

SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

- Topic: The Significance of Bodily Resurrection
for Sacramental and Liturgical Theology
- Convener: Bruce T. Morrill, Boston College
- Presenters: Bernard Prusak, Villanova University
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Bernard Prusak's paper, "'This is [henceforth] my Body': Eucharist as 'Personal Presence' of the Resurrected Jesus," first considered the anthropological meanings of the Semitic words that Jesus used at the Last Supper. Before the later adoption of the concepts of soul and person, *body* expressed and mediated the presence of a self or individual. As the bearer of "individuated life" (Lev 17:11), *blood* was related to the aliveness of the body that presented the self or individual, or as we might say, "the person." The historical Jesus had a physical body, suffused with lifeblood, that made his "individuated life" present to others. In speaking of the bread as his body and the wine as his outpoured lifeblood, he was looking to the future, anticipating his death and the life that would follow that death. Then, the bread and wine would make him present.

By contrast with the *naïve* eucharistic realism that had begun to emerge, Augustine's philosophical background kept him on the path of *sacramental* realism. In sermon 361, however, he declared that, "In the presence of *glory* Christ is always with the Father: in his *bodily* presence he is henceforth above the heavens, at the right hand of the Father; but in his presence of faith, he is in all Christians." But, if Jesus' glorified body is located at the right hand of the Father in heaven, how can the Eucharist be the presence of the body (and blood) of Christ?

Paschasius Radbertus maintained that the body of Christ in the Eucharist is that which was born from Mary, suffered on the cross, and resurrected from the tomb. By contrast, Ratramnus asked how the body of Christ could be at the right hand of the Father and yet present in the Eucharist at the same time. He distinguished the *true* or historical body of Jesus and the Eucharistic body on the altar (*figure* or sacrament).

The eucharistic issue regarding Christ's risen body was not resolved but pushed aside by the concept of substantial presence. In 1059, Berengar was made to profess an exaggerated physicism, replaced by the profession of 1079, which spoke of the bread and wine being "substantially changed" into Christ's true body and blood, "in truth of substance." The term *transubstantiation* would emerge before 1200. Having devoted four articles to a discussion of Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father, Aquinas (and later, the Council of Trent) emphasized that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist was not a localized but a *substantial* presence, since his body (with flesh, bones, blood, etc.) is in heaven.

A consensus has emerged (e.g., Küng, O'Collins, Rahner, Ratzinger, and Schillebeeckx), that resurrection is not the raising up of the chemico-physical body but of a whole person, the same personal "self" or identity with its entire, particular,

embodied history. As resurrected persons we will have spiritual or pneumatic bodies, meaning that the “self” will never relinquish or be separated from the “bodiliness” and the historical process through which our individual identities were expressed and defined in the present life. That enables a reunderstanding of Real Presence. Whenever we do what Jesus did with bread and wine, he is present *personally*. That *personal* eucharistic presence of Jesus as the risen Christ, includes all that he was and became in his life, death, resurrection, and *ascension*.

In his “The Significance of Bodily Resurrection in the Theology and Practice of the Order of Christian Funerals,” Bruce Morrill critically investigated the current official funeral rite of the Roman Catholic Church by drawing upon historical and theological sources while also employing contemporary ritual theory to analyze the text “in motion” in contemporary American pastoral practice. Morrill worked through a description and analysis of a funeral vigil and mass that took place in South Boston in 2003. He described two parallel rituals he found operative, namely, the reformed liturgy of the Church (Order of Christian Funerals [OCF], 1989) and what he termed the rituals of the neighborhood. He discerned three approaches to the person-body (with a bow to L.-M. Chauvet) evident in this ritual process: (1) viewed, memorialized, and cremated—an American approach “celebrating” the deceased through photos, flowers, and a wake in the funeral home; (2) dispensed by a priestly mediator before the Altar of Sacrifice—the truncated, rushed funeral mass by a young priest who ignored key elements of the OCF but carefully, if not painstakingly, performed the words and rubrics of the Institution Narrative of the Roman Eucharistic Prayer; and (3) situated in the assembly’s celebration of the Paschal mystery—elements from the OCF that bore the paradoxical faith of the Church as it both mourns the loss of a loved one yet anticipates the heavenly banquet. Morrill drew upon recent books by British and American religious historians Douglas Davies and Gary Laderman, respectively, to analyze these three typologies further, placing those findings in critical dialogue with recent work on Christian belief in bodily resurrection by Carolyn Walker Bynum, N. T. Wright, and Douglas Farrow. He concluded by returning to selected prayer-texts and symbolic gestures of the OCF to argue their capability of serving today’s pastoral and theological exigencies.

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