
Contents

Foreword: The Eucharist <i>by Valerie Miké</i>	xiii
Original Article THE MASS ON THE WORLD	1
Article in German DIE MESSE ÜBER DIE WELT.	21
Article in Spanish LA MISA SOBRE EL MUNDO.	45
A New Meaning of Christian Worship <i>by Pope Benedict XVI</i>	67
About the Author.	69
About the Editor	71

FOREWORD

The Eucharist

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the central tenet of Catholicism. A recent study reported that the majority of Catholics no longer hold this belief, and critics point out that the traditional explanation of the Church rests on obsolete science. In this 2008 essay Richard Pendergast offers a modern theory of transubstantiation in the broad context of a historical overview. Given the importance of the subject, we decided to include this reprint in the series of the author's previously unpublished work, with translation in two other languages, German and Spanish.

The Catholic college I attended in the 1950s required four years of coursework in both philosophy and theology. We had the history of philosophy from antiquity to the present and biblical studies, but the predominant theme was the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, based on the philosophy of Aristotle. We were introduced to the major principles of Aristotelian metaphysics, their definitions with everyday examples, and studied how they were used to develop theories. The people and things of the world were substances, composed of prime matter, the universal building material, with each substance defined by its own form. The further characteristics of a substance were its accidents. This schema of substance as matter and form (in Greek *hylē* and *morphē*) was called hylomorphism.

The Mass was in Latin. Most students, myself included, had studied Latin, so that participation in the liturgy came naturally. We learned about transubstantiation. When during Mass the priest spoke the words *HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM*, the substance of the bread became

the body of Christ, while its accidents remained unchanged. Thus, the appearance and other properties of the bread were still the same, but there was no longer a substance of bread. New to philosophy and eager to understand, I wondered what this theory would mean to me if I did not already believe.

The celebration of First Communion was an important event of my childhood, and I remember strewing rose petals before the Blessed Sacrament from my little basket in a Corpus Christi Day procession along the streets of Budapest. I also recall the solemn beauty of Benedictions in the college chapel, the blessing with the host in the monstrance, as we sang Eucharistic hymns of adoration. Etched sharply in my memory all these years has been a verse from Pange Lingua that says, *Praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui*, meaning: May faith provide when the senses fail. The fact that these lines were also written by St. Thomas Aquinas was a solace to me at eighteen.

As the article relates, there had in fact been problems with the Aristotelian theory for some time, with the advent of the new physics and the holistic theory of matter, of molecules, atoms, and elementary particles.

When I first read this essay a number of years ago, my immediate reaction was that I would enjoy teaching the new theory. Why? Because it is so intuitive, because its basic structure is already part of the popular consciousness. The author sees the world as a hierarchy of irreducible levels of entities, of increasing complexity and function, from the smallest components of matter, to objects, plants, animals, and human beings. On the highest level is a single entity, the Logos. Entities on the lower levels when integrated into the higher levels retain their own identity. To illustrate this relation of the levels, the article cites the analogy of the five levels of human speech: voice, words, sentences, style, and literary composition.

As a name for raising an entity to a higher level, the author refers to what he calls the original Hegelian term “sublation.” Here we need to add an important point of clarification. Hegel introduced the German

verb *aufheben* (translated into English as “to sublimate”) into philosophy, but he did not create it. The word existed in the German language long before him, as it still does today. The present author uses the term to describe his own theory, which is unrelated to Hegelian thought: When during consecration the Eucharistic bread and wine are sublated from their natural level to the highest level of the hierarchy, they are integrated into the incarnate Word with their identity unchanged.

Two bishops who have endorsed the work of Richard Pendergast are listed on the back cover, a Benedictine and a Jesuit, and I had the privilege of extended discussions with both. Bishop Astric Várszegi spoke of historical perspective. Building on the immense treasury of the Church fathers, great believers like St. Benedict in the beginning, St. Thomas in the Middle Ages, and the contemporary Jesuits, with many others along the way, expressed what they saw in the language of their day. The Eucharist is a sign and promise of the final transformation of the world, and Teilhard de Chardin related the image of the host in the monstrance that began to grow and kept expanding as it embraced the universe. It was a vision in our age, but the reality has always been the same.

Valerie Miké
President, The Ethics of Evidence Foundation
June 24, 2020

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

THE MASS ON THE WORLD

- I. Eucharistic Theology and Cosmology
 - II. Transubstantiation
 - III. The Sacramental Universe
- Notes

The Mass on the World

The present article has three sections. The first one discusses the relationship of the theological theory of transubstantiation to that of *transmogrification* (change of meaning) and *transfinalization* (change of finality), ideas that were introduced just before the time of Vatican II by northern European theologians. The second section develops a holistic view of the nature of matter. Our present scientific knowledge seems to require that we abandon the Aristotelian theory of hylomorphism in favor of a theory in which real beings of a certain level “sublate” real but subordinate beings of lower levels. For example, a human being is a substance that includes within itself many smaller substances. When he was in the flesh, the physical body of Christ included within itself a vast number of interconnected atoms and molecules. The third section discusses ideas of Teilhard de Chardin about the relationship of Christ to matter.

I. EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY

In the sixteenth century the Council of Trent stated the Church’s teaching about the Eucharist in a way that seemed to presuppose an Aristotelian-Thomistic conceptual point of view.

If anyone says that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of bread and wine remains together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denies that wonderful and unique change of the whole substance of the bread into His body and of the whole substance of the wine into His blood while only the species of bread and wine