

The First “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracle: Eucharistic Time Travel

I. What is a Miracle?

a. Thomas Aquinas on the Definition of a Miracle

“A miracle properly so called is when something is done outside the order of nature. But it is not enough for a miracle if something is done outside the order of any particular nature; for otherwise anyone would perform a miracle by throwing a stone upwards, as such a thing is outside the order of the stone's nature. So for a miracle is required that it be against the order of the whole created nature”—which God alone can do. (ST I.110.4, c)

- i. An Event which Exceeds the Efficient Causality of the Natural Order
- ii. Miracles Can Never Cause a Logical Contradiction (ST III.77.1, obj. 2)
- iii. Miracles *Tend* to Preserve or Restore the Natural Order (ST III.77.4, ad 3 & 77.3, c)

b. What Do I mean by “Ordinary Miracles”?

- i. An Intervention of God in the Natural Order as a Regular Event in the Salvation Economy
- ii. The Consecration of the Eucharist as a Miraculous Event
- iii. However, We Will Discuss Five—Not Just Transubstantiation



II. A Debt of Gratitude to the Great Liturgical Theologian Fr. Louis Bouyer, CO (1913-2004)

a. Bouyer's Rite and Man: Natural Sacredness and Christian Liturgy (1962)

- i. Christianity as the Direct Work of God's Intervention in History
- ii. God's Intervention in History Builds Upon, and Does Not Oppose, Human Nature
- iii. Religious Ritual Is Part of Human Nature; God Builds Upon the Nature of Human Ritual
NB: This is an Expansion of the Scholastic Doctrine of “Natural Religion”
 1. Natural Religion is Part of the Augustinian Tradition
 2. A Positive Evaluation of Natural Religion in the First Sacramental Theologian
 3. Natural Religion is a Frequent Theme in Pre-Vatican II Manuals of Theology
- iv. Conclusion: There is Immense Apologetic/Theological Value in Studying Human Ritual

b. Method of Proceeding

- i. Demonstrating that Human Ritual Longs to Function in a Particular Way
- ii. Noting that only in Christian Liturgy Does Ritual Truly Function in That Way
- iii. Seeing that Liturgy Fulfills Human Ritual by the Divine Intervention of “Ordinary Miracles”

III. Foundational Natural Human Action: To View Some Actions or People as Archetypal

a. The “Dreaming” of the Aborigines: A Land of Archetypes

“for primitive man [daily actions like hunting or eating] were sacraments, ceremonies by means of which he communicated with the *force* which stood for Life Itself...as the [primitive] rite always consists in the repetition of an archetypal action performed ‘once upon a time’ (before ‘history’ began) by ancestors or by gods, man is trying, by means of the hierophany, to give ‘being’ to even his most ordinary and insignificant acts. By its repetition, the act coincides with its archetype, and time is abolished” (Eliade, 31-32).

- i. Imagine that in the beginning, there was chaos.
- ii. The ancestors/the gods bring order to that chaos showing us how to live.
- iii. Their actions all become archetypal moments of human life which exist in the Dreaming.
- iv. The Dreamtime is Happening Now, not in a Distant Past
- v. Rituals re-enact the myths, leaving time as we know it and entering sacred time.

b. Charles Taylor, A Secular Age: Modern View of Time vs. Archetypal View of Time

- i. Secular Time: “One thing happens after another, and when something is past, it's past.”

- ii. The “Higher Time of Origins,” when Gods Established the World or Society
“The idea is of a Great Time... when the order of things was established, whether that of the creation of the present world, or the founding of our people with its Law. The agents in this time were on a larger scale than people today, perhaps gods, but at least heroes. In terms of secular time, this origin is in the remote past, it is ‘time out of mind’. But it is not simply in the past, because it is also something that we can reapproach, can get closer to again. This may be by ritual only, but this ritual may also have an effect of renewing and rededicating, hence coming closer to the origin. The Great Time is thus behind us, but it is also in a sense above us. It is what happened at the beginning, but it is also the great Exemplar, which we can be closer to or farther away from as we move through history.” (57)
- iii. The Liturgy Remembers and Re-Enacts what Happened when Christ was On Earth
- iv. Secularism Causes us to Lose a Sense of a “Higher Time” Renewed by Ritual

IV. Completion by God’s Fulfilling Action: CCC, Christ’s Divine Nature

- a. The Difference Between Archetypal Time in Aborigine Ritual & Christian Liturgy
 - i. Bede Griffiths, OSB: The Difference between Hindu Myth & Christian Revelation
 - ii. Louis Bouyer, CO: The Difference between Pagan “Eternal Return” & Salvation History
 1. Pagan Semites Celebrated a Shepherd’s Ritual Like the Passover...
...but it commemorates myths and false gods, and so repeats perpetually.
 2. Israelites, Saved by God from Egypt & Expecting Messiah, Celebrate the Passover...
... it commemorates a historical event, and prepares the people for Christ.
 3. Christians, Definitively Saved by Christ, Celebrate His Passover...
... it is real History now, for Christ; it prepares us to enter that history.
- b. The Catechism of the Catholic Church on Christ’s Work in the Liturgy
1085 In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he **lives out the unique event of history which does not pass away**: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father "once for all." His Paschal mystery is **a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away**, swallowed up in the past. the Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, **cannot remain only in the past**, because by his death he destroyed death, and **all that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all**. The event of the Cross and Resurrection **abides and draws everything toward life**.
 - i. Note the Emphasis on the Work of Christ as a Fact of History
 - ii. Note the Unique Reason Why Christ’s Paschal Work is not Merely History
 - iii. Note that the Paschal Mystery is Present in Every Time through its Effects

V. Liturgical Theology: Anamnesis, Epiclesis

- a. Defining the Words...
 - i. *Anamnesis*: Remembering the Work of God or Archetypal Person of Christ (CCC 1103)
 - ii. *Epiclesis*: Asking the Spirit to Make This Archetypal Event Present Again in its Effects (CCC 1105)
- b. In the Eucharistic Prayers
 - i. The First *Epiclesis*: Asking the Holy Spirit to Bless and Approve the Offering
 - ii. The *Anamnesis*: The Institution Narrative from the Last Supper
 - iii. The Second *Epiclesis*: Asking the Holy Spirit to Make the Eucharistic Sacrifice Fruitful
- c. In Other the Sacraments, e.g., Baptism & In Devotional Prayers

VI. Practical Take Away: Living the Miracle of the Eucharistic Time Travel through *Anamnesis & Epiclesis*

- a. “Christian Classicalism”: Dominical Institution & Christ’s Life as Our Archetype of Humanity
- b. The *Ars Celebrandi*: Historical Forgetfulness as a Modern Danger to Good Liturgy
- c. Personal Prayer: How You Should Pray (*Anamnesis, Epiclesis*)