

# The Magic of Catholicism



Brother A.D.A.

Real Magic for Devout Catholics

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## CHAPTER ONE: MAGIC AS DEFINED IN CATHOLICISM

### THE IDEA OF MAGIC FOR A CATHOLIC

To the average Catholic, the term “magic” would be greeted with considerable antipathy, and the very idea of its practice is proscribed by Church law, written up as a violation of the First Commandment. Now if you understand, by the term “magic,” the Church's definition of *“the art of performing actions beyond the power of man with the aid of powers other than the Divine,”*<sup>2</sup> then such an act would indeed be sinful.

If that were all there is to magic, then we could clearly end the discussion here and now; there would be no need for writing this book, would there? So – and just as obviously – there has to be more to the idea of magic not only in general, but also of import to a Catholic mentality.

To do this, let's start by looking at where the word “magic” comes from, and what caused the Church to react against it so strongly during the course of history.

### HISTORY: PART I

Again referring to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the word “magic” comes to us from the Sumerian or word Turanian *imga*, which means ‘deep’ or “profound,” and was used to refer to a class of Proto-Chaldean wizard-priests. In ancient Persia, this word became *magu* and was used for the priests of the Zoroastrian religion. From the Zoroastrians, the word passed to the Greeks and became *μάγος* (*mágos*), meaning a magician (a practitioner of *μαγεία* – *mageía* – or “a person

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<sup>2</sup> Arendzen, John. “Occult Art, Occultism.” The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 11. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11197b.htm>. (December 3, 2014).

endowed with secret knowledge and power like a Persian magus.”<sup>3</sup>

This brings us to the Greek language of the New Testament. There are about six verses where magic is mentioned in the NT, and three separate words are used: *μαγεία* (*mageía*), *φαρμακεία* (*pharmakeía*), and *περίεργα* (*perierga*). Regarding the latter, it's only found once, in reference to the book burning in Acts 19:19. The word itself means “curiosities” and can be taken to mean “magical curiosities,” but to say anything beyond that is mere speculation on the part of the translator.

On the word *mageía*, there is more we can say. The “wise men” that came to see Jesus are described as *mágoi* in the original Greek,<sup>4</sup> and it was by their art (presumably astrology) that they came to find Him. The New Testament also refers to two other individuals as *mágoi* – Simon Magus<sup>5</sup> and Elymas Bar-Jesus<sup>6</sup> – and although both are portrayed in a bad light, nowhere in the New Testament is the practice of *mageía* explicitly condemned.

What is condemned is *pharmakeía*, which refers to drugging, poisoning, or witchcraft, and is the root for our modern word “pharmacy.” It is this word, describing a separate type of practice, that occurs in all verses where magical activity is explicitly proscribed.<sup>7</sup>

So the New Testament distinguishes between two separate types of magic, right? If this were all there was to it, we could happily go about our merry way. Yet we see that

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 2:1.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 8:9-13

<sup>6</sup> Acts 13:6-11

<sup>7</sup> Galatians 5:20; Revelation 9:21, 18:23, 21:8, 22:15

before the end of the first century, it is no defense to split hairs over what word the New Testament writers chose for the ignore or condemn. In both the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, likely written before the end of the first century, *mageia* is condemned by name.<sup>8</sup>

Why is this? The answer lies in three factors: the change in the Greek language over the centuries, the type of magical formulae extant at the time, and the laws against magic in the Pagan-ruled society where the early Christians lived. For a change in language, we can again look to the Bible. In particular Psalm 96:5. The original Hebrew tells us:

כִּי, כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים; וַיהוָה, שְׁמַיִם עָשָׂה.  
“For all the Gods of the peoples are as works of nought, but the LORD made the heavens.”<sup>9</sup>

The Hebrew word אֱלִילִים, *elilim*, means “idols” or “worthless things” or “things of no value.” The translation “works of nought” perfectly captures these senses of the word.

When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. (the “Septuagint” or LXX version), the translators chose to word this verse differently:

ὅτι πάντες οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν δαιμόνια, ὁ δὲ Κύριος τοὺς οὐρανούς ἐποίησεν.

“For all the Gods of the nations are spiritual beings, but the Lord made the skies.”<sup>10</sup>

Do you see what happened here? The verse was mistranslated from *elilim*, “works of nought,” to *daimónia*, “spiritual beings.” At the time, this new translation had a

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<sup>8</sup> *Didache* 2:2. *Epistle of Barnabas* 20:1

<sup>9</sup> Translation by the Jewish Publication Society (JPS), 1917

<sup>10</sup> My translation

polemical meaning, as *daimónia* referred to a class of spiritual beings who were beneath the *theoí*, the gods. In this case, the intent was likely to say that Pagan gods were all inferior to the one true God. As the Greek language changed over the next few hundred years, the word *daimónia* came to take on the meaning of an evil spirit (the root of the English “demon”), which sets the stage for the next development.

The next development is seen in the types of magical texts extant at the time, collectively called the “Greek magical papyri.”<sup>11</sup> The papyri date from roughly 200 B.C. to 400 A.D., and contain spells for summoning deities and commanding them as if they were *daimónia*, forging them to bring women or kill the operator’s enemies.<sup>12</sup> Another involves killing a cat and commanding the *daimónion* of that place to do the operator’s bidding.<sup>13</sup> These papyri freely mingled Greek, Jewish, and Egyptian religious elements and often promised (or pursued) things that would be criminal even if magic weren’t involved: theft of money, forcing women to have sex with the operator, and so forth.

This brings us to the third factor, the laws regarding magic that were already in place in Pagan societies. No religion starts in a vacuum, and no society starts without imbibing at least some portion of the one that preceded it; Catholicism is no exception.

Amongst the Pagans, the practice of magic had long been made illegal. As early as 2000 B.C., the Code of Hammurabi opens with a death penalty for anyone who

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<sup>11</sup> Many of the Greek magical papyri can be found online. An archive can be found here: <http://hermetic.com/pgm/> (December 3, 2014)

<sup>12</sup> Papyrus “Acquiring a Supernatural Assistant.” At the above website.

<sup>13</sup> Papyrus I.54.

casts a spell upon another (or death to the accuser, if the accusation is false).

“If a man charge a man with sorcery, and cannot prove it, he who is charged with sorcery shall go to the river, into the river he shall throw himself and if the river overcome him, his accuser shall take to himself his house (estate). If the river show that man to be innocent and he come forth unharmed, he who charged him with sorcery shall be put to death. He who threw himself into the river shall take to himself the house of his accuser.”<sup>14</sup>

In the Roman period, magic was deemed illegal almost from the start. In the Laws of the Twelve Tables, we find the following:

“Whoever enchants by singing an evil incantation ... If anyone sings or composes an incantation that can cause dishonor or disgrace to another ... he shall suffer a capital penalty.”<sup>15</sup>

Around 82 B.C. we encounter the *Leges Corneliae de Sicariis et Veneficiis* (Cornelian Laws against Assassins and Sorcerers), passed in the time of Lucius Cornelius Sulla and named after him. This section of the Cornelian Laws is lost to us in the original, but we know it through way of quotation, particularly that of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century author Julius Paulus:

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<sup>14</sup> Translation by Robert Francis Harper, 1904. Available at: [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Code\\_of\\_Hammurabi\\_%28Harper\\_translation%29](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Code_of_Hammurabi_%28Harper_translation%29). (Retrieved December 4, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> *Laws of the Twelve Tables*. Table VIII, laws 1a and 1b. The *Laws* were established circa 450 B.C., and are at the foundation of ancient Roman society. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/twelve\\_tables.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/twelve_tables.asp). (Retrieved December 4, 2014).

“15. Persons who celebrate, or cause to be celebrated impious or nocturnal rites, so as to enchant, bewitch, or bind anyone, shall be crucified, or thrown to wild beasts.

“16. Anyone who sacrifices a man, or attempts to obtain auspices by means of his blood, or pollutes a shrine or a temple, shall be thrown to wild beasts, or, if he is of superior rank, shall be punished with death.

“17. It has been decided that persons who are addicted to the art of magic, shall suffer extreme punishment; that is to say they shall be thrown to wild beasts, or crucified. Magicians themselves shall be burned alive.

“18. No one shall be permitted to have books on the art of magic in his possession, and when they are found with anyone, they shall be publicly burnt, and those who have them, after being deprived of their property, if they are of superior rank shall be deported to an island, and if they are of inferior station shall be put to death; for not only is the practice of this art prohibited, but also the knowledge of the same.”<sup>16</sup>

Around 16 B.C., once Augustus assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus, he gathered more than two thousand Greek and Latin writings on the subject of prophecy and

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<sup>16</sup> Julius Paulus. *Sententiae ad Filium*. Book V, Title 23, Sentences 15-18. [http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/Anglica/Paul5\\_Scott.htm](http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/Anglica/Paul5_Scott.htm). (Retrieved December 24, 2014).

had them burned, “retaining only the Sybilline books and making a choice even among those.”<sup>17</sup>

It is from here that we pass into the Christian era, which merely saw the enforcement of already-existing laws.<sup>18</sup> In the face of such laws, the prevalence of magical writings explicitly invoking demons, the change in language to the word “demon” now meaning “an evil spirit,” and the fact these texts promised results that Christians would consider sinful even if magic weren’t involved – set against this background, is it any wonder why the Church was so dead-set against magic from the beginning?

This is why in 397 A.D., we have St. Augustine of Hippo attacking magic in his *De Doctrina Christiana* (“On Christian Doctrine”), in which he attacks magic as idolatry, superstition, and fellowship with demons,<sup>19</sup> that God turns His back on them and allows them to sink deeper into their sins, and that people must fear and shun “this fellowship with demons,” barring the door against their return.<sup>20</sup>

During the Middle Ages, literature on magic didn’t become any less demonic. If anything, it became explicitly more so.

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<sup>17</sup> Suetonius. *The Life of Augustus*. 31:1. (Retrieved December 4, 2014).

[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Augustus\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Augustus*.html).

<sup>18</sup> The *Codex of Justinian*, for example, records pronouncement of Constantius II in 357: “No one shall consult an haruspex, a diviner, or a soothsayer, and wicked confessions made to augurs and prophets must cease. Chaldeans, magicians, and others who are commonly called malefactors ... shall be put to death, and laid low with the avenging sword.” Book IX, Title xviii, n. 5.

<http://www.constitution.org/sps/sps15.htm>. (December 5, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana*. Book II, Chapter 20. (December 3, 2014)

<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine/ddc2.html>.

<sup>20</sup> *De Doctrina*, Bk II, ch 23.

The names of God and Jesus were used to summon demons (now firmly seen as evil beings), in order to find hidden treasure or command women to being themselves to the operator in the nude. An example of such a book is a fifteenth-century manuscript known only as *Codex Latinus Monacensis 849* (or CLM 859), found at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, which contains spells explicitly demonic in nature.<sup>21</sup> Other books belonged to the “Solomonic Cycle,” claiming that King Solomon trapped demons and used them to become rich and build his public works. Still others claimed to be written by Popes and sought to use the Mass to constrain the powers of hell for whatever the operator wanted.<sup>22</sup> In addition, we encounter forms of “low magic” based on superstition, involving actions such as urinating in a ditch in order to cause rain or sticking pins in a wax image in order to cause pain.<sup>23</sup>

This leaves us with small wonder that St. Thomas Aquinas took it upon himself to devote several chapters to magic in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*. In Book III of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, St. Thomas spends several chapters analyzing the subject of magic, pointing out that magic can only be brought about by communication with spiritual intelligences,<sup>24</sup> that the intelligence in question cannot be naturally good because it assists in acts of a sinful nature,<sup>25</sup> neither can the

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<sup>21</sup> The entire text of CLM 849 can be found in *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the 15th Century* by Richard Kieckhefer. 1998. Pennsylvania State University Press. University Park, PA.

<sup>22</sup> For a study of various grimoires, see Waite, Arthur Edward. *Book of Ceremonial Magic*. 1913. The entire book can be found online at: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/grim/bcm/index.htm>. (December 3, 2014)

<sup>23</sup> Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*. 1972. Cornell University Press.

<sup>24</sup> *Contra Gentiles*. Book III, chapter 105.

<sup>25</sup> *Contra Gentiles*. Book III, 106.

intelligence be naturally evil because all God's creation is good (though they can have an evil affect – “accident” – about them).<sup>26</sup>

In the *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas relies heavily on Augustine in declaring magic “unlawful and futile,” that magic consists of “empty signs, a kind of covenant made with demons,” and that “never did anyone acquire knowledge by means of the demons.”<sup>27</sup> He seems to keep a level head when adjudicating whether an act is magical, though:

“I answer that, in things done for the purpose of producing some bodily effect we must consider whether they seem able to produce that effect naturally: for if so it will not be unlawful to do so, since it is lawful to employ natural causes in order to produce their proper effects. But, if they seem unable to produce those effects naturally, it follows that they are employed for the purpose of producing those effects, not as causes but only as signs, so that they come under the head of “compact by tokens entered into with the demons.”<sup>28</sup>

So what's a devout Catholic to do? The proscriptions against magic are firm and go all the way back to the earliest centuries. Merely relying on the word choices found in Scripture is not a valid defense, as those word choices stand condemned elsewhere. I think it's more important to look to what the Church has historically called “magic” – that is, vain superstitions and fellowship with demons – and ask: “Is this the kind of thing I'm doing?”

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<sup>26</sup> *Contra Gentiles*. Book III, 107.

<sup>27</sup> *Summa Theologiae*. Part II, II, Question 96. Article 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Summa Theologiae*. Part II, II, Q. 96, Art. 2 .

Only you will know the answer, but I can tell you that's not the stuff you'll find in this book.

Perhaps it'll help to continue our tour of magical history.

## **HISTORY: PART II**

During the Renaissance, scholars such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola attempted rehabilitate magic through studying the classical texts with which the West had become re-acquainted. In 1486 Pico wrote in his manifesto, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, that magic is “worship of the divine”<sup>29</sup> and that “Nothing certifies us of the divinity of Christ more than magic and Kabbalah.”<sup>30</sup> The heresy of that statement is obvious – he seemed to place Kabbalah and magic on the level of Tradition and the Gospels – but one can find a grain of truth in the statement: generally that as one continues to see his prayers answered and his needs met, so too does his faith in the divine become strengthened, and so too does he find himself more and more thankful to God.

It may help to look into Pico a little further. In his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, he goes on to say that the ancients made note of two different and mutually exclusive kinds of magic, one which he called *μαγεία* (*mageía*) and the other which he called *γοητεία* (*goeteía*). The first kind he describes as lofty and noble, and the other as base and profane. *Mageía* uplifts man and glorifies God, while

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<sup>29</sup> Pico, *Oratio quaedam elegantissima sive de hominis dignitate*, n. 231. (Retrieved December 3, 2014).

<http://vserv1.cscs.lsa.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Mirandola/>.

<sup>30</sup> *Conclusiones philosophicae, cabalisticæ et theologicae sive theses DCCCC*, conclusion 9, section 38: «nulla est scientia quæ nos magis certificet de divinitate Christi quam magia et Cabala.»

*goeteia* drags a man down, trafficking with evil spirits and a petty perversion of divine and natural law.<sup>31</sup>

During this time we also see the infamous witch-hunting manual, the *Malleus Maleficarum* of Sprenger and Kramer, which discusses the possibility of a “lawful enchantment,” and then has this to say about the use of enchantments:

“And even if he uses adjurations, through the virtue of the Divine Name, and by the virtue of the works of Christ, His Birth, Passion and Precious Death, by which the devil was conquered and cast out; **such benedictions and charms and exorcisms shall be called lawful, and they who practise them are exorcists or lawful enchanter.**”<sup>32</sup>

After this, the *Malleus* continues to give conditions by which to determine whether the enchantment is lawful or not. In their essence they state that the operator must understand all the words being used, no untrue or superstitious statements may be used (the text cites an example that refers to Mary walking on the water), no demons may be invoked, and the result must rest in the hands of almighty God. From this, it is as plain as day that the writers of this treatise clearly knew there was a magic

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<sup>31</sup> *Oratio*. nn. 228-230.

<sup>32</sup> Part II, Quest. 2, Chap. 6. (*Quoted in full in Appendix A*) The reader would be well advised to use caution when dealing with the *Malleus*; its theology is suspect, and the book seems to be more of a forum for Kramer's sexual hang-ups than anything else. Fortunately, however, this is one of the more orthodox points of the book, and thus worth being quoted here. For more information about the history and actual use of the *Malleus*, please see Jenny Gibbons' online review of the *Malleus* at:

[http://www.summerlands.com/crossroads/remembrance/\\_remembrance/\\_malleus\\_maleficarum.htm](http://www.summerlands.com/crossroads/remembrance/_remembrance/_malleus_maleficarum.htm). (Retrieved December 3, 2014)

usable by a devout Catholic, and provided that such Catholic magicians can be protected under the umbrella term of “lawful enchanter.”

Closer to the modern period, in the mid-nineteenth century, we find Eliphas Levi (a defrocked Catholic Deacon whose real name was Alphonse Constat) saying roughly the same things about the distinction between the magician and the sorcerer. In his *Le Grand Arcane*, he cites the Church as a magical Order, writing that the Roman Church “alone possesses the monopoly of Transcendental Magic and its efficacious ceremonies. It charms demons with water and salt; with bread and wine it invokes God and constrains Him to become visible and palpable on earth; it imparts health and pardon with oil. It does yet more, for it creates priests and kings.”<sup>33</sup>

On this subject, we even see that the deranged genius, Aliester Crowley (whose anti-Catholicism is strange when contrasted against his friendship with Fr. Montague Summers), recognized the distinction between magic and sorcery, referring to the latter as “witchcraft,” and he stated quite clearly that witchcraft is illusory and denies the Holy Ghost the right to indwell His temple.<sup>34</sup>

So again we should ask, what’s a devout Catholic to do? Only you will know the answer for yourself, but I will tell you this: the principles found in this book have no truck with demons, no truck with evil intentions, and no truck with alien theologies. The intention is to fall within the *Malleus*’ definition of a “lawful enchanter,” and the work

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<sup>33</sup> Levi, *Le Grand Arcane*, p. 52, translation by A.E. Waite.

<sup>34</sup> Crowley, Aliester. *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Book III, Ch. 4. “Witchcraft consists in treating it as the exclusive preoccupation of Magick, and especially in denying to the Holy Spirit his right to indwell His Temple.”

revolves around God as our true source and true end. The magic found in this book can thus be called “applied theology,”<sup>35</sup> because that’s exactly what we’ll be pursuing.

If this is what you’ve come looking for, then you’re in the right place!

## **BASIC MAGICAL THEORY**

Thus far, we have talked about the idea of the word “magic” in the minds of the Catholic people, as well as its conceptions and/or misconceptions. So now let’s take a brief detour and discuss the more important aspects of magical theory.

Magical theory can pretty much be summed up by a fairly small number of “laws,” many of which are hinted at (if not directly expressed) in Church teaching or in the Liturgy. These laws are, by name: the Law of Knowledge, the Law of Imitation, the Law of Mentalism, the Law of Correspondence, and the Law of Contagion. There are other laws as well, most of which are subsets of those here listed, but these are the ones which most hold our attention.

### **1. The Law of Knowledge**

The Law of Knowledge is perhaps one of the most obvious, as it holds that the more a person knows about himself, the world, and the supernatural hierarchies, the more effective he will be as a magician. The magician is required to know himself, so that he truly knows his limitations, strengths, and weaknesses; likewise he must know as much as he can about the world around him and the spiritual hierarchies, so

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<sup>35</sup> By “applied theology,” I mean that we begin with theology, which Anselm defines as “faith seeking understanding” (i.e. a systematic understanding of the contents of our faith). The next step, the step of application, is to take that understanding and apply it to all aspects of our lives.

that he may better interact with them. While not much seen in practice, in theory the Church encourages people to know themselves, their world, and their faith.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the application of this law within Catholicism should be painfully obvious.

## **2. The Law of Imitation**

Directly related to the Law of Knowledge is the Law of Imitation. This states that the more one acts like a given person, animal, or spirit, the more that person will become like that person, animal, or spirit. The two may be different at their root essence, but will become more and more alike in their similarities. Again, this should be obvious as to how we apply this Law in Catholicism, as from the cradle we are told to behave like Christ or Mary, to imitate them in virtue and in disposition, so that we may ever become more and more like them.

## **3. The Law of Mentalism**

With the Law of Mentalism, however, we take our first steps into the realm of practical magic, for it is here that we are taught that the first source of everything we do is in our minds. “All energy follows thought, the universe is mental,” is how this is often worded, and in practice it says that when we can imagine something in our minds, without a doubt that it is done, then we shall have whatever we

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<sup>36</sup> In English-speaking countries, much of the problem with knowledge not being encouraged stems from the mid-nineteenth century “Devotional Revolution” that took place amongst Irish and Irish-American Catholics. Simultaneously organized on both sides of the Atlantic, it is directly responsible for the attitude of “pay, pray, and obey” prevalent amongst rank-and-file American Catholics today. This article at *The Irish Echo* provides a concise overview of the major players and how the “revolution” was implemented. <http://irishecho.com/2011/02/hibernian-chronicle-the-devotional-revolution-2/>. (Retrieved December 5, 2014).

have imagined. This law has its place in Church teaching by way of the Scriptures, in which Our Lord says:

“Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. The Law of Correspondence

The Law of Correspondence is also important to the practicing magician, for it speaks of the correspondence between the various planes of existence. It is most commonly stated as the maxim: “As above, so below; as below, so above,” or in its longer form: “That which is above is like unto that which is below; that which is below is like unto that which is above.” By this, it means that the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical planes each have an effect upon one another, and are brought into line so as to be a mirror image of each other. Thus, so as the higher planes may influence the lower by way of decree, so the lower planes influence the higher by way of petition.

This law is described In the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read:

“Thus it was necessary for the **sketches of the heavenly things** to be purified with these rites, but **the heavenly things themselves** need better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself,

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<sup>37</sup> Mark 11:23-24

now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.”<sup>38</sup>

What’s interesting here is that where the English gives us “sketches,” the Greek and Vulgate texts both give us “copy.” The Greek says *ὑποδείγματα* (*hypodeigmata*) and the Vulgate gives *exemplar*, both of which refer to a copy, model, or example. Thus the things of earth (in particular, the temple) are depicted as merely the copies – mirror images – of what is in heaven. On a similar note, it should be noted that the Church’s liturgical worship is based on a model of worshipping God in heaven as closely as possible to how the Angels in heaven do, which worship is extracted from the descriptions given in Scripture. Both of these examples are applications of the Law of Correspondence, and shows how it applies both in the early and modern Church.

## **5. The Law of Contagion**

Now lastly, we move on to what is called the “Law of Contagion.” This law simply states that when one object comes into contact with another object, then the first object will continue to have an influence upon the second one. For example, in the Roman Ritual,<sup>39</sup> there are times when Holy or Baptismal Water becomes frozen, and thus may be mixed with a smaller quantity of unblessed water. By the law of contagion, the blessing from the Holy Water will influence the unblessed water, and thus the blessing will transfer.

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<sup>38</sup> Hebrews 9:23-24

<sup>39</sup> The *Roman Ritual* (Latin: *Rituale Romanum*) is the book containing the official rites for Sacraments and blessings in the pre-Vatican II Church.

The same can be said for touching a person or object with a consecrated Host, and this is why in the Traditional Latin Mass, the priest keeps thumb and forefinger, the fingers that touch the Host, together after the Consecration and is careful never to touch anything else with those fingers until after he was washed his hands after Communion.<sup>40</sup> This is the Law of Contagion in action, perhaps in its highest and finest application.

So much for basic magical theory, but a quick introduction to the Laws of magic will prove to be helpful in later chapters, as well as in understanding the concepts and theories encountered there.



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<sup>40</sup> *Ritus Servandus in Celebratione Missae*. Title VIII, n. 5. "... and soon, by the right hand only, he places the Host on the Corporal in the same place whence he lifted it, and from thence he keeps his thumbs and forefingers together (lit. – he does not disjoin thumbs and forefingers) – unless he must touch or pick up the Host – until the washing of fingers after Communion." (My translation). In 1967 this practice was made optional (*Inter Oecumenici*, n. 12).



*Η Αγία Τριάς*, by Andre Rublev

## CHAPTER TWO: CATHOLICISM AS AN INITIATORY MAGICAL SYSTEM

### THE SACRAMENTS AS MAGICAL OPERATIONS

If we're going to refer to magic as "applied theology," we need to realize this: that application has to start by building a bridge between the heaven in which we believe and the earth on which we live. The image of this bridge is itself nothing new, as we find the word *pontifex* ("high priest," literally means "bridge-builder") being used in reference to bishops throughout Latin literature.<sup>41</sup> In fact, all validly consecrated bishops living today can trace themselves back to the bishops who consecrated them, and the ones who consecrated them, and so on, in a line that goes all the way back to one or other of the Twelve Apostles, who in turn were consecrated by Jesus Christ himself. The technical term for this is "apostolic succession," and this means that every bishop living today is both the builder of a bridge, and is also a brick in that bridge connecting us directly with Christ himself; we can thus say that the episcopate forms a living bridge between heaven and earth.

In addition to the bishops, we have the priests, men who are ordained by the bishops to be their assistants in helping them spread the word of God as well as in imparting God's grace and power to the people by means of the Sacraments. Thus as the bishops serve as bricks on the bridge, the priests and deacons serve as that bridge's support system, while the diaconate, subdiaconate, and minor Orders<sup>42</sup> serve as additional supports to the priesthood.

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<sup>41</sup> The word *pontifex* comes from *pons*, "bridge," and *-fex*, a suffix meaning "maker."

<sup>42</sup> The Minor Orders as such – Porter, Lector, Exorcist, and Acolyte – were abolished in 1968 (Paul VI, *Pontificalis Romani*), but traces live on in the ministries of Lector, Catechist, and so forth.

The bridge is a useful illustration, but what is it good for? This is where the laity comes in. Through that bridge in which the clergy become as bricks and stone, help is made available for the laity to traverse into heaven and where, conversely, the laity may become imbued and endowed with the Divine power which travels downwards across that bridge. Thus the Catholic Church is far more than a hierarchical political organization; the Church as a whole – clergy and laity together – becomes a massive conduit through which people are empowered on earth and souls obtain into heaven.

If we can visualize the Church as a bridge between heaven and earth, it should behoove us to look further into how this bridge works, and more importantly how this bridge is used for our temporal and spiritual benefit.

In the first place, that means exploring the Sacraments, “visible signs of invisible graces,” which in and of themselves are focused on the devotee’s initiation into a spiritual current, and then his continued purification and ever closer connection with Deity. In doing so, we transcend the limitations of this world, its necessities, and its hardships, and as we draw even nearer to God, so too may we, as a side effect, gain power over those things and circumstances which once restrained us.

These powers, known as “mystical gifts,” “gifts of the Holy Ghost,” or “charisms,”<sup>43</sup> are a small part of what the Saints had which made them special. St. Alphonsus, for example,

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<sup>43</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pp. Benedict XVI), *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on October 15, 1989, nn. 24-25.

was a telepath<sup>44</sup> and a bi-locator, and St. Peter could heal people who so much as walked in his shadow.<sup>45</sup> These kinds of miracles are the stuff and stories that our parents raised us on, and it's easy to become sidetracked and begin looking for them as an end-all and be-all in themselves. This seems to be a common error, and we would do well to remember Our Lord's own words about "signs and wonders."<sup>46</sup> Rather, we should simply focus our attention on God the Son, who is the source of our life, or redemption, and in whose power we have been initiated through the waters of baptism, and we should never deviate from Him as our intention. When our hearts and minds are fixated on the proper focus, the rest will follow.

## **BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, AND HOLY ORDERS AS SPECIAL INITIATIONS**

### **1. Baptism**

To begin in the proper place, we must first look upon Baptism, as it is the first and most important Sacrament, as well as the gateway to all the others. The Nicene Creed tells us: "I confess one baptism for the remission of sins" (*Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem peccatorum.*), and this is a good starting point. Baptism, as Scripture tells us,<sup>47</sup> is the means by which we are reborn of water and the Holy Ghost, and in which we become the sons and daughters of a most loving Father. This is also our initiation into the spiritual powerhouse which is the Church, and our first step on that bridge leading to heaven.

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<sup>44</sup> *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910: "His intercession healed the sick, he read the secrets of hearts, and foretold the future. He fell into a clairvoyant trance at Arienzo on 21 September, 1774, and was present in spirit at the death-bed in Rome of Pope Clement XIV."

<sup>45</sup> Acts 5:15-16

<sup>46</sup> John 4:48

<sup>47</sup> John 3:5-7

### **a. Initiatory Traditions and their Claims.**

In many initiatory traditions, the world is seen as being steeped in a sort of darkness or infested with a problem of evil, and the tradition offers initiation into its ranks as a solution. Without debating the truth or falsehood of any of these other traditions, the fact remains that the Catholic Church makes exactly these types of claims:

1. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.
2. The world is in the darkness of sin because they did.
3. Jesus came to deliver us from sin.
4. Jesus founded the Church to continue His work.
5. Only through joining us will you find salvation.

According to Catholic theology, the world is seen as being steeped in a darkness caused by Original Sin, committed by Adam and Eve with side effects passed on to all humanity.<sup>48</sup> Through initiation into the Catholic Church, i.e. the sacrament of Baptism, we are washed away from the stains of that sin.<sup>49</sup> This in turn makes us reborn – the theological term is “regenerated” – and gives us the first step towards regaining that innocence which our first

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<sup>48</sup> Council of Trent, Session V, anathema 2: “If any one asserts, that the prevarication of Adam injured himself alone, and not his posterity; ... or that he, ... has only transfused death, ... but not sin also, ... let him be anathema: – whereas he contradicts the apostle who says; ‘By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.’ (Romans 5:12)”

<https://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct05.html>. (December 5, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch II, n. 42: “...such is the admirable efficacy of this Sacrament that it remits original sin and actual guilt, however unthinkable its enormity may seem.”

<http://www.cin.org/users/james/ebooks/master/trent/tsacr-b.htm>.

(Retrieved December 5, 2014). Also *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 1263: “By Baptism *all* sins are forgiven, original sin and personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.”

parents had lost.<sup>50</sup> While Protestants and Modernists may believe Baptism is merely a symbolic act or a welcome into the community, Catholics believe the regeneration and washing away are quite real.

### **b. Original Sin.**

Now I know that was a little complicated, so perhaps we should backtrack a little. In Catholic dogmatic theology, God created Adam and Eve in a state of “original justice” (*justitia originalis*) meaning He imbued them with Sanctifying Grace and four gifts that came along with it, called the “gifts of integrity” (*dona integritatis*).<sup>51</sup>

By name, these gifts are known as the *donum immortalitatis*, or freedom from death; the *donum impassibilitatis*, or freedom from suffering; the *donum scientiae*, or knowledge of God's will and intentions; and finally the *donum rectitudinis*, or freedom from base and impure desires.<sup>52</sup> In Genesis 3, when Eve allowed herself to be tempted by the serpent and Adam allowed himself to be tempted by Eve, this act caused them to become stripped of that innocence, which is why they felt such a sudden shame at being naked. As Bishop Challoner's comment on Gen. 3:7 – the aftermath of eating the fruit – tells us:

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<sup>50</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch II, n. 5: “...Thus it follows that Baptism may be rightly and accurately defined: The Sacrament of regeneration by water in the word. By nature we are born from Adam children of wrath, but by Baptism we are regenerated in Christ, children of mercy.” Also CCC 1265: “Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte a ‘new creature,’ an adopted son of God, who has become a ‘partaker in the divine nature,’ member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>51</sup> Ott, Ludwig. *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*. 1955. Translated from the German by Patrick Lynch. B. Herder Book Company. St. Louis, Missouri. Book 2, §18, n. 2

<sup>52</sup> Ott. Book 2, §18, n. 2, a-d.

“And the eyes, etc... Not that they were blind before, (for the woman saw that the tree was fair to the eyes, ver. 6.) nor yet that their eyes were opened to any more perfect knowledge of good; but only to the unhappy experience of having lost the good of original grace and innocence, and incurred the dreadful evil of sin. From whence followed a shame of their being naked; which they minded not before; because being now stripped of original grace, they quickly began to be subject to the shameful rebellions of the flesh.”<sup>53</sup>

We now have the basic backdrop for the problem. Mankind lost its innocence by way of Original Sin, and our entire spiritual process – the “economy of salvation” – is all about obtaining a “state of restored nature” (*status naturae glorificatae*), in which the soul completes its destiny, obtains the perfection of Sanctifying Grace, and sees the Immediate Vision of God.<sup>54</sup>

So much for Adam and Eve and Sanctifying Grace and Original Sin. What about the rest of us? The question has already largely been answered, though a little clarification never hurt anybody.

Catholicism teaches that after Adam and Eve ate the fruit and were cast out of Garden of Eden, their descendants (read: you and me) were inheritors of Original Sin. The effects we inherit are the inevitability of physical death and

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<sup>53</sup> *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version*, 1582-1610; edited and with commentary by Bp. Dr. Richard Challoner, 1749-1752.

<sup>54</sup> Ott. Book 2, §19, n. 1, c.

the inclination to commit sin. We retain our free will,<sup>55</sup> but of our own power we are simply unable to enter into heaven.<sup>56</sup>

### **c. Effects of Baptism. Why Baptism is an Initiation.**

This is where the Sacrament of Baptism comes in. We are quite literally washed clean of both the stain of Original Sin and any guilt from actual sin,<sup>57</sup> given Sanctifying Grace (regeneration), and adopted as children of God the Father.<sup>58</sup>

Yet there's a catch: Baptism doesn't fix everything. Even if we are given Sanctifying Grace, we are still inclined to commit sin (technically called "concupiscence"). Even if the guilt of sin is gone, we can still die. This is because we've been given grace, but Baptism is only the beginning of the process, not the end.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 5: "If any one saith, that, since Adam's sin, the free will of man is lost and extinguished; ... let him be anathema." See also CCC n. 405; nn. 1730-1748; n. 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 1: "If any one saith, that man may be justified before God by his own works, ... without the grace of God through Jesus Christ; let him be anathema." **See also** CCC nn. 2006, 2010-2011.

<sup>57</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch II, n. 42. See above.

<sup>58</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch II, n. 50: "But to return to the effects of Baptism, ... Our souls are replenished with divine grace, by which we are rendered just and children of God and are made heirs to eternal salvation." **See also** CCC nn. 1265-1266: "Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte 'a new creature,' an adopted son of God ... The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification ..."

<sup>59</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch II, n. 48: "The second reason why bodily infirmity, disease, sense of pain and motions of concupiscence remain after Baptism is that in them we may have the seed and material of virtue from which we shall hereafter receive a more abundant harvest of glory ..." **See also** CCC n. 1264: "Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as

We earlier said that rites of initiation are characterized by a theme of death and rebirth, and Baptism is no exception. Around 55 A.D., St. Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, saying:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”<sup>60</sup>

In the Epistle to the Colossians, we are told:

“When you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”<sup>61</sup>

This belief in death and rebirth (often called “regeneration”) can be traced throughout the early Church. In roughly 156 A.D., St. Justin Martyr writes of Baptism to the Emperor of Rome, where he also calls it “illumination:”

“As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, ... are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated ... and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, ... And this washing is called illumination, because they

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suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin ...”

<sup>60</sup> Romans 6:3-4

<sup>61</sup> Colossians 2:12.

who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings.”<sup>62</sup>

We could produce a long list of quotes from the Early Fathers on this subject, too long for the scope of this volume. For our purposes, what matters is that we come to see the importance of our Baptism, both in connection to our salvation and the spiritual powerhouse to which it connects us.

Before moving on, we should probably point out that the word “initiation” wasn’t in general use before Vatican II, as the emphasis was on regeneration and the washing away of sins. The modern concept of initiation seems to have its roots in *Divinae Consortium Naturae*, an apostolic constitution written by Pope Paul VI in 1971.<sup>63</sup> The document speaks of “sacramental initiations” throughout its text, although its primary intent is to introduce the new rite for Confirmation: a subject we’ll discuss in the next section.

## **2. Confirmation.**

In the post-Vatican II church, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are called “Sacraments of Initiation,”<sup>64</sup> and these, we could say, quite easily correspond to one or another person of the Trinity. In Baptism, we become children of God the Father; in the Eucharist, we become nourished with the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of God the Son; and in Confirmation we are made soldiers of Christ, strengthened and given the gifts of the Holy Ghost. One can easily notice that postconciliar discourse on the

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<sup>62</sup> St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*. Ch 61. (December 6, 2014).  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm>.

<sup>63</sup> Official English translation. Link retrieved December 6, 2014:  
<https://archive.org/details/paulvisapostolic00cath>

<sup>64</sup> CCC n. 1212

sacraments makes a point to use the word “initiation” frequently.

Amongst Traditionalist Catholics, the word “initiation” is never used in regard to the Sacraments,<sup>65</sup> but the ideas and principles are still present. If a Traditionalist were to designate any three Sacraments as initiations, the list would most likely be: Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination; the reason is that these three are said to imprint an “indelible character” on the soul.<sup>66</sup> The first, Baptism, has already been described in the above section, in that through this sacrament we become members of the Catholic Church. Through Confirmation, ordinarily received when the confirmand is in adolescence,<sup>67</sup> the recipient is called upon to renew his baptismal vows, the Holy Ghost is called upon to help him through the troubles of life (i.e. “make him a soldier of Christ”),<sup>68</sup> and in post-Vatican II Catholicism he is now considered to be made a full Catholic.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Amongst some Traditionalists, refusing to use the word “initiation” is held as a badge of honor.

<sup>66</sup> Council of Trent, Session VII, Canon 10: “If any one saith, that, in the three sacraments, Baptism, to wit, Confirmation, and Order, there is not imprinted in the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual and indelible Sign, on account of which they cannot be repeated; let him be anathema.” See also **CCC 1121** which also confirms the sacramental character.

<sup>67</sup> The custom of when to administer Confirmation can vary according to country. In the western Church, the minimum age for Confirmation is the “age of reason,” and explicitly stated to be seven years old. (Canon 788, *1917 Code of Canon Law*). The *1983 Code* re-iterates this (Canon 889, 2) by saying “use of reason,” with the age of reason having been defined in Canon 97, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch III, nn. 17-19: “The Effects of Confirmation.” Compare and contrast the parallel section in **CCC 1302-1305**.

<sup>69</sup> CCC 1303.

While mainline Protestant denominations tend to see Confirmation as the day when children renew their Baptismal vows and profess the faith of their own free will (radical Protestants do not practice Confirmation, but see adults-only Baptism as the time to profess one's faith),<sup>70</sup> Catholics look on Confirmation as one of the seven Sacraments established by Jesus Himself when he sent the Holy Ghost down on the apostles in tongues of fire:

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”<sup>71</sup>

At this first Pentecost,<sup>72</sup> the Apostles were given the fullness of the Holy Ghost, and then proclaimed the Gospel to the crowds in their own language. The Book of Acts is filled with testimonies of what the Apostles did after being filled with the Holy Ghost's power; this is the basis for Catholic Church's beliefs concerning Confirmation.

Fair enough. But let's ask another question: what does Confirmation do for us? It is not strictly necessary for

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<sup>70</sup> Instead of “mainline” and “radical,” it may be better to distinguish between those who practice infant Baptism (pedobaptism) and those who practice “believers-only” Baptism (credobaptism).

<sup>71</sup> Acts 2:1-4

<sup>72</sup> Actually, the Jewish festival of Shavuot (שבועות), held 50 days after Passover and celebrating Moses' receiving the Law on Mount Sinai. Early Greek translations of the Bible rendered Shavuot as *Pentekoste* (Πεντηκοστή, “fiftieth”), whence we derive the name of the Christian feast-day (Latin *Pentecostes*) along with our English word “Pentecost.”

salvation,<sup>73</sup> so what's the point? I would answer that the point depends on what you're looking for.

If you're only looking to get into heaven, then Baptism is the only Sacrament that's strictly necessary. Since Baptism cleans the soul, it stands to reason that if one dies immediately after being baptized, that person automatically gets into heaven. This means that if Confirmation wasn't instituted as a necessity for salvation, then it must exist for some other reason.

**a. Not a “Coming of Age” Ceremony.**

Neither is Confirmation a “coming of age” ceremony, like a Bar Mitzvah or a Quinceañera, though it's often treated like one. In the Book of Acts, we read:

“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”<sup>74</sup>

One could get the sense from this passage that Confirmation (reception of the Holy Ghost) is a completion

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<sup>73</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch III, n. 14: “First, it is necessary to teach that this Sacrament is not ... utterly essential to salvation.” And n. 15: “Confirmation has not been instituted as necessary to salvation.” CCC n. 1129 quotes Trent (Sess. VII, 4) in a general statement that the Sacraments are necessary for salvation, but seems not to pronounce on the necessity of Confirmation for salvation particular one way or the other.

<sup>74</sup> Acts 8:14-17.

of what one received in Baptism. This sense is confirmed later in the Book of Acts:

“While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?’”<sup>75</sup>

Reading through the various accounts in Acts, the impression forms that Confirmation normally took place immediately after Baptism, and if we follow the course of Church history, we find that impression would be right. In the late second century, Tertullian tells us:

“After this, when we have issued from the [baptismal] font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction,— (a practice derived) from the old discipline, wherein on entering the priesthood, men were wont to be anointed with oil from a horn, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. ... Thus, too, in our case, the unction runs carnally, (i.e. on the body,) but profits spiritually; in the same way as the act of baptism itself too is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, but the effect spiritual, in that we are freed from sins.”<sup>76</sup>

In the early third century, Hippolytus likewise establishes that Confirmation (the anointing with the “Oil of Thanksgiving”) takes place immediately after Baptism.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Acts 19:1-2

<sup>76</sup> Tertullian. *De Baptismo*. Chapter 8. (Retrieved December 6, 2014) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0321.htm>.

<sup>77</sup> *Apostolic Tradition*. 21:19-25. (Retrieved December 6, 2014). <http://www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus.html>.

In the middle of the third century, Cyprian of Carthage speaks of Confirmation as a necessity:

“It is also necessary that he should be anointed who is baptized; so that, having received the chrism, that is, the anointing, he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ.”<sup>78</sup>

Our final quote will come from the middle of the fourth century, written by Cyril of Jerusalem:

“And to you in like manner, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given an Unction, the anti-type of that wherewith Christ was anointed; and this is the Holy Ghost;”<sup>79</sup>

As with our discussion of Baptism as a rite of rebirth, the list of quotations here could go on and on, but I think we’ve made our point that Confirmation can never have been conceived as a “coming of age” ceremony or a “rite of passage.” Rites of passage routinely mark various stages in a person’s life, which necessitates a certain amount of time to have passed between one rite and the next. When we consider that Confirmation was originally administered immediately following Baptism, the two could not have been intended as separate rites of passage. Doubly so when

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<sup>78</sup> *Epistle 69, 2.* <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050669.htm>.

(Retrieved December 6, 2014). Cyprian should be taken with a grain of salt, as he argued that Baptisms and other Sacraments conferred by heretics is invalid, giving rise to the error of “Cyprianism” found in the Eastern Orthodox Churches to this day (i.e. the belief that non-Orthodox are not even baptized and their priests are not ordained). It’s ironic that he should become a heretic while trying to defend the Church against heresy!

<sup>79</sup> *Catechetical Lectures. 21:1.* (retrieved December 6, 2014). <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310121.htm>.

we realize that most Baptisms and Confirmations in the first century were (of necessity!) adult converts, with infant Baptism only becoming the rule once those converts had had children and, of course, their children's children. While infant Baptism can be dated to the early period,<sup>80</sup> it would be at least a century before the numbers would allow it to become the rule rather than the exception.

We can also infer that between the practice of infant Baptism and the above quotes, infants were confirmed immediately after they were baptized. This is the practice of the Eastern Churches even to this day (where it is called "Chrismation"),<sup>81</sup> and was also the custom in Spanish-speaking countries as recently as 1932,<sup>82</sup> when the Sacred

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<sup>80</sup> Acts 16:15, 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16 describe the Baptism of entire households, and this is traditionally interpreted to favor infant Baptism because households typically number children amongst their members. This interpretation is supported by a number of Fathers when describing the practice of the Early Church. See Iranaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, II, 22; Origen, *Homily on Romans*, 5:9 and *Homilies on Leviticus*, 8:3; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Traditions*, 21:4; Cyprian's *Letter to Fidus*; Tertullian's *Against Marcion*, 1, 28. Generally the Church of the first centuries defended infant Baptism as a matter of course, and characterized the opposing view as anathema.

<sup>81</sup> *Orthodox Church in America*, official website: "It is also the Orthodox tradition that the mysteries of baptism and chrismation, called officially "holy illumination," are fulfilled in the immediate reception by the "newly-enlightened" of Holy Communion in the eucharistic liturgy of the Church. This is the case with infants as well as adults."

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-sacraments/chrismation>. (Retrieved December 6, 2014).

<sup>82</sup> *Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites*, May 24, 1934, n. 3: "Since there thrives in Spain and other places, especially South America, the custom of administering Confirmation to children before the use of reason, even immediately after Baptism . . . it had been asked (of the Sacred Congregation of Rites) whether such a custom may still be observed." The response, given on February 27, 1932, was: Whether the most ancient custom flourishing in Spain and other places

Congregation of Rites was asked to discuss whether the practice may be allowed to continue.

### **b. Separation of Confirmation from Baptism.**

It was in the West that Confirmation came to be separated from Baptism, largely out of a desire to retain the earlier practice of bishops administering the Sacrament. Originally it was the bishop who baptized and confirmed, but as the Church grew it became impossible for bishops to be present at all baptismal celebrations. Therefore Baptism and Confirmation were split into two separate Sacraments: Baptisms were left to the priests, but in order to maintain the traditional practice, the bishops confirmed when they visited the local parish.<sup>83</sup> By the fifth century, we find the separation between Baptism and “Anointing” discussed by Pope Innocent I:

“Priests, when baptizing, may anoint the baptized with chrism, previously consecrated by a bishop: but they must not sign the brow with the same oil; this belongs to the bishop alone, when he gives the Paraclete.”<sup>84</sup>

In 439, the provincial Council of Riez (in modern-day southeastern France), in dealing with the illicit consecration of Armentarius as bishop of Embrun, specifically uses the word “Confirmation” and says that in whatever parish church he is placed, “it is conceded to him alone to confirm the neophytes (those newly baptized)” and again, “he has the right of consecrating virgins and confirming neophytes.”<sup>85</sup> Since the “right of consecrating virgins”

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of administering Confirmation before the use of reason can still be observed, the Fathers respond: Yes.” (My Translation)

<sup>83</sup> The history of this split is summarized in CCC 1290.

<sup>84</sup> Innocent I, *Epistola ad Decentium*. Quoted in *Summa Theologiae*, III, 72, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Council of Riez. Canons 3 and 4. (my translation).

historically belongs to the bishop alone, we see the custom of the bishop administering confirmation is taking on the force of ecclesiastical law.

In the late sixth/early seventh century, Pope St. Gregory the Great writes to bishop Januarius of Caligari, saying:

“... let the presbyters anoint those who are to be baptized on the breast, that the bishops may afterwards anoint them on the forehead.”<sup>86</sup>

In the eighth century, the Gregorian-Hadrian Sacramentary contains a rubric restricting confirmation to the bishops:

“And the infant is clothed in its garments. If a bishop is present, [the infant] must be confirmed at once with chrism, and receive communion afterwards. If the bishop is not present, then let him receive communion from the priest.”<sup>87</sup>

This separation of Sacraments, further justified by the developing theology that Baptism “cleans” while Confirmation “completes and strengthens,” paved the way for adolescent Confirmation. This was further enforced by rubrics in local rites such as Sarum either said Confirmation could take place if the child was “of age,” or enjoined the parents or godparents to teach the child the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Apostles’ Creed before being confirmed:

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<sup>86</sup> Gregory the Great. *Registrum Epistolarum*. IV, 9. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360204009.htm>. (December 6, 2014)

<sup>87</sup> Wilson, H.A. *The Gregorian Sacramentary*. Henry Bradshaw Society, Volume XLIX. 1915. p. 163. Full text available online at: <https://archive.org/details/gregoriansacrame00cath>. (December 6, 2014)

“If the Bishop is present he must confirm [the child], if he is of age, and then give him communion.”<sup>88</sup>

And:

“If [the child] is an infant, it falls to the father and mother to protect the child (or have the child protected) from fire and water and all other dangers until the age of seven years ... similarly the godfather and godmother are enjoined to teach the infant the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Apostles’ Creed, or have them taught; for chrismation is deferred to the Church; because he may similarly be confirmed as soon as the Bishop arrives ...”<sup>89</sup>

### **c. Spiritual Effect of Confirmation.**

So we know that Confirmation is neither necessary for salvation, nor is it merely a “coming of age” ceremony, and we’ve already rejected the Protestant understanding that Confirmation is a rite where the candidates profess the vows made for them as infants in baptism. This leaves only one option: *Confirmation has an actual spiritual effect.*

What this spiritual effect is, we’ve largely already discussed, and we see the thread develop from the Scriptural quotes we’ve shared, the writings of the Early Fathers, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Through Confirmation we receive yet another level of initiation, one that fulfills and adds greater grace to the one we received in Baptism,

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<sup>88</sup> *Manuale et Processionale ad Usum Sarum*. The Surtees Society. Volume LXIII. 1875. p. 17. (my translation) Available online at: <https://archive.org/details/manualeetproces01minsgoog>. (12/6/2014).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, my translation. The translation is a bit awkward, because the Latin of the passage is itself a bit awkward.

and one that puts us into deeper connection with divine power into which we've been initiated, and one which stands to give us more strength in our faith, in our practice, and in our lives.

#### **d. Grace as Energy. A Segue into the East.**

Perhaps we should pause here and say a word about the term “grace.” In the western Church, we tend to see grace in static terms, as a “favor, free and undeserved help” that God gives us.<sup>90</sup> The Eastern Churches have a competing – yet not exactly incompatible – concept: grace is the very energies of God Himself,<sup>91</sup> a “direct manifestation of the living God Himself.”<sup>92</sup>

Now think about that and let it sink in for a moment. It is not merely a gift of forgiveness that God's giving you, nor is it merely a gift of salvation, nor a gift of various helps to make it through your life. When God gives you His grace, *He is actually giving you Himself.*<sup>93</sup>

This understanding of grace, right here, is what should answer any questions about Confirmation: it opens the soul of the recipient for a greater participation in the life – in the very energies – of God Himself. Through this anointing, we are given the grace – in fact a *huge* bundle of energies –

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<sup>90</sup> CCC 1996.

<sup>91</sup> The idea of God's energies (often translated “operations”) can be found in St. Basil the Great, *Letter 234*, 1. Also in Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*. These can be found online at New Advent.

<sup>92</sup> A good introductory source for this is *Excerpts from The Orthodox Church*, which summarizes Abp. Ware's account of Orthodox history, and is found in the internet at: (Retrieved December 7, 2014). [http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/history\\_timothy\\_ware\\_1.htm](http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/history_timothy_ware_1.htm). This is covered in the section where Ware discusses Gregory Palamas and the Hesychast controversy.

<sup>93</sup> The CCC begins to engage the Eastern idea of grace=energy in n. 1997: “Grace is a *participation in the life of God*.”

connected with the Holy Ghost and known as the “seven gifts,” and brought into the maturity of Christian life.

#### **e. What Confirmation Can Do.**

Thus as in Baptism we are made babes in God the Father, and in Holy Communion we are nourished by God the Son, so in Confirmation are we lead to maturity by God the Holy Ghost, being given a wider direct interaction with God’s energies so as even more to cooperate with sanctifying grace and be transformed from corruptible human nature, and back into the image of God.

Thus, as the Apostle asks us: “Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye have believed?”<sup>94</sup>

### **3. Holy Orders**

In Baptism and Confirmation, the candidate is initiated into the Church and is then made a complete Catholic. In Holy Orders – also called “Order” or “Ordination” – the recipient takes a part in the Church’s leadership and becomes part of the bridge we discussed earlier, that bridge by which the faithful traverse into heaven and receive God’s grace – His energies – here on earth below.

#### **a. The Sacramental Character.**

Up to this point, the reader may have noticed that I used the word “character” in relation to these Sacraments. Since the doctrine of the “indelible sacramental character” is so important in regard to Holy Orders, it may be prudent to discuss this in more detail before proceeding.

Traditionally, the three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Order are referred to as *Character Sacraments*, because they imprint an indelible mark on the

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<sup>94</sup> Acts 19:2 (KJV)

soul of the recipient. This mark is technically referred to as the *Sacramental Character*.

**b. History: Persecutions, The Lapsed, Heresy, Schism.**

The theology of the sacramental character finds its roots in Scripture<sup>95</sup> and its earliest best expression in St. Augustine, who in turn was responding to a controversy that extended back much earlier than his own time, and stems from two causes.

In the early Church, the situation for Christians could go from toleration to persecution at the drop of a hat. As with all things pertaining to human nature, there were those who would renounce their faith under persecution, while they quickly go back to calling themselves “Christians” again during the next period of toleration. This caused the Church to ask: “Should we let them back in?”

The second cause, also pertaining to human nature, pertains to heresy. Almost as soon as the Jesus Movement spread outside Jerusalem, people broke off into sects: some over a leadership dispute, and other’s professing one or another leader’s personal take on Jesus’ teachings. These sects are technically known as “schismatic” (when they break away but do not alter their doctrine) or “heretical” (when they do alter the doctrine).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> 1 Timothy 4:14: “Do not neglect **the gift that is in you**, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.” (Emphasis mine). The “the gift that is in you” is what the Church came to interpret as the sacramental character.

<sup>96</sup> The difference between a *heretic*, an *apostate*, and a *schismatic* is defined thusly in the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 1325 §2 (my translation): “A heretic is one who, after being baptized, retains the name of ‘Christian’ while obstinately denying or doubting one or other of the truths to be believed with divine and catholic faith.

The issue of people splintering off into sects is not unique Christianity. For example, Josephus mentions four “Denominations” of Jews in his time: Pharisees, Saducees, and Essenes.<sup>97</sup> Within Christianity, the New Testament letters contain warnings about sects and heresy, and the beginning of St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians is perhaps the best example:

“For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ or ‘I belong to Apollos,’ or ‘I belong to Cephas,’ or ‘I belong to Christ.’ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”<sup>98</sup>

Of course, when a group splinters off into various sects or factions, there will be members who want to “jump ship” from one sect to another. Just like the issue of persecutions, this raised two questions: first, “Are they really Christians” and second, “Should we let them (back) in?”

In 250 A.D. the Roman emperor Decius sought to restore traditional Roman piety, and issued an edict which had the result of a massive empire-wide persecution against

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“If [he or she] leaves the Christian faith entirely, [he or she is] an apostate.

“Lastly, if [he or she] rejects submission to the Supreme Pontiff or refuses communion with the members of the Church subject to him, [he or she] is a schismatic.”

These definitions are retained with slight re-wording in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 751 and re-iterated in CCC 2089

<sup>97</sup> Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book I, 8:2. (December 8, 2014).

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2850/2850-h/2850-h.htm>.

<sup>98</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:11-13

Christians. We do not know if persecution against Christians was intended, but we do know it had massive consequences for the Church; many Christians either sacrificed to the Roman gods or renounced Christianity, later to join one or other heretical sect. Because of this, the question of whether to accept baptisms performed by heretics boiled over into a full-blown controversy.

The churches in Africa and Asia Minor, represented by Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, took the position that Baptism performed by heretics was invalid. When writing to Bishop Quintus of Mauritania on the subject, he says:

“For I know not by what presumption some of our colleagues are led to think that they who have been dipped by heretics ought not to be baptized when they come to us, for the reason that they say that there is one baptism which indeed is therefore one, because the Church is one, and there cannot be any baptism out of the Church. ... But we say that those who come thence are not re-baptized among us, but are baptized. For indeed they do not receive anything there, where there is nothing; but they come to us, that here they may receive where there is both grace and all truth, because both grace and truth are one.”<sup>99</sup>

Cyprian also wrote to Pope St. Stephen I in 255 A.D., regarding a local council that had taken place in Carthage, where he says:

“But that that is not baptism which the heretics use; and that none of those who oppose Christ can profit by the grace of Christ; has lately been

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<sup>99</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistle 70*, n. 1. (retrieved December 8, 2014).  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050670.htm>.

set forth with care in the letter which was written on that subject to Quintus, our colleague, established in Mauritania.”<sup>100</sup>

We do not have Stephen’s response, but Cyprian quotes from it in a letter to Pompey:

“... [Stephen] moreover added this saying: ‘If any one, therefore, come to you from any heresy whatever, let nothing be innovated (or done) which has not been handed down, to wit, that hands be imposed on him for repentance; since the heretics themselves, in their own proper character, do not baptize such as come to them from one another, but only admit them to communion.’ He forbade one coming from any heresy to be baptized in the Church; that is, he judged the baptism of all heretics to be just and lawful.”<sup>101</sup>

In the fourth century, we come to the persecution under Diocletian, the most severe against Christians in Roman history. This caused a rift between those Christians who lapsed from their faith under pressure (called *traditores*, “traitors”), and those who remained “pure.” The best-known of these “pure” groups, the Donatists, existed in North Africa from around 311 A.D. and until the Arab conquest of the region in the seventh and eighth centuries.

The Donatists were rigorists who believed that a sinful minister could not confer a valid sacrament, and “sin” included both heretics and those they branded *traditores*. The Church was for the pure, while sin was something

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<sup>100</sup> *Epistle 71*, n. 1

<sup>101</sup> *Epistle 73*, nn. 1-2.

outside the door.<sup>102</sup> They followed Cyprian's lead in this line of thinking, and it was against them that Augustine articulated the doctrine of the indelible sacramental character.

In his *Three Books Against the Epistle of Parmenianus*, St. Augustine likens the sacramental character to the mark of military service, which cannot be removed from the soldier's flesh even if he deserted, was discharged, or if he offended the emperor; the man carries the mark permanently, and if he re-enters the military service, the old mark is simply recognized and approved.<sup>103</sup>

For Augustine, the Sacraments of Baptism (and by extension, Confirmation) and Holy Orders imprint a mark on the recipient's soul which can never be removed, nor can it be surrendered under any circumstances.

This theology had already become standard by the thirteenth century, when St. Thomas writes in the *Summa Theologiae* that the Sacraments of the New Law imprint a character, that the character cannot be blotted out, and that

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<sup>102</sup> Our main surviving source for our knowledge of Donatist doctrine is Optatus of Milevis' *Against the Donatists*. (December 9, 2014).

[http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/optatus\\_01\\_book1.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/optatus_01_book1.htm).

<sup>103</sup> St. Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani Libri Tres*, ii, 29: "But if strong be the character on his body that the panicked [soldier], trembled, not performing his duty; and he flew to the emperor's mercy and by effusive prayer, having obtained favor, again started to take up military service, is the mark again re-impressed upon the man now freed and corrected, or is not the mark more ably recognized and approved? And do the Christian sacraments adhere any less strongly than these bodily things?" (Original Latin Retrieved December 9, 2014)

[http://www.augustinus.it/latino/controllo\\_parmeniano/index2.htm](http://www.augustinus.it/latino/controllo_parmeniano/index2.htm).

the three Sacraments that impose a character are Baptism, Confirmation, and Order.<sup>104</sup>

We see the doctrine of the sacramental character spelled out in Eugene IV's Decree for the Armenians at the Council of Florence in 1439:

“Among these sacraments there are three, baptism, confirmation, and orders, which imprint an indelible sign on the soul, that is, a certain character distinctive from the others. Hence they should not be repeated in the same person. The remaining four do not imprint a sign and admit of repetition.”<sup>105</sup>

Finally we come to the Council of Trent, when the doctrine of the sacramental character was officially defined, which brings us full circle to the present day.<sup>106</sup> In spite of modernist-leaning post-Vatican II theologians' attempts to weaken or undermine the doctrine,<sup>107</sup> it is still very much a part of official Catholic teaching.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Summa Theologiae*. III, 63.

<sup>105</sup> Eugene IV, *Exsultate Deo*. Found in the *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, known in English as Denziger's "Sources of Catholic Dogma." Cited in the 1954 edition as DZ 695. (Standard abbreviation for this book is "DZ"). Available online. (Retrieved December 9, 2014) <https://archive.org/details/TheSourcesOfCatholicDogma>.

<sup>106</sup> Council of Trent, Session VII, can. 9: "If any one saith, that, in the three sacraments, to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, and Order, there is not imprinted in the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual and indelible Sign, on account of which they cannot be repeated; let him be anathema."

<sup>107</sup> For an example, see McBrien, Richard, *Catholicism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 1994. Harper San Francisco. p. 795, "The term *character* does not refer to an indelible mark on the soul, as some catechisms had it. It is simply the word used to describe the permanent effect of three sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Order." This statement is self-contradictory in this author's opinion, since it's impossible to have a permanent effect without leaving some kind of a mark. **See also** Hill,

### **c. Effects of the Character.**

As this applies to the Sacrament of Baptism, the mark on the soul is one that:

“... has a twofold effect: it qualifies us to receive or perform something sacred, and distinguishes us by some mark one from another. In the character impressed by Baptism, both effects are exemplified. By it we are qualified to receive the other Sacraments, and the Christian is distinguished from those who do not profess the faith.”<sup>109</sup>

If we place this description in an initiation paradigm, this means that, by “being qualified to receive the other sacraments” – or as CCC 1273 says consecrated “for Christian religious worship” – we see the character of Baptism walks the recipient through a proverbial door, a door of being put in contact with God’s graces and the source of energy that created the world. The Baptized person has just put made his or her first step on the bridge that leads to heaven-ward.

In Confirmation, yet another character is imprinted, though as Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism,<sup>110</sup> it could be said its character is merely the second half of the

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Brennan R., *Exploring Catholic Theology*. 1993. Twenty-Third Publications. He mentions the sacramental character only once (pp. 268-269), and implies that it is a medieval creation displacing the original “ministry of service” model.

<sup>108</sup> CCC 1121, 1272, 1304, 1570.

<sup>109</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch I, n. 31. See also CCC 1272-1274, which seem to say the same thing in a less clear and roundabout way.

<sup>110</sup> CCC 1288

imprinted in Baptism; I leave the reader to his or her own conclusions. As to the character of Confirmation:

“By Confirmation we are armed and arrayed as soldiers of Christ, publicly to profess and defend His name, to fight against our internal enemy and against the spiritual powers of wickedness in the high places; and at the same time we are distinguished from those who, being recently baptised, are, as it were, new-born infants.”<sup>111</sup>

In the context of an initiatory paradigm, Confirmation can be seen as putting the recipient in greater contact with the source of power that feeds the Church, and an opportunity to receive greater strength for the sake of warding off sin, representing that power source (Christ) in the world, and attaining the self-discipline that leads to a healthy and effective spirituality.

As to the Sacrament of Holy Orders the character:

“... confers the power of consecrating and administering the Sacraments, and also distinguishes those who are invested with this power from the rest of the faithful.”<sup>112</sup>

The character is also described this way:

“Another grace is clearly conferred by this Sacrament; namely, a special power with

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<sup>111</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch I, n. 31. See also CCC 1304-1305, which de-emphasizes the “soldier of Christ” aspect but instead speak of “clothing [the recipient] with power from on high so that he may be [Christ’s] witness.”

<sup>112</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch I, n. 31. CCC 1570 says the character is imprinted upon ordination to the diaconate, and makes no attempt to describe the character beyond saying it “configures [the recipients] to Christ.”

reference to the most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. This power is full and perfect in the priest, because he alone can consecrate the body and blood of our Lord; but it is greater or less in the inferior ministers in proportion as their ministry approaches the Sacrament of the Altar.

This power is also called a spiritual character, because those who have been ordained are distinguished from the rest of the faithful by a certain interior mark impressed on the soul...<sup>113</sup>

As an initiation, the Sacrament of Holy Orders needs to be considered as several, anywhere from three to eight depending on whether we count by the pre- or post-Vatican II system.

#### **d. Number of Holy Orders.**

Prior to Vatican II, the Catholic Church held that there were seven Orders – four “minor” and three “major” – that can be traced at least as far back as the mid-third century; Eusebius of Caesaria lists that, during the time of Pope Cornelius (reigned 251-253 A.D.), there were in the city of Rome:

“...forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and door-keepers...”<sup>114</sup>

These were the seven orders known up to Vatican II: the “minor” Orders of porter (doorkeeper), lector (reader), exorcist, and acolyte; and the “major” Orders of subdeacon,

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<sup>113</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch VII, n. 57.

<sup>114</sup> Eusebius of Caesaria. *Church History*. Book VI, Chapter 43, n. 11. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250106.htm>. (December 9, 2014).

deacon, and priest (presbyter). The priesthood was considered the final Order, with a bishop seen as being a “high-priest.”

“Now although (the sacerdotal order) is one alone, yet it has various degrees of dignity and power. The first degree is that of those who are simply called priests, and of whose functions we have hitherto been speaking.

“The second is that of Bishops, who are placed over the various dioceses to govern not only the other ministers of the Church, but the faithful also, and to promote their salvation with supreme vigilance and care. ... Bishops are also called pontiffs. This name is derived from the pagans, who thus designated their chief priests.”<sup>115</sup>

By the 1940’s, a change in thinking had occurred and the episcopate (bishopric) was an Order in its own right.<sup>116</sup> This is the stance taken by the post-Vatican II Church, which declares there are only three Orders – Bishops, Priests, and Deacons<sup>117</sup> – and abolished the minor orders in 1968.<sup>118</sup> Since the minor Orders were not given from God

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<sup>115</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch VII, n. 50. The CCC comes closest in n. 1557.

<sup>116</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Sacramentum Ordinis*, November 30, 1947, lists the Diaconate, Presbyterate, and Episcopate as the Sacred Orders. **See also Ott, Ludwig.** *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*. Book Four, Part III, Chapter VI, §2 for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>117</sup> 1983 Code of Canon Law, can 1009 §1: “The orders are the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate.” **See also** CCC 1554.

<sup>118</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Pontificalis Romani*, June 18, 1968. The abolition of the minor Orders is what accounts for any apparent differences between the CCC and the Catechism of Trent regarding this subject. <http://www.catholicliturgy.com/texts/pontrecognitio.txt> (Dec. 9, 2014)

but were created by the Church to fill certain needs,<sup>119</sup> this suppression need not bother us in any significant way.

#### **d. When the Character Is Imprinted.**

Without getting bogged down in details, it's enough to say that in the pre-Vatican II Church, the question of "when" the sacramental character was imprinted seemed to be an open one. The *Summa Theologiae*, for example, is of the opinion that every Order, including the minors, imprints a character:

"Wherefore since a character is a sign whereby one thing is distinguished from another, it follows that a character is imprinted in each Order."<sup>120</sup>

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* says nothing explicit on the subject one way or the other, but seems to agree with the *Summa* in a section we've already quoted: "but [the character] is greater or less in the inferior ministers in proportion as their ministry approaches the Sacrament of the Altar."<sup>121</sup>

In the post-Vatican II Church, the character is said to be imprinted upon ordination to the Diaconate, and its nature is very loosely defined if we were to go by the CCC alone,<sup>122</sup> though Canon Law shows perfect agreement with pre-Vatican II teaching. We'll return to this point shortly.

#### **e. Holy Orders as an Initiation. Its Levels.**

As an initiation, the ranks of Holy Orders signify an even more progressive interaction with God's grace/energies. In

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<sup>119</sup> *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*. Book Four, Part III, Ch VI, §2.

<sup>120</sup> Supplement, Q. 35, Art. 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part II, Ch VII, n. 57.

<sup>122</sup> CCC 1570.

Order, the recipient is imprinted with a character and given what's technically called the "power of order," the power to confect sacraments officially in the name of the Church, and especially the power to bring Jesus Christ down to earth under the appearances of bread and wine.

In the highest level of Order – the Episcopate – the recipient is able to initiate others into all levels of Church life and practice. While I would not say that Order is a "higher" initiation than Confirmation, I would say that Order is a different kind of initiation, in that it is one of two ways the Church perpetuates herself here on earth (the other is Matrimony and the begetting of children).

It would seem there is a definite spirituality behind the sacrament of Holy Orders, and this is why I think the minor orders are important, even if they weren't of divine institution. The progression of grades, from four minor orders and up to the three majors, breaks up the powers and responsibilities of Holy Orders into degrees, and thus gives the candidate a chance to experience it a little at a time, and to know what they're getting into, and to know whether they can handle it. Not everybody's cut out for the priesthood, and the sooner one realizes what they can handle (one way or the other), the better.

#### **f. Power of Order versus Power of Jurisdiction.**

Before passing on from our discussion on Holy Orders, it's important to relate one important feature about the character, namely the nature and limitations of the power derived from this initiation. On the one hand, there is what the recipient receives in his soul, the "power of Order."<sup>123</sup> On the other hand, there's whether the recipient has

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<sup>123</sup> Ott, Ludwig. *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*. Book Four, Part III, Chapter VI, §4, n. 2.

permission from the Church to use those powers, and this is called “power of Jurisdiction.” This latter is defined as:

“The moral right to govern the faithful in the Catholic Church. Also called the power of ruling (potestas regiminis), which, by divine institution, belongs to the Church founded by Christ.”<sup>124</sup>

In simple English, the power of Jurisdiction can only be given by the Church’s hierarchy, while the power of Order is dependent upon the character imprinted in Holy Orders. This is the distinction between “licit” and “valid” that we find in Catholic theology.

#### **f-1. The Power of Order and Validity.**

We learn from St. Augustine that clerics who leave the Church retain their ordinations, and the sacraments can be administered even by those in schism:

“For the sacrament of baptism is what the person possesses who is baptized; and the sacrament of conferring baptism is what he possesses who is ordained. And as the baptized person, if he depart from the unity of the Church, does not thereby lose the sacrament of baptism, so also he who is ordained, if he depart from the unity of the Church, does not lose the sacrament of conferring baptism. For neither sacrament may be wronged. ... and we act rightly who do not dare to repudiate God’s sacraments, even when administered in schism.”<sup>125</sup>

St. Thomas expounds upon this, telling us that on account of the sacramental character, any one who has been

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<sup>124</sup> Fr. John Hardon, S.J., *Modern Catholic Dictionary*. 1999. Inter Mirifica. Available online at: (Retrieved December 10, 2014).  
<http://www.therealpresence.org/dictionary/adict.htm>.

<sup>125</sup> Augustine. *On Baptism*, Book I, ch 1, n. 2. (December 10, 2014).  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/14081.htm>.

ordained is capable of validly administering the sacraments, including heretics, schismatics, and those who were excommunicated:

“But such as are ordained while separated from the Church, have neither the power rightly, nor do they use it rightly. But that in both cases they have the power, ... And since the consecration of the Eucharist is an act which follows the power of order, such persons as are separated from the Church by heresy, schism, or excommunication, can indeed consecrate the Eucharist, which on being consecrated by them contains Christ's true body and blood ...”<sup>126</sup>

As we have seen, the Council of Florence (*Decree for the Armenians*, DZ 695) confirmed the doctrine of the sacramental character, and in the same paragraph it also tells us:

“All these sacraments are dispensed in three ways, namely, by things as the matter, by words as the form, and by the person of the minister conferring the sacrament with the intention of doing as the Church does; if any of these is lacking the sacrament is not fulfilled.”

And the Council of Trent, says this:

“If any one saith, ... that he who has once been a priest, can again become a layman; let him be anathema.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *Summa Theologiae*. Part III, Q. 82. a. 7. In article 8 he adds, in regards to degraded (defrocked) priests: “And thus it is evident that the degraded priest can perform this sacrament.”

<sup>127</sup> Council of Trent, Session XXIII, Canon 4.

In more recent times, Pope Leo XIII tells us, when discussing Anglican Orders:

“A person who has correctly and seriously used the requisite matter and form to effect and confer a sacrament is presumed for that very reason to have intended to do (*intendisse*) what the Church does. On this principle rests the doctrine that a Sacrament is truly conferred by the ministry of one who is a heretic or unbaptized, provided the Catholic rite be employed.”<sup>128</sup>

What this ultimately means is that according to Catholic doctrine, the power to confect the Sacraments can be found both inside and outside the Catholic Church. So long as the “form, matter, and intent” are correct, the Sacrament is *valid*, meaning a true Sacrament actually happened. Period.

## **f-2. Power of Jurisdiction and Liceity.**

Power of Jurisdiction is something that will take less time to discuss than power of Order, mainly because it has less to do with theology and everything to do with *permission*. We’ve seen it defined as “A moral right to govern,” and what that really means is: “Do you have permission from the Pope/local bishop to do what you’re doing?”

If a person has this permission, then he has power of Jurisdiction and his actions are *licit* and acts with *liceity*. If he does not, then his actions (without permission) are called *illicit*. That’s really all there is to say about power of Jurisdiction.

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<sup>128</sup> *Apostolicae Curae*, September 18, 1886, n. 33. Pope Leo concluded that Anglican ordinations were invalid owing to defect of intention and form. He affirmed the Catholic principle that sacraments performed outside the Catholic Church are valid if done in the Catholic manner.

To put it another way, the difference between validity and liceity can be compared to driving a car. One can *validly* drive a car – that is, take it from point A to point B – with or without a license. However, one cannot *licitly* drive a car without a license. While liceity is important for the good order of any society, it's important not to confuse man-made laws with divine institutions.

This distinction between validity and liceity is found within Canon Law and treatises on Sacramental Moral Theology, which describe conditions under which a Sacrament is “licit” or “illicit.” Even canon Law recognizes its own limits in this matter, where we read:

“Sacred ordination never becomes invalid”<sup>129</sup>

And we read elsewhere:

“There is no such penalty as the deprivation of the Power of Order.”<sup>130</sup>

This is also why Rome habitually refrains from public pronouncements on consecrations performed by schismatic bishops, but will denounce those consecrations as illicit. This was the rationale in 1976 when the Vatican denounced the Palmar de Troya consecrations by Abp Ngo Dinh Thuc,<sup>131</sup> and in 2006 – contrary to the interpretations of Wikipedia and the Catholic blogosphere – only pronounced

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<sup>129</sup> 1917 Code of Canon Law, c. 211. 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 290.

<sup>130</sup> 1983 Code of Canon Law, c. 1338.

<sup>131</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. *Decree concerning certain unlawful priestly and episcopal ordinations*. September 17, 1976. n. 3: “whatever about the validity of their orders, the Church does not recognize their ordination nor shall it do so” (December 10, 2014).

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19760917\\_illegitimas-ordinationes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19760917_illegitimas-ordinationes_en.html).

on the “canonical status” of the four Episcopal consecrations performed by Abp. Emmanuel Milingo.<sup>132</sup>

Of course, this brings us to a problem with the concept of liceity in terms of the big picture: *Everybody is somebody's schismatic. Everybody is somebody's heretic.*

Think about it. The Catholic Church declares that her hierarchy alone was lawfully established by Christ, and that all outside here are schismatics, heretics, infidels, or apostates.<sup>133</sup> This means that to the Catholic mentality, the only liciety is that which eats, sleeps, and breathes under the shadow of the Vatican. Amongst the Eastern Orthodox – who follow the “Cyprianic doctrine” and thus make no distinction between validity and liceity – nobody outside her umbrella is lawful or even *able* to confect the Sacraments (in fact, the Russian Orthodox Church teaches that non-Orthodox aren't even baptized!). We can say the same thing for the Anglicans (who have their own church law), the Old Catholics in Germany and Holland, and pretty much every church on the face of the planet!

This is a point where I openly dissent from the hierarchy, as I tend to look at it this way: if your faith is primarily invested in “team spirit,” “institutional loyalty,” and “a spirit of partisanship,” then liceity should be the over-

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<sup>132</sup> Vatican Press Office, September 26, 2006. Both the Wikipedia article and the lay Catholic blogosphere have taken this to mean the consecrations were pronounced invalid, but the Vatican is incapable of such a pronouncement unless there were a known defect in the form, matter, or intent. To do otherwise transgresses both Catholic theological principles and Canon Law, which we've amply discussed and documented thus far.

<sup>133</sup> 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, c. 1364, §2. Heretics, apostates, and schismatics are automatically (*latae sententiae*) excommunicated – that is, put outside the Church – and infidels (non-Christians) were never members of the Church in the first place.

riding factor for you. If, however, you're able to see past the borders of communities of men, past them and towards the source from which it all came, then the first concern should be one of validity, with liceity being of little concern. My own position is the latter, as partisan loyalty means nothing to me.

#### **g. Conclusions Drawn.**

Ultimately, when one considers the initiations of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, one has to stand in awe at the grandeur of a spiritual system that so complicated and at once so simple. Complicated, in that there are all these subtle distinctions between "licit" and "valid" and the different ranks and orders. But at the same time it's simple, because Baptism and a virtuous life are all that's needed to get into heaven.

We have seen how these three Sacraments serve as initiations into the energy that powers Catholicism, God's grace as distributed through His Son, Jesus Christ, and we have talked about how that works. We also see that God's grace is not limited to any one hierarchy, but that the "spirit goes where it wilt," regardless of the boundaries of heresy or schism. So whether in the Catholic Church, or the Orthodox Churches, or even the small churches that dot the landscape of the "Independent Sacramental Movement,"<sup>134</sup> I hold that each of them possesses these initiations, and if they would each get over their prejudices and ego

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<sup>134</sup> The Independent Sacramental Movement (ISM), also called the "Independent Catholic Movement," refers to small churches descending from groups that broke from Rome, Anglicanism, or Orthodoxy in various waves, for different reasons, and at different points in history. The best modern treatment is found in Plummer, John, *The Many Paths of the Independent Sacramental Movement*. 2006. Apocryphile Press. ISBN-13: 978-0977146123.

problems, those initiations could lead to a powerful spiritual life for Christian souls indeed!

## **THE HOLY EUCHARIST AND ITS PLACE IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE**

We said earlier that the post-Vatican II Church views the Eucharist as a Sacrament of initiation, right after Baptism and Confirmation. This is part of a fuller scheme, where the modern Church, divides the Sacraments into three categories: the *Sacraments of Initiation* (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), *Sacraments of Healing* (Penance, Extreme Unction), and the *Sacraments of Service* (Holy Orders and Matrimony).<sup>135</sup>

Prior to Vatican II, the Sacraments were divided up into two categories: the *Sacraments of the Dead* (Baptism and Penance) and the *Sacraments of the Living* (Confirmation, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony), based on whether they were intended for a recipient in a “state of grace.”<sup>136</sup>

While both of these schemes and categorizations are man-made, they can both be helpful. They can be helpful because they assist us in comprehending the Sacraments’ place in our lives. And of all the Sacraments, none illustrates the intersectionality of our lives with the life of the Catholic community so much as the Eucharist.

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<sup>135</sup> CCC 1210-1211. Also 1212, 1421, 1534.

<sup>136</sup> This scheme does not seem to have official sanction, but is found in various catechisms and textbooks on religion. Deharbe’s *A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion*. 1876. Catholic School Book Company. p. 247. (Dec 10, 2014) <https://books.google.com/books?id=J749AAAAYAAJ&pg>. See also Coppens, Charles, S.J., *A Systematic Study of the Catholic Religion*. 1903. B. Herder Book Company. n. 232. (December 10, 2014). <https://archive.org/details/systematicstudy00coppuoft>.

To understand that statement fully, it helps to understand that the Catholic Church takes the doctrine behind the Eucharist – that the bread and wine are changed really, truly, and substantially into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, and that only the appearances (“accidents”) of the bread and wine remain – she takes this belief VERY SERIOUSLY. Hence, the life of the Church leads towards and draws from the Eucharist, because as much as Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, THE EUCHARIST IS CHRIST.

This is why the entirety of Catholic life is oriented towards the Eucharist (and by extension the Mass), because the Eucharist is what anchors the Church in her founder. In **Baptism**, we become members of Christ’s Church and are able to receive the other Sacraments. In **Confirmation**, we become soldiers of Christ, strengthened and armed in faith. In **Penance**, our souls are cleansed and again made ready to partake of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. In **Extreme Unction** we are prepared to meet Christ in the world to come. In **Holy Orders** we are given the Power to make Christ present to others. And finally, in **Matrimony**, we are called to give birth to others who will encounter Christ as we do. The entirety of Catholic life is oriented towards the Eucharist, because the entirety of the Catholic life is oriented towards Christ.

### **1. The Real Presence**

What I said above was a strong statement, and could easily be appalling to non-Catholic readers as well as Catholics who were poorly catechized (an all-too-common phenomenon these days), so allow me to explain. When I mention that “the Eucharist is Christ,” it’s a logical

conclusion from the doctrine of the *Real Presence*, which states that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

The seed of the Real Presence doctrine is found in multiple places in Scripture, beginning with the narrative of the Last Supper, where Jesus said “This **IS** my body.”<sup>137</sup> In no place did he say “This is a symbol of my body.”<sup>138</sup>

We likewise have the testimony of St. Paul, who writes to the Christians in Corinth about the dangers of misusing the Eucharist:

“For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.”<sup>139</sup>

Paul is talking about “unworthy communion,” which refers to receiving the Eucharist while in a state of sin, but this passage raises a more interesting point: when was the last time anybody died from ordinary bread or ordinary wine?

By the end of the first century, the *Didache* tells us:

“Let no one eat and drink of your Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord; to this, too

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<sup>137</sup> Matthew 26:17-30. Mark 14:12-26. Luke 22:7-39.

<sup>138</sup> This is the belief of Reformed Protestantism. While Lutheranism affirms that the Sacraments confer grace (*Augsburg Confession*, Articles IX and X), Reformed theology reduces the Sacraments to mere symbols with no efficacy. This is rooted in Ulrich Zwingli (the father of the Reformed churches) who said, amongst other things: “The sacraments we esteem and honour as signs and symbols of holy things, but not as though they themselves were the things of which they are the signs. For who is so ignorant as to try to maintain that the sign is the thing which it signifies” *An Exposition of the Faith*. 1530.

<http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl/FullText.aspx?qc=AdHoc&q=3164&qp=6>. (Retrieved December 11, 2014).

<sup>139</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:29-30.

the saying of the Lord is applicable: ‘Do not give to dogs what is sacred.’”<sup>140</sup>

Around 110 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch writes the following while on his way to martyrdom in the arena:

“They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes.”<sup>141</sup>

In the middle of the second century, St. Justin Martyr also affirms the Real Presence:

“For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.”<sup>142</sup>

Iraeneus of Lyons, around the end of the second century, tells us:

“When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh

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<sup>140</sup> *Didache* 9:5.

<sup>141</sup> *Epistle to the Smyneans*. n. 7. (Retrieved December 11, 2014).  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0109.htm>.

<sup>142</sup> *First Apology*. ch. 66.

is increased and supported, how can [the heretics] affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?”<sup>143</sup>

While we again run the risk of overkill, we see there’s no question that early Christians did **not** believe the Eucharist was a mere symbol, but the testimony is plain that they believed the elements truly became the Body and Blood of Christ. Of course, none of this talks about *how* the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, only that they do.

As to the “how,” there is no specific hypothesis that’s supported directly by Scripture. The Catholic Church, moved by Aristotelian metaphysical concepts of “substance” (a thing as it is in itself) and “accidents” (what a thing looks/smells/feels/sounds/tastes like), defined this process as *Transubstantiation* at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 A.D.

“His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been *changed in substance*, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us.”<sup>144</sup>

By the sixteenth century, the Protestant Revolt challenged the doctrine of Transubstantiation from all quarters. Luther claimed that Transubstantiation held the Eucharist a

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<sup>143</sup> *Against Heresies*. Book V, ch. 2, n. 3. (December 11, 2014).  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103502.htm>.

<sup>144</sup> Fourth Lateran Council, Confession of Faith. (December 11, 2014).  
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/LATERAN4.HTM>.

prisoner of “Aristotelian metaphysics,” but he alone amongst the Reformers defended the Real Presence. While the primary confession of his church (the *Confessio Augustana*)<sup>145</sup> doesn’t specify a process by which it comes to pass, Luther’s own view was what he called “Sacramental Union” (often incorrectly called *Consubstantiation*): Jesus was truly present, but the bread and wine remained.<sup>146</sup>

Ulrich Zwingli taught that the Sacraments were mere symbols, tokens of what we do for God and lacking in any kind of grace whatsoever.<sup>147</sup> John Calvin tried to find a position halfway between Luther and Zwingli, stating that Jesus was present in the Eucharist only as a spiritual presence in the room, because His body was *localiter circumscriptus*, or “locally constrained” in heaven:

“I now come to the hyperbolical mixtures which superstition has introduced. Here Satan has employed all his wiles, withdrawing the minds of men from heaven, and imbuing them with the perverse error that Christ is annexed to the element of bread. And, first, we are not to dream of such a presence of Christ in the sacrament as the artificers of the Romish court have imagined, as if the body of Christ, locally present, were to be taken into the hand, and chewed by the teeth, and swallowed by the throat. ... As we cannot at all doubt that [Christ’s body] is bounded according to the

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<sup>145</sup> AC, art. X: “Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.” <http://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php>. (Dec. 11, 2014).

<sup>146</sup> *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 37, pp. 299-300.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in a previous footnote. Zwingli’s approach is technically called “Real Absence” or “Memorialism,” while I tend to call it “Nonsubstantiation.”

invariable rule in the human body, and is contained in heaven, where it was once received, and will remain till it return to judgment, so we deem it altogether unlawful to bring it back under these corruptible elements, or to imagine it everywhere present. And, indeed, there is no need of this, in order to our partaking of it, since the Lord by his Spirit bestows upon us the blessing of being one with him in soul, body, and spirit. The bond of that connection, therefore, is the Spirit of Christ, who unites us to him, and is a kind of channel by which everything that Christ has and is, is derived to us.”<sup>148</sup>

To put an end to all this foolishness, the Council of Trent clearly defined that Transubstantiation is the official teaching of the Catholic Church:

“And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by

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<sup>148</sup> Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Book IV. Chapter 17. n. 12. The reader will notice a general thread throughout the *Institutes*: Calvin typically rails against Catholicism and then advocates the opposite of what Catholics believe, apparently for no reason other than that Catholics believe it. (Retrieved December 11, 2014). <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.vi.xviii.html>.

the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.”<sup>149</sup>

The foregoing quote retains the status of official Catholic doctrine, and the CCC reiterates it in full.<sup>150</sup>

## **2. The Real Presence for a Catholic**

For a devout Catholic, the Real Presence is more than the arguments and decrees we’ve cited. It’s something more than an intellectual debate or an ideological construct, even more than just an official dogma of the Church. For a devout Catholic, transubstantiation is a palpable reality, every bit as real as the birds in the air, the trees in the forest, and the water in the streams. Our God is often called a Living God, and it is through our living that we best encounter and experience Him: whether that living takes place through the drawing of breath, through love for our fellow living creatures, or through the eating of God’s own flesh in the Sacrament of the Altar.

In the previous sections, much has already been said about the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Order, and we have seen how the Christian receives progressive initiations. Each initiation is intended to configure him to Christ and be His worthy vessel – “servants of Christ and

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<sup>149</sup> Council of Trent, Session XIII, ch. 4. Protestant views are clearly anathematized in the canons of that session.

<sup>150</sup> CCC 1376. Some may say this stance is softened in CCC 1374: “... is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too ...” This is a quotation from Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, n. 39, and the document refers to other ways Jesus is present in the community of believers (nn. 35-39), not to other theologies of Jesus being present in the Eucharist. (Retrieved December 11, 2014).

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_03091965\\_mysterium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_03091965_mysterium_en.html).

dispensers of God's mysteries"<sup>151</sup> – yet it is singularly by way of the Eucharist that we are *filled* with Christ Himself.

In the Mass, during the part known as the Offertory, there is a prayer said while the celebrant pours water and wine into the chalice, the *Deus, qui humanae substantiae*, which translates: "O God, who hast wonderfully crafted the dignity of the human substance and hast more wonderfully reformed it, grant unto us, through the mystery of this water and wine, to become partakers of His divinity, who vouchsafed to become a partaker of our humanity."<sup>152</sup>

The text of this prayer is important in understanding the nature of the Eucharist in relation to our spiritual life, as it illustrates the exchange which takes place between God and man in context of this Sacrament. While by the Sacraments of initiation we are made into vessels to contain Christ's divinity and power, it is here, through our participation in the Sacrifice of the Altar, that we are made to become *partakers* in that divinity and power. As we partake of that divinity, so does it fill us and shape us during our pilgrimage on this earth, and so too do we become more and more like unto Christ in His divinity, while at the same time working to perfect our individual humanity.

It is with these things in mind that a Catholic understands the Eucharist, and a Catholic magician understands himself

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<sup>151</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:1.

<sup>152</sup> The full text of the prayer is as follows: «*Deus, qui humanae substantiae dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti: da nobis per hujus aquae et vini mysterium, ejus divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostrae fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus Filius tuus Dominus noster: qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus: per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.*»

as being filled with God's grace to bring about change on this physical plane.



*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.*

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