, proposes a return to the ancient Augustinian insight that the subject matter of theology is the Whole Christ, the New Covenant; this requires a systematization of theology which will respect its historicity, its freedom, by developing what Augustine also saw, its Eucharistic ordering. That ordering would seem to require that the historicity of philosophy and theology be at once integrated, and distinct: the paradigm of the Old Covenant in its free and historical relation to the New is then inescapable.

At the same time, it remains impossible for a Catholic theology to reject the plenary historical Lordship of the Christ, his radical and redemptive transcendence of the whole of fallen space and time. The metaphysical systematization of this Lordship of history requires only that one recognize in the Eucharist the sole means by which the transcendence of the risen Christ over history is actual in history. This recognition is equivalently the admission of the need to come to explicit and systematic terms with the historical and metaphysical primacy of the Eucharistic sacrifice, an admission which cannot but conclude to the recognition of the Eucharistic institution of the New Covenant as the prime analogate of being. For it is clear enough that Jesus, the Lord of history, has no other Lordship than that by which he is the Head of his Body, the Church, and creation as such, in the One Flesh of the New Covenant—which Covenant has no other historical actuality than the Eucharistic sacrifice. This One Sacrifice causes the Church to be, precisely in the Covenant by which she subsists, her union in One Flesh with her Lord.

The Church's affirmation that Jesus is the Lord can be the subject of the *fides quaerens intellectum* that is theology only if it be taken with full systematic seriousness, as objectively, literally, historically, and metaphysically true. Systematically—which is to say, metaphysically—this faith-assertion is identical to the affirmation that Jesus, the Christ, is the prime analogate of being and further, that he is so precisely in the exercise of his Lordship over history, of his headship of creation, in the institution of the New Covenant which is the term of his full obedience to the Mission by the Father to give the Spirit—an institution which has no other actuality than the Eucharist.

But, as has been said, this is a hard saying, incapable of accommodation to or reconciliation with any nonhistorical or rationally autonomous philosophy whatever: its *full* systematic articulation is the single task of theology insofar as it is coherent, therefore systematic and speculative, a metaphysical account of the affirmation that Jesus is the Lord. Implicit in this statement is the charge that those theologies which do not accept this view of systematic theology as historical, and therefore as dependent upon the historical prime analogate, are systematically incoherent and can be shown so to be by the mere examination of the metaphysical failure of any other prime analogate.

The Relation of Philosophy to Theology

It is clear enough that any metaphysics which is caused by the Eucharistic prime analogate must be a theology; it cannot travel as philosophy, merely, because the causality of the Eucharistic immanence will produce a Trinitarian theology, a Christology, an ecclesiology, a sacramental theology, a sacramental morality—in brief, it will articulate a historical *quaerens intellectum* of an unmistakably Catholic character and origin.

Yet within the historical order of salvation, ordered by the Eucharistic immanence of the Lord of history in history, there is room for more than Catholics, more than Christians, more than

Jews: Christ died for all men. They share, now as always, in a single history of salvation, in which every historical *quaerens intellectum*, whether it arise within paganism, Judaism, Islam, Protestantism, or Catholicism has its own legitimacy, its own autonomy.

It is then necessary to understand how what has been termed a tacit affirmation of the Eucharistic analogate is possible, even necessary, for philosophy, and how a philosophy thus Eucharistically normed is yet not at all a theology.

A philosophy can only be thus normed if it is loyal to its historical *quaerens*, which is to say, if it is in fact responsive to the *trahi a Deo* which is the lure, to borrow Whitehead's term, by which the mind is led to affirm a truth more and more historical, more and more free. By this alone is the human *quaerens intellectum* liberated from its self-absorption, its fallen nihilistic *pondus*. To follow this lure is to refuse all the rationalist reductions to undifferentiated nonhistorical unity of the historical "ontological differences" between God and the world, between man and the world, between God and man, by whose affirmation alone can philosophy avoid entrapment in its own immanent logic. But concretely those ontological differences are established by the New Covenant: Eucharistically immanent in all of time and space, ordering it as effective sign of the New Creation, the Kingdom, the New Covenant is the single foundation for the historical optimism we find so clearly assumed, even to the point of naïveté, in *Gaudium et Spes*, and now, once again, in the DFF.

Philosophy, understood as the DFF understands it, as the quest for wisdom, is then continually lured by the *trahi a Deo* to become ever more historical, to become in the end theological, in the explicit affirmation of the Eucharistic prime analogate, which it has been led to see is the sole possible foundation for its quest.

The relation between philosophy and theology therefore can only be historical, for it is free. Its model, as has been sufficiently observed already, is that of the Old Covenant to the New. This historical relation is easily misunderstood, for it is transcendental rather than predicamental, and is constitutive of historical understanding, which is at once philosophical and theological, not as mixed, but interrelated and mutually constitutive, as past is to present, and present to past. Theology transcends philosophy, but not as cancelling it: once again, we have to do with the *historicity* of historical rationality, whose past is not annulled, *aufgehoben*, by the present or the future. Rather, it is only in its historical and free relation to theology that philosophy can be itself, a free exercise of historical rationality: as self-enclosed, immanent rationality, it is the mere foolishness which says there is no God. Similarly, a systematic theology, a theological metaphysics, which is not historical, which does not look back upon a philosophical antecedent, cannot remember its moment of conversion, by which it is a free response to the *trahi a Deo*: such a theology would know no alternative.

Theology is then defined, definable, as that metaphysical system which explicitly affirms the Eucharistic representation of the institution of the New Covenant as the prime analogate of being, unity, truth, goodness, and beauty. This alone corresponds to the full weight of the faith affirmation that Jesus is the Lord. This said, what remains for philosophy? Is not the work of speculative reason theological per se?

Such inference would be warranted only were the Old Covenant annulled by the New. Since it is not, it may be supposed that philosophy continues to be of a significance for theology analogous to that which the Old Covenant has for the New. Generally speaking, this is to say that philosophy is proleptic of theology: it is of course true that this view of philosophy is available only from the side of theology, but this is legitimate: the true understanding of the Old Covenant is given only in the New. Philosophers as such will not share it. Within Catholicism, however, there are no philosophers “as such”: to philosophize in that sense would be to refuse the Catholic faith in Jesus the Christ.

Obviously, there are many wholly Catholic philosophers who will be astonished, at best, by the historical interpretation of their field of study. For reasons sufficiently indicated, it is nonetheless now necessary to understand philosophy in this historical context, that of an intellectual response to the *trahi a Deo*, for no other context is real. However, persuading Catholic philosophers to accept this fact is clearly a long-term prospect. Upon its acceptance waits any understanding by non-Catholic philosophers that their own discipline can avoid the fatalities of nonhistoricity by no other means.

In the meantime, it is for theologians to pursue, for their own purposes, the continuing project of the conversion of Platonism and Aristotelianism, which like all conversions, is always incomplete: theology also *semper reformanda est*. This task is the ordinary work, respectively, of those Augustinian and Thomist theologians who understand the *fides quaerens intellectum* to be historical.

There are of course theologians who undertake the conversion of post-Christian philosophical systems or patterns of thought. Contemporary disciples of Tillich—if, *contra* Tillich, we may for the moment suppose their existence—not uncommonly find in his thought an affinity with Whitehead’s. Thomists of the transcendental persuasion have looked to the Kantian critiques as a bridge to constructing a Thomism responsive to the post-critical dimension of contemporary philosophy. Others, like Tillich and Rahner, have thought to find in the phenomenology of the early Heidegger the ground of a theological hermeneutic. For some younger theologians, Wittgenstein has offered a similar challenge. It is not unusual to find Catholic theologians taken up with the implications of the analytical school: e.g., the work of Suzanne Langer has been levied upon for such purposes. And of course the theologians of politics and of liberation have over the past generation looked to Marxism, particularly of the Frankfurt School, for inspiration; other varieties of economic and sociological theory are now being explored for their possible theological import.

Not long ago, Freud was thought to offer a basis for theological inquiry. Finally, we have pointed out the admitted influence of Enlightenment rationalism upon the historical criticism employed by contemporary Catholic exegetes and historians.

In all of these cases, and in the many more which might be listed, the interrelation of Catholic doctrine and contemporary philosophical or other humanistic viewpoints is in issue. In the absence of some freely agreed upon and yet unassailable criterion for what amounts to the ongoing theological criticism of philosophy and philosophical humanism, the tension between faith and what looks like “reason” but is usually only its nonhistorical counterfeit, has all too often led Catholic theologians to reject one or another point of Catholic doctrine, as incompatible with contemporary consciousness, and as incapable of intelligent support in the face of contemporary criticism. It is in this connection that we hear, e.g., proposals to exploit “the hierarchy of truths” to relativize the points of Catholic doctrine particularly indigestible by the “modern mind.”

It is idle to suppose that such defections will not increase with the increased intensity of encounter which the DFF proposes between Catholicism and the intellectuality of modernity. Catholic thinkers, whether philosophical or theological, find themselves so divided upon the appropriate response to such secular challenge that the optimism underlying the DFF’s proposal of intellectual evangelization may seem difficult to justify as matters now stand.

It is for this reason that the firm foundation for such evangelization must first be laid as the necessary preliminary to any summons of Catholic philosophy and theology to their inherent mission of intellectual evangelization. This foundation, as has been sufficiently urged, can only be Eucharistic. On that basis, theology can inquire into the a priori postulates of secular intellectuality, deal rationally with them, and having exploited the incoherences latent in their unvarying lack of historicity, provide a challenge from the Catholic faith which relies simply upon the postulate underlying the free discussion itself: viz., the freedom and therefore the historicity of the inquiry, and so of the truth itself.

There is no other possible basis for the intellectual evangelization which is proposed, and no other which will meet the criteria which the DFF asserts as basic to Catholic intellectuality.

Catholic theologians and philosophers are not used to taking the faith-affirmation with a full metaphysical seriousness. They have been taught—largely by the inadequately converted Aristotelianism of St. Thomas and his commentators—to prefer nature to grace, reason to faith, philosophy to theology. In short, they have been taught to think nonhistorically, and it is that habituation which first must be overcome, if the evangelization is to rely not upon nature, but upon grace; not upon theory, but upon revelation; not upon divine ideas, but upon history. If one may risk the pun, we have been spoiled by the Egyptians. Too many contemporary Catholic thinkers have come to accept, e.g., the dehistoricizing *dicta* of Bernard Lonergan, who in all good faith did no more than repeat the despairing response of Schleiermacher to his learned critics, and proceed thereupon

to dehistoricize the Catholic faith.³² But such mistakes are inevitable unless the full historicity of the Catholic theological criticism of contemporary thought is sustained by the Eucharistic prime analogate of being: none other will serve.

This theoretical systematization of the *fides quaerens intellectum* leaves room for partnership with, and relation to philosophy; once more, theology as historical no more absorbs philosophy than the New Covenant displaces the Old. In fact, thus viewed, as proleptic, philosophy becomes a historical propaedeutic indispensable for theology.

Given the Eucharistic prime analogate, every authentic speculative inquiry is by definition historical; those speculative ventures which prescind from the Eucharistic prime, or which refuse it in favor of another, thereby must operate on some other basis than that which permits them to be authentic, in quest of objective historical truth; the *quaerens intellectum* has no other free object for its inquiry than the historical objectivity of the world which the world possesses only as freely ordered. Only as so ordered is the world continually new, and therefore interesting, capable of sustaining a rational inquiry into its truth. The failure of any developed scientific project outside the culture formed by the historical optimism which characterizes the Christian consciousness, is explainable only by a lack of confidence in the intrinsic free intelligibility of historical reality, which is to say, confidence in the capacity of historical reality continually to mediate a truth independent of the inquiring mind. Such intellectual optimism is entirely lacking in the pagan world view, as it is in the neopaganism of modern secularity. Where it is absent, the resulting consciousness can support no *quaerens intellectum* which would not be a mere immanentism.³³

The Alternative to the Historicity of Reason

No free and historical prime analogate has ever been proposed other than the historicity of the nuptially ordered New Covenant, which is to say, of its sacramentally and historically effective representation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Where this Eucharistic representation of the New Covenant is not affirmed as the basis of all understanding, there lie in wait the morasses of idealism, positivism, historicism, pragmatism, and their variants, whose programmatic annihilation of man in his world is now so obvious.

³² I have developed this critique in "A Methodological Critique of Lonergan's Theological Method," *The Thomist* 50 (1986): 28-65.

³³ Stanley Jaki, O.S.B., has devoted his many publications to the establishment of the indispensability of Christian postulates to the experimental method which defines modern science; see, e.g., *The Savior of Science* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1988).

The reservation of this unique and exclusive efficacy to the Eucharistic prime analogate, as alone capable of articulating a world which can support any *quaerens* whatever, is simply the consequence of a recognition, already given in the praxis of the physical sciences, that it is novelty which drives all scientific inquiry, and that this novelty is supplied *ab extra*, by historical reality independent of the inquirer; it is not the product of a transcendental deduction, for such inference from immanently necessary intelligibility can produce only immanently necessary reasons, which can never be verified by a free inquiry into a free reality.³⁴ When, as often happens, philosophers of science seek for an all-embracing “theory of everything,” they seek to undercut the experimental mode of science, by which it lives. At least since James Clerk Maxwell’s supposition in the last third of the 19th century that, with his equations governing electro-magnetic fields finally in place, little nontrivial physical truth still remained to be discovered, such ambitions have been disappointed by yet further and unsettling discovery. Whether it be Maxwell in the 1860’s or Francis Fukiyama in the 1990’s, man’s proclamation of the end of man’s historical quest is the proclamation of his own transcendence of history and so, of his own humanity, *quod est absurdum*.

Most such announcements are seen for what they are, more or less elevated nonsense, but sporadically there arises one or another of those figures whose name is Legion: men such as Joachim, Genghis Khan, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Napoleon, Comte, Marx, Nietzsche, Lenin, Hitler, and Mao, who perennially inebriate their hearers with the world-destroying prospect of becoming like God, and so wreak havoc. Such cosmic antihistorical aspirations present the perennial post-Christian political temptation: the quest for an order of salvation alternative to that which is worked by the death and resurrection of Christ.

The term of those uncovenanted quests is always a version of timeless union with the non-historical absolute, whose unconditioned unity devours its servants by relativizing them, annihilating them before the immanently necessary absolute goal of historical inevitability, by whose attaining the injustices inseparable from history are *aufgehoben*. The quest for *any* alternative to

³⁴ “Necessary reasons” is an ambiguous term; it is currently generally understood to describe the deterministic product of the transcendental deduction of the necessary structures of subjectivity basic to the Kantian and post-Kantian critiques. However, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, its meaning was governed by the ongoing Christian conversion of Neoplatonism, whereby the necessary coincidence of truth and freedom in Plotinus’ system became free and historical in beauty, or *rectitudo*, as Anselm has it. The search for “necessary reasons” in the hands of such exponents of the Augustinian tradition as Anselm, Bonaventure, Pascal, and Newman has paradoxically resisted the rationalist reduction of truth to cosmic-immanent necessity; their insight into the precision and rigor of the truth which in Christ is freed from all determinism is the perduring heritage of what von Balthasar has named theological aesthetics, and what may be more generally described as that remnant within the theological tradition which has never lost sight of the gratuity of truth and the consequent factual illumination of our minds by the light of Christ, and their liberation from the immanent futility which the Kantian critiques have explored. This illumination by him in whom we are created, who illumines all men who come into the world, is the intuitional *and historical* a priori of all knowledge; this illumination of our *ratio* connotes an aesthetic and sacramental understanding of historical objectivity, the *sapida scientia* or *sapientia* which von Balthasar has pointed to as the hallmark of all valid theology: for an account of Anselm’s *rectitudo*, see *Clerical Styles*, esp. 22-30.

the Christian demand that one render to God what is God's drives the bulk of modern politics, as it provides the pseudo-values of contemporary culture.

There would then seem to be no intellectual devices or strategies which could deflect or reconcile this animus, this *anti-Roman Affekt*, which has become constitutive for the Western consciousness: to refuse its normative impact is to accept some degree of exile, for by that refusal one is self-condemned as simply too alienated from modernity to share in its communion. If one gives a persistent public expression to this alienation, one becomes an enemy of humanity, a member of a *religio illicita*, as were the Christians of the first three centuries. It is not at all unreasonable to anticipate that, in the West, and within another generation, a cultural drive will once more force the Christian to choose between martyrdom and apostasy—for the pagan hatred of the Church is a constant in history.

The attitudes and mores which have formed modernity are those that formed the pagan world in which the Christ died on the Cross, in which Christianity first was preached, in which Jesus first was proclaimed to be the Lord, and in which Peter and Paul followed him to the death. We may expect an analogously vigorous reaction to any contemporary renewal of that preaching and that proclamation. There is little welcome in the Western world today for a Catholic irenicism or evangelism, and the prospects for tomorrow are not brighter.

Yet evangelization is a permanent demand of the Gospel: it is not to be abandoned, and therefore it remains an obligation now as always; it is not a futility. In fact, the very insistence upon Christocentrism which marks the DFF points the way to understanding that in fact there is a common ground of agreement still available for purposes of Catholic evangelization, even philosophical evangelization.

While the DFF's repetition of the optimism written into *Gaudium et Spes* by the Fathers of Vatican II thirty years ago is difficult to justify today, it was not easy to justify even then: the Fathers spoke then, as the DFF speaks today, from a Catholic hope, not from a sociological survey. The DFF is addressed to an audience of orthodox Catholic scholars, philosophical and theological, facing bitter opposition in their own Catholic universities when they presume, e.g., to find in them a place, even in biblical exegesis, for a Catholic religious and dogmatic interest; a radical deconstructionism and post-deconstructionism—the full flowering of the Enlightenment's dehistoricizing rationalism so beloved of our exegetes and historians—has overtaken the bulk of the humanities faculties in the Catholic schools as well as in the institutions of a more avowedly secular persuasion. It is safe to say that no senior administrator in one of the half-dozen largest and most influential Catholic universities in the U.S. would ever be selected for such office were he not in open sympathy with the severance of his institution from any serious Catholic influence, and especially from any institutional recognition of the specifics of the Catholic doctrinal tradition.

Those who recognize the existence of a cultural war, a *Kulturkampf*, in the West are not limited to the “religious right,” whatever that term may be thought to denote. For in fact, the dichotomy between those whose consciousness is Christian and Catholic, and those whose consciousness is frankly secular, grows ever more clear, and the irrelevance of those who would occupy a mediating position ever more evident. The appropriate Magisterial response to the contemporary anti-intellectualism must begin by refusing the ideal ambiguities upon which it feeds; perhaps the most insidious of these is “nature,” now commonly read, as by contemporary dissenting moralists, as denoting the ungraced situation of pure secularity, of rationalizing autonomous reason whose autonomy is its self-enclosure in the immanent necessities of logic. The DFF has rejected that modernist trap by its clearly historical use of the terms of its project: faith and reason, nature and grace, philosophy and theology, are treated not as ideal forms but as concrete historical realities, however inadequately they are distinguished in the consequent discussion.

But other ambiguities persist in the DFF: the most notable is the DFF’s insistent use of the Christological title, “Word of God,” often to refer to Jesus, the Son of Mary and the Son of the Father, “one and the same,” but also, as is commonplace in Catholic theological parlance, the DFF seems to employ this title neither to deny nor to affirm our Lord’s humanity, but rather to prescind from it. The DFF appears to resort to this latter usage when the capacities of natural knowledge to know God is in view: viz., the ability to respond positively to what may be considered natural revelation, the witness to God which is given in creation and especially in one’s own conscience.

Such a dehistoricized understanding of “Word of God” is taken for granted in most of the exegesis of the Johannine Prologue, Catholic as well as Protestant. The first few verses of the Prologue are understood by most exegetes to refer to a nonhistorical condition of the Son: “in the Beginning.” Of course, the eternal Word has no beginning, and from there the confusion becomes only worse confounded.

This confusion arises out of attributing to the author of the Fourth Gospel some acquaintance with and adaptation of a notion of the *Logos* taken from Middle Platonism (or Neoplatonism). It is difficult to discover where the Evangelist, writing about 95 A.D., would have arrived at an acquaintance with late Platonism, but little is known about him apart from his mastery of Greek. It is conceivable that already at the end of the first century Philo’s use of the *Logos* doctrine of a late Middle Platonism had become familiar to some of the learned Christians; we know that Philo’s Platonizing Old Testament exegesis influenced early Alexandrine theologians such as Clement and Origen.

Whatever the explanation of the Evangelist’s supposed use of the *Logos* of Greek philosophy, a dehistoricized and quite unbaptized notion of the *Logos* was associated with the Second Person of the Trinity by Origen, as perhaps earlier by Justin Martyr, and thence came by way of Antioch to Arius, who exploited its logic to deny that the *Logos* could be God; out of this denial began the centuries-long controversy over Arianism.

Few if any of the orthodox defenders of the divinity of the *Logos* avoided the nonhistorical understanding of the *Logos* which had been imposed upon the great debate by Arius' Platonism. The false postulate of a nonhistorical *Logos*, naively accepted by the Fathers, thereafter posed for Catholic theologians an unsurmountable problem, out of which arose the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, with analogues in the Reformation and nowadays in, e.g., Christologies and ecclesiologies "from below." For there are no potentialities in the nonhistorical divine *Logos* by which he can become historical; his nonhistoricity "In the beginning" has rendered him immune to history.

Yet most natural theology goes merrily on proving the existence of the nonhistorical *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, and in doing so makes all the conclusions of that exercise entirely irrelevant to Christianity, whose faith is not in nonhistorical speculation, but in the historical revelation in Christ of the Father and the historical Gift by Christ of the Spirit of the Father and the Son which Christ was sent by the Father to give.

The historical density of this revelation cannot be exaggerated, for it is the ordering principle of history as such, and no ambiguous use should be made of this entirely Christological title: it is as sent that Christ is affirmed to be the Word of God, despite all the Platonism which desires to know of that cosmic moment prior to the revelation in which the real, the nonhistorical, truth of God is found. But that is to distrust the historical mediation of the risen Christ, and in the end to reject the revelation who is Christ.

Eucharistic Morality

The dehistoricization of morality by its subordination to a rationalized view of natural law is avoided only by recognizing the subordination of moral reasoning to the Eucharistic prime analogate of historical truth—for morality is above all else historical, the historical imaging of the Lord of history, which imaging is nuptially ordered. Where this is ignored, Catholic morality can only become a conformity to a nonhistorical truth, which can never be free, and can never ground moral freedom.

Veritatis Splendor gives explicit recognition to this Eucharistic ground of morality, as Archbishop Quinn has acutely observed. The DFF must insist upon the incorporation of this moral foundation in all Catholic moral theology: it will not otherwise be theology, nor morality, but only the rationalization of what can be no more than a servility to a timeless nonhistorical ideal, and consequently a flight from personal responsibility, rather than its exercise. It should be emphasized that if the Christian "law of love" is not understood to be nuptially ordered and Eucharistically grounded, the equation of morality with a "law of love" can have precisely the same result: morality becomes conformity, directed to the suppression rather than to the enhancement of freedom.

While the subject cannot be developed here, it is in the first place clear that the “nature” with which *Veritatis Splendor* is concerned is integral, humanity as “in the beginning”: it is this integral human nature, restored in baptism, that is the first pledge of the full gift of the Spirit; it is this graced human nature that is therefore normative for the “human act.” This nature, and the morality which is its proper expression, find full historical expression in the imaging of God. However, man’s integral nature has only a sacramental actuality in fallen history: its integrity is manifest only in the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

Further: the writings of Pope John Paul II have strongly suggested that our imaging of God is nuptial: this is equivalent to the identification of the imaging of God with covenant virtue, for the New Covenant is nuptially ordered: the One Flesh of Christ and his Church.

If we accept at full value the nuptial quality, and the sacramental realization, of the human imaging of God, it follows that the full or integral unity, truth, goodness, and beauty of our nuptial humanity is given only sacramentally. Empirically, we are a fragmented people, whose truth is obscured by ambiguity and confusion, whose goodness is sullied by original sin and its aftermath of personal sin, and whose beauty is in consequence veiled, visible only in the sacramental signs of the Church’s worship.

The adequate sign of the nuptial unity, truth, goodness, and beauty of man’s imaging of God is of course the Eucharist; the secondary and dependent sign of this human imaging—which is the historical realization of human integrity, unity, truth, goodness, and beauty—is marriage; it is this sign particularly which is normative for the meaning of human freedom, responsibility, and dignity. These are at one with our integrity, our imaging of God, our virtue: they are then nuptially ordered, and therefore are historical, incapable of reduction to definitions such as those which are now proposed by such theologians as Richard McCormick for the analysis of the “human act.”

It should be remembered that “integrity” applies to the human substance: it is this reality, the substantial unity of humanity, that is veiled in fallen history, having there only a sacramental expression and actuality. But this substantial actuality is the imaging of the divine substance, the Godhead. For the human substance is shown, in the sacrament of marriage as it is also in the One Flesh of the Eucharistic Sacrifice upon which all sacraments are founded, also to be triune, freely constituted by the free and irrevocable interrelations of husband, wife, and covenant. It is in this nuptial signing that man is constituted as free community, and in this community that man is the image of the Trinity.

The consequence is that at its most fundamental level, our imaging of God is achieved in our sacramental worship in the Church, whose Covenantal union in One Flesh with her Lord is the most radical image of God. This grounds all morality, and any moral theology which would prescind from it, to seek some other basis for its conclusions, cannot be considered Catholic.

Conclusion

Faith in Jesus as the Lord of history has liberated the Catholic, the Christian intelligence from all the idolatries of reason which have coalesced in the cultus of modernity. It is into such a world that the Gospel was first preached, to convert mankind from devotion to the false divinities which their own minds had forged, and which they still forge.³⁵ If Catholic metaphysical inquiry is to be loyal to that apostolic preaching, if it is to carry forward that work of evangelization, surely it must take as its prime truth that which perennially is preached and celebrated in the Church, Christ's Lordship of history. Only the Eucharistic representation of the transcendent Event of that Lordship, by which alone it is transcendent to history in the ordering of history into the effective sign of the Kingdom of God, can serve as the prime analogate for the free rationality which would serve Christ in his Church and in the world which is one, good, true, and beautiful only by its creation in Him.

It is not difficult to show that the entire project of the DFF pivots on the conversion of metaphysics to the historical prime analogate of being. This conversion is incumbent first upon Catholic theologians and philosophers, in order that they may truly evangelize those whom it is their mission to teach. If this is not made clear to the Catholic academy, we need expect nothing of significance from the Catholic *fides quaerens intellectum*, regardless of Roman exhortation.

It is more than forty years since the promulgation of *Humani Generis*, widely interpreted as a most cogent inhibition upon further development in Catholic and particularly in Thomist metaphysical speculation, whether philosophical or theological. Since then, the Thomist metaphysics of nonhistorical nature and grace has been exploited rather by dissenters than by orthodox theologians; it has in fact been very largely abandoned by systematic theologians. One may cite Rahner's turn from systematic to pastoral theology, and Lonergan's turn from the Thomism of his earlier works to the cognitional analysis of his *Method in Theology*. Under a similar disillusionment with the Thomism in which they were trained, von Balthasar abandoned systematic theology altogether, while Teilhard essayed to ground his own system of theology in an evolutionary/historical format which, had it succeeded, would have done so as a converted Platonism rather than as Thomism.

³⁵ Augustine is eloquent on this point in many places: e.g.,

1) nolite ita cogitare, ne in corda vestro idola fabricetis (*In Joann. Evang. Tract.* tr. 40, par. 4).

2) si vobis talia feceritis in corde, idola ponitis in anima una (*De symbolo ad catechumenos*, 2 [Against the Arians]).

3) si autem talia tibi idola ponis in corde, ut duos facias deos . . . (*Contra Maximinum II*, c. 761).

I am indebted for these references to Roland Teske, S.J., of Marquette University.

Meanwhile, Augustinian theology is largely regarded today as difficult if not impossible to reconcile with the sacramental realism which Augustine's genius had established on a firm foundation. His historical analysis of sacramental efficacy, which received its classic statement from the School of Laon in the twelfth century, had by then already been abandoned in favor of the nonhistorical Aristotelian matter-form, substance-accident analyses—introduced to Western theology by Berengarius in the eleventh century and employed by him, however ignorantly, to dehistoricize Eucharistic realism. Since his insertion of Aristotelianism into the all-consuming debate over Eucharistic realism which his own destructive use of a pseudo-Aristotelian logic had precipitated,³⁶ the historical Augustinian sacramentalism has languished to the point that Catholic church historians of rank have put Augustine's own sacramental realism in issue, by reason of his evident failure to set it out in Aristotelian categories.³⁷

³⁶ Henri de Lubac has recounted the impact of the Berengarian heresy on Catholic theology in his *Corpus mysticum*, esp. 162-188.

³⁷ Johannes Betz, in *Eucharistie in der Schrift und Patristik*; Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte; eds. Michael Schmaus, Alois Grillmeier, Leo Scheffczyk und Michael Seybold: (1 Teil) Band IV, Faszikel 4a; (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1979) observes of Augustine's Eucharistic doctrine:

In diesem Zusammenhang gebraucht unser Autor das verhältnismäßig blasse *Verbum fieri*. Deutlichere, speziellere Wandlungstermini sucht man bei ihm vergebens. Er spricht aber von der Konsekration der Elemente durch das mystische Wort und den Heiligen Geist ^{63a}. *Die ontische Verwandlung der Elemente liegt ihm fern*. (150; emphasis added)

^{63a} *De Trin.* 3,4,10 (CChr 50,136); vgl. *Sermo* 227 (PL 38, 1099).

He concludes:

Ein Rückblick bringt uns zum Bewußtsein, daß Augustinische Fragestellungen und Gedanken auch bei seinen Nachfolgern spürbar sind, daß diese aber bis auf wenige Ausnahmen, nämlich Fulgentius und Facundus, seine Reduzierung des Sakraments nicht mitmachen, sondern seinen Symbolismus realpräsentisch auffüllen. *Die Tradition der Kirche erweist sich mächtiger als die Genie Augustins*. (at 159; emphasis added)

Thus also Wilhelm Gessel, *Eucharistische Gemeinschaft bei Augustinus*; ser. Cassiacum, Band XXI (Wurzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1966), who observes:

Diese aktual-dynamische Realpräsenz mit ihrem ereignishaften Charakter in den Terminus "Transsubstantiation"⁷⁹ hineinpressen zu wollen, ist schlechterdings unmöglich und wird dem von Augustin gebrauchten Spannungsgefälle seiner eucharistischen Denkform nicht gerecht.

Der Christus incarnatus, passus et resuscitatus ist das waltende⁸⁰ Subject jeder Eucharistiefeier, in deren lebendigem Gefüge seine dynamisch-zentrisch wirkende Personalität sich zum Christus totus, caput et corpus ausweitet und so, die Einheit aller Eucharistieteilnehmer in sich zu binden, in der Lage ist.

Vielleicht liegt gerade hierin der Grund dafür, das *wir bei Augustin, ganz im Gegensatz zu Ambrosius dem von ihm hochverehrten Bischof von Mailand, nicht von einem eucharistischen Metabolismus sprechen können*. (181; emphasis added)

⁷⁹Gegen O. Blank, *Die Lehre des hl. Augustin vom Sakramente der Eucharistie* (Paderborn, 1906), 46.

⁸⁰Lekkerkerker, A. F. N., *Realis praesentia bij Augustinus*, in: *Schrift en Kerk*. Een Bundel Opstellen van Vrienden en Leerlingen aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. T. R. L. Haitjema. Nijkerk, 1953, schlägt S.

It would not be difficult to demonstrate that an unquestioning loyalty to school interpretations of St. Thomas has made the truly historical sacramental realism of Augustine unintelligible to contemporary theologians and historians. The enormous range and power of the *sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum, res tantum* account of the event-character of Catholic worship is simply ignored, as it was by St. Thomas apart from his obligatory commentary upon the Sentences of Peter Lombard. This account is not tied to any theological synthesis: it is as exploitable by a historical interpretation of the act-potency analysis of St. Thomas as by the hylemorphism of the Augustinian tradition, for it refers not to theory but to the free event of sacramental signification and efficacy: its application to all the manifestations of that worship is simply universal.³⁸ Yet it

124 vor, bei Augustin nicht zu fragen, was er zur Realpräsenz sagt, sondern, was nach Augustin in der Eucharistiefeier geschieht.

Similar dismissals of Augustine's Eucharistic realism are found in Karl Adam's *Eucharistielehre des heiligen Augustin*; ser. *Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte*, VII Band, 1 Heft (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1908), 98, 117, 150; in Josef Geiselman's *Die Eucharistielehre der Vorscholastik*; ser. *Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte* XV Band, 1/3 Heft (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1926), where we read:

Diese Sakramentslehre ist unzweifelhaft an Augustin orientiert. Augustinisch ist die heilsgeschichtliche Wertung des Sakramentes, die starke Betonung seiner symbolischen Aufgabe, die Einstellung des Sakramentes in die mystische Einheit Christus-Kirche... Und war schon der Augustin der Spätzeit zu einer verständnisvolleren Würdigung der caro auch im Sakrament gelangt, so hat nun Florus diesen Ansatz durch Gedanken aus Gregor und Beda zu einer realistischen Bestimmung des Sakramentsinhaltes und der Sakramentsverwirklichung ausgebaut. *Nirgends aber finden wir eigentlichen Metabolismus*. . . . Auf ein Formel gebracht, hieß diese Eucharistielehre: realistisch betonter Augustinismus. Florus setzt damit die Linie Augustin—Gregor—Beda weiter. (104; emphasis added).

This passage from Geiselman is quoted with approval in Burkhard Neunhauser's *Eucharistie im Mittelalter und Neuzeit*; *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Band IV, Fazikel 4b (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1963) at 14; see also Hans Jorissen, *Die Entfaltung der Transsubstantiationslehre bis zum Beginn der Hochscholastik*; ser. *Münster Beiträge zur Theologie*, Heft 28,1 (Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1965), at 5.

³⁸ It is sufficient to indicate the following analogous applications of the Augustinian sacramentalism, enucleated in the *Sacramentum Tantum, Res et Sacramentum, Res Tantum*; the listed analogies by no means exhaust its range:

potency (matter)	act (form)	substance
literal sense	allegorical sense	anagogical sense
Old Covenant	New Covenant	Kingdom
Offertory	Canon	Communion
first Adam	second Adam	resurrection
sarx	mia sarx	pneuma
purgative way	illuminative way	unitive way

In all of these historical—because Eucharistic—integrations of creation as historical substance, the first element can in no sense be understood to contain the second as an integrating part of its own discrete or autonomous intelligibility, in such wise that the second would be latent within it as a necessary inference or consequence; in all cases, the correlation is a free event, *ex nihilo sui et subjecti*. Neither does the second element thus complete the first in such a manner that the relation of the two is constitutive and conclusive of their reality, for each is dependent upon, because freely integral with, the further and final eschatological fulfillment given in the Resurrection of the Christ: i.e., in the risen life or the fulfilled Kingdom of God, without which history, having no meaning, must give way to cosmos, and the despairing consciousness that coincides with the conversion to nonhistoricity.

is Augustine who is the Church's great doctor of grace—and all grace is sacramentally mediated. The dismissal of Augustine's sacramental orthodoxy which today the entire academic community takes for granted relies upon the supposition that St. Thomas' Eucharistic theology is definitive, amounting to Catholic doctrine in fact. This supposition is absurd. Even if, *per impossibile*, that theology were satisfactory, it could never so exhaust the possibilities of *fides quaerens intellectum* as to simply identify with Catholic doctrine: theology is always less than doctrine, as the speculative account of the *quaerens intellectum* is always less than the affirmation of truth. But in fact St. Thomas' Eucharistic theology attempts the flatly impossible: it has the same metaphysical standing as any other attempt to justify the prime analogate. Prime analogates undergird theological speculation; theological speculation does not undergird prime analogates. No *fautor* of classical Thomism would undertake systematically to prove that the *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* should be the prime analogate: the proposition that such a Thomist theologian should ask “*An sit verum?*” of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* would be recognized as an absurdity on its face. So also, in the context of a truly historical metaphysics, is any attempt to make the prime analogate which is the Eucharist the subject of the theological *quaestio*. The historical Prime Analogate underlies and so transcends all historical thought, all free inquiry: one does not inquire into its intrinsic intelligibility, without placing some criterion of truth over it. But there is none: the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the radical, unsurpassable—because liturgical—expression of the Church's faith; it is the metaphysical equivalent of the “*fiat mihi*” by which Mary is the *Theotokos*. By “This is my Body, This is my Blood,” the Church is constituted. Everything done in the Church, and most particularly all theology, is radically dependent upon this Prime Event. If the DFF does not recognize and affirm this Primacy as the basis of its exhortation, as *Veritatis Splendor* has done, that exhortation will be sterile, rather an inhibition upon the Catholic *quaerens intellectum* than a stimulus. For the faith is free; it has freed the faithful for existence in the history of salvation, and any philosophy or theology which is not there at home is not Catholic, and that by definition. If this cannot be said by the DFF, what it does say will be of little consequence. For there does not appear to be any other means than this of communicating the urgency of the Catholic rediscovery, at once philosophical and theological, of the free historicity of the truth revealed in the event of the life, death and resurrection of the Christ. This has been forgotten and ignored by Catholic philosophy and theology across the board, while a generation of dissenters has arisen to exploit this failure without needing to fear any serious scholarly rebuttal from an academy locked by school loyalty into the nonhistorical pseudo-Thomist consciousness which has for seven centuries been mistaken for the *historical* Catholic *fides quaerens intellectum*. St. Thomas saw the need to convert Aristotelianism, but did not live to complete the task, even at the level of method. We should not fear to complete what he began.