The One Table of Christ's Word and Body: the Unity of Scripture and Eucharist in Dei Verbum and its Theological Precursors

Robert Matthew London

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THE ONE TABLE OF CHRIST’S WORD AND BODY: THE UNITY OF
SCRIPTURE AND EUCHARIST IN DEI VERBUM AND ITS
THEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Robert Matthew London

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Robert Matthew London

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THE ONE TABLE OF CHRIST’S WORD AND BODY: THE UNITY OF
SCRIPTURE AND EUCHARIST IN *DEI VERBUM* AND ITS
THEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS

By

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ABSTRACT

THE ONE TABLE OF CHRIST’S WORD AND BODY: THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE AND EUCHARIST IN DEI VERBUM AND ITS THEOLOGICAL PRECURSORS

By

Robert Matthew London

May 2014

Dissertation supervised by William Wright IV, Ph. D.

In Dei Verbum, the Second Vatican Council retrieved the doctrine of the One Table, but without offering a sustained or comprehensive presentation of it: “the Church has always held the divine scriptures in reverence no less than it accords to the Lord’s body itself, never ceasing—especially in the sacred liturgy—to receive the bread of life from the one table of God’s word and Christ’s body, and to offer it to the faithful” (Dei Verbum §26). Nevertheless, this doctrine can be found throughout the conciliar documents. This dissertation provides clarification to this important, but overlooked, doctrine using as its guide the theological thought of Henri de Lubac.

Henri de Lubac heavily impacted the Second Vatican Council, Dei Verbum in particular. De Lubac immensely contributed toward the renewal of the ancient doctrine of the One Table, especially with his eucharistic ecclesiology (that found its way into Lumen Gentium), and his
retrieval of spiritual exegesis, especially through the genius of Origen. Chapters two and three of this dissertation present a synopsis of de Lubac’s retrieval of scriptural exegesis and his eucharistic ecclesiology.

Against this backdrop, chapter four interprets the meaning of the One Table as it can be found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. As recovered by de Lubac, the principles found in ancient Christian hermeneutics taken together with his eucharistic ecclesiology serve to elucidate the meaning of the One Table.

In conclusion, this work offers some theological, liturgical, pastoral and ecumenical suggestions flowing from the recovery of the One Table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body.
DEDICATION

To my beloved wife, Beth: for her unwavering love, patience and endurance. Thank you for “running the race” (1 Corinthians 9:24) with me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and gratefully thank Dr. William Wright IV, who patiently and meticulously guided me through the dissertation process: I hope he enjoyed it as much as I did. I would also like to thank Fr. Sebastian Madathummuriyil and Dr. Bogdan Bucur for their attentive reading of and insightful suggestions for enhancing this dissertation.


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CHAPTER 1: THE ONE TABLE, *DEI VERBUM*, AND HENRI DE LUBAC

The Second Vatican Council retrieved an ancient doctrine\(^1\) that expresses the inherent correlation of the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Eucharist and the Church: “the Church has always held the divine scriptures in reverence no less than it accords to the Lord’s body itself, never ceasing—especially in the sacred liturgy—to receive the bread of life from the one table of God’s word and Christ’s body, and to offer it to the faithful.”\(^2\) This statement refers to what I will call the “Doctrine of the One Table.” Already in 1950, Henri de Lubac anticipated this doctrine with the concise statement: “Both [Scripture


\(^2\) *Dei Verbum* §21. Emphasis mine. Unless stated otherwise, I will take all conciliar citations from Norman P. Tanner, ed. *Trent to Vatican II*, vol. 2, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990). What might be forgotten or unknown to many, is that the Second Vatican Council not only stressed the frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist, but also the increased devotion to the reception of the sacred Word for a new spiritual impulse in the Church (see *Dei Verbum* §26). The veneration given by the Church both to the Holy Eucharist and the Sacred Scriptures has historically been demonstrated liturgically: the evangeliaries—the liturgical books containing the four gospels for liturgical celebration—were often elaborately decorated with precious metals and diamonds. The manuscripts were sometimes written in gold on purple parchment in very beautiful script. Additionally, the evangeliary would be exposed on the altar, a privilege shared only with the Eucharist. Furthermore, these evangeliaries were typically carried in procession during the Divine Liturgy as a special reminder and sign of Christ’s presence. The Church has maintained many of these liturgical practices: for example, in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy the Gospel book is typically richly decorated and covered with various icons and precious gems. During the Little Entrance, the deacon (or priest, if no deacon is present) processes around the inside of the Church—very similar to a Eucharistic procession in the Latin rite—with the evangeliary, surrounded by acolytes bearing candles and incense, which signifies, among other things, John the Baptist pointing the way to Christ. In the Latin rite ordination of a bishop, the open evangeliary is placed over the head of the bishop-elect to indicate that the Word watches over and embraces his ministry as bishop and because the bishop’s life is to be submitted to the Word of God. These examples taken from the Church’s liturgical life serve as vivid, living illustrations of the veneration the Church has traditionally held and continues to demonstrate for the Sacred Scriptures as well as their intimate connection to the Sacred Eucharist. See Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1978), 51; Lucien Deiss, *God’s Word and God’s People* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1976); Hans-Joachim Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1986); Patriarch Gregorios III, *Introduction to Liturgical Services and Their Symbolism in the Eastern Church* (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 2009); Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy. The Development of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 6; Arthur Serratelli, “Reflections on Revelation: *Dei Verbum*’s 40th Anniversary,” *Origins* 35:8 (2005): 118-19; John Breck, *Scripture in Tradition. The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 15; Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 214.
and Eucharist] are the object of the same veneration.”

The interrelationship of the Liturgy of the Word (or the liturgy of the catechumens) and that of the Liturgy of the Eucharist (or liturgy of the faithful) is so strong that Vatican II declared these two parts of the Mass as one act of worship (this is also applicable to the Divine Liturgy of the other rites within the Catholic Church, which possess the essential structure of the liturgy as it is offered in the Latin rite).

The doctrine of the One Table needed retrieving, because, as a general rule, especially after the Protestant Reformation, whereas Catholics placed the emphasis on the “real presence” of Christ in the Eucharist most Protestants drew attention to the Scriptures as God’s Word and power to save. On the other hand, before the 10th century the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Eucharist were venerated equally as they both find their source and unity in Christ.

The retrieval of this doctrine contains important, often overlooked ideas and implications for our thinking about many theological topics, such as ecclesiology, the liturgy, the theology of scripture, and the sacraments. In the early twenty-first century,
we continue to experience the profound effects of this conciliar teaching: from the ongoing liturgical revitalization, especially within—but not confined to—the Roman (Latin) rite, to a renewed appreciation and emphasis placed on the centrality of the Sacred Scriptures for the life of the Church. 8

After the council, scriptural and liturgical studies have proliferated, albeit not always symbiotically. Although there may be a greater awareness of the essential unity of the Sacred Scriptures and the sacraments and of their dynamic energy to create, maintain and strengthen the unity of the Church, these related topics remain under-developed within contemporary Catholic theology. Furthermore, among most Christians, there remains a profound lack of devotion and understanding of the necessary link between the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Eucharist.

In retrieving the doctrine of the One Table, the Second Vatican Council emphasized the necessary nourishment that each Christian should derive from the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Eucharist for the life of the Church. According to Dei Verbum §26, “just as faithful and frequent reception of the eucharistic mystery makes the church’s life grow, so we may hope that its spiritual life will receive a new impulse from increased devotion to the word of God.” Since the Scriptures and the Eucharist are intimately linked in Christ, they both establish, strengthen, and maintain the human persons’ life with God. This intimate relationship between the Scriptures and the Eucharist, and what

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this bond means for the Church and each individual, is a topic rarely treated. Therefore, it behooves us to examine more closely Vatican II’s teaching on this rich subject.

I. The Significance of Dei Verbum

It is not an overstatement to say that the Second Vatican Council was perhaps the greatest event of the Church’s life in the twentieth century and the defining ecumenical moment of the Catholic Church. Moreover, within the sixteen conciliar documents Dei Verbum maintains a unique place. As Thomas Norris writes,

the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council, Dei Verbum (DV), enjoys a special dignity as one of only four constitutions appearing among the sixteen documents promulgated by the Council. This status is enhanced further by the importance of the subject matter it deals with, as well as by the recognized theological excellence of the exposition.

The subject matter is so important to the Church’s life that the idea of producing a constitution on revelation appeared as early as the preparations for the council. As Witherup remarks,

already in 1959 the Holy Office, under the direction of Cardinal Ottaviani and with the assistance of that dicastery’s secretary, Jesuit Father Sebastian Tromp, had begun consultations to prepare for the council. A preparatory Theological Commission, one of ten that would draft various proposals for the council, was formed. It was

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9 See e.g., Edward Foley, “Forward,” in Paul Janowiak, The Holy Preaching: The Sacramentality of the Word in the Liturgical Assembly (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), ix-x. The doctrine expressing the essential unity of Word, Sacrament, and Church is something shared by the Orthodox, e.g., see Breck, The Power of the Word, 11ff. I will return to this ecumenical aspect in the concluding chapter.


composed of numerous bishops assisted by expert theologians. They were charged with preparing a major document on revelation.\textsuperscript{13}

And, although work began on the schema from the very beginning, the fathers of Vatican II worked on it throughout all stages of the council: \textit{Dei Verbum} itself was only approved weeks before the conclusion of the council.

\textbf{A. \textit{Dei Verbum}: the Guiding Document to the Council?}

In the end, the drafting of \textit{Dei Verbum} and the council itself became intertwined into a kind of unity: \textit{Dei Verbum} concerns itself with fundamental and primary categories of Christianity that affect all of Christian theology and is a mirror of the whole council. Donald Senior declares, “reviewing the process that led to the formulation of this conciliar text is equivalent to reviewing the whole agonizing and glorious struggle of the Council itself.”\textsuperscript{14} And, Archbishop Florit observed, “because of its inner importance, as well as the many vicissitudes that it has undergone, the history of the draft of the Constitution on Divine Revelation has fused with the history of the council.”\textsuperscript{15}

Furthermore, to some degree, \textit{Dei Verbum} serves as the cornerstone around which the theology of the council itself was framed.\textsuperscript{16} According to Christopher Butler,

outstanding as is the importance of the much larger dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Constitution on Divine Revelation may prove to be the supreme achievement of this council. It deals


\textsuperscript{14} Senior, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 122. See also Holland, “\textit{Dei Verbum},” 114.

\textsuperscript{15} As quoted in Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” III:155.

with an issue which is at the heart of the Christian religion, and
does so in a way which makes possible dialogue on this basic subject
between the Catholic and the other Churches.\textsuperscript{17}

Jared Wicks remarks,

\begin{quote}
Vatican II’s Doctrinal Commission once said that the constitution
on revelation is in a certain way (\textit{quodammodo}) the first of all
the council’s constitutions. Some editions place \textit{Lumen gentium} at the
head of the Vatican II constitutions, but would not the conciliar
ecclesiology be better contextualized if it were placed \textit{after} the
council text starting with ‘hearing the word of God reverently and
proclaiming it confidently…’ and ending with ‘the word of
God...stands forever,’ as does \textit{Dei Verbum}?\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

For different reasons, the two quotes above highlight the importance of \textit{Dei Verbum},
especially in relation to \textit{Lumen Gentium}. I will show that the council’s sacramental
understanding of Scripture is essentially related to the council’s eucharistic ecclesiology
and the two documents shed light upon the other, and for this reason, \textit{Dei Verbum} deserves
more scholarly attention.\textsuperscript{19} It was perhaps fortuitous that \textit{Dei Verbum} spanned the entirety
of the council, due to its centrality to the council itself, and its importance to the life of
the Church and the modern world. \textit{Dei Verbum}’s importance cannot be overlooked, as it
serves as the foundation for the other conciliar documents.

\textbf{B. The Centrality of \textit{Dei Verbum} to Modern Concerns}

\textit{Dei Verbum} touches on central tenets of the faith that shape the Church’s self-
understanding and her ecumenical nature, aspects that are articulated in greater depth in
other conciliar documents (e.g., \textit{Lumen Gentium}, \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, and \textit{Unitatis Redintegratio}).

\textsuperscript{17} Christopher Butler, \textit{The Theology of Vatican II} (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967), 25.
\textsuperscript{18} Jared Wicks, “Vatican II on Revelation—From Behind the Scenes,” \textit{Theological Studies} 71 (2010): 641; see
also Murray, “Revelation,” 74.
\textsuperscript{19} This statement will become more clear in chapter four.
Dei Verbum links the importance of Scripture to living a full Christian life and to the celebration of the divine mysteries within the Church’s liturgy that will also be stated in other conciliar texts (e.g., Sacrosanctum Concilium).

Dei Verbum underwent many revisions during the council before it was promulgated in 1965. Dei Verbum did not develop in a vacuum, but builds upon the Tradition in dialogue with modern thought. In fact, the arduous process that led to the formulation of Dei Verbum resulted from the council’s desire to address the contemporary and ecumenical concerns, and to this end, there was a necessary return to the original sources of Christianity. Witherup notes that Pope John XXIII “envisioned that Vatican II would reformulate church teaching in such a way that it would appeal more broadly and more effectively to modern individuals. Even divine revelation itself was not to be seen as a static, delimited deposit of teachings but as a living body of truth.” The updating (aggiornamento) of the Church’s doctrinal expression was made possible by ressourcement scholars who sought to “return to the sources” (ressourcement) of the Christian faith.

Among those who exercised such a prominent role toward the conciliar ressourcement was Henri de Lubac—I will return to de Lubac’s contributions with regard to the various ressourcement movements below. In the following section, I wish to outline three renewal movements (liturgical, biblical, and patristic) while simultaneously indicating the manners in which they influenced Vatican II, especially toward the retrieval of the One Table. Although distinguished from one another, the patristic, biblical, and liturgical

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21 Witherup, Scripture, 2.
movements form an organic link and are more properly understood as such.

C. Towards Dei Verbum: Three Renewal Movements

As Denis Farkasfalvy comments, “in cooperation with a patristic and liturgical renewal, a new trend was born in the Church leading to a new, biblically grounded type of Catholic theology, which gradually yielded the intellectual and spiritual fermentation that stimulated the decrees of the Second Vatican Council.”

There is certainly a strong interrelationship between liturgy, scripture and the patristic tradition. For, it is in the liturgy that the Church best prepares one to receive and respond to the Word of God: after the council, the very structure of the liturgical texts of Scripture were chosen to shed light on one another, to elucidate the interrelation of the Old Testament to the New Testament, and it is primarily in the Sunday liturgy that the majority of Christians come into contact with Scripture. Moreover, without a return to the patristic sources of the Church’s liturgy, the liturgical renewal was itself not possible. One need only to examine the patristic sources used in the conciliar text, Sacrosanctum Concilium, either

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23 This applies to the liturgy or Holy Mass of the Latin rite. The Eastern rite of the Divine Liturgy does not include a reading from the Old Testament; however, in the Divine Liturgy, the troparia (short hymns rooted in Scripture) are usually interpolated between verses of the Psalms or the prophets. Until the seventh century, the threefold structure of sacred readings for the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern rite was identical to that used in the Latin rite today. See David M. Petras, *Time for the Lord to Act: A Catechetical Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 2005), 66.
24 See Pamela Jackson, *An Abundance of Graces: Reflections on Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 10ff. It is not an accident that both the liturgical and biblical movements contributed to both Dei Verbum and Sacrosanctum Concilium; as the council reminds us, there is an intimate and essential connection between Word and Sacrament in the Christian tradition, and it is primarily in the Sunday liturgy that the majority of Christians encounter Christ in his Word and in the Eucharist. Furthermore, it is no accident that the three renewal movements (liturgical—biblical—patristic) correspond to the same areas of ressourcement espoused by those who have often been labeled as members of the nouvelle théologie, among whom de Lubac was numbered. For a lucid analysis of the liturgical nature of Scripture, see Denis Farkasfalvy, “The Eucharistic Provenance of New Testament Texts,” in *Rediscovering the Eucharist. Ecumenical Conversations*, ed. Roch Kereszty (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 27-51.
directly or indirectly. MacManus writes, “the council embraced a return to the sources, *ressourcement*, both to the biblical sources that are divinely inspired and to the venerable traditions of the early post-biblical centuries. This is evident especially in the dogmatic constitutions on the church and on revelation and, our concern, the disciplinary constitution on the liturgy.”

Although the liturgical renewal began prior to both the biblical and patristic renewals, all three movements are contemporaneous. The biblical renewal began circa the middle of the 19th century and the patristic renewal is closely linked not only chronologically, but also organically, to both the biblical and liturgical movements. Moreover, the retrieval of the doctrine of the One Table is in some way made possible by each of the three *ressourcement* movements that sprang up before the council. The One Table doctrine insists that Scripture is the living Word of God, which is most properly heard, celebrated and proclaimed in the liturgical setting of the Church. Moreover, this doctrine is essentially connected to the patristic method of reading Scripture, especially as it was retrieved by Henri de Lubac.

1. The Liturgical Ressourcement

The modern liturgical renewal had been prepared by the renewal of the liturgical life promoted by Dom Prosper Guéranger in the early nineteenth century at the Benedictine monastery at Solesmes. Martimort indicates that, “in addition to carrying on his fight for the restoration of the Roman liturgy in France, he [Guéranger] educated many priests and faithful in liturgical prayer by means of his *Annee liturgique* (*The Liturgical

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26 Ibid., 387.
27 These points will be further explored below in chapters two, three and four.
Guéranger was only one among many others who contributed to the modern liturgical movement.

Many pontiffs also contributed to the liturgical renewal. Pope Leo XIII (r. 1878-1903), although he did not begin the liturgical movement, anticipated it in some ways. His *Mirae Caritatis* (1902) used language that would be taken up by the Second Vatican Council: e.g., Leo XIII described the eucharist as the source of the human person’s life, and also as the most important of all God’s gifts. This emphasis on the Eucharist as the source of the human person’s life is a theme that will be stressed by the Second Vatican Council, especially in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and is present in de Lubac’s retrieval of Spiritual exegesis and Eucharistic ecclesiology. In *Lumen Gentium*, we are reminded that “when we really participate in the body of the Lord through the breaking of the eucharistic bread, we are raised up to communion with him and among ourselves.”

Going beyond *Mirae Caritatis*, Vatican II will stress not only the necessity of the Eucharist to attain this life, but will also urge familiarity of the Scriptures to obtain this holiness.

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29 Pope Leo XIII (*Mirae Caritatis*, article 4), writes, “now if any one will seriously consider the benefits which flow from the Eucharist he will understand that conspicuous and chief among them all is that in which the rest, without exception, are included; in a word it is for men the source of life, of that life which best deserves the name.” Compare *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §10, where the liturgy is described as the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed and the fountain of the Church’s life.
30 Pope Leo XIII (*Mirae Caritatis*, article 6), remarks, “for as men and states alike necessarily have their being from God, so they can do nothing good except in God through Jesus Christ, through whom every best and choicest gift has ever proceeded and proceeds. But the source and chief of all these gifts is the venerable Eucharist, which not only nourishes and sustains that life the desire whereof demands our most strenuous efforts, but also enhances beyond measure that dignity of man of which in these days we hear so much. For what can be more honourable or a more worthy object of desire than to be made, as far as possible, sharers and partakers in the divine nature?”
31 *Lumen Gentium* §7.
Thus, in conclusion, by reading and study of the sacred books “may the word of the Lord speed on and triumph” (2 Th 3, 1), and the treasure of revelation, entrusted to the church, fill human hearts ever more and more. Just as faithful and frequent reception of the eucharistic mystery makes the church’s life grow, so we may hope that its spiritual life will receive a new impulse from increased devotion to the word of God, which “abides for ever” (Is 40, 8; 1 Pt 1, 23-25).32

Here is not the place to develop the importance of the Scriptures for the believer’s growth in union with God. However, I will return to this important topic in chapter three.

Leo XIII’s successor to the Petrine ministry, Pope St. Pius X (r. 1903-1914), began the liturgical reform of the twentieth century with the motu proprio on sacred music, \textit{Tra La Sollecitudini} (1903). In this motu proprio, the Pope established laws for singing in the Mass and for the restoration of Gregorian chant. Anticipating the Second Vatican Council, Pope Pius X exhorted the faithful to participate actively in the celebration of the Eucharist.33 To help increase the faithful’s active participation in the celebration of the holy mysteries, Pope Pius X urged frequent, even daily, communion in the decree \textit{Sacra Tridentina}.34 He also encouraged children to receive holy communion once they had...

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32 \textit{Dei Verbum} §26.
33 Pope Pius X (\textit{Tra La Sollecitudini} in Jackson, \textit{An Abundance of Graces}, 117) writes, “being moved with the most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish again in every way among all the faithful, the first thing to which We must turn our attention is the holiness and dignity of the temple. There Our people assemble for the purpose of acquiring the Christian spirit from its first and indispensable source, namely the active participation in the most sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. It is vain to hope for such copious blessings from Heaven if our worship of the Most High, rather than ascending with an odor of sweetness, again puts into our Lord’s hands the scourges with which the unworthy profaners were once driven out of the temple by the Divine Redeemer.” Compare \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} §14-20 where the “full, conscious and active” participation (especially inward but also outward) in the liturgy is endorsed.
34 Pope Pius X (\textit{Sacra Tridentina}) teaches that, “frequent and daily Communion, as a practice most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the state of grace, and approaches the Holy Table with a right and devout intention (\textit{recta piaque mente}) can be prohibited therefrom.” According to Pierre Jounel (“Chapter IV: From the Council of Trent to Vatican Council II,” in \textit{Principles of the Liturgy}, ed. A. G. Martimort, \textit{The Church At Prayer} (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987), I:74), “participation becomes full only when the faithful share in the Lord’s table. That is why Pius X decided to urge Christians to frequent and even daily communion, as indeed the council of Trent had done in its time.”
reached the age of reason (approximately seven) in another decree, *Quam Singulari*.\(^{35}\)

Pope Pius XI (r. 1922-1939) in his apostolic constitution, *Divini Cultus*, wrote in 1928, that the restoration of Gregorian chant for the use of the people would provide the means whereby “the faithful may participate in divine worship more actively.”\(^{36}\) For Vatican II, this call to active participation in the liturgy especially requires greater and more varied exposure to the Scriptures outside of and during the liturgy so that the faithful are formed by the divine Word and learn to give proper thanks to God, so that they may be built up into the Trinitarian union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.\(^{37}\)

Pope Pius XII (r. 1939-1958) contributed to the liturgical renewal with *Mediator Dei* (1947), the first encyclical letter devoted entirely to the liturgy.\(^{38}\) This encyclical was Pius XII’s theological reflection of the liturgy that incorporated the best insights of the liturgical movement, and in it, Pius XII referred to the eucharist as the font of Christian piety, the main act of divine worship.\(^{39}\) Furthermore, *Mediator Dei* developed theological points that would be used later in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: e.g., the liturgy is an exercise of Christ’s priestly office, which is offered by the faithful through the priest, and to a certain extent, in union with him.\(^{40}\) Pius XII also indicated various ways Christ is present in the

\(^{35}\)*In the Christian East, the tradition remains for every Christian—children and newborns included—to receive the ‘sacraments of initiation’ (Baptism, Eucharist, and Chrismation) immediately; this tradition was once shared also in the West, and we can hope that it may be restored in the Western lung of the Catholic Church.


\(^{37}\)*See *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §35; §48.

\(^{38}\)*See Jackson, *An Abundance of Graces*, 3.

\(^{39}\)*Pope Pius XII (*Mediator Dei*, article 5) observes, “with more widespread and more frequent reception of the sacraments, with the beauty of the liturgical prayers more fully savored, the worship of the Eucharist came to be regarded for what it really is: the fountain-head of genuine Christian devotion. Bolder relief was given likewise to the fact that all the faithful make up a single and very compact body with Christ for its Head, and that the Christian community is in duty bound to participate in the liturgical rites according to their station.”

\(^{40}\)*Pope Pius XII (*Mediator Dei*, article 87) writes, “the rites and prayers of the eucharistic sacrifice signify and show no less clearly that the oblation of the Victim is made by the priests in company with the people. For
liturgy, anticipating *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7.\(^4^1\) The various manners in which Christ is present to the Church is also an aspect that is similarly formulated by de Lubac, especially in connection with the sacramental-exegesis of Sacred Scripture.\(^4^2\)

The liturgical movement caused people to be more attentive to the Word of God and its use in the liturgy. Furthermore, if people are to have greater access to and more intimacy with the Scriptures at the table of the Word, this Word needs to be proclaimed in a language common and comprehensible to the local Church, to both lay and clergy.

Without making extensive changes, Pius XII did allow the epistle and gospel to be read in the vernacular after they had first been read in Latin, and he allowed the publication of not only does the sacred minister, after the oblation of the bread and wine when he turns to the people, say the significant prayer: “Pray brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty;”\(^5^0\) but also the prayers by which the divine Victim is offered to God are generally expressed in the plural number: and in these it is indicated more than once that the people also participate in this august sacrifice inasmuch as they offer the same.” And elsewhere (*Mediator Dei*, article 78) he observes, “the cooperation of the faithful is required so that sinners may be individually purified in the blood of the Lamb. For though, speaking generally, Christ reconciled by His painful death the whole human race with the Father, He wished that all should approach and be drawn to His cross, especially by means of the sacraments and the eucharistic sacrifice, to obtain the salutary fruits produced by Him upon it. Through this active and individual participation, the members of the Mystical Body not only become daily more like to their divine Head, but the life flowing from the Head is imparted to the members.” According to Jackson (*An Abundance of Graces*, 4), “at the same time *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was published, commentators were quick to point out how heavily it relied on *Mediator Dei*, not only for its theology but sometimes its very words, even though this is not immediately apparent from the footnotes, which provide references only to biblical, patristic, and liturgical sources, and the Council of Trent.” See *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7.

\(^4^1\) Pope Pius XII (*Mediator Dei*, article 20) writes, “along with the Church, therefore, her Divine Founder is present at every liturgical function: Christ is present at the august sacrifice of the altar both in the person of His minister and above all under the eucharistic species. He is present in the sacraments, infusing into them the power which makes them ready instruments of sanctification. He is present, finally, in prayer of praise and petition we direct to God….The sacred liturgy is, consequently, the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members.” It is instructive to compare the various ways Christ is present in the liturgy according to Pope Pius XII with *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7: “Christ is always present to his church, especially during the liturgy, so that this great task can be fully accomplished. He is present through the sacrifice which is the mass, at once in the person of the minister—“the same one who then offered himself on the cross is now making his offering through the agency of priests”—and also, most fully, under the eucharistic elements. He is present through his power in the sacraments; thus, when anyone baptizes, Christ himself is baptizing. He is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when scripture is read in church. Finally, he is present when the church praying or singing hymns, he himself who promised, “where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (Mt 18, 20).” Christ’s presence in the *proclamation of Scripture during the liturgy* is absent from *Mediator Dei*.

\(^4^2\) I will return to this topic in the following chapters and show: how it is related in the council documents, its presence in the theology of de Lubac, and its relationship to the One Table.
bilingual rituals.43

Many of these liturgical developments found their way into the documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially in *Dei Verbum* and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. For example, *Dei Verbum* §22 mirrors Pius XII’s concern to make Scripture more accessible to the faithful: “easy access to holy scripture should be available to all the christian faithful.” In *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §36 the use of the vernacular in the liturgy was encouraged: “in the mass, the administration of the sacraments, and in other parts of the liturgy, there can not at all infrequently exist a practice of using the local language, a practice which is really helpful among the people.” This trend toward allowing the liturgy and the scriptural reading to be proclaimed in the vernacular is quite significant. If the Scriptures are truly the Word of God, and God only speaks his one Word to humanity, then each individual must be given the opportunity to hear that Word in his own native tongue. Greater contact with the Divine Word must be provided for the faithful.

Although many popes significantly contributed to the renewal of the liturgy, the work of several theologians and monks in the effort to renew the liturgy cannot be overlooked. In Belgium, the monk of Mont Cesar, Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960) took Pope Pius X’s call to active participation to heart.44 In 1909, Beauduin began a liturgical movement that would extend beyond Belgium. He was concerned not only for the laity, but for his fellow priests. For the laity, Beauduin published a small missal to aid in their

43 Jounel, “Chapter IV: From the Council of Trent to Vatican Council II,” I:75f.
44 Louis Bouyer (*Liturgical Piety* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955), 60) declares that “no man of the time was so well prepared as Dom Lambert to listen to the words of the Blessed Pope, and no one else was so ready as he to proclaim these words so forcefully.” According to Alcuin Reid (*The Organic Development of the Liturgy*, 78-79), Beauduin is the founder of the liturgical movement. Louis Bouyer (*Liturgical Piety*, 58) believes that the “decisive turning point for the Liturgical Movement came in 1909, when, at a Catholic Conference held at Malines in Belgium, Dom Lambert Beauduin, a monk of Mont César, proposed what was to become the basis of the Belgian liturgical renewal.”
understanding of the liturgy, and for priests, he organized annual liturgical courses and conferences at Louvain.45 Another Belgian abbey, Saint-Andre in Bruges published a missal46 to help the faithful participate in Sunday Mass and sung Vespers. In Germany, two important theologians made significant contributions towards the liturgical renewal: Romano Guardini (1885-1968) and Dom Odo Casel (1886-1948).

Guardini provided principles that supported much of the activity of the liturgical movement, e.g., that the liturgy is properly celebrated, in their respective manners, by the entire Church, laity and ordained.47 This principle anticipates Vatican II’s understanding that the liturgy of the Church is a work of the whole Christ, the whole Church—laity and the ministerial priesthood, the entire body united with Christ, its head. According to the Second Vatican Council, in the liturgy, “the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is the head and the members, is together giving complete and definitive public expression to its worship.”48 Another theologian, Dom Odo Casel, a Benedictine monk of Maria Laach, developed a theology of the mysteries that drew from both patristic and biblical understanding.49 Casel’s elucidation that Christ continues to act through the mystery

45 According to Jounel (“Chapter IV: From the Council of Trent to Vatican Council II,” I:74), “to this end he published a small missal for the people. At the same time, however, priests had to be prepared to become liturgical educators of the faithful, and for this purpose he organized annual liturgical courses and conferences at Louvain, while his abbey published a journal, Les Questions liturgiques.”
46 Gaspar Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal (Bruges: Abbey of Saint André, 1940).
47 According to Guardini, (The Spirit of the Liturgy (London: Sheed and Ward, 1930), 6), “the Liturgy is the Church’s public and lawful act of worship and it is performed and conducted by the officials whom the Church herself has designated for the post...In the Liturgy God is to be honoured by the body of the faithful, and the latter is in its turn to derive sanctification from this act of worship. It is important that this objective nature of the Liturgy should be fully understood.”
48 Sacrosanctum Concilium, §7.
49 Roch Kereszty writes (Wedding Feast of the Lamb: Eucharistic Theology From a Historical, Biblical, and Systematic Perspective (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), 139), “the ‘Theology of the Mysteries’ approach begun by Odo Casel intended to recover the traditional biblical and patristic understanding of the liturgy: in every sacrament, and in the Eucharist par excellence, we enter into the divine present and the everlasting Today, where we become contemporaneous with the mysteries of Christ’s incarnation, death, Resurrection, and eschatological lordship in the spirit.” According to Casel (Mystery of Christian Worship and Other Writings. (Westminster: Newman Press, 1962), 12-15), “the content of the mystery of Christ is...the person of the God-man and his saving deed for the Church; the Church, in turn, enters the mystery through this
The sacrament of the liturgy will also be expressed in similar language by Vatican II: “the liturgy, through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the eucharist, ‘the act of our redemption is being carried out’, becomes thereby the chief means through which believers are expressing in their lives and demonstrating to others the mystery which is Christ, and the sort of entity that the true church really is” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* §2).

Salvation history is continued primarily in the liturgy of the Church because it is here that Christ’s life, death and resurrection is celebrated in the Eucharist and the Sacred Scriptures are read and explained to the faithful. Casel drew attention to the Paschal mystery as the heart of the liturgy, and this too would be retrieved in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: it is stated that the paschal mystery is continued in the activity of the Church (§5) and the paschal mystery is unfolded in the Church through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the sacramental ministration (§6).

The Christian thing, therefore, in its full and primitive meaning of God’s good Word, or Christ’s is not as it were a philosophy of life with religious background music, nor a moral or theological training; it is a *mysterium* as Saint Paul means the word, a revelation made by God to man through acts of God’s manhood, full of life and power; it is mankind’s way to God made possible by this revelation and the grace of it communicating the solemn entry of the redeemed Church into the presence of the everlasting Father through sacrifice, through perfect devotion….What is necessary is a living, active sharing in the redeeming deed of Christ….For this purpose the Lord has given us the mysteries of worship: the sacred actions which we perform, but which, at the same time, the Lord performs upon us by his priests’ service in the Church. Through these actions it becomes possible for us to share most intensively and concretely in a kind of immediate contact, yet most spiritually too, in God’s saving acts.” See also Jouzel, “Chapter IV: From the Council of Trent to Vatican Council II,” I:72ff.

Casel’s retrieval of *mysterium* as it relates to the liturgy is similar to that retrieval elucidated by de Lubac’s in *History and Spirit* and *Medieval Exegesis*. I will return to de Lubac’s understanding of this important topic in the next chapter, as it is related to the One Table.

The council (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §§5-6) declares: “the great divine acts among the people of the old covenant foreshadowed this deed of human redemption and perfect glorification of God; Christ the Lord brought it to its completion, above all through the paschal mystery, that is, his passion, his resurrection from the dead and his glorious ascension….Just as Christ was sent by the Father, he himself sent apostles, filled with the holy Spirit, and for the same purpose: that they should preach the good news to every creature, and thus announce that the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan and death, and carried us over into the Father’s kingdom. Not only this, however: they were also to enact what they were announcing through sacrifice and sacraments, the things around which the whole of liturgical life revolves. This is how it is that the people are implanted into the paschal mystery of Christ through baptism: how they die with him, are buried with him and rise with him; how they receive the spirit of adoption as daughters and sons, the spirit ‘in whom we cry, Abba, Father’ (Rm 8.15), and thus become the true worshippers whom the Father seeks.”
The foundation for the liturgical renewal that continued after the Second Vatican Council was laid in the early twentieth century. This liturgical ressourcement was able to update the Church’s liturgical life precisely by returning to the past sources. Moreover, this return to the sources of Christian faith took place in union with the biblical and patristic renewal. There is an essential unity shared by the liturgy and Scripture. Therefore, it is not surprising that the liturgical and biblical renewal would both overlap prior to the council and serve to enrich the Church’s explanation of this unity at the council. The liturgical renewal helped lead to the retrieval of the sacramental unity of Scripture, Eucharist, and Church, and, in chapter four, I will draw out the implications that here I have only briefly mentioned.

2. The Biblical Ressourcement

The biblical renewal was contemporaneous to the liturgical movement.\textsuperscript{52} During the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the most pressing controversies surrounded the issue of the historical reliability of the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{53} According to Frank Lambert:

\textsuperscript{52} Denis Farkasfalvy observes (“The Case for Spiritual Exegesis,” \textit{Communio} 10 (1988): 332), “‘movement’ may not be the right word to describe our recently recovered interest in the Bible, yet we can certainly speak of a definite shift of theological, catechetical and homiletic interests toward the Bible, which thus obtained a much more eminent place in the Church’s life and received more attention than it ever had in the past several centuries of Catholic history.”

\textsuperscript{53} See Gerald O’Collins, \textit{Retrieving Fundamental Theology} (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 49. According to Jerome Neyrey (“Interpretation of Scripture in the Life of the Church,” in \textit{Vatican II: The Unfinished Agenda}, ed. Richard Lucien, et al. (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 33-34), “as a result of the Enlightenment, the nineteenth century saw the Church as the object of rational attack, an attack which would touch Gospel interpretation directly. Post-Enlightenment scholars came to realize that the churches’ teaching and preaching about Jesus were heavily dogmatic and often overlaid with ecclesiastical ideology. Discoveries in languages, archeology and the like confirmed the perceived hiatus between what ‘history’ [i.e. ‘reason’] could tell us about Jesus and how he was preached according to Church dogma. With science and reason as trustworthy guides, authority and tradition came under attack as sources of ‘truth,’ which cast the churches in the role of reason’s enemy. And so a split developed in Gospel interpretation between the Jesus of history [who spoke of the kingdom of God] and the Christ of faith [who left us an unenlightened Church]. Reasonable scholars could only applaud the move to recover the genuine or historical Jesus, for this alone could be true. On this point alone, scholarship would travel 360 degrees in the course of the next century. Yet it should be obvious that critical Gospel scholarship was initially perceived as a way of attacking the Church, a perception which could hardly win it favorable reception by the Church.”
Higher criticism challenged traditional views of the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Genesis was not, as the King James Version proclaimed, the work of Moses. Rather, according to the Wellhausen theory—named for its German originator, Julius Wellhausen—it was actually written by a number of authors who drew upon several sources. In the ironical depiction of one Presbyterian, M. B. Lambdin, ‘The Pentateuch is thus not Mosaic; but a mosaic.’ Similarly, higher criticism called into question the history of the New Testament, from the life and miracles of Jesus to the allegory of the book of Revelation. Like the Pentateuch, the Gospels were shown to have been based on several, contradictory sources that resulted in various accounts of the life of Jesus. After subjecting the New Testament to historical analysis, critics concluded that it was a work of dogma, not history. To them, what traditionalists regarded as reliable history was myth or legend.

Interrelated to the biblical movement is the question of the relation between historical-critical and spiritual exegesis. Here, I do not intend to draw such a strong contrast between the modern scientific methods vis à vis the patristic exegetical tradition, as if the one has to be opposed to the other. However, it will become quite clear that the spiritual interpretation of scripture can only take place within the Church, especially within the liturgy, and only in the light of faith in Christ. On the other hand, modern scientific methods allow for the scriptural analysis and interpretation from outside the ecclesial setting, i.e., the historical-critical methodology itself neither requires faith in the divine nature of the scriptures nor faith that Jesus Christ is Lord, and therefore, the Old Testament is not necessarily interpreted in its relation to faith in Christ, the fullness of God’s revelation. Already in the early nineteenth century, Protestant scholars were using

55 See Baum, “Vatican II’s Constitution on Revelation,” 54-55.
56 This will be explained in greater detail in chapters two and three.
the historical-critical method. The historical critical exegesis of Scripture was preoccupied with establishing bedrock history in the bible, and, as such, the weight given to the historicity of the sacred texts led to the neglect of the spiritual understanding (something emphasized by Patristic hermeneutics) of the Sacred Scriptures.

As an increasing amount of scholars investigated the historicity of the New Testament, these outcomes led to a heightened skepticism regarding the historical reliability of the sacred texts. In time, there were those within the Church who saw the

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57 John Donahue (“The Bible in Roman Catholicism Since Divino Afflante Spiritu,” Word & World XIII.4 (1993): 405) writes, “until quite recently biblical scholarship was principally done by Protestant scholars, who have been responsible for the major achievements of biblical scholarship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.” See also Witherup, Scripture; Fitzmyer, “The Second Vatican Council and the Role of the Bible in Catholic Life,” 37.

58 But, not to the extent that the concern for historicity was entirely lacking. In fact, according to Breck (Scripture in Tradition, 2), “the early Church Fathers, particularly Irenaeus and Origen, adopted for their interpretation of Scripture an approach that in their time was clearly analogous to the way exegesis is done today. They used critical tools to establish the text (that is, to determine the most accurate readings based on a comparison of ancient manuscripts) and to draw from the text its literal, historical meaning.” See also de Lubac, History and Spirit, especially 103-158, where de Lubac shows unequivocally that Origen’s spiritual interpretation of Sacred Scripture was firmly founded in the literal (or historical) sense, with the caveat that Origen’s understanding of the literal sense is not identical, though similar, to the modern notion of the literal sense. In chapter two, the differences between the ancient literal sense and the modern literal meaning will be clarified. However, it must also be made clear that there is today no obvious consensus concerning the meaning of the literal sense. As William Wright (“The Literal Sense of Scripture According to Henri De Lubac: Insights From Patristic Exegesis of the Transfiguration,” Modern Theology 28:2 (2012), 253) observes, “for something often synonymous with the ‘plain’ sense, there is much about the literal sense as a theological topic which is neither plain nor straightforward.”

59 According to Ignace de la Potterie (“Biblical Exegesis: A Science of Faith,” in Opening Up the Scriptures: Joseph Ratzinger and the Foundations of Biblical Interpretation, eds. José Granados, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 32), “from the last century onward, the conviction has spread that the only really ‘scientific’ and modern method in exegesis is the ‘historical-critical’ method: the exegesis of a book of the Bible should be only the study of its sources and of the historical environment of its author, followed by a study of the philological and literary aspects of the text. Under no circumstances ought it to venture onto the terrain of theology. But this is precisely the whole problem! Some even go so far as to affirm that one must attentively distinguish (scientific) exegesis and (theological) interpretation. The latter would no longer be rigorously scientific. So we come to the disconcerting paradox that, contrary to the entire ancient tradition, the task of the exegete would no longer be that of interpreting Scripture or of seeking its sense, but solely that of reconstructing its historical genesis and then explaining the texts from a cultural, philological, and literary point of view.” See also, Francesco Bertoldi, “Henri De Lubac on Dei Verbum,” Communio 17 (1990): 88ff.

60 According to Witherup (Scripture, 12), “the more scholars investigated the Gospels, the more the outcomes led to skepticism about the historical reliability of the texts.” Paul Decock (“Can the Church Fathers Help Us to Develop a Better Approach to the Actualisation of Scripture?,” in African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue, ed. Hans Wit, and Gerald O. West (Boston: Brill, 2008), 329) observes, “the turn to critical biblical studies reflects a knowledge system which, while offering new insights, radically affected our relationship to the biblical text. A new approach to the biblical text was constructed which was very different from the approach developed during the first centuries of Christianity and which was the common approach for more than 1500 years.”
historical-critical method as antithetical to Christian faith because it called into question
the inerrancy of sacred scripture: that is, if God is the author of the Sacred Scriptures,
how could it contain any falsehood? On the other hand, there were also those within the
Church who embraced the historical-critical exegesis of the bible as a normal outcome of
the search for truth. As Witherup explains:

In time, two large, amorphous camps of scholars formed along
doctrinal lines, including in the Catholic Church. There were those
who saw in the historical-critical method hope for making progress
on our historical understanding of the Bible. They did not see this
as a threat to faith but as a natural outcome of intellectual curiosity
and a search for the truth. Others, however, including Popes Pius
IX and Leo XIII, saw grave danger in these developments and
sought to stave them off. They feared that such historical
questioning would lead to a serious erosion of faith primarily
because they call into question the inerrancy of the Bible. 61

According to Witherup (and others), this principal division continues to exist in our own
day. 62

In response to such errors (e.g., the rejection of the historical reliability of the
Scriptures or the question surrounding the inerrancy of the Scriptures) that were

51 Witherup, Scripture, 12. See also Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Origin and
Background;” Giacomo Martina, “The Historical Context in Which the Idea of a New Ecumenical
62 Witherup (Scripture, 12-13) states, “this division existed right down to the eve of Vatican II, and indeed
continues in our own day. The history of Catholic biblical scholarship throughout the first half of the
twentieth century is a bit like the dance of life, two steps forward, one back. Scholars would publish
findings on their research on some of these biblical questions only to be attacked as undermining the faith.
Even as Vatican II got under way, such actions were still being taken against biblical scholars who had come
under suspicion for questionable positions.” See also Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds. Reclaiming
the Bible for the Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), especially Brevard S. Childs, “On Reclaiming the
Bible for Christian Theology,” 1-17; Richard John Neuhaus, ed. Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger
Conference on Bible and Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), especially Joseph Ratzinger, “Biblical
Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today,” 1-23;
Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” III:158; Donahue, “The Bible in Roman
Catholicism since Divino Afflante Spiritu,” 407-413; Raymond Collins, “Rome and the Critical Study of the
affirmed the inspiration of Sacred Scripture by the Holy Spirit who ensures that they are without error.\textsuperscript{63} Responding to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, Vatican I emphasized the inaccessibility of supernatural truth to unaided natural reason and the need for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the author of the scriptures.\textsuperscript{64}

On the other hand, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with Leo XIII and Pius XII, the Church began to reassess the contemporary scientific methods being used for biblical exegesis and their compatibility with Catholic biblical studies. According to Joseph Fitzmyer, “because of the critical spirit of the Enlightenment, German historicism...and because of the new discoveries and the scientific advances in biology and evolution, a radically rationalist way of thinking and interpreting emerged, which Leo XIII sought to cope with in his encyclical, \textit{Providentissimus Deus}.”\textsuperscript{65}

\textit{Providentissimus Deus} reinforced traditional Catholic teaching, emphasizing the historicity

\textsuperscript{63} According to Vatican I (\textit{Dei Filius}, chapter 2), “these books [the Old and New Testaments] the Church holds to be sacred and canonical not because she subsequently approved them by her authority after they had been composed by unaided human skill, nor simply because they contain revelation without error, but because, being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and were as such committed to the Church.” See Raymond Brown, and Thomas A. Collins, “Church Pronouncements,” in \textit{New Jerome Biblical Commentary}, ed. Raymond Brown, et al. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989), 1167. According to Collins (“Rome and the Critical Study of the New Testament,” 357), “at issue was the inerrancy of the Scriptures, a doctrine the Church wanted to uphold in view of an increasing number of opinions which saw the Scriptures as being in conflict with scientific and historical truth. To this rationalist point of view, the Council opposed the inspiration and canonicity of the Scriptures.”

\textsuperscript{64} As Witherup (\textit{Scripture}, 8) states, Vatican I “basically affirmed the teachings of the Council of Trent, especially those concerning the validity of the Bible and church traditions outside of the Bible, although it did not advance this question. The council went on to affirm the inspiration of Sacred Scripture by the Holy Spirit, calling God their author who ensures that they are “without error.” Neither Trent nor Vatican I developed a thoroughgoing theology of revelation, but together they managed to solidify what was for centuries a specific approach to the question.” De Lubac too emphasized the inspiration of the Scriptures: it is only possible to interpret the Scriptures according to the Spirit who inspired them—I will return to this topic in chapters two and three.

\textsuperscript{65} Fitzmyer, “The Second Vatican Council and the Role of the Bible in Catholic Life,” 36. Pope Leo XIII established the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1902 to further biblical scholarship and to protect the authority of Scripture against exaggerated criticism and to help further Catholic scientific progress in biblical exegesis.
and accuracy of both the Old and New Testaments as inspired documents.\textsuperscript{66} With 

*Providentissimus Deus* (1893) and *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XII authorized the pursuit and use of the available scientific tools to help in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.\textsuperscript{67}

In *Providentissimus Deus* a new era concerning biblical studies was inaugurated.\textsuperscript{68} As a defense against the contemporary attacks on Scripture, Leo XIII advocated the use of available scientific tools in Catholic biblical studies.\textsuperscript{69} In *Providentissimus Deus*, Leo helped bring forth a positive view of and gave Catholics greater freedom to use the historical scientific exegesis of the bible; however, his endorsement of historical biblical criticism remained cautious.\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{66} According to Witherup (Scripture, 9), Leo XIII “essentially reiterated the church’s longstanding tradition of biblical inerrancy, affirming that inspired texts could not contain any errors because they emanate from God.”


\textsuperscript{68} See Brown and Collins, “Church Pronouncements,” 1169-1170.

\textsuperscript{69} Leo XIII (*Providentissimus Deus*, §36-37) taught: “the study of the ancient Oriental languages as well as the practice of scientific criticism. These two acquirements are in these days held in high estimation, and therefore the clergy, by making themselves more or less fully acquainted with them as time and place may demand, will the better be able to discharge their office with becoming credit, for they must make themselves ‘all things to all,’ (1 Cor 9:22), always ‘ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope’ (1 Peter 3:15). Hence it is most proper that Professors of Sacred Scripture and theologians should master those tongues in which the sacred Books were originally written; and it would be well that Church students also should cultivate them, more especially those who aspire to academic degrees. And endeavors should be made to establish in all academic institutions—as has already been laudably done in many—chairs of the other ancient languages, especially the Semitic, and of subjects connected therewith, for the benefit principally of those who are intended to profess sacred literature. These latter, with a similar object in view, should make themselves well and thoroughly acquainted with the art of true criticism.”

\textsuperscript{70} Stephenson (“Roman Catholic Biblical Scholarship,” 308-309) states, “in addition to being an attempt to strike down the excesses of critical scholarship, the encyclical [*Providentissimus Deus*] sought to be a cautious but positive encouragement to more judicious critical scholarship among Catholics.” Leo XIII (*Providentissimus Deus*, §38) writes, “it is clear, on the other hand, that in historical questions, such as the origin and the handing down of writings, the witness of history is of primary importance, that historical investigation should be made with the utmost care, and that in this matter internal evidence is seldom of great value, except as confirmation. To look upon it in any other light will be to open the door to many evil consequences. It will make the enemies of religion much more bold and confident in attacking and mangling the sacred Books, and this vaunted ‘higher criticism’ will resolve itself into the reflection of the bias and prejudice of the critics. It will not throw on the Scripture the light that is sought or prove of any advantage to doctrine; it will only give rise to disagreement and dissension, those sure notes of error, which the critics in question so plentifully exhibit in their own persons. And seeing that most of them are tainted with false philosophy and rationalism, it must lead to the elimination from the sacred writings of all
Leo tentatively supported the historical-critical method, and he established the Pontifical Biblical Commission to foster responsible, creative, critical scholarship by using all valid aspects of new scientific means.\textsuperscript{71} In addition to his tentative support to the scientific exegesis of Scripture, Leo also taught that an interpretation of Scripture cannot contradict an interpretation that has the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and, in interpreting difficult passages, exegetes must follow the analogy of faith.\textsuperscript{72} Leo’s cautious support of the use of contemporary scientific hermeneutics prepared the way for Pope Pius XII’s resounding endorsement of the historical critical method in \textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu}.

\textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu}, issued September 30, 1943, is often called the Magna Carta of Catholic biblical studies.\textsuperscript{73} This encyclical letter was partially written in response to a spurious pamphlet, which was an attack against the scientific study of Scripture, written by Dolindo Ruotolo under a pseudonym, Dain Cohene. Marcellino D’Ambrosio explains:

In Pius XII’s encyclical \textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu} (1943), a rigorously scientific and critical approach to the study of the Bible finally received the Catholic Church’s official endorsement. This

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\item \textsuperscript{72} Quoting from Vatican I’s \textit{Dei Filius}, chapter 2, Leo XIII (\textit{Providentissimus Deus §27}) says, that “in things of faith and morals belonging to the building up of Christian doctrine, what is to be considered the true sense of Holy Scripture is that which has been held and is held by our Holy Mother the Church, whose place it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; and therefore that it is permitted to no one to interpret Holy Scripture against such sense or also against the unanimous agreement of the Fathers.” In \textit{Providentissimus Deus §28}, Leo XIII writes with regards to difficult passages, “the analogy of faith should be followed.”
\item \textsuperscript{73} As Witherup (\textit{Scripture}, 9) states, “Pope Pius XII issued a groundbreaking encyclical that most scholars consider to be the Magna Carta of Catholic biblical studies.” See also Raymond Brown, “Church Pronouncements,” in \textit{New Jerome Biblical Commentary}, ed. Raymond Brown, et al. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989), 1167; Stephenson, “Roman Catholic Biblical Scholarship,” 318.
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landmark statement was initially provoked by an inflammatory pamphlet sent to the Italian bishops by a certain Dolindo Ruotolo which alleged that so-called scientific exegesis was in reality driven by an “accursed spirit of pride, presumption, and superficiality, disguised under minute investigations and hypocritical literal exactness.”

Ruotolo proposed as an alternative to scientific hermeneutics a return to patristic spiritual exegesis. He published such a bizarre collection of patristic commentary that this thirteen volume series was placed on the Index in 1940. Because de Lubac showed such keen interest in patristic exegesis, some advocates of scientific exegesis wondered whether de Lubac himself was inimical to historical criticism. Here is not the place to attempt an answer to this charge; however, in the following chapter, it should become clear that de Lubac was not opposed to modern scientific exegesis.

Rooted in Providentissimus Deus, Divino Afflante Spiritu went far beyond it by allowing Catholic scholars more freedom to pursue scientific biblical studies. Divino Afflante Spiritu sought to maintain a balance between the divine and human aspects of Sacred Scripture simultaneously encouraging biblical scholars to pursue diligently contemporary scientific advances that would aid in the study of the ‘divine oracles’ without neglecting to attend

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76 According to D’Ambrosio (“Henri De Lubac and the Critique of Scientific Exegesis,” 366), “several supporters of the new scientific method could not help but wonder whether de Lubac’s interest in patristic exegesis was fueled by the same hostility to historical criticism demonstrated by Ruotolo.”
78 Pope Pius XII, (Divino Afflante Spiritu, §11) observes, “more precise methods and technical skills have been developed in the course of actual experience, it gives us information at once more abundant and more accurate. How much light has been derived from these explorations for the more correct and fuller understanding of the sacred Books all experts know, as well as all those who devote themselves to these studies. The value of these excavations is enhanced by the discovery from time to time of written documents, which help much towards the knowledge of the languages, letters, events, customs, and forms of worship of most ancient times. And of no less importance are papyri, which have contributed so much to the knowledge of the discovery and investigation, so frequent in our times, of letters and institutions, both public and private, especially from the time of our Savior. Moreover, ancient codices of the sacred Books have been found and edited with discerning thoroughness; the exegesis of the Fathers of the Church has been more widely and thoroughly examined; in fine, the manner of speaking, relating, and writing in
to the spiritual sense. To aid in the task of exegesis, the encyclical states that the exegete must begin from the literal meaning of the text, that is, with what was in the minds of the human authors. Although Pope Pius XII primarily encouraged attention to the literal sense in scientific exegesis, he also recommended that modern exegetes attend to the spiritual sense, although with some hesitation.

It should, however, never be forgotten that this use [the spiritual sense] of the Sacred Scripture is, as it were, extrinsic to it and accidental, and that, especially in these days, it is not free from danger, since the faithful, in particular those who are well-informed in the sciences sacred and profane, wish to know what God has told us in the Sacred Letters rather than what an ingenious orator or writer may suggest by a clever use of the words of Scripture.

If, in the above citation, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* is referring to the spiritual sense as it was practiced and understood according to the patristic and medieval exegetes (and retrieved by de Lubac), then it seems to misunderstand the inherent unity between letter and spirit held by ancient Christian hermeneutics. I do not wish to address this assertion here; however, in the following section it will become clear that, according to de Lubac, ultimately the literal and the spiritual sense cannot be separated and the spiritual sense is certainly not extrinsic or accidental to the Scriptures, but, due to the sacramental

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79 Pope Pius XII (*Divino Afflante Spiritu*, §14) states, “in the performance of this task [the interpretation of Sacred Scripture] let the interpreters bear in mind that their foremost and greatest endeavor should be to discern and define clearly that sense of the biblical words that is called ‘literal.’” See also §15-16. Patristic exegetes too advocated beginning with the literal sense, and in fact, the literal sense can be said to be *sine qua non* to the spiritual exegesis that is most commonly associated with the Fathers. The modern understanding of the literal sense is similar, but different, to the patristic notion of the literal or historical sense. I will return to the patristic understanding of the literal sense in the following chapter and the differences between the patristic and the modern understanding of this sense will be made clearer. See Farkasfalvy, *Inspiration and Interpretation*, 121-122.

80 Pope Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, §15-16. Pius XII’s call to use both the modern scientific methods of exegesis and patristic hermeneutics anticipates *Dei Verbum*, and to some degrees mirrors de Lubac.
character of Scripture, is actually necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of them. According to de Lubac, for a correct understanding of Scripture the exegete cannot separate letter from spirit, literal from spiritual sense for this would be similar to separating the divinity of Christ from his humanity.\textsuperscript{81} Despite this misunderstanding of patristic and medieval exegesis, \textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu} also encouraged exegetes to study the Fathers of the Church and the most renowned commentators of the past.\textsuperscript{82} Furthermore, anticipating Vatican II, Pius XII recommended the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular and encouraged the reading of Scripture by Christian families.\textsuperscript{83}

With \textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu}, the contemporary Catholic critical scriptural scholarship began to flourish.\textsuperscript{84} However, soon after the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, attacks on critical scholarship began and continued up until the Second Vatican Council. According to Donahue, “at the beginning of the pontificate of Pope John XXIII (1958), important biblical scholars were attacked,”\textsuperscript{85} especially Stanislas Lyonnet and Maximilian Zerwick, who were removed from their teaching positions at the Pontifical Biblical

\textsuperscript{81} This assertion will be clarified in chapter two. Contrary to what John McKenzie (“Problems of Hermeneutics in Roman Catholic Exegesis,” \textit{Journal of Biblical Literature} 77.3 (1958): 201) has said of de Lubac, it cannot be held that he denied “any religious value in scientific biblical scholarship.” De Lubac insisted that spiritual exegesis not be relegated to the past as something dead and not worthy of our scholarly attention, and he endorsed the use of modern scientific methods, but in accord with the faith of the Church and not to the neglect of sacramental exegesis.

\textsuperscript{82} Pope Pius XII (\textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu}, §17) observes that the “Catholic exegete will find invaluable help in an assiduous study of those works in which the holy Fathers, the Doctors of the Church, and the renowned interpreters of past ages have explained the sacred Books.”

\textsuperscript{83} Pope Pius XII (\textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu}, §26) writes, “let them [bishops] favor, therefore, and lend help to those pious associations whose aim it is to spread copies of the sacred letters, especially of the Gospels, among the faithful, and to procure by every means that in Christian families the Scriptures be read with piety and devotion. Let them efficaciously recommend by word and example, whenever the liturgical laws permit, the Sacred Scriptures translated, with the approval of the ecclesiastical authority, into modern languages.” See \textit{Dei Verbum} §21: “Easy access to holy scripture should be available to all the christian faithful.” The importance of this pastoral aim has significant implications for the Church that will be attended to in chapter four.

\textsuperscript{84} See Farkasfalvy, \textit{Inspiration and Interpretation}, 166-167.

Institute before the convening of the Second Vatican Council. The flowering of biblical studies that began with *Divino Afflante Spiritu* would not truly begin to flourish until after the publication of *Dei Verbum*.

With Leo XIII, and especially Pius XII, the Church began to allow and sanction the use of scientific exegesis, simultaneously stressing the divine nature of Scripture. However, the historical-critical method remained a controversial theological issue: on the one hand, modern exegetes placed too great an emphasis on the human aspects in scripture, over and against the divine aspects. On the other hand, the traditionalists stressed the divine authorship of scripture, simultaneously deemphasizing the human character. Ratzinger observes,

> the modern approach would put strong emphasis on the human factor in Scripture, from which then follow both the possibility and the necessity of investigating it according to critical historical methods...On the other hand, the traditionalists insisted on an idea of inspiration that was conceived entirely in terms of the divine author, which involved an untenable view of the negligible human contribution in the transmission of revelation, but the positive value of which should be recognized, namely the strong sense of the sacredness of Scripture.\(^86\)

Spiritual exegesis, especially as retrieved by de Lubac, allows the Church to maintain both the human and divine character of Scripture, and this is brought out clearly in de Lubac’s retrieval of Origen, which will be treated in chapters two and three. At the Second Vatican Council, not only was the scientific interpretation of Scripture endorsed, but other important aspects related to the Sacred Scriptures were articulated that will bear upon our topic, e.g., the highly personal character of revelation and the sacramental

mediation of God’s divine economy through his divine Word. I will return to these themes and more in chapter four. For now, I will provide a very brief examination of the patristic revival and de Lubac’s role in this renaissance.87

3. The Patristic Ressourcement

Throughout the 19th century, theologians had tried to come to terms with the challenges that arose during the Enlightenment, and it has become clear that the biblical movement was one such response. The 20th century patristic renaissance also was an attempt to grapple with the contemporary challenge to Christian faith raised by the Enlightenment, and the challenges of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Together with Jean Daniélou, de Lubac founded Sources Chrétiennes, a series that made the works of the Fathers available to the general public and enabled a new generation to benefit from the Church’s forgotten or overlooked voices. In a review of Sources Chrétiennes, John Courtney Murray states:

the collection, Sources chrétiennes, is under the general editorship of RR. PP. Henri de Lubac, S.J., and J. Daniélou, S.J. The titles so far announced or in print comprise some fifty-three works of the Greek Fathers, and some seventeen of the Latin Fathers. Also promised are certain Syrian texts, and other religious but non-Christian texts which are important for the history of Christian origins. The whole idea is genial, courageous, and edged with contemporaneity; the competence of the collaborators is uniformly high. We have here to do with an enterprise of profound importance, that deserves to be known and followed in the English-speaking world.88

The aim of Sources Chrétiennes was to provide easy access to the treasures of patristic thought, to restore neglected patristic spirituality, to provide examples of a vibrant

87 Below, beginning on page 51, I will provide a more substantial look at de Lubac’s renaissance.  
theology more dynamic than neo-scholasticism, and to restore patristic exegesis. It is interesting to note that, upon his election as Bishop of Rome, John XXIII made a substantial donation to *Sources Chrétiennes*. Furthermore, the central core of the twentieth century patristic movement seems to have been the recovery of the patristic modes of figurative or spiritual exegesis, and for this reason, the patristic renewal remains intimately linked to the biblical and liturgical movements. As Brian Daley, remarks, “the work of the Fathers is in large part a vast commentary on Holy Scripture’, while the patristic style of spiritual biblical interpretation, ‘which invites us to look for figures of Christ in the Old Testament’, is itself a continuing structural principle of Catholic liturgy.” Patristic theology is typically described as scriptural commentary, a reading grounded in the Church’s liturgical proclamation and celebration of the Word.

4. Twentieth Century Ressourcement Movements and the Second Vatican Council

These three *ressourcement* movements—patristic, biblical, and liturgical—were essential for the *aggiornamento* that would take place at the Second Vatican Council, and would contribute to some of the most important and influential documents that came

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89 Joseph Komonchak (“La Collection Sources Chrétiennes: Editer Les Pères De l’Église Au 20e Siècle,” *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 382-83) comments that the aim of *Sources chrétiennes* is not only “to restore to Catholic consciousness neglected classics of spirituality but also to offer examples of a theology more vital than baroque Scholasticism and of a reading of the Scriptures more ecclesial than that of historical-critical method.”


91 See Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie & Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3. In this way, the patristic *ressourcement* cannot be separated from the biblical or liturgical movement that produced so much fruit at the Second Vatican Council.


93 See Breck, *Scripture in Tradition*, 9-16. According to Robin Darling Young (“Theologia in the Early Church,” *Communio* 24 (1997): 687), “the first feature of a patristic and catholic theology is its devotion to Scriptural exegesis. The purpose of theology was to interpret the Bible, a Bible in which the two testaments were insistently held together as the joint witness to Christ and to the one God of Israel and the Church.”
from the council, e.g., *Dei Verbum, Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes*, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The biblical movement called for a renewed appreciation of scripture, especially concerning the question of its inspiration and inerrancy, its interpretation and the historicity of the gospels. The patristic movement retrieved the ancient tradition of spiritual exegesis that, in conjunction with the modern historico-critical scientific method, sought to deepen the Church’s understanding of the mystery revealed in Sacred Scripture, celebrated and actualized in the divine liturgy. Together with the liturgical and patristic movement, the biblical movement helped to recover certain spiritual realities that had long been neglected before the council began, e.g., the essential unity of scripture and tradition, the centrality of the Word of God, and hence, the need for the vernacular in liturgical celebrations. The council was able to take up, deepen and extend many of these gems for the whole Church. The Second Vatican Council closed almost fifty years ago, and the conciliar documents continue to be interpreted and implemented, albeit not always without controversy. However, it is not my intention to review the reaction to the council in general. In the following section, I will analyze the reception of *Dei Verbum* §21.

II. Status Quaestionis: the Reception of *Dei Verbum* §21

Although *Dei Verbum* is only one of the four constitutions produced by the council, and, although it may be the most integral, it remains one of the least known and

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studied, especially in comparison with *Lumen Gentium*, and *Guadium et Spes*. This is a surprising state of affairs especially considering the central importance of the Sacred Scriptures to the life of the Church as reiterated by the Second Vatican Council. For example, in *Dei Verbum* §21, the Church teaches that:

> all the church’s preaching, no less than the whole Christian religion, ought to be nourished and ruled by holy scripture. In the sacred books the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children and talks with them. There is such force and power in the word of God that it stands as the church’s support and strength, affording her children sturdiness in faith, food for the soul and a pure and unfailing fount of spiritual life.

Furthermore, the conciliar documents were not intended to be the final word on any respective topic, but a renewed beginning, a renewal rooted in Divine Revelation.

Despite the lack of attention given to *Dei Verbum*, there is a growing awareness among theologians concerning the seminal nature of this conciliar text, e.g., John R. Donahue, Rino Fisichella, Gerald O’Collins, and Matthew Levering. Nevertheless, despite this growing scholarly interest in *Dei Verbum*, the focus of these studies mainly surrounds the relationship between Scripture and Tradition or on the proper methods of the interpretation of Scripture whereas the pastoral section, chapter 6, continues to be neglected.

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98 It would be expected that those who seek and work for the unity of the Church would return to this seminal document in order to strengthen the bonds of catholicity, the bonds of Christian unity. De Lubac himself believed that, in order for the renewal envisioned by the Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* remained, together with *Lumen Gentium*, foundational. See Jared Wicks, “Further Light on Vatican Council II,” *Catholic Historical Review* 95:3 (2009): 554-555.
Notwithstanding the importance of these other questions and *Dei Verbum* as a whole, I am not primarily concerned with the general reception of *Dei Verbum*, but specifically the reception of §21 or more precisely the doctrine of the One Table, i.e., the sacramental nature and interrelationship of Scripture, the Eucharist, and the Church. Although this doctrine is not developed in any systematic or precise manner, it courses throughout the conciliar documents. Therefore, in order to properly understand the council’s teaching on this topic we cannot isolate *Dei Verbum*, or for that matter §21, from the remaining conciliar documents. As O’Collins observes, “in differing ways they [the other conciliar documents] not only repeat and amplify the teaching from *Dei Verbum* on revelation, but at times they also add new and important points.” Nevertheless, I will use *Dei Verbum* as the touchstone, in the light of the thought of Henri de Lubac, from which I will develop my thesis.

Various scholars have pointed out the significance of *Dei Verbum* and in particular its understanding of the sacramental nature of sacred scripture. What follows is a chronological assessment of the post-conciliar work concerning *Dei Verbum* §21.

A. Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II (1967)

The *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Herbert Vorgrimler, contains one of the earliest, exhaustive commentaries on the documents of the Second

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100 Section 21 of *Dei Verbum* rarely receives any sustained scholarly thought. See O’Collins, *Retrieving Fundamental Theology*, 65ff.
Vatican Council. Composed of five volumes, the *Commentary* was produced two years after the conclusion of the council in 1967. Often, theologians who served as *periti* at the council provided important commentaries, e.g., Karl Rahner, Gerard Philips, and Joseph Ratzinger. In volume three, Joseph Ratzinger, subsequently Pope Benedict XVI, offers the commentary on *Dei Verbum* §21.104

Ratzinger begins his commentary on §21 by pointing out that the important image used at the beginning of this section was common in the Latin tradition. This image of the one table draws a parallel between the Scriptures and the Eucharist, however, this idea was rejected by some of the bishops at the council for fear that faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist would be weakened. According to Ratzinger, the Theological Commission answered these fears by referring to Jerome and Augustine and by changing the word *velut* (like) to the coordinating phrase *sicut et* (just as).105 By maintaining this traditional concept, the text also emphasizes what had already been clarified in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, i.e., the liturgy of the word is not just a non-essential preliminary part of the Mass. Rather, it is of equal value to the liturgy of the Eucharist. Further, the doctrine of the One Table emphasizes that the Church is also the community of the Word, drawing its life from that word, so that the Word made flesh comes to us in his body to be our bread for life.106

According to Ratzinger, this section also examines three main ideas. First, that the unique character of Sacred Scripture as opposed to tradition resides in the fact that in the

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105 “The fears of some fathers that this idea furthered the break-down of faith in transubstantiation were acknowledged by the Theological Commission, inasmuch as it changed the word *velut*, which was open to misinterpretation, to the clearly co-ordinating phrase *sicut et*.” Ibid., 3:262.
106 Ibid., 3:263.
Scriptures, we encounter the humanity of the Word. Ratzinger writes, “the particular character of Scripture as opposed to tradition resides in the fact that...the humanity of the word of God, its original historical shape, remains close to us through this document and through it alone.”

Following from this first idea, flow the second and third ideas: the voice of the apostles and prophets throughout the Scriptures is essential (2) because their voice resounds with the Holy Spirit and (3) in their voice we enter into the dialogue God initiated with humanity. Ratzinger lists three more important points: first, the normative character of Scripture. The second point in §21 is, that what the Bible says of the Word of God in general is true of Scripture, which maintains the basic dialogue of God with humanity, and constantly renews this possibility. Finally, that this Divine Word is life-giving, and builds up the human person, who does not live on bread alone, but from the Word of God that gives meaning to all people.

Of great significance is the fact that, in a footnote concerning the One Table, Ratzinger instructs the reader to see de Lubac for this very important doctrine.

Ratzinger’s commentary on §21 comprises only three pages: while he does root this doctrine in the tradition, points out the personal, dialogical nature of Scripture, expresses the normative character of Sacred Scripture, and guides the reader to de Lubac concerning the One Table, he does not offer a sustained treatment of this important and rich topic as it was articulated at the Second Vatican Council.

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107 Ibid.
108 See Ibid.
B. Lucien Deiss (1976)

In 1976, Lucien Deiss provided us with the most exhaustive treatment of the sacramental-scriptural theme retrieved by the council. However, Deiss’ concerns are to establish the biblical foundations of this ancient doctrine and to stress its pastoral relevance. He introduces his work on this topic by examining the Covenant-Sacrificial meals of the Old Testament, specifically the Sinai Covenant.\(^{110}\) Deiss draws certain parallels between the Old Testament covenantal-sacrificial meals with the New Testament Eucharist, and he demonstrates the unity of Word and Eucharist by comparing it to the intrinsic link between the Word and the celebration of the Covenant in the Old Testament.\(^{111}\) He also shows how, in the New Testament, the Eucharist takes up and perfects this Covenant love.\(^{112}\)

In *God’s Word and God’s People*, Deiss explores the Old Testament and explains the foundational importance of the Word in calling the people of God into existence and sustaining them in unity, albeit an imperfect unity that continues to be threatened by Israel’s unfaithfulness.\(^{113}\) It is through his Word that God calls together the Israelites, forming them into a people. Through both his Word and the covenant-sacrificial meal, God renews the covenant from which *adulterous* Israel has departed.\(^{114}\) In the New Testament, God the Father will continue to call and gather his people, only this time, it

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\(^{111}\) Especially as it was established in the Mosaic Covenant on Sinai and renewed at Shechem, at Jerusalem under Josiah and later under Ezra. See Deiss, *God’s Word and God’s People*, 3-82.

\(^{112}\) This observation of fulfillment echoes the thought of Henri de Lubac, a theme I will return to in the subsequent chapters. See Deiss, *Celebration of the Word*, 28-34; idem, *It’s the Lord’s Supper*, 33ff. Much of *God’s Word and God’s People* is an examination of the biblical foundations of the celebration of the Word and Covenant and their intrinsic unity.

\(^{113}\) Deiss, *God’s Word and God’s People*, 16ff; 40ff; 56ff; 76ff.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., 81.

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will be through his Son, the Eternal Word who fulfills the divine promises to Israel to unify all those dispersed—both Jews & Gentiles. Again, similar to the ratification of the Sinai covenant, after the proclamation of the Word, the Son seals the covenant with the Father through his sacrificial blood.\textsuperscript{115} \textit{God’s Word and God’s People} contains a beautiful and in-depth demonstration of the intrinsic link between Word and Covenant as found in the scriptures, but it does not contain an analysis of the doctrine as re-established by the Second Vatican Council.\textsuperscript{116}

Deiss stresses the equality that exists between both the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Eucharist. But, more than stressing a mere equality, drawing on his extensive analysis of the covenant assembly at Shechem, Deiss argues that the Word is essential for the Eucharist just as the covenant-sacrificial meal is inconceivable without the preaching of the Word of God and its acceptance.\textsuperscript{117} According to Deiss, “we must rather maintain that the celebration of the word is constitutive of the covenant. Even though the bread and wine of the covenant meal are offered in the Eucharistic liturgy proper, the covenant itself is concluded in the proclamation and acceptance of the word.”\textsuperscript{118} Furthermore, although in a very brief manner, Deiss comments on the unity, not merely the equality, of Word and Eucharist as it was stated by the Second Vatican Council.\textsuperscript{119} The equality and unity of Sacred Scripture and the Holy Eucharist are further expressed by Deiss’ analysis of the various ways Christ is present in the Liturgy.

Taking up the teaching reiterated by the Second Vatican Council, Deiss explains

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 184ff.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., especially 253-264.
\textsuperscript{117} Deiss, \textit{It's the Lord's Supper}, 33ff; 122ff.
\textsuperscript{118} Deiss, \textit{God’s Word and God’s People}, 257.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 256-257.
that Christ’s presence in the Holy Eucharist is just as real as his presence in the Word.\textsuperscript{120} Following \textit{Dei Verbum} §21, Deiss points out that the “Word and Eucharist, then, are equally important, equally ‘venerable.’ And the veneration due them is the adoration we offer the Lord who is equally present in the word and present in the Eucharist.”\textsuperscript{121} Christ is equally, truly present in the Word that is proclaimed at the Liturgy and in the Eucharist that is consumed, but in differing, manifest ways: in the Eucharist, Christ is present under the appearance of bread and wine; in the Word of God, he is present under the veil of human words.\textsuperscript{122} Deiss does not sustain an in-depth study of the sacramental unity of the Sacred Scriptures and the Eucharist,\textsuperscript{123} but he does succeed in verifying the deep scriptural roots of this doctrine, and highlights some important, often overlooked aspects found in \textit{Dei Verbum}.\textsuperscript{124}

\textbf{C. The Reception of Vatican II (1987)}

\textit{The Reception of Vatican II} is a collection of articles, edited by Guiseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua, and Joseph Komonchak and published in 1987, that attempts to assess the reception of the Second Vatican Council. In his article, “The Centrality of the Word of God,” Enzo Bianchi seeks to sketch the Church’s reception of the centrality of the

\textsuperscript{120} See \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium}, 7.

\textsuperscript{121} Deiss, \textit{God's Word and God's People}, 257; idem, \textit{It's the Lord's Supper}, 119-121.

\textsuperscript{122} Deiss, \textit{It's the Lord's Supper}, 119f. We will return to this concept in chapter two, especially de Lubac’s retrieval of Origen’s exegesis, as much of what Deiss says here correlates to expressions used by de Lubac.

\textsuperscript{123} In \textit{Celebration of the Word}, Deiss provides a necessary reminder of the important & intrinsic unity between Word and Eucharist; however, his main focus is pastoral: to explain the importance of the liturgy of the Word and the laity’s proper role in response to that divine Word. He offers a commentary on the various parts of the liturgy of the Word: the responsorial psalm as the faithful’s response to the real presence of Christ in the Word that has been proclaimed, the homily, the prayer of the faithful, the various roles exercised by the faithful and the ritual environment that helps to underline the importance of the liturgy of the Word. His most sustained treatment of this topic is in \textit{It's the Lord's Supper}, but here his focus is to provide a basic introduction on the meaning of the Eucharist for the modern person. In \textit{God's Word and God's People} Deiss places the emphasis on the scriptural foundation for the New Testament covenant ratified in Christ.

\textsuperscript{124} E.g., the incorporation of Christ in the Sacred Scriptures.
Word as it has been retrieved and stated in *Dei Verbum.* Before affirming the importance of §21, Bianchi identifies the Word of God as a sacrament, not merely a sacramental.

“This passage [§ 21] of *Dei Verbum* is thus extremely important and pregnant with consequences, because scripture, as celebrated and prayed in the Church as God’s own word by the power of the Holy spirit, is here given the quality of a sacrament (and no longer simply of a sacramental, as used to be said).” Bianchi even identifies the intrinsic unity of the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist, going so far as to indicate that there is only one source of life for Christians. According to Bianchi, “it is clear that there is but a single bread of life on which the Church and the faithful are fed when they approach the table of the word and the Eucharist.”

Bianchi believes that the Second Vatican Council was able to restore the centrality of the Sacred Scriptures to the life of the Church “where it exercises its full primacy and dominion, making every ministry a service of the word and turning every Christian into a servant of the word (see Luke 1:2; Acts 20:24).” Further, without providing any source material, Bianchi states that the intimate relationship between Word and Eucharist is a traditional theme in theology that was treated by many of the fathers, e.g., Ignatius of Antioch (as early as the late 1st century to early 2nd century), and Jerome (in the 5th century), and in medieval thought, e.g., in the *Imitation of Christ.*

Nonetheless, Bianchi does not try to summarize the early Church’s understanding

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126 Ibid., 121-122.
127 Ibid., 121.
128 Ibid., 122.
129 Bianchi (“The Centrality of the Word of God,” 121) states, “the parallel [between Word and Eucharist] goes back to the Fathers of the Church—Ignatius of Antioch, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine—and was customary as late as the medieval Cistercians and Victorines, through whom it made its way into the *Imitation of Christ.”
(or develop that of the Second Vatican Council itself) of this doctrine because he is less concerned to develop this important, pregnant theme, and more concerned to express how the faithful have received the Word of God on a pastoral level. Vatican II encouraged the faithful—both clergy and laity—to return to the Sacred Scriptures, and it is the fruits of this return to which Bianchi focuses his attention.\textsuperscript{130}

D. Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives (1988)

Comprised of three volumes, with the first volume being published in 1988, \textit{Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives} is an attempt to evaluate the contributions of the Second Vatican Council. The majority of the contributors to this series edited by René Latourelle are faculty members of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Volume one of this series is divided into three parts, with part two providing a detailed review of \textit{Dei Verbum}.

In volume one, Stanislas Lyonnet discusses chapters 4 and 6 of \textit{Dei Verbum}: in his article, Lyonnet points out that his choice of these chapters is not arbitrary, rather, it is because the Sacred Scriptures—both Old and New—(treated in chapter 4), nourish the spiritual life of Christians (treated in chapter 6).\textsuperscript{131} After analyzing chapter 4 and the changes in the various drafts before its final composition, Lyonnet examines chapter 6. He begins his analysis of chapter 6 by citing two Protestant Pastors and their evaluation of this chapter. These pastors believe that, despite its pastoral character, chapter 6 is more important that at first might be assumed. Lyonnet writes, “Pastor Max Thurian sees it as ‘a key for the understanding of the whole Constitution,’ and another observer at

\textsuperscript{130} Bianchi, “The Centrality of the Word of God,” 130f.
\textsuperscript{131} Lyonnet, “A Word on Chapters IV and VI of \textit{Dei Verbum}, 157ff.
the Council, Pastor Lukas Voscher, considers it ‘perhaps the most important part of the text.’” Although recognizing the important nature of chapter 6, Lyonnet only provides a cursory glance at §21.

Lyonnet traces some significant changes in the drafts leading to the final composition of §21: the original draft was titled “The Church’s Care Concerning Holy Scripture,” whereas the title of the second draft was “The Church’s Veneration of Holy Scripture.” Two reasons are given for this veneration: first, because the Father comes to speak with his children, and second, because of the strength and power possessed by the Word of God. In the third draft, Hebrews 4:12 and Acts 20:32 will be added to apply to Scripture, although in each case they seem not to equate the Word of God with Scripture. As Lyonnet says, “It will then be left to Text 3 to add the two citations from Hebrews 4:12 and Acts 20:32, where the ‘word of God’ does not in fact really mean the Scriptures, but either the personified Word (Heb. 4:12) or the apostolic teaching (Acts 20:32), so that Text 5 will thus explain that the two statements apply ‘in a most excellent way...to holy Scripture’.” According to Lyonnet, in the third draft there are two new points that help express the Church’s veneration: first, there is the strong parallelism assigned to the Eucharist and Sacred Scripture. Lyonnet, like Enzo Bianchi, points out that this parallelism has been present in the Tradition and is ultimately based in Scripture itself. According to Lyonnet, “there is in fact a tradition of such parallelism. It is found in The Imitation of Christ with the formula of the ‘two tables’ (IV, 11d), and is based on the interpretation the Fathers and many exegetes give to the passage in chapter 6 of St. John’s

132 Ibid., 175-176.
133 Ibid., 176-177.
134 Ibid., 177.
Gospel.” The second point that illustrates the Church’s veneration for Sacred Scripture is the description of the Word of God as God’s own Word in unalterable form that makes the voice of the Holy Spirit sound again and again through the words of the Prophets and Apostles. Lyonnet concludes his assessment of §21 with the reminder that only the Scriptures are proclaimed during the Liturgy, and no other documents of the Tradition. Despite the above important insights and, although Lyonnet indicates the importance of chapter 6 (which is often overlooked because of its pastoral nature), he himself only takes up three pages to analyze this significant section.


One of the most recent commentaries on *Dei Verbum* is found in the new series begun in 2005, and edited by Christopher Bellitto, *Discovering Vatican II*. In this series, Ronald Witherup has produced a valuable introduction and commentary on *Dei Verbum*. As Witherup indicates, the final section of *Dei Verbum* is a pastoral reflection on the dogmatic ramifications from the earlier sections. Although primarily pastoral, chapter 6 may actually be the most important section of *Dei Verbum* for better understanding the whole constitution. According to Witherup,

the final chapter, with its six articles (*DV*, 21-26), contains both new and old insights. It is the only chapter devoted to the pastoral ramifications of the church’s teaching on divine revelation. Some might consequently dismiss it as doctrinally insignificant, but one prominent Protestant observer at the council called it “a key for the understanding of the whole Constitution.” Indeed, it prominently reiterates the crucial relationship between Scripture and Tradition,

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135 Ibid., 178.
136 Ibid., 178-179.
137 Ibid., 179.
insisting they are one unified source of revelation, not two (DV, 24).\textsuperscript{138}

Despite acknowledging its importance, Witherup’s commentary of Dei Verbum, chapter six, only occupies about two pages. While he does indicate the council’s equation of Sacred Scripture and the Holy Eucharist in §21, he is more concerned with showing the council’s reiteration of the dynamic relationship between Sacred Scripture and Tradition as it was treated in the earlier, dogmatic sections of the constitution.\textsuperscript{139}

Although the majority of the authors reviewed above indicate the importance of section twenty-one of Dei Verbum, only Deiss, Ratzinger, and Lyonnet have provided an analysis related to the doctrine of the One Table that is at least three pages or more. Moreover, although they have each indicated the importance of section twenty-one, not one of the above has developed what the Second Vatican Council meant by the One Table and how it is related to the Eucharist and the Church. Some of the above authors have indicated that the Second Vatican Council’s doctrine of the One Table is deeply rooted in the Tradition.\textsuperscript{140} But again, there is no sustained treatment of this rich, traditional doctrine. As recently as 2010, in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Benedict XVI indicated the need for greater attention devoted to this topic: “there is great need for a deeper investigation of the relationship between word and sacrament in the Church’s pastoral activity and in theological reflection.”\textsuperscript{141} By offering this dissertation, I hope to help alleviate the need for a deeper investigation of the relationship

\textsuperscript{138} Witherup, Scripture, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 39-41.
\textsuperscript{140} It is helpful to keep in mind that this doctrine is ultimately rooted in the Sacred Scriptures: the Fathers explication of the one table is rooted in their exegesis of the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of John, but also found in patristic commentaries on select Old Testaments Scriptures. The fathers provide rich material in their commentaries on some of the prophets, especially those on Isaiah 6:1-8 and Ezekiel 2:8-3:3.
\textsuperscript{141} Verbum Domini §53.
between the One Table of Word and Eucharist. However, before I detail de Lubac’s theological retrieval of spiritual-sacramental exegesis and eucharistic ecclesiology, and the way this retrieval pertains to the One Table of the Second Vatican Council, I will present a brief biography of Henri de Lubac up to the time of his appointment as a *peritus* of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴²

### III. Henri de Lubac: A Brief Biography from Birth up to Vatican II

#### A. Birth and Education

Henri de Lubac was born in Cambrai, France on February 20, 1896. He was one of six children born to Maurice Sonier de Lubac and Gabrielle de Beaurepaire. He spent his childhood and studied, first with the Christian Brothers’ school in 1901-1902, and 1904, and then with the Sisters of St. Joseph in Lyons in 1905. From 1909-1911, he continued his studies at the Jesuit College of Notre Dame de Mongré in Villefranche-sur-Saône. Beginning in 1911, de Lubac studied at the College of Moulins Bellevue and earned his baccalaureate and secondary school diploma in 1912. He then took two semesters of law at the *Institut Catholique* of Lyons and applied in the fall of 1913 for admission to the Society of Jesus.

#### B. Jesuits, the First World War, and Continued Studies

French laws hostile to religious communities forced the Jesuits from Lyons to England from 1901-1926. De Lubac, therefore, entered the novitiate at Saint Leonard’s in Sussex, but he was drafted into the French army in 1914, in which he served until 1919. During his time in the French army, he was wounded in action and awarded the

¹⁴² For the biographical information in this chapter I have relied primarily on Voderholzer, *Meet Henri De Lubac*, 25-94.
Croix de Guerre, a French military decoration of war awarded to those who have distinguished themselves for heroic acts during battle.\textsuperscript{143}

From 1920 until 1923, he pursued philosophical and theological studies on the Isle of Jersey, followed by a Jesuit regency at the college of the Jesuits of Mongré. He continued advanced theological studies in Hastings, which was completed at Lyon-Fourvière, where he was ordained a priest, August 23, 1927.\textsuperscript{144} In 1929, he was named Professor of Fundamental Theology in the School of Catholic Theology at Lyon.\textsuperscript{145}

C. Scholar and Controversial Figure: \textit{La Nouvelle Théologie}

In 1935, de Lubac joined the theology faculty at Fourvière, where he taught only occasional courses until 1940. In 1940, together with Jean Daniélou, former student and friend, de Lubac founded the series \textit{Sources Chrétiennes}. \textit{Sources Chrétiennes} made Patristic and medieval texts available to the general public, and in 1944, he collaborated in the collection \textit{Théologie}, a supplemental series to \textit{Sources Chrétiennes} dedicated as an explanation of patristic theology and its application to modern issues. Volume three of \textit{Théologie} was de Lubac’s \textit{Corpus Mysticum}.\textsuperscript{146} From 1945 until 1950, he was the editor of \textit{Recherches de science religieuse}, a journal dedicated to the scientific research of religious and was founded in 1910 in Paris by Leonce de Grandmaison. Many of de Lubac’s works presented fresh examinations of the tradition in order to address contemporary problems. Unfortunately, in 1946, \textit{Surnaturel}, which challenged the contemporary Thomistic interpretation of the possibility of a pure nature, ignited attacks against de Lubac’s orthodoxy. As Voderholzer

\textsuperscript{143} Voderholzer (\textit{Meet Henri De Lubac}, 36) writes, “On ‘All Saints’ Day in 1917 he sustained a serious head wound.”
\textsuperscript{144} See Voderholzer, \textit{Meet Henri De Lubac}, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{145} See Ibid., 45f.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 51. I will discuss de Lubac’s eucharistic-ecclesiology as it is related to this book in chapter three.
indicates “the publication of his study [Surnaterel] was one of the more important
catalysts, and Henri de Lubac was perhaps the most prominent and articulate theologian
in a movement that others now tried to label la nouvelle théologie—the “New Theology.”147
De Lubac himself, and others associated with this new movement, denies that such a
school actually existed.

Nevertheless, de Lubac was regarded with much suspicion and was characterized
as a member of the controversial la nouvelle théologie inasmuch as he shared many of the
same goals of others who had been associated with this movement.148 However, as Hans
Boersma points out,

many of the ressourcement scholars themselves, however—Henri de
Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Henri Bouillard (1908-81), Hans Urs von
Balthasar, and Yves Congar—questioned the appropriateness of the
term. Intent on a ressourcement of the Tradition, they did not regard
their theology as new; nor had they any intention of starting a
distinct theological school.149

Those typically categorized as members of this movement sought to overcome the
prevailing theological system—neo-scholasticism, which had dominated the theological
scene since the late 19th century—and the upheaval caused by the Modernist crisis of the

147 Ibid., 64.
148 I use nouvelle théologie (and ressourcement) as a term to describe de Lubac’s theological thought in the positive
sense: he sought to both update the Church’s life by returning to the sources of the faith and to thereby
‘renew’ what the Church already in fact possessed, but may have neglected or overlooked for an extended
period of time.
149 I wish neither to delve into the controversy surrounding the actual existence of such a “school” of
thought nor examine whether de Lubac truly belonged to such a group. Many of the so-called members of
the ‘new theology’ have argued against the commonly held idea that they were a tightly organised group,
e.g., Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac both detested this pejorative label. For an in-depth treatment of la
nouvelle théologie see especially Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie, 8. See also Jürgen Mettepenningen, Nouvelle
Théologie: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II, (New York: T & T Clark, 2010); Wood, Spiritual Exegesis,
Ecclesiasticæ: The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Henri De Lubac,” 143; D’Ambrosio, “Ressourcement Theology,”
530-32; Voderholzer, Meet Henri De Lubac, 63-94; Joseph Komonchak, “Theology and Culture At Mid-
late 19th and early 20th centuries. Those associated with nouvelle théologie, provided an answer to post-Reformation theology, the neo-scholasticism that dominated Catholic theology before the council, and the problems that arose from the Modernist crisis.

D. Renewal: Member of the Theological Commission and Peritus for Vatican II

Although several of de Lubac’s works came under attack (Corpus Mysticum, Connaissance de Dieu), it was only after the publication of Surnaturel: Études historiques in 1946 that this attack intensified. In 1950, with the publication of the encyclical Humani generis, de Lubac came under suspicion. According to de Lubac,

shortly after the publication of the encyclical Humani generis, a new measure had been taken. The order was given to withdraw from our libraries and from the trade, among other publications, three of my books: Surnaturel, Corpus mysticum and Connaissance de Dieu — as well as (from our libraries) the volume of Recherches containing my article on the ‘Mystère de surnaturel’.

However, three years later, de Lubac returned to Lyons and was allowed to begin teaching again, although not on a regular basis as a member of the theology faculty.

Six years later, in 1959, Pope John XXIII announced his intention to convocate a council, and, on May 17 of the same year, the preparatory commission was established. In 1960, the second phase of the preparations began: ten commissions and two secretaries were set up. As a member of one of the preparatory commissions, de Lubac also became a peritus (an expert) for the council. At the council many of de Lubac’s

150 According to Boersma (Nouvelle Théologie, 87), “the focal point of nouvelle théologie’s criticism was usually either the scholasticism of the post-Reformation period or the more recent neo-scholasticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”

insights retrieved from the patristic and medieval tradition would enrich the conciliar
documents and the Church’s life.\footnote{152}

Now that I have given an outline of de Lubac’s life up to the council, I would like
to present de Lubac’s theological work as a ressourcement theologian, specifically his
retrieval of Origen. Origen’s thought, especially as it relates to the doctrine of the One
Table of God’s Logos in Scripture and Eucharist, was taken up by de Lubac and
reappears in the council documents, especially its formulation in \textit{Dei Verbum}.

\textbf{IV. Interpreting \textit{Dei Verbum} With the Help of Henri de Lubac}

My goal is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the doctrine of the One Table: to
uncover the essential relationship between Scripture, the Eucharist, and the Church,
especially as it has been retrieved by Vatican II, and as it can be supported and enriched
by the thought of Henri de Lubac.\footnote{153}

A. Determining de Lubac’s Role in the Formulation of \textit{Dei Verbum}

De Lubac was appointed by Pope John XXIII as a consultor to the Theological
Commission set up to prepare doctrinal schemata for the Second Vatican Council in 1960
and as an official council expert in 1962.\footnote{154} Although de Lubac certainly influenced the

council, especially *Dei Verbum*, it is difficult to determine with precision the part he played in the formulation of the text itself. Nevertheless, I will show, especially in the following two chapters, that many of the more important features found in *Dei Verbum* were already expressed by de Lubac years before the council was convened: already 20 years before the council, de Lubac was retrieving the patristic, medieval and biblical sources that would play such a vital role not only in *Dei Verbum*, but also in some of the other more important documents of the Second Vatican Council, e.g., *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. Joseph Ratzinger, commenting on de Lubac’s influence to the ecclesiology of the council writes, “in all its comments about the Church, [Vatican II] was moving precisely in the direction of de Lubac’s thought.” Notwithstanding the difficulty in determining de Lubac’s contribution to the formation of *Dei Verbum*, there are various indications of his influence.

According to Joseph Komonchak, de Lubac “influenced several of the most important of the conciliar documents, most notably the sacramentally centered ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum*’s discussion of revelation and tradition, and the treatment of atheism and Christian humanism in *Gaudium et spes*.” Furthermore, his theological work at the council attained its highest level of intensity surrounding *Dei Verbum*. The day *Dei Verbum* was solemnly adopted, Pope Paul VI requested de Lubac’s presence as one of the concelebrants. Moreover, it is commonly held that de Lubac was the principal contributor to the final draft of *Dei Verbum*. However, it is perhaps the

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157 I do not mean to imply that de Lubac alone was responsible for *Dei Verbum*. Nevertheless, many of his insights published years before the council found their way into the conciliar documents—this will be made more clear in chapter 4.
theme of unity as it is established in *Dei Verbum*, a theme permeating *Lumen Gentium*, that indicates just how much de Lubac is responsible for this document (and for much of the conciliar thought in general).

According to Eric de Moulins-Beaufort, “there is no better way to see how much the teaching of *Dei Verbum* corresponds to the intimate fiber of de Lubac’s thought than this theme of unity; or how much his work, in consequence—a good part written before the Council, but an important part after it, as well—is nourished from the reading of this text.”\(^{159}\) The theme of unity permeates all of de Lubac’s works, and is a common theme shared by *Dei Verbum*. Aidan Nichols observes, “unity - in a variety of analogical senses of that word - constitutes the key to de Lubac’s entire enterprise.”\(^{160}\) For example, in de Lubac’s retrieval of patristic hermeneutics, he showed the indissoluble unity of the two Testaments: it is Christ the one Word spoken in all the words of Scripture.\(^{161}\) In his study of Origen, de Lubac anticipated *Dei Verbum* §21 by demonstrating the essential unity of Scripture, Eucharist, and Church.\(^{162}\) As we develop this dissertation it will become increasingly obvious that much of de Lubac’s theological thought and *Dei Verbum* share other important, common elements and, by an in-depth examination of de Lubac’s important retrieval, greater understanding of this pivotal doctrine will come to light.


\(^{160}\) Nichols, “Henri De Lubac,” 3. See also Antonio Sicari, “*Communio* in Henri De Lubac,” *Communio* 29 (1992): 450-64. With the council’s emphasis on the Church, rooted in the communion of the Trinity, it is easy to see how de Lubac influenced the council in general. I will return to de Lubac’s rich thought on this topic at a more appropriate section.

\(^{161}\) See, e.g., de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 190-204 where de Lubac shows how this theme permeated Origen’s thought and that it was a theme present in the tradition before Origen’s time. Compare the thought in this chapter with *Dei Verbum* §15. See Rudolf Voderholzer, “Dogma and History: Henri De Lubac and the Retrieval of Historicity as a Key to Theological Renewal,” *Communio* 28 (2001): 662-664.

B. De Lubac’s Work Before the Council

Many of de Lubac’s own insights anticipated conciliar statements in various ways. According to Karl Neufeld, de Lubac “had spoken of the duty of the Church to proclaim the gospel to all peoples and to the whole world in his *Le fondement théologique des Missions*. In general, the teaching on the Church would be clarified on several further points from his works. His *Méditation sur l’Eglise* (1963) proposes the idea of Mary as ‘type of the Church’.\(^{163}\) Furthermore, certain essential features of the Church that found their way into *Lumen Gentium* are due to the contributions of de Lubac, who had long before the council began to use the term “mystery of the Church,” and who had been one of the first to point out the Church’s sacramental nature, which is rooted in Scripture and the patristic and medieval tradition.\(^{164}\) Moreover, as Neufeld observes, “in his investigations on the sacred Scriptures and their meaning for theology, on medieval exegesis and the spiritual change that had led to the historical-critical analyses of Scripture in modern times, he had laid the foundations for a more comprehensive and lively conception of the very event of revelation.”\(^{165}\) It is specifically de Lubac’s retrieval of sacramental theology, as it pertains to Scripture, Eucharist and Church, that has perhaps produced so much fruit at the council itself and certainly contributed to the retrieval of the One Table. In the subsequent chapters, I will clarify the extent to which de Lubac influenced the conciliar understanding of divine revelation, specifically the relation of Scripture to the Eucharist and to the Church.\(^{166}\) However, in the following section, I merely wish to

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\(^{163}\) Neufeld, “In the Service of the Council,” 91.
\(^{164}\) See Ibid., 91f.
\(^{165}\) Ibid., 94. See also de Moulins-Beaufort, “Henri De Lubac: Reader of *Dei Verbum*,” 669-94.
\(^{166}\) I am not suggesting that de Lubac alone was responsible for the council’s sacramental ecclesiology or its retrieval of a more comprehensive biblical exegesis. For example, Otto Semmelroth (*Die Kirche Als Ursacrament* (Frankfurt am Main: Joseph Knecht, 1953) and Karl Rahner too wrote about the Church as
explain the general retrieval of the tradition made by Henri de Lubac and how his retrieval contributed to the formulation of the One Table of the Second Vatican Council.

C. The Ressourcement and Aggiornamento of Henri de Lubac

In 1946, Jean Daniélou wrote an article, “Les orientations présentes de la pènsee religieuse,” providing general information on specific aspects of religious thought in France. However, this article was perceived by many—e.g., Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange and Charles Boyer—as a manifesto for an entirely new way of doing theology that was divorced from the Tradition. According to Daniélou, there existed a rift between theology and contemporary concerns, there had been a rupture between exegesis and systematic theology, with further fragmentations of theology in general, and a constant aridity within systematic theology. The renewed orientation in theology, shared by many eminent theologians (e.g., Louis Bouyer, Henri de Lubac, M.-D. Chenu, Yves Congar, & Jean Leclercq), aimed at a reunification of theology, including a return to Scripture, a return to the Fathers, and a liturgical revival.

Because of the depth of de Lubac’s work toward the ressourcement of the Tradition, he contributed significantly to the biblical renewal and the patristic revival that took place during the decades leading up to the Second Vatican Council and beyond. This does not meant that he did not influence the liturgical movement, although, his influence here may

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sacrament before the council. Karl Rahner developed a notion of the Church as Sacrament in 1947 (Karl Rahner, “Membership of the Church According to the Teaching of Pius XII’s Encyclical ‘Mystici Corporis Christi,’” in *Theological Investigations*, II:1–88 (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1963)), when commenting on Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici Corporis*. Nevertheless, with regards to each theologian, de Lubac’s explication of the Church as sacrament preceded them by at least 9 years for Rahner and 15 for Semmelroth.

167 *Études* 79 (April 1946), 1-21.
be perceived as indirect.\textsuperscript{170} He was a prolific writer, although he did not leave a systematic treatise of his thought. In fact, in his \textit{Memoirs}, he himself writes:

\begin{quote}
I have never claimed to be doing the work of philosophical systematization or of theological synthesis. That is not out of contempt on my part, quite the contrary. But, leaving this twofold kind of task to others with the necessary gifts, it is in a more general way [that I call to mind] the great tradition of the Church, understood as the experience of all Christian centuries, coming to enlighten, orient, expand our poor little individual experience, to protect it from aberrations, to open it to the paths of the future.\textsuperscript{171}
\end{quote}

De Lubac returned to the past in order to renew the present: De Lubac’s monumental works on exegesis, \textit{History and Spirit}, and the four volume work, \textit{Medieval Exegesis} worked out in great depth the doctrine of the four senses of scripture, retrieved it from the ancient Christian Tradition and updated its relevant teaching to enhance the contemporary discussion of scripture. According to Rudolf Voderholzer, “even though the Council does not expressly mention the doctrine of the fourfold sense of Scripture and also avoids the term \textit{allegory}, it is nevertheless part of the background for article 12 of \textit{Dei Verbum}, which calls for a synthesis of the historical approach to Scripture and the traditional interpretation of the Bible.”\textsuperscript{172} Moreover, de Lubac’s historical and theological retrievals—e.g., \textit{Corpus Mysticum} and \textit{Medieval Exegesis}—enabled a new generation to benefit from the Church’s forgotten gems.\textsuperscript{173} According to Komonchak, “few Catholic

\textsuperscript{170} I am thinking of his retrieval of Origen’s understanding of the various modes of Christ’s presence that is similar to the explication of \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} §7. This aspect of de Lubac’s retrieval will be treated in chapters 2 and 3. But, it cannot be overlooked that he also explained that true exegesis cannot be done in any other way than in the Spirit of Christ and this only takes place, properly speaking, in the Church and the Church’s liturgy.
\textsuperscript{171} \textit{At the Service of the Church}, 144-145.
\textsuperscript{172} Rudolf Voderholzer, \textit{Meet Henri De Lubac: His Life and Work} (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 198. The \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church} (§118) does include the fourfold senses of Scripture, even going so far as to quote the same distich that is found in de Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, 1:1.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 49f; Wang, “\textit{Sacramentum Unitatis Ecclesiasticae},” 144f; Komonchak, “Recapturing the Great Tradition,” 14-15.
theologians today, whether they know it or not, are not in his [de Lubac] debt.” Many of these works, especially *Corpus Mysticum, Catholicism*, and his works on spiritual exegesis, shaped the documents of the Second Vatican Council in various ways. However, for de Lubac, the purpose of returning to the sources of the Christian faith was never to take up a permanent dwelling in the past, but was always to contribute to the development and flourishing of the present and the future life of the Church (to update).

1. The Purpose of Ressourcement

*Ressourcement* and *aggiornamento* are two distinct words that typically refer to the overall work of the Second Vatican Council. Although they represent two distinct ways of thought, this does not mean that they are antithetical to each other. Indeed, according to de Lubac, the purpose of *ressourcement* (return to the sources) is to renew or update (*aggiornamento*) Christianity by returning to those eras and works where the Christian tradition is expressed with special intensity. By returning to this foundational Tradition, the contemporary Church will be revitalized—today, especially since Vatican II, this is typically called *aggiornamento*, i.e., the updating of the Church’s life and expression of doctrine, etc.

However, it would be a mistake to claim that de Lubac sought to make a permanent return to the Patristic or Medieval periods. For, just as it would be a mistake...
to claim that there is nothing new or of value in the Christian past, so too would it be problematic to seek to take up a permanent abode in that past. Advocating ressourcement, but without discarding the present and the future, de Lubac elaborates:

But if we were to say: “There is nothing great, nothing really new in the Christian past—those early happenings were just an aberration and are quite undeserving of an historian’s sympathetic curiosity or of any effort to rediscover their essence,” we would be making a false historical judgement, and this would be detrimental to the preservation and to the renewal of Christian culture. We would be just as mistaken—and, here again, we are overstating the case, without suggesting that the opinion can actually be supported—if we admired the ancient constructs so much that we longed to make them our permanent dwelling; or if we canonized such doctrines so as to become unconscious of their weak or outdated aspects; or if we believed that fidelity to an author meant that we had to copy him or imitate him slavishly. In doing so, we would be abandoning the present without being able to find refuge in the past. 

For de Lubac, aggiornamento and ressourcement are inextricably linked: the only way to update, to renew the Church, is to return to the Tradition. The Second Vatican Council itself attests to this important and essential endeavor: the council fathers sought to update aggiornamento the pastoral practices and dogmatic expressions of the Deposit of Faith precisely by ressourcement (return to the sources) so that the Church might increase fidelity to her own vocation and nature.

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179 In Unitatis Redintegratio §6, the Church states: “every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her calling. Undoubtedly this explain the dynamism of the movement toward unity. Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always
De Lubac has been hailed as one the most important theologians in the Church of the twentieth century and much of his work is of a historical nature, especially the recovery of many theological gems that were forgotten or at least devalued or underused by the Church. In his retrieval of the tradition, de Lubac contributed significantly to the thought of the Second Vatican Council and to the revitalization of the Church’s life.\textsuperscript{180}

2. The Ressourcement of Early Christian Exegesis, Especially Origen

Many of de Lubac’s works have provided groundbreaking retrievals of forgotten truths from the ancient fathers, e.g., his eucharistic ecclesiology continues to influence not only Catholics, but Orthodox and Protestants as well.\textsuperscript{181} In \textit{History and Spirit}, de Lubac clarified ancient Christian hermeneutics simultaneously restoring Origen’s reputation as one of the most profound, if not misunderstood, ancient Christian exegetes. In many instances, de Lubac’s fresh retrievals influenced the direction of the council itself as well as subsequent theological developments.\textsuperscript{182} For example, writing before the council, de Lubac was able to demonstrate that Origen expressed the sacramental parallelism between Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist in a very similar manner to that which would have need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth. Consequently, if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in Church discipline, or even in the way that Church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself—these should be set right at the opportune moment and in the proper way.” Similarly, in \textit{Dei Verbum} §23, the council indicates that “the church, the ‘spouse of the incarnate Word’, taught by the holy Spirit, strives to attain, day by day, to an ever deeper understanding of holy scripture, so that she may never fail to nourish her children with God’s utterances. With this in view the church appropriately encourages the study also of the fathers of the church, both eastern and western, and of the sacred liturgies.”


\textsuperscript{182} E.g., according to Vorderholzer (\textit{Meet Henri De Lubac}, 54), the “rediscovery of the sacramental concept of the Church decisively prepared the way for the understanding of the Church that was formulated by the Second Vatican Council.” See also George Chantraine, “Cardinal Henri De Lubac (1896-1991),” \textit{Communio} 18 (Fall 1991): 297-303; McPartlan, \textit{The Eucharist Makes the Church}.  

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later be retrieved by the council, and formulated in *Dei Verbum*. In his *Homily on Exodus* Origen says,

> you know, you who are used to assisting at the divine mysteries with such religious care, when you receive the Body of the Lord, you take care lest the least morsel fall from it...You would think yourselves blameworthy, and so you would truly be, if that were to happen through your negligence... Now... how could it be less serious to neglect the Word of God than his Body?

For Origen, equal veneration and preparation should be given to receive Christ, present in his Word and in his Body, the Eucharist. Origen’s insistence is taken up in the opening words of *Dei Verbum* §21.

3. The Ressourcement of the Sacramental Nature and Interrelationship Between Eucharist and Church

De Lubac not only retrieved and rehabilitated Origen, but he sought to recover the vitality of the Tradition as a retrieval in dialogue with modern problems. It is not by accident that many of de Lubac’s theological insights are shared by *Dei Verbum*, e.g., the relationship between Christ in Scripture and Eucharist, the unity of the two Testaments, the completely personal nature of the Sacred Scriptures. Moreover, in *Corpus Mysticum* de Lubac recovered the sacramental relationship of the Church and Eucharist as it was held throughout the Tradition by the fathers and during the Middle Ages. This notion of sacramentality harmonizes with the complementary nature of Word and Eucharist and will prove helpful for thinking about Scripture and in clarifying the

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184 De Lubac (History and Spirit, 347) writes, “scripture is not a document handed over to the historian or the thinker, even to the believing historian or thinker. It is a word, which is to say, the start of a dialogue. It is addressed to someone from whom it awaits a response. More precisely, it is God who offers himself through it, and he awaits more than a response: a return movement.”
185 (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2006).
intimate relationship of Word, Eucharist & Church as it was articulated at the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, I will not limit my analysis to History and Spirit, but will draw from Corpus Mysticum and other relevant works of de Lubac to develop this theological theme.

V. Conclusion

In retrieving the doctrine of the One Table the council did not comprehensively and clearly articulate what was meant by the One Table.\textsuperscript{186} Assisted by the thought of Henri de Lubac, I hope to shed light on the overlooked text from Dei Verbum: to clarify the council’s vision concerning the intrinsic relationship of the Word of God, the Eucharist, and the Church, and as a fruitful way to interpret the conciliar text, thereby aiding in the Church’s on-going renewal.\textsuperscript{187}

In the following chapters I will investigate the indissoluble unity of the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Eucharist, and the Church. In chapter 2, I will examine Henri de Lubac’s theological retrieval of patristic exegesis, via Origen, specifically as it pertains to the One Table.\textsuperscript{188} I will concentrate primarily on History and Spirit, while also drawing from Origen himself to explicate de Lubac’s sacramental hermeneutic. Chapter 3 will complement chapter 2 by examining de Lubac’s articulation of the sacramental nature of

\textsuperscript{186} The two phrases, One Table and Two Tables are synonymous, as they each refer to the varied, though unified presence of Christ in Word, Sacrament, and Church. This will become clearer in chapter three.


\textsuperscript{188} Henri de Lubac’s theological vision has been discussed in a number of valuable works, and I do not wish to repeat that information. My intention here is much more modest; I only wish to present a synthetic account of de Lubac’s theology as it pertains to the interrelationship of the Scripture, the Eucharist, and the Church, and how it provides a fruitful, helpful, and fuller interpretation of the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council on this topic. For a general picture of de Lubac and his theology see Balthasar, The Theology of Henri De Lubac and Voderholzer, Meet Henri De Lubac. For an understanding of his eucharistic-ecclesiology see McPartlan, The Eucharist Makes the Church. And, for his biblical hermeneutics see Wood, Spiritual Exegesis.
the Church and the Eucharist, a theme inherently related to ancient Christian exegesis. In chapter 4, I will present the conciliar teaching on the One Table as it is articulated and found throughout the conciliar documents and in the light of the theology of Henri de Lubac. In the concluding chapter, I will indicate the ecumenical importance of the retrieval of this ancient doctrine for the life of the Church and the theological, pastoral, and liturgical implications of this ancient doctrine.

189 In Corpus Mysticum de Lubac coined the famous phrase, ‘the Eucharist makes the Church.’ I will show in what manner that it can also be said that the Word makes the Church—Word, Eucharist, and Church are intimately related. See also the statement in Unitatis redintegratio §3: Scripture is one of the “elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church.”

190 The council mentions the One Table doctrine in Dei Verbum; however, various other conciliar documents are related to this teaching without specific mention of it, e.g., Sacrosanctum Concilium §48, §51.
CHAPTER 2: HENRI DE LUBAC’S RETRIEVAL OF SPIRITUAL EXEGESIS AND ITS RELATION TO THE ONE TABLE OF VATICAN II

Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) played an important role both before and during the Second Vatican Council. Although it is difficult to determine de Lubac’s role in the writing of *Dei Verbum*, it is certainly obvious that many of his seminal insights were influential, not only to *Dei Verbum*, but to the council in general. Among these insights, de Lubac’s work on spiritual exegesis and sacramental ecclesiology was a theological precursor to the doctrine of the One Table in the council documents.

In this chapter, I wish to examine de Lubac’s theological understanding of scriptural exegesis, relying on de Lubac’s interpretation of Origen. It is not my purpose to examine the validity of de Lubac’s interpretation of Origen. Neither do I wish to avail myself of recent scholarship on Origen. I merely wish to uncover the meaning and importance of spiritual exegesis in de Lubac’s thought, specifically as he has received and interpreted Origen. There are other worthwhile manuscripts that uncover the exegetical method of Origen. Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, the following examination of Origen’s spiritual exegesis is dependent upon de Lubac’s reception and interpretation of Origen. In uncovering his interpretation of Origen, together with his

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Eucharistic ecclesiology, it will become evident that de Lubac profoundly influenced the Second Vatican Council’s formulation of the doctrine of the One Table.192

I. Henri de Lubac: Reader of Origen

Origen (ca. 185-255) is one of the first theologians of the Church, and, according to Walter Kasper, “perhaps the greatest theologian of all time.”193 Origen’s contribution to Christian thought is certainly not limited to his own time. In fact, although his name and theological edifice were attacked after his death, Origen’s theology represents one of the foundations of all traditional Christian doctrine.194 And, although Origen certainly did not invent all of the characteristics of patristic Scriptural exegesis, he was the first to order the diverse features, thereby creating a truly scientific analysis of the Word of God in Scripture. Manlio Simonetti explains:

Origen organised and systematised these more or less traditional features, using an incomparably superior knowledge of the actual biblical text, a far greater depth of exegetical reflection, and an unprecedented critical intelligence sharpened by debate with the Gnostics. He not only widened and deepened all that he received, but he ordered it, for the first time on precise methodological criteria, into a total synthesis which would in many ways remain definitive. In short, Origen made biblical hermeneutics into a real science, and, in that sense, he conditioned decisively all subsequent patristic exegesis.195

192 De Lubac’s theological fingerprints can be found throughout the council documents. This will become more evident in chapter 4.
Therefore, Origen has rightly merited the title “the father of Christian exegesis.” And, as Thomas Scheck points out, what ancient and modern authors “sought in Origen was not so much his doctrine as his mentality and spirit, most of all, his way of interpreting Holy Scripture.” For, as one of the foremost scholars on Origen, Henri Crouzel, has stated, “most of Origen’s writings have as their aim the interpretation of Scripture and that in those which are not directly exegetical Scripture still holds an important place.”

For Origen, Scripture maintained pride of place in his theological endeavors.

Henri de Lubac sought to retrieve the important, but overlooked, thought of Origen because he wished to understand what Origen actually said, and he hoped to show, by uncovering Origen’s doctrine of the senses of Scripture, that the extreme prejudice against Origen and his allegorism is due to misunderstanding. As de Lubac himself has indicated, Origen is often accused of being a foolish allegorist, an error so deeply rooted that “we find good historians reviving it without a closer look.” This misconception often prevents Origen’s genius from being recognized. De Lubac has observed that “more than any other figure in the fields of hermeneutics, exegesis, and spirituality, he would be the grand master.”

One of the first volumes published for Origen, according to de Margerie (An Introduction to the History of Exegesis, 95), is “the first scientific exegete of the Catholic Church.” See also de Lubac, The Sources of Revelation (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 46-47.


Crouzel, Origen, 55. See also de Lubac, History and Spirit, 42f.

De Lubac (At the Service of the Church, 10), states: “I have sought, not to ‘defend’ Origen, but simply to know what in fact he thought and said.” See also John Courtney Murray, et al., “Sources Chrétiennes” Theological Studies 9, (1948): 262f.

De Lubac, History and Spirit, 9.

De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), I:159. According to Louis Bouyer, (The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers (New York: The Seabury Press, 1960), 280-281), Origen “produced lasting models for all the types of work and studies which have Holy Scripture as their object: from the establishment of the critical text, whether in the original or in its versions, with the Hexapla, to the great commentaries on St. Matthew, St. John, the Epistle to the Romans, or the Canticle of Canticles, going through the detailed studies on one or another particularly difficult passage to the Homilies which, on the contrary, make directly available to the faithful the spiritual fruit of scientific research.”
Sources chrétiennes (1944) dealt with Origen, specifically his homilies on Genesis, for which de Lubac provided the introduction.\textsuperscript{202} In his own investigation of Origen, de Lubac uncovered the thought of a deeply humble man of the Church, firmly attached to Jesus Christ, unwilling to waver from the Church, especially in his exegetical-theological work.\textsuperscript{203}

The retrieval of Origen’s doctrine of the spiritual senses is extremely significant for de Lubac’s theological thought and will contribute to de Lubac’s recovery of the One Table doctrine that permeates the council documents.\textsuperscript{204} In recovering Origen, de Lubac uncovered not simply Origen’s exegesis, but an entire way of thinking about the divine mysteries that Christ has revealed to us and that are encountered within the communion of the Church, especially as celebrated in her liturgy.\textsuperscript{205} By his penetrating analysis of Christian hermeneutics, de Lubac showed both that the traditional manner of entering into the Scriptures was simply the way theology was exercised, and expressed the intimate relation of exegesis, theology and spirituality, something that, to varying degrees, was also retrieved by the council.\textsuperscript{206} In Medieval Exegesis, de Lubac says: “theological science and the explication of Scripture cannot but be one and the same thing. In its most profound

\textsuperscript{202} Murray, et al., “Sources Chrétiennes,” 262f.
\textsuperscript{204} The paramount place of spiritual exegesis in de Lubac’s thought, especially as it is related to his ecclesiology, is developed by Susan Wood in Spiritual Exegesis. Although my study is similar to Wood’s, I have explored how de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual exegesis is related to the doctrine of the One Table of the Second Vatican Council.
\textsuperscript{205} See de Lubac, At the Service of the Church, 83-84.
\textsuperscript{206} For example, the council (Dei Verbum §24) will emphasize the primacy of Scripture in the life of theology: “sacred theology takes its stand on the written word of God, together with tradition, as its permanent foundation. By this word it is made firm and strong, and constantly renews its youth, as it investigates, by the light of faith, all the truth that is stored up in the mystery of Christ. The holy scriptures contain the word of God and, since they are inspired, really are the word of God; therefore the study of the ‘sacred page’ ought to be the very soul of theology. The same word of scripture is the source of healthy nourishment and holy vitality for the ministry of the word—pastoral preaching, catechetics and all forms of christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should have the highest place.” See also de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), II:77; Crouzel, Origen, 83f.
and far-reaching sense this estimation of the situation remains true even to our own day. But in its stricter and more immediate sense, this idea flourished right to the eve of the thirteenth century.”

De Lubac himself says that he wrote History and Spirit (1950) for the express purpose of uncovering Origen’s understanding of Scripture and his exegetical method because he believed that contemporary exegesis should seek to reproduce the spiritual movement of patristic hermeneutics. De Lubac believed that the recovery of spiritual exegesis was “essential not only for understanding early Christianity,” but also the “permanent foundations of Christianity.” Moreover, according to de Lubac, some of the modern attacks against patristic or spiritual exegesis conceal criticism of the New Testament itself.

The subject of scriptural interpretation in Origen is vast and complicated. Therefore, I will only highlight some of the more important aspects of Origen’s exegesis for the purpose of elucidating the doctrine of the One Table, which will occur below. This in turn, will aid in uncovering the doctrine of the One Table of Word and Eucharist, and both its reception in and its relationship to the Church. The following exegetical principles will allow us to apprehend better the essential connection and

207 De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:27.
208 See Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie, 154. Indeed, de Lubac believed that theology was essentially the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, an idea that was re-emphasized by the Second Vatican Council, especially in the Dei Verbum. See especially §24-25. See also de Lubac, The Splendor of the Church (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 246.
209 As de Lubac (History and Spirit, 431) states, “the question [concerning the importance of spiritual exegesis] is not only essential for understanding early Christianity. It reaches, as Möhler himself seems to imply toward the end, moreover, to the permanent foundations of Christian thought.”
210 See de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:150.
211 For a more thorough presentation of Origen’s exegetical method, in addition to de Lubac’s History and Spirit, one may consult Crouzel, Origen, especially, 61-84, and de Margerie, An Introduction to the History of Exegesis, 95-116. See also Martens, “Revisiting the Typology/Allegory Distinction,” 283-317; Wright IV, “The Literal Sense of Scripture According to Henri De Lubac,” 252-77; Dively Lauro, The Soul and Spirit of Scripture Within Origen’s Exegesis.
relationship of Scripture, Eucharist, and Church, as it was retrieved by Henri de Lubac.  

II. Henri de Lubac, Origen, and Spiritual Exegesis

My examination of Origen’s hermeneutics as retrieved by Henri de Lubac will serve a twofold purpose: first, a proper understanding of the principles of spiritual exegesis will allow us to understand more clearly Origen’s explication of the various incorporations of the One Logos, which is essential for understanding the doctrine of the One Table. It is the underlying principles of spiritual exegesis, taken together with de Lubac’s recovery of the sacramental ecclesiology that contributes so much towards understanding the doctrine of the One Table.  

Second, de Lubac’s return to the Fathers and his retrieval of Origen’s (and the Medieval) doctrine of spiritual exegesis has intimately shaped his own theological work. The exegetical method of Origen underlies much of de Lubac’s theological claims, which reappear throughout his other various works, and is thereby characteristic of his own theological mindset.

Historically, the description of the exegesis of the Scriptures is divided according to two models: either the four senses (historical, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical) or the three senses (historical, allegorical, tropological). Each of these senses can be narrowed to the two fundamental senses, the literal (historical) and the spiritual (mystical). Both of these forms are attributed to Origen and, according to Denis Farkasfalvy, the fourfold sense of scripture “became the backbone of Christian biblical

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213 De Lubac drew heavily, although not solely, from the spirit and method of Origen; one need only to recall Wood, *Spiritual Exegesis* or scan the subheadings and index of *Medieval Exegesis*.
214 What these principles are and how they are related to de Lubac’s sacramental ecclesiology will be made clear below and in the subsequent chapter.
215 The four senses also found their way into the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (115), which also uses the medieval couplet (118) that de Lubac uncovered in *Medieval Exegesis*, I:1.
interpretation for over a thousand years and dominated exegesis until the late Middle Ages.”

De Lubac has shown that a systematic theory of scriptural senses as we understand it today was not developed by the patristic authors themselves, Origen included. In practice, the two fundamental senses—the historical (literal) and the spiritual (mystical)—do not contradict or oppose one another, and cannot be separated. Ancient Christian exegesis is typically and legitimately called spiritual. However, this does not mean that patristic and medieval exegesis is not rooted in history or is hostile to history.

A. The Historical Sense: Its Importance and Centrality to Spiritual Exegesis

In practice, according to de Lubac, Origen grounded the spiritual sense in the literal or historical sense. Because Origen took seriously the historical sense as the foundation of the spiritual sense, de Lubac states: “the sacred text must therefore be ‘sounded’ everywhere with the greatest care. That is what Origen repeats with respect to everything, and it is what immediately strikes the reader...The spirit does not wish to harm the letter. It does not wish to ‘destroy the text’.” In his Homilies on Leviticus 14, Origen himself says, “the history was read to us which, although the narrative appears clear, nevertheless unless we follow very carefully its contents which is according to the

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216 Farkasfalvy, Inspiration and Interpretation, 121. See also de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:142f. However, Origen’s application of this tripartite criterion is rare, not systematic, and in other places he simply distinguishes between letter and spirit based on the humanity (letter) and divinity (spirit) of Christ. See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 161-171; idem, Medieval Exegesis, I:66-74; Simonetti, Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church, 43f.


218 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 205; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:25.

219 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 104. According to Crouzel (Crouzel, Origen, 61), “without the historical foundation of the Scriptures, the spiritual sense would only be arbitrarily related to what Scripture says and therefore extrinsic to it.” De Margerie (An Introduction to the History of Exegesis, 98) writes, “Origen regards the literal sense of Scripture as the essential one, and he generally begins by explaining it with great care.”
letter, its interior sense will with difficulty be opened to us.” However, for Origen, there are instances where an historical or literal sense is not necessary, for example, when Jesus speaks in parable there is no need for the historical sense—as Origen and the early Church understood the literal meaning, which is not identical to modern constructs—because Christ is not speaking of an historical event, he is clearly speaking figuratively (parabolically). Nevertheless, this does not mean that Origen de-valued the historical or literal sense. I believe it is only with great difficulty, after perusing Origen’s actual practice of exegesis, to maintain that Origen’s exegetical work is anti-historical. Indeed, Origen believed that God reveals himself in and through history; therefore, historical realities are to be understood (not rejected) in a spiritual sense. Echoing Origen, de Lubac writes, “historical realities possess a profound sense and are to be understood in a spiritual manner.” But, rather than pitting the historical sense over and against the spiritual sense, spiritual exegesis includes the historical or corporeal sense. For, as de Lubac reminds us, “the literal meaning also comes from the Holy Spirit; every true scriptural meaning is inspired, and inspiration is unique.” Both the historical and spiritual senses derive from the Living Word spoken by the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

The historical (literal or corporeal) sense refers to the historical events, the exterior and sensible aspect of things. De Lubac observes, “Scripture includes first of all—a historical sense: it is the account itself of events or the texts of the laws.”

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221 The differences between the ancient and modern understandings of the ‘literal’ sense will be made clearer in the treatment below.
222 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 165.
223 See almost any homily or scriptural commentary of Origen’s: in the majority of cases, Origen begins with the corporeal sense before proceeding through the various spiritual levels to shed light on the mystical meaning of the paschal mystery. In each case, these levels of scriptural senses remain intrinsically united.
simultaneously, history here refers to that universal history in which Christ is the one goal of all events, thus the historical events recounted in Scripture are not recounted only for the sake of narrating them, but primarily to express the saving mystery hidden within. Therefore, although most often used synonymously, there is a certain ambiguity between letter and history. De Lubac makes note of this ambiguity in the second volume of *Medieval Exegesis*. In the Middle Ages, these terms were used synonymously. But, as de Lubac has shown, history also referred to both history as a *past event*, and history as the *recounting* of that event.226 Without a doubt, certain books of Scripture are more properly historical—the objective history—while others are non-historical and may not possess a literal or corporeal sense, e.g., the Song of Songs, parables, proverbs, the psalms, etc.

Not only is there a certain ambiguity between letter and history, but also ancient Christian hermeneutics did not use literal and historical with the same meaning that they possess today. In modern exegesis, the literal sense typically designates the meaning intended by the human author of the inspired text.227 But, for the patristic and medieval tradition, the literal sense often included the figurative (or allegorical) sense because the literal sense identified the words themselves and what they express, before any interpretation is attempted. A helpful illustration of this observation is provided by Crouzel:

> the material story will be for Origen the literal sense but the drama of the Gentiles (the prodigal son) and the Jews (the elder brother), with the affirmation of the divine mercy, which is what Jesus wanted


227 According to Crouzel, today, when we speak of the literal or historical sense, while “we usually employ this expression to mean what the sacred writer was seeking to express, Origen means by it the raw matter of what is said, before, if it were possible, any attempt at interpretation is made.” Crouzel, *Origen*, 62. See also De Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, 99; and, Sandra Schneiders, “Faith, Hermeneutics, and the Scriptural Sense of Scripture,” *Theological Studies* 39 (1978): 719-36.
to express, will be the literal sense for the moderns but the spiritual sense for Origen. As this narrative in its material content, does not relate a real story, it has no historicity.\(^{226}\)

Therefore, Origen observes that not all texts include an historical sense.\(^{229}\) Nonetheless, for Origen—and the patristic and medieval tradition he influenced—the historical sense remained the fundamental starting place for all exegesis.\(^{230}\) De Lubac emphasizes Origen’s insistence on the literal sense by recalling that: “in the homily that he devotes to Noah’s ark, what meticulous care he brings to justify the most precise literal meaning of the most astonishing accounts.”\(^{231}\) In agreement with de Lubac, Farkasfalvy too has affirmed that, for Origen, the first task for the exegete is to find the passages’ literal or historical sense, which is to be explored by the tools of textual research, grammar, and literary analysis. The accusation that Origen neglected or at times even denied the validity of the literal sense is based more on misunderstandings and misinterpretations than on his system’s actual shortcomings.\(^{232}\)

The mystical or spiritual sense is firmly based in the literal account or event.\(^{233}\)

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\(^{226}\) Crouzel, Origen, 62.


\(^{230}\) According to Simonetti (Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church, 44), “Origen, whose name is a byword for the use of allegory, is also the same person who gave much more weight than every before to the literal sense.” As an example of Origen’s attention to the smallest historical or literal detail, see Origen’s Homilies on Jeremiah 17, wherein he begins with an analysis of the meaning of ‘partridge’ to determine the more significant and deeper meaning of the word; he begins with the ‘fact’ of the game bird before treating its spiritual significance. See Origen, Homilies on Jeremiah 17:1-6 (FC:97.180-187).

\(^{231}\) De Lubac, History and Spirit, 106-107.

\(^{232}\) Farkasfalvy, Inspiration and Interpretation, 121. Moreover, according to Farkasfalvy, (Inspiration and Interpretation, 121), “had Origen undervalued or neglected the importance of the literal meaning, he would not have invested so much work in text-critical studies, nor would he have discussed countless questions of textual variations, geographical locations, and biblical names and personalities.” Lienhard (“Origen and the Crisis of the Old Testament in the Early Church,” Pro Ecclesia 9:3 (2000), 363), succinctly states, Origen “pays painfully careful attention to the literal sense.”

\(^{233}\) See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 231ff. Crouzel (Crouzel, Origen, 61) too has explained that, typically it is the literal sense that serves as the foundation and source of the spiritual sense: “the room that Origen finds in his homilies for the literal sense, which he also calls the historical or the corporeal, varies considerably: some homilies are almost entirely built around it, in others it occupies a minimal space. Normally the literal sense is the source of the spiritual sense: if that were not so there would only be an arbitrary sense whose relation with what the Scripture says would be merely extrinsic.”
According to Origen, “the splendor of the coming of Christ, by illuminating the Law of Moses with the radiance of truth, removed that veil which had been placed over the letter, and laid open for all who believe in Him the good things that were hidden covered within (cf. 2 Cor. 3:15-16).” De Lubac, laconically expressing the same thought, says, “for the Christian to understand the Bible means to understand it in the light of the Gospel,” in the light of Christ, who not only interprets Scripture for us, but fulfills it in deed. Scripture is the narrative that communicates historical deeds, which, in themselves are figures or shadows that contain the mysteries to be extracted by the spiritual sense, but the extraction is based on the literal sense.

B. The Spiritual Sense: Fulfillment of the Historical Sense

God’s Logos truly became incarnate in Christ, but he prepared for this incarnation in Israel by addressing his Living Word to the Patriarchs and the Prophets. Scripture, in the unity of the Old and New Testaments, cannot be separated from the Logos, and it remains animated by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Scripture, for Origen and de Lubac, always remains the living and vibrant Word of God, not in general, but here and now, addressed to the Church and every individual partaking in the ecclesial communion. Because Scripture is the Living Word, it remains alive and effective for the present, not merely confined to the past. For this reason, de Lubac writes, “we need

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234 Origen, *On First Principles*, Book 4, chapter 2.6. See also de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 177-179. In agreement with de Lubac, Crouzel (Origen, 68) has indicated that, for Origen “the true meaning is not in the letter, but in the spirit when the veil is taken away by Christ.”

235 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 178.

236 De Lubac (*History and Spirit*, 108) observes, the Scriptures “contain divine depths, but they retain, nonetheless, in the very great majority of instances, their literal significance.”

237 I will return to the ecclesial nature of Scripture in a subsequent section. De Lubac (*Medieval Exegesis*, I: 146) observes, “it is to the Church that the Father addresses himself as to his daughter. It is the Church that is led to Christ, and it is in her that souls, united by faith and virtue, are made one.”

238 “It is the Word of God that is being received, as it is addressed to us ‘here and now.’” Ibid., I:265.
both the learned, in order to help us read Scripture historically, and the spiritual men
(who ought to be ‘men of the Church’) in order to help us arrive at a deeper spiritual
understanding of it. If the former deliver us from our ignorance, the latter alone have the
gift of discernment, which preserves us from interpretations that are dangerous to the
faith.”

For both Origen and de Lubac, the Scriptures are truly the Living Word of
God, who has first spoken to us through the Patriarchs and prophets, and continues
speaking to all people for all ages in the unity of the Church.

1. The Depth and Breadth of the Divine Mystery

Animated by the Holy Spirit, this living, divine Word of Scripture possesses a
depth and richness incapable of being fully understood by the human person. As de
Lubac says in reference to the Scriptures, they possess “so many mysteries that it is
impossible to explain them or even to perceive them all. Their grandeur surpasses our
strength. Their density is crushing.” In his Homilies on Genesis 9, regarding the
profundity and depth of the Scriptures, Origen declares that:

the more we read on, the higher rises the mountain of mysteries.
And as someone who sets out to sea in a small boat is less afraid as
long as the land is near, but when he has gradually moved out into
the deep and the waves get bigger, and he begins to be tossed up on
the crests and plunged down in the troughs, then indeed he is seized
with fear and terror for entrusting a slender craft to such great
waves; the same seems to happen to us who, with little merit and
slight talent, dare to enter into so vast a sea of mysteries.

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239 Ibid., I:267.
240 See Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie, 152f.
241 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 103. See also R. R. Reno, “Origen and Spiritual Interpretation,” Pro Ecclesia
242 Origen, Homily on Genesis 9.1, as quoted in Hans Urs Von Balthasar, ed. Origen: Spirit and Fire (Washington,
Hence, because of the depth and breadth of the Scriptures, they possess diverse levels of meanings that the faithful can begin to glimpse to varying degrees, but only if this Word is received in the same Spirit that animates them. Led by the Spirit of Christ, beginning with the historical level, one is enabled to penetrate, to varying degrees, the spiritual mystery. The Scriptures possess such a depth that one and the same episode may contain several different levels of meanings and one understanding does not prevent another understanding. Indeed, as de Lubac says, “there is no resource of the human mind, no method, no scientific procedure which will ever be enough to make us hear” and understand fully the divine Word.\(^{243}\)

In his *Homilies on Genesis* 2, expounding on the various senses of Scripture, Origen stresses a certain depth of the Scriptures that is not accessible by any one sense alone, but requires the unity of all the senses for the fuller meaning:

> Because God commanded the ark to be built not just with two chambers but also with three chambers, let us get to work and, to this twofold interpretation which has gone before, also add a third as God commands. The first of these was the historical sense and is set at the bottom as a kind of foundation. The second, higher and more sublime, was the mystical. Let us try, if we can, to add a third, the moral sense, although this too—since it is called neither “two-chambered” with no addition nor “three-chambered” and nothing more, but when it is called “two-chambered” the “three-chambered” is also added—is not without mystery for this interpretation we are presenting. For three-chambered designates this threefold exposition. However, the literal sense in holy scripture cannot always stand but is often lacking, when for example it is written: ‘Thorns grow in the hand of the drunkard’ (Prov 26:9 LXX), and when it is written of the temple built by Solomon: ‘The sound of the hammer and the axe was not heard in the house of God,’ and then in Leviticus when the leprosy of a wall and a skin and a wrap are required to be inspected by the priests and purified (cf. Lev 14:34; 13:48). It is therefore because of things like this that

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\(^{243}\) De Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, 19; See also idem, *History and Spirit*, 159f.
the ark was built not solely with three chambers but also with two chambers.\textsuperscript{244}

De Lubac, in retrieving the spiritual exegesis of Origen, also emphasizes the depth and breadth of the divine mystery present in the Scriptures: “the ‘ocean of mysteries’ that Origen teaches us to see in Scripture is deeper. It encloses the most varied marvels. Let us observe, first of all, that one and the same episode, phrase, or even word can often have several different meanings.”\textsuperscript{245} De Lubac illustrates this point by drawing from some of Origen’s homilies and commentaries on certain scriptural texts. For example, the houses of Jacob and the tents of Israel extolled by the Book of Numbers actually existed at one time in history. Going beyond the letter, the mere history, de Lubac explains how Origen unfolds the threefold mystery present within:

we will have to see in the first place that these houses of Jacob symbolize perfection itself, a solid and definitive edifice, while the tents of Israel represent that series of gradual increases in knowledge whose progress marks out the path to perfection; we will also be able, apart from this first symbolism, to recognize in them, respectively, the law and the prophets, or indeed, the bodies and the souls of the elect.\textsuperscript{246}

Because of the vastness of the mystery present in Scripture, the mystery that the human person is called to penetrate through the various levels of Scripture, it is not sufficient to remain at the letter of the words themselves. Therefore, although Origen insists on the corporeal or historical sense, he is not primarily concerned to remain at this basic level: one must not stop at the letter (the literal, historical deed), but must continue to the mystery hidden within the letter because it is the spiritual sense that gives the text

\textsuperscript{244} Origen, \textit{Homily on Genesis} 2.6, as quoted in Von Balthasar, \textit{Origen}, 104:211.\textsuperscript{245} De Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 159. See also idem, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, I:75ff.\textsuperscript{246} De Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 159-160.
its true value.247

2. The ‘Deeper’ Sense

The historical sense may provide a usefulness, especially to the spiritually immature Christian not yet able to penetrate the depths of the Scriptures and it may be edifying by itself, but the corporeal sense points beyond itself to a more profound and richer understanding of Scripture.248 For example, in Origen’s *Homilies on Joshua* 2, he says the letter of the Law is placed on the ground and lies down below. On no occasion, then, does the one who follows the letter of the Law ascend. But if your are able to rise from the letter to the spirit and also ascend from history to a higher understanding, then truly you have ascended the lofty and high place that you will receive from God as your inheritance. For if in these things that are written you perceive types and observe figures of heavenly things, and with reflection and intuitive feeling “you seek those things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God,” then you will receive this place as your inheritance.249

As Boersma points out, like Origen, “for de Lubac, the Spirit’s authorship of Scripture meant that the revelatory and spiritual contents conveyed by the text were much more important than the literal meaning of the words themselves.”250 The literal meaning itself derives from the Holy Spirit, but, so long as one has not penetrated to the spiritual level, that person has not perceived the full intention of the Spirit.251 Furthermore, the literal

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249 Origen, *Homily on Joshua* 2.3, FC:105:39 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2002). In *Peri Archon* (*On First Principles*, Book 4, chapter 3.4), Origen explains that “the aim of the Holy Spirit, who thought it right to give us the divine Scriptures, is not that we might be able to be edified by the letter alone or in all cases, since we often discover that the letter is impossible or insufficient in itself because by it sometimes not only irrationalities but even impossibilities are described. But the aim of the Holy Spirit is that we should understand that there have been woven into the visible narrative truths that, if pondered and understood inwardly, bring forth a law useful to men and worthy of God.”
250 Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 152.
251 De Lubac (*The Sources of Revelation*, 19) writes, “we have not completely perceived the intention of the Spirit as long as we have failed to penetrate to the deepest level.” Again, de Lubac, (*The Sources of Revelation,*
meaning, in and of itself, remains truncated and incomplete unless related to Christ and
the Church, the ecclesial communion in which humanity is refashioned and made a new
creation. Without the spiritual sense—the deeper sense to which the literal sense is
ordered—the literal sense remains incomplete because the literal sense is fulfilled in Christ
and his Church.

The spiritual sense (mystical or allegorical) unites the events recorded in the
historical sense to Christ and the Church, the mystery which is both present now, yet also
to be completed in the age to come. Although the spiritual sense is often identified with
the allegorical sense, it encompasses more than just the allegorical, but also the
tropological and the anagogical. To limit the spiritual sense to the allegorical is to
misread the tradition, especially Origen and the retrieval of the spiritual sense of
Scripture made by de Lubac.

The proper object of the spiritual sense is the mystery of Christ and His body, the
Church; this reality is simultaneously present now, but always a reality awaiting its
fulfillment in the future: although present now, the mystery of Christ and his Church is
ordered to its completion in the future when Christ the Head will reveal the hidden and
fuller meaning of the divine mysteries. The tropological (moral) sense is the mystery
of Christ taking root in, nourishing and transforming the soul: in and through his Word,

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20) says that “to the extent that we have not arrived at it [the mystical meaning], we have not drawn out a
totally Christian interpretation from the Scriptures.” Without faith, it is impossible to penetrate the spiritual
sense of Scripture, or, as de Lubac says (Medieval Exegesis, I:261), we cannot recognize Christ “except
through the Spirit, and that this Spirit is always the Spirit of Christ.”

252 See de Lubac, Catholicism, 217-226.
253 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 163.
254 See Crouzel, Origen, 80f.
255 See de Lubac, Catholicism, 230ff.
256 According to Wood (Spiritual Exegesis, 42), “a trope, in the broadest sense of the word, is a figure of
speech, a turn of language by which one ‘turns’ an expression to designate something other than its natural
meaning. Thus tropologia came to suggest the idea of moral conversion.”
God addresses each individual, transforming them into his Body, the Church. His Divine Word in Scripture is always sacramental, i.e., it is the dynamic, living, and effective Word. In the tropological sense, the historical deed prefigures that which is to be completed in the individual person within the ecclesial communion, within the Body of Christ.

C. The Unity of the Historical and Spiritual Senses

The two senses, the historical and spiritual, are inherently related to each other the way the Old and New Testaments are intertwined. Origen possesses a unified reading of Scripture (the mutual correlation of literal and spiritual), and De Lubac shares a similar position. He writes:

God acts in history and reveals himself through history. Or rather, God inserts himself in history and so bestows on it a “religious consecration” which compels us to treat it with due respect. As a consequence historical realities possess a profound sense and are to be understood in a spiritual manner: ιστορικά πνευματικῶς [historical things spiritually]; conversely, spiritual realities appear in a constant state of flux and are to be understood historically: πνευματικά ιστορικῶς [spiritual things historically].

It is not as though the spiritual sense is divorced or separated from, or even antithetical to, the literal or historical sense. According to de Lubac, “each meaning tends towards the other as toward its end. Thus although they are several, they together make but one.”

The spiritual sense is the deeper understanding of the Word, the Word of God that has

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257 Lewis Ayres, (“The Soul and the Reading of Scripture: A Note on Henri De Lubac,” Scottish Journal of Theology 61:2 (2008): 173-90), has explained the importance of the tropological sense to pre-modern exegesis, although it typically goes unnoticed by modern scholars.

258 These two senses form part of the spiritual sense, and therefore are not two new senses in addition to the literal and spiritual senses.


260 De Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 221.
freely chosen to become rooted in human history.\footnote{According to de Margerie (\textit{An Introduction to the History of Exegesis}, 100), “it is the spiritual sense that reveals the full truth to those who are capable of grasping it.”} The senses of Scripture, although typically designated as the ‘two senses’ or ‘four senses’ are united by the one Logos, just as the Logos unites the Old and the New.\footnote{According to Wood (\textit{Spiritual Exegesis}, 29), “the difference between the tripartite and the quadripartite delineation is not, in itself, very significant because the quadripartite delineation simply divides the allegorical (or mystical) sense into two senses—the allegorical and the anagogical.” See also de Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, I:123; 144ff., 225; idem, \textit{History and Spirit}, 134ff.} In the Logos, all apparent contradictions are overcome because he is the one Word underlying all the words of Scripture. De Lubac remarks, “God has spoken but once, and yet his Word, at first extended in duration, remains continuous and does not entirely cease to reach us.”\footnote{De Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, II: 140-141.} This unitive principle will have important ramifications toward a proper understanding of the One Table—I will return to this assertion in the subsequent sections and chapters below.

1. The One Logos and the Two Covenants

There is only one Logos spoken in both the Old and the New Covenants: Christ is the one Word of the Father spoken on all the pages of the Scriptures. In his \textit{Commentaries on Matthew}, Book II, Origen says, “for he knows that all the Scripture is the one perfect and harmonised instrument of God, which from different sounds gives forth one saving voice to those willing to learn.”\footnote{Origen, \textit{Commentary on Matthew}, Book II (\textit{ANF} 9:413). See also de Lubac, \textit{Catholicism}, 181; idem, \textit{The Sources of Revelation}, 82-84.} Beyond Jesus Christ there is nothing else offered, nothing else remains to be spoken.\footnote{See de Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, I:227-260. Nevertheless, this mystery remains on its way to fulfillment and will not be completed until the eschaton, especially as appropriated by each person within the ecclesial body of Christ. See Walter Kasper, “Jesus Christ: God’s Final Word,” \textit{Communio} 28 (2001): 61-71.} In his \textit{Commentary on John}, Book 5, Origen says:

the Logos of God, who was in the beginning with God, is not πογυ-λογία, he is not λόγοι. He is one, unique Word, formed of multiple sentences, each of which is a part of the same whole, of the same Logos….Outside of him, even if one speaks of truth, there is no
truth, there is no unity, no harmony, no tending toward a same Whole….He, on the contrary, who speaks the truth, even if he says everything without omitting anything, always pronounces a single Logos: the saints do not fall into the multiplicity of words, having always as their goal a single Logos….Thus, while profane words are a multiplicity, all the Holy Books together are but a single Book.  

The spiritual sense clearly presupposes an inherent link between the two Testaments, a link between what is both prefigured and the figure itself because they all are united by the One Word. De Lubac echoes Origen when he writes,

Christ is the subject of all the Holy Books; he is the key to them, and if we read them accordingly, we will discover his divinity everywhere. He himself, in saying to us ‘Search the Scriptures’, does not refer us to one or another part in particular but to all of them. All concern him, just as all are also his words, the words of the One who is himself Word.

The Logos unites the literal sense and the spiritual sense, he unites the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, just as his divinity and humanity are united. According to de Lubac, seen in this way, the two testaments are “not primarily a book. It is a twofold event, a twofold ‘covenant’, a twofold dispensation which unfolds its development through the ages, and which is fixed, one might suppose, by no written account.” The Scriptures trace the successive stages of this twofold dispensation that is occurring in history and remains in the process of completion, to be fulfilled both historically and socially.

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266 Origen, Commentary on John, Book 5, chapters 5-6, as quoted in de Lubac, History and Spirit, 386.
267 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 385. De Lubac (The Sources of Revelation, 117) writes, “we find that the Old Testament itself has been unified and the two Testaments together speak with a single voice.” According to Voderholzer (Meet Henri de Lubac, 192), commenting on de Lubac’s understanding of the senses of scripture, “the middle term that joins them [the Old and New Covenants] is Christ. The Scripture of the Old Covenant points ultimately to him, the writings of the New Testament testify to him using the characteristic expressions of the Old Covenant, and following his initiative, all the texts of the Old Covenant—even those that do not expressly contain Messianic prophecies—are interpreted with reference to Christ and the Church.”
268 See de Lubac, Catholicism, 169f.; idem, Medieval Exegesis, I:225f.
269 De Lubac, Catholicism, 169. Together, the twofold dispensation makes one body for the Logos.
2. The Transformation of the Old into the New

The Old Covenant not only prepares for and promises the New, but also is transformed by it through the coming of the Incarnate Word and the action of the Holy Spirit within the Church. This interconnected relation is paradoxical: on the one hand, there is historical continuity since the Old prepares for the New; on the other hand, there is also discontinuity because the Old is transfigured by the New. And, as de Lubac explains, although prefiguring the New, the Old Testament is suddenly, not gradually, transformed by the New:

note well that this transformation of the Old into the New does not come about from some sort of intellectual development. And it is not something which is spread over a period of time: it happens in a flash. In no sense is it a gradual progression; even though prepared for, it is a sudden change when it finally occurs, a total transference, a change of key which gives a different meaning to everything. The Church is the daughter of the Synagogue, but in the newness of the Spirit. Thanks to a new illumination, a sudden change appears in everything which made up what is now called the Old Testament.

In Christ, suddenly all that had been revealed to the Israelites as promise, is now fulfilled. This transformation does not mean that the Old Testament is discarded.

Indeed, for the Christian, it only continues to exist in its relation with the New Testament. Together, the two expressions of the divine economy (the Old and New

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270 De Lubac (History and Spirit, 316) remarks, “let us say therefore, that Jesus Christ does not so much explain the Old Testament as he transforms it.” See also 191ff.; idem, Catholicism, 170-183; idem, Medieval Exegesis, I:228f; Crouzel, Origen, 109f.; Voderholzer, Meet Henri de Lubac, 195. This transfiguration is not merely limited to the Old Testament, but is a transformation of history itself.

271 See de Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 100-112.

272 Ibid., 91.

273 De Lubac (The Sources of Revelation, 99) observes, Christians “no longer sought to ‘actualize’ ancient Scripture; they realized that it had been actualized in Jesus, once for all.”

274 See de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), III:98-116 for a discussion of this paradoxical relationship; see also idem, The Sources of Revelation, 88-91.
Testaments) form one body for the Word in which the Scriptures are made new in the everlasting newness of the Spirit, they have been converted from letter to spirit. 275

The New Testament cannot be properly understood apart from the Old Testament and the Old Testament itself is ordered to the New Testament. Likewise, the letter cannot be separated from the spirit. For, according to de Lubac,

in Scripture itself, one professes that there is no dissociation of the two senses. The spirit does not exist without the letter, nor is the letter devoid of the spirit. Each of the two senses is in the other—like the ‘wheel within the wheel.’ Each needs the other. With those two they constitute ‘the perfect science.’ To tell the truth, from the start they even constitute really only one. 276

Just as the Old Testament is ordered to the New Testament and cannot be properly and fully understood without it, so too the historical sense is ordered to the spiritual sense as its completion or fulfillment. Because Christ is the One Word spoken on all the pages of Scripture, there is no contradiction between the Old and the New, despite what may appear to be dissimilarities. De Lubac observes, there

is something which makes us appreciate the ‘distantiam evidentissimam’ between the Old Testament and the New. But at the very moment that the gift of the New Testament creates the contrast, it suppresses it. The distance is at once filled in. We find that the Old Testament itself has been unified, and the two Testaments together speak with a single voice. 277

According to Origen, all of Scripture, both Old and New, resounds with the one saving voice of God. 278 The Old and the New both make up the united voice of Jesus. This one

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275 According to de Lubac (Catholicism, 177), “in the conjunction of the two Testaments was woven a single vesture for the Word; together they formed one body, and to rend this body by rejecting the Jewish books was no less a sacrilege than to render the body of the Church by schism.”
276 De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:26; see also The Sources of Revelation, 87f.
277 De Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 116-117.
278 See Origen, Commentary on Matthew, Book II (ANF: 9.413).
voice is the Logos of God who speaks to the human person in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and, in such an intimate way, that all may be drawn from letter to spirit, from the signifying to the signified so that the person be brought back from disunity to the divine unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For, according to de Lubac, the Old Testament itself is ordered to its fulfillment in Christ and the Church, like the letter that is ordered to the spirit. The Old Covenant was merely an anticipatory stage, a shadow, announcing the image of the Christ to come. Hence, it is only in the fullness of the one foreshadowed that the Old is transformed into the fullness of the New. De Lubac expresses this aspect in the following manner: “the second [the New Testament] derives from the first [the Old Testament], but without repudiating it, it gives it life, it does not destroy the first: while fulfilling it, it gives it life, it renews it. The second transfigures the first. It absorbs it into itself. In a word, it changes the letter of the first into spirit.”

Concerning the New Testament itself, although it offers a direct link to Christ on the literal level, the mystical sense demands going beyond external, visible facts and arriving at the mystery of the Incarnate Logos and his ecclesial body.

Just as there is an indispensable relation between the Old and the New, between the letter and spirit, so too is there a similar relation between humanity and divinity in the Incarnation of the Son of God. Indeed, for de Lubac, God has truly revealed himself to humanity and achieved its theosis through Christ’s Incarnation, and all that that entails—his life, death and resurrection. Therefore, according to de Lubac, the realities of this

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280 De Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, 90.
history are the primary vehicles for the unveiling of the divine mystery: “history, just like nature, or to an even greater degree, was a language to them [the Fathers]. It was the word of God. Now throughout this history they encountered a mystery which was to be fulfilled, to be accomplished historically and socially, though always in a spiritual manner: the mystery of Christ and his Church.”

The mystical or spiritual sense is fundamentally sacramental as revealing that effective mystery, Christ himself, who is both hidden within the letter and capable of granting theosis. Historical reality mediates divine mystery: in both Scripture and in his Incarnation, the Logos is truly present to the world.

According to de Lubac, as the divine Word became man, and took for himself a human body, so too, something similar occurs Scripturally as well: “in his Scripture as in his earthly life, Origen thought, the Logos needs a body; the historical meaning and the spiritual meaning are, between them, like the flesh and the divinity of the Logos.” Scripture can be said to be an incorporation of the Logos into the letter. The letter (the humanity of Christ) veils the spirit (the divinity of Christ) and, in so far as one remains only at the letter (at the corporeality of Christ), he or she cannot perceive the mystery within (the divinity of Christ expressed through the body). In fact, according to de Lubac, the exegetical rejection of the spiritual sense is similar to the theological rejection of the divinity of Christ. Those who do not look beyond the historical body of Christ, the historical body born of the Virgin, will not arrive to his divinity. Those who reject the

281 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 170.
282 According to Crouzel, (Origen, 68; see also 109-11), “to read the Bible without seeing that Jesus shows its meaning, is to remain in the ‘letter which kills’ without going on to the ‘spirit that gives life.’ For the veil to be taken away, one must turn to the Lord. ‘We all who, with unveiled face, reflect (Origen reads ‘contemplate’) as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed in that same image from glory to glory, as under the action of the Lord who is Spirit’.”
284 See Crouzel, *Origen*, 70.
divinity of Christ may see merely a prophet, a social revolutionary, or only a good man, but not they are not able to look beyond the humanity of Christ to penetrate to his divinity. Similarly, those who reject the spiritual sense may perceive only an antiquated text that remains out of touch with modern concerns, that is without any relevance for the modern person or for any age other than the one in which is was written. And, stating something similar, Origen, in his *Sermons on Matthew* 27, writes:

> I judge that, just as Christ came hidden in the body so that his manhood appeared to the carnal-minded who regarded the appearance of his body but did not reflect on his virtues, whereas his divinity was understood by the spiritual-minded who did not attend to the appearance of the body but considered his works, just so all divine Scripture is ‘in the body’, especially the Old Testament Scriptures. For the spiritual and prophetic meaning of Scripture is hidden in the history of the subject proposed, so that all Scripture is understood by the ordinary reader according to the literal history whereas by the spiritual and perfect reader according to the spiritual mystery.\(^{285}\)

If a person remains only at the corporeal level, one remains unaware of the life-giving riches Christ offers. De Lubac, commenting on Origen’s hermeneutics, says that “certainly, just as one must not stop in Christ at the man who is seen but, through the flesh that veils him to carnal eyes, perceive by faith the God who is in him, so one must go through the external history that is offered to us in the Holy Books, particularly in the Old Testament, in order to penetrate to the ‘spiritual’ mystery that is hidden there.”\(^{286}\)

This same sacramental principle as applied to exegesis, can also be applied to perceiving Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, because it is the same Christ present in the sacraments that is present in his scriptures (albeit in a different mode of presentation): if

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\(^{286}\) De Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 105; see also Crouzel, *Origen*, 112.
one only stops at the letter, at the corporeality of the Eucharist, they will see the host or
the leavened bread (used among Eastern Christians), but fail to perceive the mystery of
Christ truly present within the corporeality of the bread. This sacramental principle is at
the root of de Lubac’s immense work, and will allow the Second Vatican Council to speak
of the One Table of Christ’s Word and Body, and will be further examined in subsequent
sections of this chapter and in the following chapter.

D. The Unique Logos of God: the Incorporations of the Logos

At the center of all Origen’s immense and varied work is the Logos: although not
identical in modes of presence, it is the same Logos present in both the Old and New
Testaments, in Scripture and in the Incarnation. Chapter 8 of History and Spirit, is an
important chapter for better understanding the doctrine of the One Table. In this
chapter, Henri de Lubac continues his analysis of Origen’s hermeneutics, specifically
investigating the various, subtle manners in which the Word has incorporated himself into
human history.287

Similar to the Second Vatican Council’s insistence on the various ways that Christ
is ‘present’ to the Church, Origen too taught a sacramental realism.288 Henri De Lubac’s
retrieval of Origen’s sacramental exegesis is essentially related to the doctrine of the One
Table. For, if Scripture truly is the Life giving Logos of God, if it is truly Jesus, the ‘bread
of life,’ then indeed, Scripture is life-giving: through the mediation of Scripture, this same

287 In this section of the dissertation, although I will draw primarily from History and Spirit, I will not limit my
discussion to this work.
288 See Sacrosanctum Concilium §7.
Logos grants Eternal life to those who partake in his Scriptures.\footnote{In his \textit{Commentary on Proverbs} 9.2 (as quoted in Von Balthasar, ed. \textit{Origen: Spirit and Fire}, 262), Origen says, “we drink the blood of Christ not only in the sacramental rite, but also when we receive his words in which are life.”}

1. \textit{The Logos and Sacred Scripture}

Scripture, as the embodied Word of God, is identical to the Logos and it simultaneously proclaims the Logos of God who has chosen to live among humankind: all the words of Scripture speak of this one Word. De Lubac remarks: “now, there are not two Words any more than there are two Spirits. Just as the spirit of the Scriptures is none other than the Holy Spirit, so the Word of God that is Scripture, or that Scripture contains, is none other, in his essence, than the Logos.”\footnote{De Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 385.} Despite the multiplicity of words, there remains only one Word spoken by the Father: all the words of Scripture have their unity in the One Logos. In his \textit{Commentaries on John} 5, Origen comments, “the complete Word of God which was in the beginning with God is not a multitude of Words, for it is not words. It is a single Word consisting of several ideas, each of which is a part of the whole Word.”\footnote{Origen, \textit{Commentary on John}, Book 5, Chapter 5 (\textit{FC}:80.163).} Therefore, Scripture is a first embodiment of the Logos.

He who is invisible by nature became visible and has allowed himself to be touched, as if in the flesh, in the Scriptures. This body of the Scriptures is a letter that makes the Logos readable, and through the letter he communicates his unfathomable depths to the human person. Origen writes: “just as Christ appeared veiled in a body, so that the carnal would see that man in him while the spiritual would recognize the God, so all Scripture is presented embodied \textit{[incorporée].}”\footnote{Origen, \textit{Sermon on Matthew} 27, as quoted in de Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 386-387.} The Logos, incorporated in the
Scriptures, continues to speak to each person in his Scriptures. In *Medieval Exegesis*, de Lubac writes, the Logos is the one “who speaks to us still; it is he who reveals himself, ‘always the same, ever unchangeable and unfailing’; present on every page, ‘deploying his force from one end to the other,’ reaching the depth of our souls as the limits of the universe.” In fact, because the Logos and the Scriptures are one, Origen uses these words interchangeably. In his *Commentary on Matthew* 10, Origen comments that the field in which the kingdom of God is hidden like a treasure refers both to Scripture and to Christ:

> ‘the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field’ (Mt 13:44)

…and That field, it seems to me, is the scripture, planted with what has become clear in the words and other thoughts of the histories, law and prophets (for the planting of these words in the whole of scripture is great and varied). But the treasure hidden in the field consists of the concealed thoughts (underlying what is manifest) of wisdom hidden ‘in mystery’ (cf. 1 Cor 2:7) and in Christ, ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Col 2:3).

Scripture not only communicates God’s Life-giving Word to humanity, Scripture is itself his dynamic, creative Word, animated by the Holy Spirit, that mediates the realities of the divine economy to all generations. In *On Prayer*, Origen writes, “the essential bread…gives health, vigor and strength to the soul and (since the Word of God is immortal) shares its own immortality with those who eat it….We must pray for this, that we may be made worthy of it, and, nourished by the Word that is God and was in the

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294 Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.5, as quoted in Von Balthasar, ed. *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 98. Moreover, because the Jews had Scripture, this was already a presence of the Logos in their midst. The saints of the Old Covenant could not have announced the Logos of God, if the Logos had not been truly present to them. This idea is shared by many of the Fathers: e.g., Justin the Philosopher, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Hilary and Augustine. See Henri de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery* (Staten Island: Ecclesia Press, 1969), 68-71.
beginning with God (cf. Jn 1:1), we may be made divine. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church would say something similar: the Bread of Life nourishes humanity in Word and Sacrament and that is why the Church can teach that it is from the One Table of God’s Word and Christ’s body that the faithful receive divine fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the literal meaning of Scripture, the Logos is not embodied as he is in the humanity of Jesus. Nevertheless, he is truly incorporated there, he is truly present there. In his Homilies on Jeremiah 9, Origen writes that before the Incarnation of the Logos, the Logos is present in his Word addressed to the prophets: “it is necessary to know that he was also dwelling prior to this, yet not in a body, in each of the holy ones. And after this visible dwelling, he dwells in us again….For who is the word which came from the Lord to Jeremiah or to Isaiah or to Ezekiel or anyone except the one who was in the beginning with God” In his Homilies on Leviticus, Origen expresses this thought in the following manner: “as by the veil of the flesh, he is covered here by the veil of the letter, so that this literal meaning might be considered like flesh, while the spiritual meaning that lies within might be sensed like the divinity.” Similarly, de Lubac writes that in the Scriptures, “he himself dwells there, not just some idea of him and this is what authorizes us to speak already of his coming, of his hidden presence.”

The is only one subject in Jesus Christ and this same subject, the Logos, is also truly present in the Scriptures. De Lubac expresses this parallel presence by powerfully

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297 See, e.g., Sacrosanctum Concilium §6; Dei Verbum §1-2, 21.
299 Origen, Homilies on Leviticus 1.1 as quoted by de Lubac in History and Spirit, 388-389.
300 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 389.
explaining that, in each, the Logos overcomes in Christians

the corruption of sin and the power of darkness; both are a sign of contradiction; both are ‘an arrow’ that wounds us deeply; both must ‘bite into’ us and ‘burn’ us to the point where we can say: ‘Did our heart not burn within us when we heard him?’ Both are an effective Word, a ‘defense based on fact’; both are a ‘living word’ addressing the supreme summons to all men: and this is also an indication of their unity.301

This one, Living Word is spoken by the Father, and emptying himself, the Father has poured out his Word in Scripture. For de Lubac, the kenotic outpouring of the Logos into the Scriptures is a personal, Living Word addressed by the Father to the human person, and this Word continues to be uttered, and remains effective even today through the dynamism of the Holy Spirit.302 Indeed, as de Lubac observes, to say that Scripture is inspired means that “coming from the Spirit, it is itself spirit and life,”303 and “like God himself, the Scriptures effect what they say.”304 In Sacrosanctum Concilium, the council’s document on the sacred liturgy, we find a similar thought regarding the various ways that Christ remains present to the faithful.

Among the various ways that Christ is present to his people, the council remarks that he “is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when Scripture is read in church.”305 This conciliar doctrine, which is essential to the One Table doctrine, can be clearly seen to have deep roots in Origen’s sacramental hermeneutics. And, de Lubac’s retrieval of this ancient teaching of Origen anticipates, and may have contributed to, the conciliar expression concerning the various modes of Christ’s presence in the Divine

301 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 390.
302 See de Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 73-75.
303 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 338.
304 Ibid., 342. See also idem, Medieval Exegesis, I:81-82.
305 Sacrosanctum Concilium §7.
Liturgy as found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Although the council does not reproduce an identical list to Origen’s for Christ’s presence, it is from the principles elucidated by de Lubac that the council can explain other various, important ways that Christ personally touches the Church and each individual human person within the ecclesial embrace:

he is present through the sacrifice which is the mass, at once in the person of the minister—‘the same one who then offered himself on a cross is now making his offering through the agency of priests’—and also, most fully, under the eucharistic elements. He is present through his power in the sacraments; thus, when anyone baptises, Christ himself is baptising. He is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when scripture is read in church. Finally, he is present when the church is praying or singing hymns.\(^{306}\)

The unity of Word-Scripture-Christ in Origen’s spiritual exegesis, Christ’s presence in the Word of God that is Scripture, is essential to a proper understanding of the doctrine of the One Table. Mirroring de Lubac’s retrieval of Origen, the Second Vatican Council teaches that Christ is truly present not only in the Eucharist, but also in the Word.\(^{307}\) Moreover, for Origen, de Lubac, and the council, Christ’s true presence is not limited to the sacraments or to Scripture.\(^{308}\)

Now, I wish to explain briefly how Origen’s doctrine of the spiritual sense is not restricted to the Scriptures, but permeates all other manifestations of the Logos and his action concerning the human person. First, for Origen, there is the relation of Scripture to the soul and the universe; second, there is Scripture’s relation to the Church and to the

\(^{306}\) Ibid.  
\(^{307}\) According to the council (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* §6), “just as Christ was sent by the Father, he himself sent apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, and for the same purpose: that they should preach the good news to every creature, and thus announce that the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan and death, and carried us over into the Father’s kingdom. Not only this, however: they were also to enact what they were announcing through sacrifice and sacraments, the things around which the whole of liturgical life revolves.”  
\(^{308}\) And this understanding is echoed in *Lumen Gentium* §14-17. I will return to this observation in the following chapters.
2. The Logos and the Soul

Anticipating the council, de Lubac clearly identifies Christ’s presence in Scripture, and goes on to show that there is also an intimate interrelationship between the human soul and Scripture. De Lubac considers the human person as a social being; the soul to which the mystical sense refers is never the isolated individual, but the whole Christian people, united in the ecclesial body of Christ. The soul here, according to de Lubac, is the “faithful soul,” the soul “seeking God,” or the soul “turned toward God,” and “adhering to the Logos,” the soul renewed daily with Jerusalem as its mother. As de Lubac writes, “in other words, it is a question of ‘the soul in the Church’, which is the royal dwelling where the Logos instructs it.” When God the Father speaks his Word, he speaks to each individual person, but always to the Whole Body of Christ. For this reason, de Lubac writes “it remains true, even when intended for the soul, that ‘God, in speaking, always addresses only a single interlocutor, who is ever the same;… it is the Church. The Church is the unique beloved whom her beloved draws into the desert’.”

There is a correspondence between the individual soul and the whole body of the Church because the human person is a microcosm of the Church.

Christ truly became man, therefore, all that happens to Christ happens also to the whole Body of Christ, and whatever happens to the Church happens to the individual.

De Lubac remarks, “when such symbols as the tabernacle, the house, and the city have

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309 I will treat the first of these incorporations in the remaining portion of this chapter, and turn to the remaining of Origen’s incorporations in chapter three.

310 See De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:136f.

311 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 164.

312 Ibid.
been applied to the Church, they are likewise applied to the soul. For the soul too is a Jerusalem which must praise the Lord, ‘and, speaking generally, whatever in Scripture fits the Church, can be applied to the soul’. Therefore, according to de Lubac, both the individual within the Whole Body of Christ and also Scripture are a temple wherein dwells the Lord; both are a paradise; both contain living water, which is this same in each.  

The individual soul is capable of hearing the Logos because the Church is united to the Logos and through the Church the individual person can hear and respond to the Word of God. De Lubac expresses the unity of individual persons in the Church by the following manner:

He spoke not only in the assemblies of the Jews, in Galilee, but he speaks even today, in this assembly, present in the midst of us. And it is we who are Jerusalem, over whom Jesus still weeps. It is we, the dead, whom he calls back to life. It is his entire Church who, a sinner since the beginning of the world, prostrates herself at his feet in order to anoint them and to rise up again purified. It is to believers of all the ages, and not to Peter alone, that he says: “If I do not wash you, you have no part in me”.

Prefigured in the Old Testament, the mystery of Christ attains its fullness in the Christian soul. The individual person participates in the redemptive action of Christ, but it is always within the communion of the Body of Christ, the Church. According to de Lubac,

this individual soul, who is united to the Logos of God as the Church was united to Christ, can enjoy this union with the Logos and can be taught by him only within the royal house, which is to say again, within the Church; and, on the other hand, although

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313 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 208-209.
appearing at first to be one of the young girls who accompany the Bride, she herself is this Bride—“ex ipso Sponso splendorem decoris accipiens” (the one who receives the radiance of beauty from the Bridegroom himself)—for she is herself a part of this Church, a member of the one Body.\textsuperscript{316}

Within the Church, the individual person participates in the mysteries of Christ, not as though these mysteries occur only in the distant past, but as they are present in the Church’s present. De Lubac writes of this ever present mystery: “each day, deep within ourselves, Israel departs from Egypt; each day, it is nourished with manna; each day it fulfills the Law; each day it must engage in combat…; each day the promises that had been made to this people under a bodily form are realized spiritually in us.”\textsuperscript{317} What is important is not to speculate on the profound meaning of the Scriptures, but to receive the Logos with a living faith and to adapt one’s way of life to conform to the Word of truth that it contains.

Indeed, Origen, following the path of St. Paul, conceived the Christian life as a combat for virtue against vices initiated at baptism. De Lubac writes, “if beginners deal especially with flesh and blood, the more they advance toward perfection, the more they confront ‘principalities and powers, princes of this world of darkness, with malicious spirits in the heavens’.”\textsuperscript{318} Among the Fathers, Origen is the architect of the traditional Christian theme of morality as a spiritual combat.\textsuperscript{319} De Lubac explains, however, that the spiritual combat of Christians is never restricted to the individual alone, but is always

\textsuperscript{316} De Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 170.
\textsuperscript{317} De Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, II:138; see also idem, \textit{History and Spirit}, 239.
\textsuperscript{318} De Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 214.
\textsuperscript{319} See ibid., 214ff. Here, recall St. Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:10-12): “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Dr. William Wright IV directed me to this connection between Origen and St. Paul.
ecclesial: each individual victory “contributes to the great victory that the Church of Christ is assured of winning against ‘the common enemy.’ Each is a step forward in establishing the kingdom of Christ and in the progress toward unity.”

The kingdom of Christ must be continued and appropriated by the human person, for, although de Lubac emphasizes the social nature of Scripture, he insists that spiritual exegesis is in fact concerned with the individual person, the soul of the believer in the Church. It is the individual person within the ecclesial Body of Christ who must make present in his or her daily life the mysteries present in Scripture.

De Lubac indicates that the reunification of the human person was achieved in Christ’s Incarnation because Christ chose to truly dwell with humanity, he truly became man and:

from the very first moment of his existence virtually bears all men within himself—erat in Christo Jesu omnis homo. For the Word did not merely take a human body; his Incarnation was not a simple corporatio, but, as St. Hilary says, a concorporatio. He incorporated himself in our humanity, and incorporated it in himself. Universitatis nostrae caro est factus.

In each, Scripture and the human person, it is the same divine presence that makes himself visible and concrete and reveals himself in the depths of the human person.

320 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 217.
321 According to de Lubac, the idea of individual asceticism as a continuation of the redemptive combat (in its explicit formulation) goes back to Origen. See e.g., de Lubac, History and Spirit, 218; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:141-142. The spiritual life as articulated by Origen also includes other aspects as well that are found in the Scriptures: the theme of a mystical journey (through an interpretation of the journey of the Hebrews across the desert, and of the forty-two stations that are counted in the Book of Numbers from their departure until their arrival at the banks of the Jordan), and the theme of union between the soul and the Logos (through an interpretation of the Song of Songs). See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 219-222, 235-247; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:141-142. De Lubac (Catholicism, 39) writes, “Christ the Redeemer does not offer salvation merely to each one; he effects it, he is himself the salvation of the whole, and for each one salvation consists in a personal ratification of his original ‘belonging’ to Christ, so that he be not cast out, cut off from this Whole.”
322 De Lubac, Catholicism, 37-38.
Christ took upon himself the entirety of human nature, therefore, as de Lubac points out, whole and entire he will bear it then to Calvary, whole and entire he will raise it from the dead, whole and entire he will save it. Christ the Redeemer does not offer salvation merely to each one; he effects it, he is himself the salvation of the whole, and for each one salvation consists in a personal ratification of his original ‘belonging to Christ, so that he be not cast out, cut off from this Whole.’

Through the one man (Adam), the Logos chose to dwell in all persons, so that through the Logos, what was once divided could be reunited in one Body. De Lubac remarks that “it is only through the flesh of the Logos that the soul feeds on his divinity. The soul is taught by the Logos and becomes his bride only in the house that he himself has built; for the Master within is revealed to those only who receive Christ’s word transmitted by the Church’s preaching.” The same mystery, Christ himself, has made himself at home in the depths of the human person, similar to the way that he has made himself at home in the Scriptures. According to de Lubac, “what we call the spiritual sense in Scripture we name the image of God in the soul.” The same Logos resides in Scripture and in the human soul in distinct modes.

Having been formed in the image of the Image, i.e., the Logos, the human person can increase only in that image in a thoroughly personal and dynamic relationship in the Logos. Origen says that the Logos is the true source of life, and “those who have a share in Christ truly live that life. But those who try to live apart from him, just as they do not have the true light, neither do they have the true life.” And since the Logos “is the invisible ‘image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), he himself grants participation in himself

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323 Ibid., 39.
324 Ibid., 211.
325 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 397.
to all rational creatures in such a way that the participation each of them receives from him is commensurate with the passionate love with which they cling to him.”

Because the human person lives by the Logos, and because there is such a connaturality between Scripture and the soul, the human person needs Scripture, the Word of God, in order to know himself or herself.

The Life-giving Logos reveals himself in Scripture to the human person and in his revelation the human person sees himself as in a mirror. De Lubac writes, concerning Scripture:

"it is a living mirror, a living and efficacious Word, a sword penetrating at the juncture of soul and spirit, which makes our secret thought appear and reveals to us our heart. It teaches us to read in the book of our experience and makes us, so to speak, our own exegesis...In return, once acquired by meditation on Scripture, experience permits one to deepen this meditation, though it could never free itself of it. It becomes the path that leads to genuine spiritual understanding."

Christ the Logos, the Image of God and the image in which humanity has been created, reveals the image that we are called to reproduce in ourselves, so that we might grow in his likeness. In the divine Logos, the human person not only sees the face of Christ, but must also see his or her own image, to see what he or she should be and what he or she is called to become.

This circular pattern leads one to a better understanding both of oneself and of Scripture: from within himself or herself does the human person also understand Scripture because it is the same Logos who reveals the human person to himself or

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According to de Lubac, “what I draw from myself with respect to the Bible, provided that it is really, in fact, from the depths of myself, I draw from the Bible also; since Scripture and the soul have the same structure, or rather the same ‘inspiration’; since one and the same divine breath gives birth to them and never ceases to animate them.”

The Word preached and received in the heart and understanding of the individual within the ecclesial body constructs the tabernacle in which the Word dwells and makes his life flow. The faithful reader of Scripture experiences the mystery present in the written text as an ever deepening revelation of the mystery of Christ. Simultaneously, the reader or hearer also experiences the soul’s transformation narrated through the sacred text, and thus comes to a deeper self-awareness. De Lubac remarks, “Scripture makes me penetrate the innermost depths of my being; it is thus the sign that normally reveals my soul to me; but the converse also has its truth. The one serves the other reactively.”

These two reading practices (penetrating Scripture and coming to know oneself better) are united because, so long as one penetrates faithfully the mystery of God’s action in Christ present in the Scriptures (faithful to the same Spirit who inspired them), the more one understands how this mystery that pertains to Christ and the Church also is personally applied to each individual Christian.

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328 This thought is echoed in Gaudium et Spes §22, in language that could have easily been taken from de Lubac’s retrieval of Origen: “it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of humankind...It is Christ, the last Adam, who fully discloses humankind to itself and unfolds its noble calling by revealing the mystery of the Father and the Father’s love. It is not therefore to be wondered at that it is in Christ that the truths stated here find their source and reach their fulfillment. He who is the ‘image of the invisible God’ (Col 1, 15), is the perfect human being who has restored to the offspring of Adam the divine likeness which had been deformed since the first sin.”

329 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 398.

330 Ibid.

331 See de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:138.
deeply, one is coming to a deeper understanding of the truth about himself or herself; and, so long as one faithfully penetrates one’s own heart, he or she is growing in his or her understanding of the Scriptures. In his *Homilies on Genesis* 12, Origen comments:

> try to have your own well and your own fountain, so that you, too, when you take up the book of the Scriptures, may set about drawing some understanding from your own depths; and, according to the doctrine that you have received in the Church, you, too, try to drink at the fountain of your spirit. There is a kind of living water in you....purify your spirit so that a day will come when you will drink from your own fountains and when you will draw living water from your wells. For if you have received the Logos of God within you, if you have received from Jesus living water with fidelity, a fountain of water will open up in you, springing up for eternal life.

In penetrating the Scriptures and in allowing the Scriptures to penetrate him or her, the human person is in the process of becoming divinized: the Life-giving Logos is always active, transfiguring the human person who opens herself or himself to his divine presence. In his *Homily on Genesis* 13, Origen writes “if, then, even today, you listen faithfully, Isaac accomplishes his work in you, and in purging your heart, he opens for you the mysteries of Scripture and makes you grow in its understanding...The Logos of God is close to you; he is even within you; he removes the dirt from each of your souls and makes the living water spring up from them.” This penetration of Scripture is not understood as the passive standing-before of the human intellect; Scripture is not merely a text meditated upon or studied by the human subject. Scripture is an active, effective text because through the Divine Logos of God the Holy Spirit penetrates the human

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332 See ibid., II:142-143; see also Ayres, “The Soul and the Reading of Scripture: A Note on Henri De Lubac,” 186.
334 Ibid., 13.3-4, as quoted in de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 399.
person and transfigures him or her so that God will take up a permanent abode in that person and restore the divine image to its fullness causing that one to increase in his divine likeness. Origen, in his *Homilies on Genesis* 13, says,

> when God made man in the beginning, he made him in his image and likeness. And he placed that image, not outside, but within. It cannot be seen in you so long as you remain dirty….But the image of God painted in you by the Son of God himself could not be entirely concealed. Every vice concealed it with a new layer, but our Isaac could make them disappear, and the divine Image will shine again….Let us beg him, let us run to him again, let us dig with him, let us fight the Philistines, let us search the Scriptures. Let us dig so well that the water of our well waters all the flocks.\(^{335}\)

According to de Lubac, the Holy Spirit causes Scripture to penetrate into the depths of the human person, creating

> in man new depths which harmonize him with the ‘depths of God’, and he projects man out of himself…he personalizes and unifies…By revealing the Father and by being revealed by him, Christ completes the revelation of man to himself. By taking possession of man, by seizing hold of him and by penetrating to the very depths of his being Christ makes man go deep down within himself, there to discover in a flash regions hitherto unsuspected. It is through Christ that the person reaches maturity.\(^{336}\)

Through the Life-giving Word, present in Scripture and dwelling within Christians, the Spirit draws us to the Father. Because the restoration of the human person occurs within Christ, this restoration will always be a corporate restoration. This corporate restoration will be addressed at length in the subsequent chapter. In the following section, I will examine the manner in which the Logos has incorporated himself into the cosmos.

\(^{335}\) Ibid.

\(^{336}\) De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 338-339.
3. The Logos and the Universe

The same dynamic and unitive presence of the Logos, who is present in the Scriptures and in the human soul, is also present in the cosmos. Indeed, all things are made through him: the Father spoke the cosmos into being through his Word, the Son; he breathed forth his Word from his plentitude by the Holy Spirit. From the preface of his *Commentary on the Psalms*, Origen says:

But if ‘the oracles of the Lord are undefiled, refined silver, unadulterated with earth, purified seven times’ (Ps. 111:7 {12:6}) and if the Holy Spirit has prompted them with deliberate precision through the servants of the Word (see Lk. 1:2), we must not miss the analogy, since the wisdom of God has permeated the whole of Scripture even to the individual letter. This is indeed why the Savior said: ‘Not one iota or one stroke will pass away from the law, until everything comes to be’ (Mt. 5:18). For just as the divine skill in the fabrication of the world appears not only in sky, sun, moon, and stars—all of these being bodies through which it courses—but it has acted on earth in the same way even in the meanest material object, since even the bodies of the tiniest creatures are not despised by the Artisan, and even less the souls present in them, each of which receives in itself a particular property, a saving principle in an irrational being. Nor does the Artisan despise the earth’s plants, since he is present in each of them with respect to their roots, leaves, possible fruits, and different qualities. So with regard to everything recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we accept that, since divine providence has endowed the human race with a superhuman wisdom by means of the Scriptures, he has, so to speak, sowed traces of wisdom as saving oracles.\(^{337}\)

The presence of the Logos, the wisdom of God in the cosmos, unites the visible and the invisible, the spiritual and the material, the eternal and the temporal. In Christ the Logos, not only is the letter fulfilled by the Spirit, but so too is creation united and therefore, fulfilled. There is harmony in God’s work, and his created order is sacramental

\(^{337}\) Origen, preface from the *Commentary on the Psalms*, as quoted in Trigg, *Origen*, 71.
in nature.

Creation too is among the words spoken by the Father in his one Word. In the preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms*, Origen observes, “once one has accepted that these Scriptures are the work of the world’s Creator, that those who investigate the Scriptures will confront issues as serious as do those who investigate the rational principal of creation….The author of existence is contemplated by means of the creation.”

Through visible creation and realities (objects, creatures, etc.), the human person can be led to know the Invisible, just as through the letter one can be led to the Spirit. It is the same Logos who illuminates both Scripture and the cosmos. According to de Lubac, Scripture is similar to a microcosm, made by the Father on the model of the first. In his *Homilies on Leviticus* 5, Origen draws a parallel between the created order and scripture:

> the truth of the faith holds that there is one and the same God of the Law and the Gospels, Creator ‘of’ the visible and the invisible.’ For the visible holds the highest relationship with the invisible, as the Apostle says, ‘The invisible is perceived from the creation of the world through the things that were made.’ Therefore, just as ‘the visible and invisible,’ earth and heaven, soul and flesh, body and spirit have mutually this kinship and this world is a result of their union, so also we must believe that Holy Scripture results from the visible and the invisible just as from a body the letter, which is certainly something seen, and the soul, the understanding of which is understood within, and of the Spirit, according to that which some also hold in ‘heaven’ as the Apostle said, ‘They serve as models and shadows of the celestial things.’

Like the created order, Scripture is a mixture of visible and invisible (letter and spirit) because the latter, created by the same God, is likewise: visible reality reveals invisible

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338 Ibid., 71-72.
339 Origen, *Homily on Leviticus* 5 (FC:89).
And, according to de Lubac, just as the spiritually mature, the saints, truly arrive at the spiritual level of Sacred Scripture, so too is it only the saints who possess a true understanding of the cosmos—because it is only those enlightened by Wisdom that are able to penetrate to the very heart of the matter: without the Logos, it is impossible to see the obscurities of nature, just as it is difficult to see the hidden meaning in Scripture. According to de Lubac, “the heavens sang the glory of God. They sang it still, but their sound is no longer perceptible to our carnal ears: Scripture will be for us a second firmament and this book of the re-creation, received through faith, will make the understanding of the first creation possible for us.”

According to de Lubac, the understanding of Scripture is completed in that of a universal symbolism, which also provides an outline and its full justification: everything in Scripture carries the imprint of Divine Wisdom because everything in the universe carries this stamp. It is the same author of the Scriptures who authored the universe: God’s divine economy operates in the same manner in Scripture and the natural world, in the salvation of the cosmos and in each person. As there is a sacramental character to the Scriptures, so there is a sacramental character to reality, and, for this reason, de Lubac explicitly relates scriptural exegesis to the exegesis of the cosmos: “but it is not only the soul, it is also the entire universe that must be the subject of spiritual interpretation. For there is also a certain kind of fundamental unity between the universe and Scripture.” With each, the Scriptures or the cosmos, the same Logos is actively leading it from the visible, historical

340 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 401.
341 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 403.
342 Ibid., 401.
reality to the invisible, spiritual truth in which the visible and historical is fulfilled.

III. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual exegesis, especially as it was practiced according to Origen. Because the purpose of Scriptural exegesis is contact with the Divine Logos for all of created reality, this endeavor required considering three ways in which the Logos incorporates himself in the human soul, in the cosmos, and, most importantly, in the Scriptures. However, these are not the only incorporations of the Logos, according to Origen. Therefore, in chapter three, I will examine the interconnected manner of the Logos’ incorporation—in the Scriptures, in the Eucharist and in the Church.
CHAPTER 3: HENRI DE LUBAC ON THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF 
SCRIPTURE, EUCHARIST, AND CHURCH

It should be quite clear by now that the sacramental exegesis of the early Church is essentially related to a fuller understanding of the One Table doctrine presented—but without any enlargement on what this means—by the Second Vatican Council, especially in *Dei Verbum* but found throughout the council documents. In the previous chapter, we looked at Henri de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual exegesis, especially as it was practiced by Origen. Now that we have examined three various incorporations of the Logos, we can turn to the incorporation of the Logos in the Eucharist and in the Church.

Central to de Lubac’s thesis in *Corpus Mysticum*, the Eucharist has an essential ecclesial imprint to it, and the Church herself is fundamentally eucharistic in nature. Moreover, what may often be overlooked is the sacramental nature of Scripture. As de Lubac says when commenting on Eusebius’ application of “mystical body and blood” to the Scriptures, if Eusebius (who is a common example among many other voices) “focuses principally on Scripture, it does not rule out the Eucharist, that other nourishment of the soul, or even the Church.”

I. The Spiritual Exegesis of the Eucharist

Anticipating the Second Vatican Council’s statements on the harmony between Scripture and Eucharist, especially those made in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Dei Verbum*,

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344 For a perceptive, but brief explanation on the intimate connection between scriptural exegesis and the Whole Christ as it is found in patristic and medieval sources, see Mariano Magrassi, *Praying the Bible*, 8ff.
345 According to the council (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* §56), the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist “are so closely bound up with each other that they amount to a single act of worship.” The council (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §47) observes that the faithful “should be formed by God’s word, and refreshed at the table of the Lord’s body.”
de Lubac writes, “scripture and Eucharist, moreover, appear closely associated in
everything, since it is in the midst of the same assembly, in the course of the same liturgy,
that the Bread of the Word is broken and the Body of Christ is distributed. Both are the object of
the same veneration.” Dei Verbum §21 uses language very similar to de Lubac’s, when it says,
“the Church has always held the divine scriptures in reverence no less than it accords to the Lord’s
body itself, never ceasing—especially in the sacred liturgy—to receive the bread of life from
the one table of God’s word and Christ’s body, and to offer it to the faithful.” Indeed, the
entire quote taken from Dei Verbum, which was written almost fifteen years after the quote
above from de Lubac, is extremely similar in expression of thought to that quote. The
two quotes above are so comparable that they could be used interchangeably without any
real change in substance of idea.

Nonetheless, in the council’s formulation found in Dei Verbum §21 there is a certain
ambiguity concerning the ‘Body of Christ’ or the ‘Lord’s body.’ Does the ‘body’ in the
opening statement made in Dei Verbum §21 refer to the Church, to the Eucharist, to the
Scriptures, or to all three? I believe, in the light of de Lubac’s ressourcement—both his
retrieval of Scriptural exegesis (History and Spirit and Medieval Exegesis) and his eucharistic
ecclesiology (Corpus Mysticum), and in conjunction with other conciliar statements related
to this topic, that it will become clear that ‘the Body of Christ’ referred to in Dei Verbum
§21 calls attention to the inherent relationship of all three bodies—the Eucharist, the

546 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 407. Emphasis mine. History and Spirit was written in 1950. Elsewhere in
History and Spirit (415-417), de Lubac writes “in order to explain the words of Jesus: ‘This is my body’, it is
usual to say at the same time: ‘This bread is the Body of Christ’, and: ‘The body of Christ is Scripture.’
The parallelism is completely natural.” See also Wood, Spiritual Exegesis: Woods shows that in order to
understand fully de Lubac’s eucharistic-ecclesiology, it is necessary to understand his spiritual exegesis
because both are intimately related.
547 Emphasis mine.
548 Both of which were very influential to the development of the council’s document on divine revelation
(Dei Verbum) and its document on the nature of the Church (Lumen Gentium).
Not only is it the same Logos, the One Bread of Life, venerated in the One Table of Scripture and Eucharist, but it is also the same Logos who comes to the human person in his Body, the Church, elevating the human person to divine adoption in the life of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. However, in order to defend this reading of Dei Verbum, it will first be necessary to examine de Lubac’s sacramental exegesis as it is applied to the Eucharist, and in this way more light will be shed on the parallel relationship among the Scriptures, Eucharist, and Church.

A. The Eucharist and Exegetical Language

Because of the intimate sacramental link between Eucharist and Scripture, it is not surprising that exegetical principles have traditionally been applied to the Eucharist. According to de Lubac, Scripture and Eucharist both possess a spiritual sense, which is identical in both. In both Scripture and Eucharist, the spiritual sense is Christ, the Logos of God, who by distinct modes of presence comes to the human person in his ecclesial body through the Holy Spirit as spiritual nourishment. This same principle that is applicable to Christ present in Scripture equally befits Christ present in the Eucharist, and will also pertain to Christ’s body, the Church. As McPartlan observes, “just as Christ’s visible humanity was filled with his invisible divinity, such that he was only

349 The body is not exclusively the sacramental body but always includes the ecclesial body, and even refers to the Scriptural body of Christ, both of which happen to also be sacramental in nature. See e.g., de Lubac, Corpus Mysticum, 23f.; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:107-108. I will return to de Lubac’s uncovering of this topic in a following section.

350 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 407. The theosis of the human person never occurs in isolation, but is always related to the Whole Body of Christ, the Church. I will return to this assertion at a following section in this chapter.

351 Ibid.

352 Although this fruition has already occurred in the person of Christ, it is simultaneously eschatological, because it has yet to be appropriated fully by every individual within the Church.
properly understood spiritually, in a faith which penetrated from the visible to the invisible, so the same is true, in parallel fashion, for the Eucharist.” In *Corpus Mysticum*, de Lubac weaves together the sacramental-exegetical commonality between Eucharist and Church with an extensive analysis of the terms “body” and “mystical.” Therefore, I will begin with a brief analysis of these words as they are applied to the Eucharist. After outlining the three meanings given to the aforementioned terms, I will examine some terms related to “mystical body.”

1. Mystical

De Lubac’s *Corpus Mysticum* is a long and important work and it will be impossible for this dissertation to focus on all aspects of his treatment on the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist. *Corpus Mysticum* is an investigation into the phrase “mystical body,” specifically, how it was used to describe the Eucharist and the Church up to the medieval era. “Mystical body” originally identified the Eucharist and only later shifted to indicate the Church. Because of their exegetical implications, it is important to take a look at the three possible ways “mystical body” is applied to the Eucharist during the Middle Ages.

First, the term “mystical body” is applied to the mystical action, wherein the body of Christ is hidden in the mystery of the Eucharist. Second, exegetically considered, the phrase is applied to the prefiguration of Christ’s sacrifice in the New Testament as it is found in the Old Testament sacrifices. The Eucharist has a similar relationship to the sacrifices of the Old Testament as Christ and the New Testament is related to the Old Testament as Christ and the New Testament is related to the Old Testament.

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353 McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 82.
354 See de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 67-70.
Testament: that is, as the Old Testament prefigures the New Testament, in a similar fashion the Old Testament sacrifices prefigure the New Testament sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist. Finally, “mystical body” identifies the Eucharist, but in reference to the future where it is also understood as an effective sign. In this third interpretation of “mystical body,” the Eucharist is emphasized as signifying the ecclesial body as the future completion of the Whole Body of Christ: the Eucharist is an effective sign of the Church that is not yet complete in each person.

All three meanings of the phrase “mystical body” express a more complete understanding of the Eucharist and its intimate relation to spiritual-sacramental exegesis. However, as de Lubac shows in Corpus Mysticum, there was a shift in the meaning of “mystical body.” No longer does “mystical body” refer to the Eucharist, but now it designates the Church. Moreover, “mystical body” begins to give way to a rival expression: the “true body.”

2. True

According to de Lubac, in ancient Christianity, truth designated fullness of being. As applied to the Eucharist, truth could signify the third and final body that we examined above: the eschatologically complete Whole Body of Christ, the Church. According to de Lubac, “the words true and truth evoked...a plenitude, a perfection of being, a spiritual completion which, in the case of the Eucharist, could in fact denote nothing other than the third and final of the ‘bodies’ distinguished in common usage.”

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355 Ibid., 77.
356 See Ibid., 78. See also Le, “The Eucharist and the Church in the Thought of Henri De Lubac,” 342-343.
357 De Lubac, Corpus Mysticum, 188.
eschatological aspect, de Lubac observes that because the Eucharistic mystery was perceived as a spiritual meal that causes the fulfillment of the Church, it was a natural step that this effect would be conceived as its truth.

According to de Lubac, as the Old Testament prefigures the definitive truth of the New Testament, so the Eucharist anticipates the eschatological completion of the ecclesial Body (or its truth as explained above). De Lubac comments on this scriptural aspect of the Eucharist:

according to the Christian understanding of allegory sketched out in St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, events and things, acts and persons, in their very reality, whether historical or substantial, are the figures of spiritual realities which alone participate in the pure and definitive Truth of the Logos by integrating the fullness of his Body. The words in which the relationship of Israel to Christ or of Christ himself, in his earthly state, to his eternal ‘Pleroma’ were traditionally expressed, serve here to define the relationship of the sacrament to its end.  

With this terminological understanding, the “true body” is identified with the body (the Church) that is prefigured by the “mystical body” (the Eucharist). Therefore, within the Eucharist, what is discovered spiritually is the truth of the ecclesial body, the eschatologically complete Whole Body of Christ, head and members sharing in his glory.

Although the previous statement may sound foreign to modern ears, this concept has to be understood according to patristic and medieval hermeneutics. There is no denial of the real presence according to this ancient concept, although, once the Eucharistic body was separated from the ecclesial body, this terminology would easily be

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358 Ibid., 192.
misread in this precise manner.\textsuperscript{359}

The parallel use of “truth” and “body” was eventually joined, e.g., “body of truth” and “truth of the body.”\textsuperscript{360} De Lubac traces the subsequent changes that led to the interpretation of “true body” as the truth of the unity between what was offered (the bread and wine) and the body and blood of Christ, rather than identifying the “true body” with the ecclesial body. With this change and the identification of truth with substance, truth lost its exegetical and ecclesial roots: no longer was “in truth” founded on the exegetical relation between the Old Testament prefigurations of the Eucharist and the fullness of truth of which the Eucharist is the image or sign. In due time, truth became identified with the reality of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, rather than the completion of the Eucharist in the Church.\textsuperscript{361} Now, truth is identified with the reality of the body and blood whose substance is on the altar, although under the appearance of bread and wine.\textsuperscript{362}

With this terminological modification there is a misreading of ancient Christian texts and a neglect of the ecclesial symbolism that had been traditionally associated with the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{363} Moreover, “true body” (originally applied to the Church, before the 11th and 12th centuries) was itself no longer understood as a sacrament of the Whole Christ in its eschatological fulfillment. With the separation of the ecclesial body from the historical and Eucharistic bodies, the emphasis was placed on the real presence of Christ in the

\textsuperscript{359} On the other hand, as Wood states (\textit{Spiritual Exegesis}, 55), “for de Lubac, as well as for the early medieval authors he studies who wrote prior to Berengarius, the realism of the eucharistic presence is never called into question.” See also Lam T. Le, “The Eucharist and the Church in the Thought of Henri De Lubac,” \textit{Irish Theological Quarterly} 71 (2006): 338-47.

\textsuperscript{360} See Wood, \textit{Spiritual Exegesis}, 66.

\textsuperscript{361} See de Lubac, \textit{Corpus Mysticum}, 244-245.

\textsuperscript{362} See ibid., 223-225; 244-245.

\textsuperscript{363} See ibid., 247-249.
Eucharist. Furthermore, after the 12th century, the Eucharist as signifying the eschatological union of the ecclesial body with Christ was lost. Prior to the 12th century, exegetical language was easily and naturally applied to the Eucharist. As Boersma observes, for de Lubac too there is a direct link between spiritual exegesis and a sacramental view of reality.\textsuperscript{364} There is more than a mere parallel between exegetical language and the Eucharist. As de Lubac indicates,

the Eucharist in itself, and not only in its effects, is very often described by words that normally serve to designate the New Testament. This is because it is considered explicitly as forming part of the New Testament, or even as constituting its very heart. \textit{The blood of Christ, the new covenant...The Eucharist is par excellence the mystery of Christ, the mystery of Christians}, in which the entire ‘fullness of the Gospels’ is contained.\textsuperscript{365}

After the 12th century, the Eucharist is seen as an end in itself, rather than the defining source and effective sign of the Whole Christ, eschatologically complete.

However, for the majority of the tradition, the eucharistic body of Christ was seen to efficaciously point beyond itself to the ecclesial body of Christ in its fulfillment. A similar relationship that is expressed exegetically between the two testaments: the New Testament presupposes the Old Testament, and the Old Testament prefigures and is fulfilled in the New—the two remain united, yet differentiated. Commenting on the similarity between the Old and New Testament and the Eucharist, de Lubac writes:

\textit{now, according to the whole of tradition, there were two ways of envisaging the revelation of the New Testament: either as the definitive truth succeeding the preparations and figures of the Old Testament, or as the intermediate state between the shadows of long ago and the full light of eternity. We can expect, therefore, to}

\textsuperscript{364} See Boersma, \textit{Nouvelle Théologie}, 156-159.
\textsuperscript{365} De Lubac, \textit{Corpus Mysticum}, 193-194.
meet two further new series of texts, in which the Eucharist will be envisaged according to each of these points of view in turn.\textsuperscript{366} 

Similar to the relationship between the Old and New Covenant, though not identical, the Eucharistic body and the ecclesial Body remain united. The Eucharistic body of Christ is the image (or type) of the ecclesial body of Christ. However, the Eucharist itself is a mystery of unity, which explains the other name for the Eucharist—communion—to which all people have been called, and are being formed into one Whole Body of Christ.\textsuperscript{367} 

The communion of the ecclesial body received in the Eucharist is a sign or image of the union of the ecclesial body that will be complete only at the eschaton. Without the eucharistic body, one cannot speak about the ecclesial body: the unity of the ecclesial body and the eucharistic body is not extrinsic to each other because in the Eucharist the fullness of Christ intended for all is accomplished.\textsuperscript{368} The Eucharist is given, so that those who receive the sacramental body may become the “true body,” the Whole Body of Christ, Head and members, in heavenly glory. Therefore, what is received in the Eucharist is not only the real presence of Christ, but also the ecclesial body, which is simultaneously being fulfilled in the reception of the Eucharistic body. Receiving Christ in the Eucharist is also a sign which creates the ecclesial union of the Church: the Eucharist is received to make the Church into that perfect body of Christ.

Although the three meanings given to “mystical body” (1st, as the body of Christ,

\textsuperscript{366} Ibid., 194.
\textsuperscript{367} Perhaps due to de Lubac’s work, the theological understanding of the Church as communion was retrieved at the Second Vatican Council. I will return to this aspect in chapter four.
\textsuperscript{368} De Lubac (\textit{Corpus Mysticum}, 292-293) writes, “the Church and the Eucharist make each other, every day, each by the other.” See also Ibid., 23ff; Wood, \textit{Spiritual Exegesis}, 56; McPartlan, \textit{The Eucharist Makes the Church}, 75f.
hidden in the mystery of the Eucharist, 2nd, exegetically considered as prefigured in the Old Testament sacrifices, and 3rd, in reference to the future, where it is also an effective sign of the Church’s completion) may be helpful to better understand how scriptural exegesis was applied to the Eucharist, it will be further illuminating to examine two of the most common terms associated with ancient Christian hermeneutics. Therefore, in the following section, I will explore two terms that were applied during the patristic and medieval eras to Scriptural exegesis, Eucharist and Church, but in modern parlance are more readily associated solely with the Eucharist and the Church: “mystery” and “sacrament.”

3. Mystery and Sacrament

The Greek word *mystērion* is rendered by the Latin word *sacramentum*, and each of these words is rooted in Scripture itself, and taken over by the Fathers. According to de Lubac, “mystery,” in the New Testament (especially Paul) and the Fathers, does not mean something hidden and revealed to a select few. Rather, “mystery” refers to the divine economy for human salvation that has been revealed in the Son by the Holy Spirit.

Exegetically, “mystery” and “sacrament” are equated to allegory: each has traditionally been used interchangeably and referred to both the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures and the Eucharist. As de Lubac remarks, “in the language of the liturgy, as with that of exegesis, mystery and sacrament are often used interchangeably.” When a distinction was made between “sacrament” and “mystery,” “sacrament” typically

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369 Thanks to de Lubac, these terms have once again become part of modern theological parlance.
372 De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 45; see also *Medieval Exegesis*, II:20-21.
identified the exterior facts, whereas “mystery” referred to the interior, spiritual mystery. The relationship between external fact or event and interior meaning is patterned on the relationship between the Old and New Covenant. According to de Lubac,

there is the area that I will describe as scriptural, understanding by that not Scripture itself, but the vast array of speculation on Scripture, on its spiritual significance and the links between the two Testaments. Between both areas the conjunctions are all the more numerous and the connections all the more profound because the two Testamenta are unanimously considered in tradition as the centre of operation of all the sacramenta, the secret refuge of all the mysteria.

De Lubac argues that in early Christianity, the term mystery “evokes the idea of depth … [and] ‘symbol’” and the term sacrament “hides as much as it reveals of the thing that it signifies.” In Corpus Mysticum, de Lubac observes that “the sacramentum would therefore play the role of container, or envelope, with regard to the mysterium hidden within it.”

We can see the correlation between these terms and sacramental exegesis: the spiritual sense is hidden within the literal sense similar to the way the mystery is concealed within the sacrament.

Although similar, according to de Lubac, the difference between “mystery” and “sacrament” is that in the ancient Christian sense, mystery denoted more of an action than a thing. Therefore, “mystery” referred not only to the sign or the intended reality,
but rather indicated their mutual relationship and interpenetration. According to de Lubac, this relationship “remains hidden from the eyes of the profane (wherein lies the mystery), but [is] progressively revealed to the believers who choose to submit themselves deliberately to the school of the Logos.” The interior truth (“mystery”), which is hidden within the sign (“sacrament”) and signified by the sign, is grasped only spiritually. As it is possible to look at Christ and perceive him only according to his humanity, so it is possible to look at the Eucharist and understand it only according to the material appearances of bread and wine. As Christ’s humanity concealed his divinity, the disclosure of which was perceptible only in the Holy Spirit, so similarly the same is true for the Eucharist. In each case, sacramentally or exegetically, the mystery hidden within the sign is the Logos himself, who transfigures those who receive him in the Spirit into the fullness of that which has been received, through Word and Sacrament.

The above exegetical terms (“truth,” “mystery,” “sacrament,” “body,” “mystical”) are equally exegetical and sacramental because there is such a binding relationship between Scripture and Eucharist as it is received within the ecclesial body of Christ that each remain fundamentally united. Therefore, once these exegetical terms were separated from their sacramental context, the doctrine of the Eucharist and ecclesiology became sorely impoverished. This impoverishment in turn, led to an excessive emphasis on the doctrine of the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which led to a misinterpretation and neglect of the sacramental understanding of the Church and

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378 See de Lubac, Corpus Mysticum, 52; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:20-22.
379 In each case, exegetical or sacramental, the historical event of Christ is the link between the two and it is only in the light of the Holy Spirit that the deeper, hidden power of God working in them is seen. See de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:94-96; Wood, Spiritual Exegesis, 39.
380 As the Holy Spirit is necessary to lead us from the letter of Scripture to encounter the mystical presence of Christ within it, likewise, the Holy Spirit is necessary to transform us to encounter the mystical presence of Christ in the Eucharist, to be led from the mere bread and wine to the Bread of Life.
scriptural exegesis. Without properly understanding the sacramental nature of exegesis and its relation to the Eucharist and the Church, it may well be impossible to fully or accurately comprehend the doctrine of the One Table. Without properly understanding spiritual exegesis, it is easy to mistake the patristic and medieval spiritualization of the Eucharist.

4. Spiritual: A Concluding Observation

Indeed, some have been disconcerted by the allegorical tendency in Origen concerning the Eucharist. According to de Lubac, by spiritualizing the Eucharist, some feared that Origen was denying the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. However, most critiques against Origen on this matter proceed from a common error concerning his sacramental exegesis. De Lubac elucidates Origen’s dynamic use of language and shows how this does not lead to a denial of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist. The fear of the denial of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is similar to those who believe that Origen renounces the historical sense in Scriptural exegesis. De Lubac considers an instance of this in the scholarship of his time in *History and Spirit*. The various misunderstandings of Origen’s allegorizing of the Eucharist seem to be formed from an erroneous conception of his spiritual exegesis, an understanding divorced from the fundamental unity of letter and spirit within spiritual exegesis, especially as it relates to the Eucharist and the Church.

For Origen, allegory does not contradict the literal meaning, and the historical meaning is neither inconsequential nor in need of being discarded. There is an essential

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382 In the following, I am summarizing the main elements of de Lubac’s discussion in *History and Spirit*, 407-408.
relation between the literal and the spiritual meaning. Likewise, when Origen interprets
the Eucharist allegorically, he does not deny the mystery of Christ’s presence. Rather,
Origen attempts to focus on the truth of the mystery, similar to his desire in exegesis to
seek the spiritual or deeper meaning rather than stop at the historical or literal meaning.\footnote{See ibid., 406-409.}

With a proper understanding of Origen’s sacramental-exegetical perspective
concerning the various incorporations of the Logos, it becomes easier to understand the
nature of the spiritual link connecting the Eucharist, Scripture, and Church, a connection
that is also made in the doctrine of the One Table. Not only does Origen apply
exegetical terms equally to the Eucharist, Scripture, and Church, but, he also maintains
an essential unity in the plurality of Christ’s bodies.

B. The Triform Body of the Logos

According to de Lubac, for Origen (and the medieval tradition that followed him),
Christ does not only have for a body the individual flesh that has been seen and touched
by his disciples, the body born from the Virgin Mary. He also has the Church, the
ecclesial body, and the sacramental body, the Eucharist.\footnote{De Lubac traces this traditional understanding of the triform body of Christ in \textit{Corpus Mysticum}, 75-119. It was around the twelfth century that the original unity between the body of Christ born of the Virgin Mother, the Eucharistic body, and the ecclesial body was lost. Prior to this time, there was no separation between the triform body because they were understood to be ultimately one.} The individual body of Christ
is made to allow for the assumption of the whole Body, the Church. Therefore, in
Origen’s exegetical language, the Church (the ecclesial body, the Whole Body) is more
properly true than the Eucharistic body because it is the fuller and intended realization of
the divine economy.
The Eucharistic body is the sign of the ecclesial body as an eschatological reality. This holds also for the historical body: the historical body of Christ symbolizes his true and perfect (full, complete) body, the ecclesial body. Scripture and Eucharist too are body of Christ, sacramentally pointing to the Church, and through the Church, to the completed body of Christ, in whom, through the power of the Holy Spirit, humanity will be more fully united to the Father.

In his historical body, Christ is the image of the Divinity, and, just as he emptied himself into the words of Scripture, so he makes himself seen, touched, & heard in the signs of his Incarnation: the Scriptures, the Eucharist, and the Church. Before the twelfth century, these three—Scripture, Eucharist, & Church—were intimately united in common theological thought. Sacred Scripture and Eucharist possess an essential ecclesial affinity, and the traditional understanding of the Church was eucharistic in nature, built on the foundation of the Word. Within the context of spiritual exegesis, this triform body remains a unified whole: Christ and the Eucharist are eschatologically completed in the Church, the Whole Body.

According to de Lubac, not only are Scripture and Eucharist images of the Church, the individual body of Jesus too is the figure of the whole body, the Church: “the historical life of the Savior symbolizes a broader life, that of his ‘true and perfect

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385 The ecclesial body, for de Lubac (History and Spirit, 412), “is the reality of which the other, in its very reality, is the ‘type’, the symbol.”
386 The ecclesial body will not be complete until the eschaton where all will be made one in the Son by the unifying and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.
387 See Moloney, “Henri de Lubac on Church and Eucharist.” As it has been pointed out above, “mystical body” was a technical term that distinguished the Eucharistic body from the ‘body born of the Virgin’ and from the ‘body of the Church’ while simultaneously keeping the three intimately united.
388 De Lubac (The Splendor of the Church, 161) states, “if the Church is thus the fullness of Christ, Christ in his Eucharist is truly the heart of the Church.”
Therefore, the life of Christ in his flesh, and the mystical life in his Church are one and the same life under two aspects, one of which is symbolic and the second symbolized. The individual body of Christ is not something that exists alongside the Church. The two bodies remain independent but are united in one single flesh. In his Commentary on John, Book 10, Origen says: “both, however, (I mean the temple and Jesus’ body) according to one interpretation, appear to me to be a type of the Church, in that the Church, being called a ‘temple,’ is built of living stones, becoming a spiritual house ‘for a holy priesthood’.” And, just as the historical body of Jesus has been crucified, buried and raised up, so too has the ecclesial body of the saints been crucified with Christ and will rise with him united in the fullness of the Whole Body of Christ, the Church.

As de Lubac sees it, Origen does not deny the distinction between the historical body and the ecclesial body or the differences in their respective modes of union with the Logos. He understands their unity according to the divine economy that orders one to the other, just as he understands the unity of the Old Testament ordered to its fulfillment in the New. Likewise, the Eucharistic body causes the ecclesial body, and points forward to its fulfillment at the eschaton.

Although Origen speaks of the Eucharistic body as symbolic, he does not intend to deny the reality of that body. For example, in his Homily on Leviticus, Origen says:

our Lord and Savior says, ‘unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life within you. For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.’ Therefore, since Jesus it totally clean, all his ‘flesh is food,’ and all his ‘blood is a drink’ because his every

389 De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 161.
390 Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of John, Book 10, chapter 228 (FC:80.305).
deed is holy and his every word is true. For this reason, therefore, his ‘flesh is true food’ and his ‘blood is true drink.’

Moreover, based on what we have expressed above, it should be clear that Origen’s symbolic or allegorical interpretation of the Eucharist must be understood according to his sacramental-exegetical principles. The Body received in the Eucharist remains symbolic, but with respect to the efficacious end in which the Eucharist is completed. 

Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is ordered to establishing the communion of the Catholic Church, towards the completion of his whole body. De Lubac explains this dynamic interrelationship: “sacramental communion (communion in the body and the blood) is always at the same time an ecclesial communion (communion within the Church, of the Church, for the Church…), so also ecclesial communion always includes, in its [fulfillment], sacramental communion. Being in communion with someone means to receive the body of the Lord with them.”

The Eucharistic body is dynamic, not static. The Eucharistic body creates the unity of the Church, it is the sacrament of unity: this is also signified by the name “communion,” which is given to both the Eucharist and the Church because of the communion they establish and sustain among those who partake of Christ’s Body. In The Splendor of the Church, de Lubac expresses this thought in very similar words that he famously wrote in Corpus Mysticum: “each has been entrusted to the other, so to speak, by Christ; the Church produces the Eucharist, but the Eucharist also produces the Church.”

De Lubac explains that the Eucharistic Body maintains our communion in the ecclesial body: “in order to remain in this body of Christ, which is the holy Church,

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391 Origen, Homilies on Leviticus 7.5 (FC:83.145-146).
392 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 414.
393 De Lubac, Corpus Mysticum, 21. See also Wood, Spiritual Exegesis and the Church, 59-63.
394 De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 134; see also Corpus Mysticum, 17.
we must achieve true participation, through the sacrament, in the first body of Christ [the Eucharist].” Although not identical, there is a genuine unity between the Eucharistic body and the ecclesial body.

Likewise, there is an intimate relationship between Scripture, the Eucharist and the Church, because there can be no true separation between this triform body of Christ: each body is a distinct mode of Christ’s presence to his people. Because of their unity in the One Logos by the Holy Spirit, we can speak of a triform body without creating a plurality of bodies. This same principle applies to the One Table of God’s Word and Christ’s body as it is used at the Second Vatican Council: the council itself alternates between the two titles, One Table and Two Tables, but I believe it will become clear that the use of these two titles is united in the One Logos. Here is not the place to examine the council’s understanding of the One Table. I will now turn to Henri de Lubac’s understanding of the theological concept of communion, a concept taken up by the council. De Lubac’s understanding of communion will help to shed light on the interrelationship of Scripture, Eucharist and Church.

II. Communion in the Ecclesial Body and Its Eschatological Fullness

This turn to de Lubac’s understanding of communion is not artificial. Indeed, it cannot be separated from the creative and unitive dynamism of both Scripture and Eucharist. Moreover, it cannot be separated from the sacramental nature of the Church. For it is through the Church, in Scripture and Sacrament, that the Holy Spirit causes and

395 De Lubac, Corpus Mystica, 14; see also 15-36.
396 For example, in Presbyterorum Ordinis §18 there is mention of the two tables: “those actions by which Christians draw nourishment through the Word of God from the double table of holy Scripture and the Eucharist hold preeminent place above all spiritual aids.”
397 I will turn to the council’s understanding of the One Table in chapter 4.
sustains our union with the God, and it is this union with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that enables union among human persons.\textsuperscript{398}

The idea of communion is one of the most common and dominant themes from the tradition that is interwoven throughout all of de Lubac’s works, and it is perhaps one of the most famous theological ideas for which he will be remembered. Indeed, communion is the central axis around which most of de Lubac’s theological output branches, perhaps especially his sacramental exegesis and Eucharistic ecclesiology.\textsuperscript{399} As Antonio Sicari has noted,

anyone who delves into the depths of Father de Lubac’s writings (and, thus, his life-experience) immediately perceives two dynamics which continually intersect with precision and crucial consistency: the vertical movement by which the gifts from on high break upon humanity, (“gifts” which are, above all, the divine Persons themselves who welcome us into their Trinitarian intimacy), and a horizontal movement, spread out in every direction to recreate bonds between people by overcoming every barrier of time and space, all possible diversities, and even the very confines of death.\textsuperscript{400}

De Lubac’s concern with the Christian understanding of communion can be seen in his first and foundational work, \textit{Catholicism}.\textsuperscript{401} In this important work, de Lubac discusses the social nature of humanity, or human solidarity in salvation, as a fundamental characteristic of Christ’s redemptive life. Moreover, as Lisa Wang has observed,


\textsuperscript{399} See, for example, Boersma, \textit{Nouvelle Theologie}; Doyle, “Henri De Lubac and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology,” 209-27; Antonio Sicari, ““Communio” in Henri De Lubac,” \textit{Communio} 29 (Fall 1992), 450-464. De Lubac has retrieved this extremely rich and provocative idea of unity from the Fathers, especially as it is found and related to the patristic exegetical tradition. The idea of communion is deeply rooted in divine revelation (e.g., John 14-15), and permeates the tradition up to the Middle Ages.

\textsuperscript{400} Sicari, ““Communio” in Henri De Lubac,” 451. See also George Chantraine, “\textit{Catholicism}’s On “Certain Ideas”,” \textit{Communio} 35 (Winter 2008): 520-34.

\textsuperscript{401} According to Hans Urs Von Balthasar (\textit{The Theology of Henri De Lubac}, 35), the major works that followed \textit{Catholicism} “grew from its individual chapters much like branches from a trunk.”
Catholicism “was intended, in its emphasis on the essentially social nature of Christianity, to address what he perceived to be the unfortunate tendency in the religious attitudes of his day towards individualization rather than a focus on community.” The individual person’s participation in the Trinitarian life takes place within Christ’s ecclesial body, through his other bodies: that of the Word and of the Eucharist.

De Lubac’s insistence on the universality and social nature of the Gospel is directly related to the doctrine of the One Table: the promise of partaking in the divine life is given not to the individual alone, but to a diversity of persons united by the Holy Spirit, within the Body of Christ, the Church. It is in his ecclesial body that the Logos continues to convocate all people to partake of eternal beatitude, a life effected, strengthened and maintained at the One Table of Eucharist and Scripture.

The human person’s mystical union with the ecclesial body, in which and through which the human person participates in the divine communion, is made possible because Christ has first assumed human nature in his Incarnation and thus every human person who was made according to his divine image. As de Lubac observes, “the divine image does not differ from one individual to another: in all it is the same image. The same mysterious participation in God which causes the soul to exist effects at one and the same time the unity of spirits among themselves.” All of humanity is capable of partaking of Christ’s divine life because they form part of that integral humanity taken up by Christ. According to de Lubac, the ecclesial union “supposes a previous natural unity, the unity of the human race.”

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403 De Lubac, Catholicism, 29.
404 Ibid., 25.
who bears within himself every person by bearing all of human nature in himself: the
image of God is universally human.405 When Christ became man he did not merely take
on a human body, but truly became a human person. Echoing the Fathers de Lubac
writes, Christ “incorporated himself in our humanity, and incorporated it in himself.”406
However, due to ancestral or original sin, all of humanity was divided, scattered, and
separated from one another because humanity separated itself from God.

Separated from the unity of the Trinity, human persons cannot abide in perfect
harmony among each other. Created in the image of God, all of humanity participates
in God, and this participation in God alone unifies the human person with God, with
oneself and with others. De Lubac encourages us to “abide by the outlook of the Fathers:
the redemption being a work of restoration will appear to us by that very fact as the
recovery of lost unity—the recovery of supernatural unity of man with God, but equally
of the unity of men among themselves.”407 The image of God in the human person can
never be lost, although it can be darkened and marred. However, the human person’s
likeness to Christ, or one’s union or level of intimate friendship with God, can be
destroyed by sin and is only restored in Christ by the Holy Spirit. This likeness is not
complete from the beginning, but is a goal—requiring the work of a lifetime—that can
only be acquired in the Spirit, by living in union with Christ in his ecclesial body. De
Lubac expresses it in the following manner:

all infidelity to the divine image that man bears in him, every
breach with God, is at the same time a disruption of human unity.
It cannot eliminate the natural unity of the human race—the image

405 See Nonna Verna Harrison, God’s Many-Splendored Image: Theological Anthropology for Christian Formation
of God, tarnished though it may be, is indestructible—but it ruins that spiritual unity which, according to the Creator’s plan, should be so much the closer in proportion as the supernatural union of man with God is the more completely effected.\footnote{De Lubac, Catholicism, 33.}

The original unity between human persons and the human person’s unity with God was thrown into discord because of humanity’s unfaithfulness to that image, in which all persons have been created. Sin fragmented the original harmony of humanity and just as Christ unites the Old and New Testament, just as he unites the literal and spiritual meaning, so too he overcomes the discord caused by sin and saves the human person by \textit{re-uniting} divided humanity, both individually and collectively.

Indeed, the Father has chosen to reunite, in the Logos, through the Holy Spirit, all of his children that are scattered and led astray because of sin.\footnote{See ibid., 221-243. Compare Lumen Gentium §9: “it has pleased God, however, to sanctify and save men and women not individually and without regard for what binds them together, but to set them up as a people who would acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness.” And, in the Son the Father has called “together from Jews and gentiles a people which would be bound together in unity not according to the flesh but in the Spirit, and which would be the new people of God.” See de Lubac, Catholicism, 25ff.} This reunification is not the reunion of isolated individuals, but the gathering together of a community of persons with a common destiny to share in the intimate life of the divine communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.\footnote{De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 238. De Lubac’s stress on the Trinitarian foundation and goal of all human persons seems to anticipate the council’s emphasis on the Trinitarian foundation and goal of the Church as explicated in Lumen Gentium.} God desires all of humanity to share in his Trinitarian unity, to form one people, one Body of Christ, and to be formed into one temple of the Holy Spirit. De Lubac observes, “God did not make us ‘to remain within the limits of nature’, or for the fulfilling of a solitary destiny; on the contrary, He made us to be brought together into the heart of the life of the Trinity.”\footnote{De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 238. De Lubac’s stress on the Trinitarian foundation and goal of all human persons seems to anticipate the council’s emphasis on the Trinitarian foundation and goal of the Church as explicated in Lumen Gentium.} This Trinitarian life fills the Church and summons all persons to the ecclesial communion: in the Son, all people are called to
enter into the Church, and through Christ’s Body, the Holy Spirit unites all people of every age to himself. De Lubac remarks, the Church, which is

‘Jesus Christ spread abroad and communicated’ completes—so far as it can be completed here below—the work of spiritual reunion which was made necessary by sin; that work which was begun at the Incarnation and was carried on up to Calvary. In one sense the Church is herself this reunion, for that is what is meant by the name of Catholic by which we find her called from the second century onward, and which in Latin as well as in Greek was for long bestowed upon her as a proper noun.  

The ecclesial body of Christ is the re-union of all those led astray by sin: in this one body, the Holy Spirit restores, establishes, sustains, and makes the human person’s likeness to Christ deepen. Theosis is offered to every individual, but it is always offered through and in Christ’s Body. For de Lubac, God does not only create the individual person through his Life-giving Word, but also continues to re-create each individual as a union of people in Christ’s ecclesial Body.

In this universal communion all will partake of the Trinitarian union in Christ by the Holy Spirit, for, as de Lubac writes, the Church is “not just a spiritual community, but a community of the Holy Spirit.” Moreover, the ecclesial body of Christ is not just one social body or institution among many others. The tradition likens the Church to a city of elect where all reign with the one and only King, Jesus Christ. In this city, the heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God, the saints dwell in fellowship and joy. As the City of God,

412 De Lubac, Catholicism, 48.
413 The liturgical life of the Church confirms her doctrinal life: there is one sacrifice offered by the one Church (priest and laity united), for her unity and for the divinization of the whole world. The offerings of the many become one by the Holy Spirit, who knits them into the one Body of Christ. See de Lubac, Catholicism, 102-105.
414 De Lubac, Catholicism, 116. See also idem, Splendor of the Church, 209f, and Catholicism, 49-50. Compare Lumen Gentium §13: “All the faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with the rest in the holy Spirit.”
415 See de Lubac, Catholicism, 334-337; idem, The Splendor of the Church, 46; 81-83.
the Church is not a human city, but rather, a heavenly city where those who are received into her participate in an intimate and true union, not merely one of external harmony. The union of the Church is a true unity because it is the communion of the Holy Spirit, where individuality is not absorbed into the community, and the communion is not a mere collection of individuals, but where the whole body shares in the unity of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{416}

Although the non-Christian may not partake in the full communion of the Church, having been created in the image and likeness of God, he or she is predestined to share in the same fullness of union with God as the person who actually participates in the ecclesial communion. Because of the universal nature that Christ has incorporated into himself, every individual person shares in one common destiny. Echoing St. Irenaeus, de Lubac states that “the Son, from the very beginning and in every part of the world, gives a more or less obscure revelation of the Father to every creature.”\textsuperscript{417} De Lubac also indicates that traditionally, the Fathers were in majority agreement that the universal grace of Christ would be made available to all who seek to do what is right.\textsuperscript{418}

On the other hand, because Christ has taken up in his Incarnation human nature, salvation for this body of people can only come to those who receive the form of Christ, to those who are refashioned and recreated in the likeness to God, which is possible only through the Church.\textsuperscript{419} Moreover, because the life of the members comes from the life of the body, theosis for the individual can only occur also for the whole body: theosis for this

\textsuperscript{416} See de Lubac, Catholicism, 112-119; idem, The Splendor of the Church, 78; 81.
\textsuperscript{417} De Lubac, Catholicism, 218.
\textsuperscript{418} See Ibid., 219.
\textsuperscript{419} According to de Lubac (Catholicism, 223), “this Church, which as the invisible Body of Christ is identified with final salvation, as a visible and historical institution is the providential means of this salvation.” However, it remains the Church’s mission to reveal to humankind the unity they have lost, to restore this communion and to complete it.
body—humanity united to its Head—is conformity to the Whole Christ. Outside the Body of Christ, scattered humanity remains fractured because outside this united body, the human person cannot reach its divine goal and remains in discord and disunity.

A. The Salvific and Ecclesial Communion Effected by Word and Sacrament

It is from within the ecclesial communion of Christ that the human person participates and grows in the fullness of the divine communion. The Sacred Scriptures and the seven sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are means of theosis, effective instruments of the human person’s union with God. De Lubac stresses the necessity of both Word and Sacrament for the divinization of the human person: he writes, “the very bread of the word of God, which is broken and distributed without pause by those who are its witnesses and ministers, is not enough, on its own to vitalize the soul; we have to drink from the wellspring of the sacraments.” Elsewhere, de Lubac says, “through both of them [Scripture and Eucharist], our souls only begin to be brought to life by the one Bread, who is to be their eternal food.” As they effect or renew the human person’s life with Christ, the Word of God and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, simultaneously renew, strengthen and effect one’s union with the Church, and it is through the ecclesial dwelling that humanity participates and increases in the divine life of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is an organic relationship between Scripture, Eucharist, Church, that prevents them from being separated or singled out from the

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420 See de Lubac, Catholicism, 223.
421 Similarly, separated from the historical sense, the spiritual sense remains fractured, dubious, and devoid of any reasonable foundation in the truth. Likewise, separated from the spiritual sense, the historical sense remains frustratingly incomplete, and incapable of life-sustaining transformation.
422 De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 147.
423 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 425.
others: it is this organic and essential connection that allows the council to speak of the One Table from which the Bread of Life is received.

De Lubac succinctly highlights the sacramental and shared characteristic of the Word and the Eucharist, and in doing so, he observes that both Scripture and the Eucharist contribute to the growth of the ecclesial body: “Scripture and Eucharist are thereby joined once again. Both never cease to ‘build up’ the Church.”424 The Logos is the principle of unity for Scripture, Eucharist, and Church: it is the same Logos, though in different modes, who effectively reveals and expresses himself in both Scripture and the Eucharist. Moreover, both Scripture and Eucharist can be designated as the Body of Christ and they each remain ordered to making and increasing the unity of the ecclesial Body of Christ.425

Indeed, for de Lubac there is a direct correlation between God’s Word and the Church. De Lubac remarks, “the permanent existence of a Sacred Scripture gives witness that God has spoken in the depths of human hearts throughout the course of history, which is to say, that he is building up a Church.”426 The Church is for each person the place of the Logos. There is a unity between the individual body of Christ and that of his social body, the Church, and there is a real unity between this social body and Scripture. According to de Lubac,

the Church, in accepting it [Scripture], takes in this radiance, ‘she is herself full of it from East to the West; she is wholly filled with the true light’, and that is why the Son of Man already comes endlessly in her, too, he who said: ‘I am with you always, to the close of the

424 Ibid., 418. De Lubac further remarks (History and Spirit, 342), “like God himself, the Scriptures effect what they say.”
425 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 417.
426 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 417.
The Logos creates the Church. As it can be said, “the Eucharist makes the Church, and the Church makes the Eucharist,” so too, in a qualified sense, it can be said that the Logos makes the Church, and the Church makes the Logos. After his reflection on the biblical unity of Word and Sacrament, Lucien Deiss acknowledged that, “while the word creates the ecclesiastical community, the community can also be said to ‘create’ the word.” De Lubac comments in a similar fashion, when he writes: “it is first of all in himself that, through the action of this Church, the Christian gives birth and growth to the Word of God which he has received, from which he lives and which he makes bear fruit.”

The Church existed before the Word of God began to be recorded in written form. The canon of Scripture itself was determined within the ecclesial communion (both Israel and the Christian people as the Church) to be received, not as a mere historical letter from the past, but as eternally new, speaking to the human person at his or her present moment. The Church has faithfully watched over this Word, handing it on to future generations. Through her missionary proclamation and the acceptance of that preaching, and her liturgical proclamation of Scripture, which continues to transform the faithful into the Body of Christ, the Church makes present the Word of God to those who will receive him in faith. It is in this sense, that the Church makes the Logos, even as the Logos makes the Church. Scripture actually effects what it signifies, but it is from within

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427 Ibid., 418.
428 Deiss, God’s Word and God’s People, 266. Whereas de Lubac recovers this doctrine from the Fathers before the council, Deiss’ elucidation of the biblical roots for the sacramental character of the Word for the building-up of the Church took place after the council.
his ecclesial body that Christ transforms the human person who is open to receiving this Word.\textsuperscript{430}

The effective manducation of the Logos in Scripture is made possible only for the person in union with the ecclesial body of Christ, wherein he or she is enabled to hear and understand, to receive and accomplish, the words of the Word in the most intimate recesses of the soul. Scripture, the external symbol possessed by the Church (and which possesses the Church), is explained by the Church (and explains her to herself), and, is the most effective means taken by the Logos to make himself heard interiorly.\textsuperscript{431} Therefore, according to de Lubac, the Christian work must essentially be a meditation or rumination on Scripture, a true participation in the Logos of God.\textsuperscript{432}

In Scripture, Christ continues to speak to every individual from within the ecclesial body. The Word spoken by the Father does not resound from the outside of this social body, but illuminates from within. De Lubac observes, “Scripture is thus like the voice of Christ speaking to the Church and in the Church; it is his efficacious sign; it thus assures the luminous presence of Christ to the Church.”\textsuperscript{433} Anticipating the Second Vatican Council, we can say with de Lubac that, in the Logos, the Church is \textit{lumen gentium}.\textsuperscript{434} In listening to and accepting this divine voice in the Scriptures, the Church is

\textsuperscript{430} De Lubac writes (\textit{Medieval Exegesis}, I: 146), “it is to the Church that the Father addresses himself as to his daughter. It is the Church that is led to Christ, and it is in her that souls, united by faith and virtue, are made one.” See also de Lubac, \textit{The Sources of Revelation}, 115. Although the Word of God is effective, it must be received in faith for its full effect to take place. The freedom to enter into this interior dialogue presupposes a radical conversion, and the purification of the soul, which, in the divine economy, requires the sacrament of reconciliation, a sacrament of the Body of Christ. See de Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 421.

\textsuperscript{431} In this regard, it is helpful to recall the ancient monastic practice of \textit{lectio divina}. See Michael Casey, \textit{Sacred Reading: the Art of Lectio Divina}, (Missouri: Ligouri, 1997).

\textsuperscript{432} This “work of the people” most properly takes place in the Divine Liturgy.

\textsuperscript{433} De Lubac, \textit{History and Spirit}, 418.

\textsuperscript{434} Similarly, the council (\textit{Lumen Gentium} §1) declares, “since Christ is the light of the nations [\textit{lumen gentium}], this holy synod, called together in the holy Spirit, strongly desires to enlighten all people with his brightness, which gleams over the face of the church, by preaching the gospel to every creature.”
illuminated with the true light of Christ and is unified from within to become the Whole Christ, making one all those who are joined to her unity. Just as the Logos, through his body of Scripture, calls and effects the unity of humanity in the Church, the Eucharist too forms humanity into one body, his ecclesial body. Again, the three bodies are joined together in de Lubac’s thought: the Body of Scripture and the Body of the Eucharist always work toward the union of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The proposition that Scripture is the Body of Christ does not ignore the presence in the Eucharist of that body assumed by Christ in his Incarnation because it is the same Logos embodied in each. However, if we wish for a fuller understanding of Origen’s thought on this matter, it is necessary to always include the other body, the Church. It is from within the ecclesial Body that all creation will partake of the Life-giving Bread at the One Table. A brief look at the various linguistic expressions that apply to the ecclesial body will prove helpful in clarifying the interrelationship of the ecclesial body to Christ’s Scriptural body and his Eucharistic body.

1. The Logos Convokes and Gathers into One Body

The early Christian idea of the Church is in direct continuity with the Hebrew Qahal, (a summons to an assembly) a word translated in the Septuagint as convocation, congregation, assembly, church, or synagogue (εκκλησία), which itself derives from to call (ἐκ καλέω). The Greek word emphasizes two essential elements of the Church, two elements that can be distinguished, but are not to be separated: to be called and to belong to or to be gathered into the assembly of believers.

This thought recalls the humble and listening attitude (that must be the Church’s and those within the Church) endorsed by the Second Vatican Council in the prologue to Dei Verbum: “the Word of God calls for reverent attention and confident proclamation.” I will return to this aspect in chapter four.
First, according to de Lubac, “the man who hears the ‘glad tidings’ and gives himself to Christ answers a call. Now by reason of the connection between the words (it does not appear in English) ‘to be called’ is to be called to belong to the Church.”

God the Father has effectively called the ecclesial body of Christ into creation by his Word, similar to the way he has called all creation into existence through his Word. As the ecclesial body of Christ, the Church continues the call of the Father for all people to partake in the communion offered in Christ. She summons all people to union with Christ and in doing so brings them forth to eternal life. The assembly of the Church is a natural succession to those who have been effectively called together by the Word of the Father.

The Church can only summon all people to herself if she speaks the one Word first spoken by the Father and transmitted by the Spirit.

Despite the multiplicity of human persons, this diversity of persons is made one, through the Holy Spirit, in the unity of Christ’s ecclesial body. The Church simultaneously calls all persons to divine union in the One Word as well as effecting this divine union for all people through the Holy Spirit. Those who are called by the Church are gathered into Christ’s one Body: as de Lubac writes, “she is a *convocatio* before being a *congregatio*” and her “unique mission is that of making Christ present to men.”

These two meanings of the word Church (convocation and congregation) are intimately related to the doctrine of the One Table: God the Father *calls* and *gathers* all people into a unity of persons, around the One Table of Word and Sacrament to partake

436 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 64.
437 See ibid.
438 See ibid., 40; 65; 101.
439 Ibid., 64.
of the Bread of Life. Moreover, these two complementary meanings of the word *ecclesia* (convocation and congregation) serve to show the similarity and interconnections between the Church, Scripture, and Eucharist. In both the Eucharist and Scripture, the Logos continues to call and form humanity to be formed into his likeness. And in his ecclesial communion, persons are truly united to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because, as de Lubac states, it is in this Whole Body,

the dwelling-place prepared on the mountain tops and foretold by the Prophets, to which, one day, all nations are to come to live in unity under the law of the one God. She is the treasure-chamber in which the Apostles have laid up the truth, which is Christ; the one and only hall in which the Father celebrates the wedding of His Son; and since it is in her that we receive our forgiveness, it is through her that we have access to life and the gifts of the Holy Spirit...she is the Mother who brings us our regeneration.

God the Father continues to call all people to his ecclesial communion, through his Word mediated in the Sacred Scriptures, so that the Church can bring them forth to new life in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking of this unitive aspect of Scripture, de Lubac observes, “whatever page I meditate upon, I find in it a means that God offers me, right now, to restore the divine image within me. Thus I myself become Jerusalem, the holy city; I become or become again the temple of the Lord.” Scripture plays a privileged role in this convocation because it is itself Logos, Christ’s scriptural body, that invites and effects the human person’s union with God by restoring him or her to the likeness of Christ. Moreover, the

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442 De Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, 39. And elsewhere (*The Splendor of the Church*, 37-38) de Lubac says, “she is ‘the Church of God’. She is His inseparable Bride, serving Him in faith and justice; she is the House of God and it is in her that He welcomes us to the forgiveness of our sins. It is in this Church, ‘the pillar and firmament of truth’, that we believe in Him correctly and glorify Him.”
444 Ibid., II:141.
individual’s restoration is always ecclesial. De Lubac remarks, “the Word dwells in us, in that one temple he took through us and of us, so that we should possess all things in him and he should bring us back to the Father in one Body.” We may individually hear the Father’s address, but it is always simultaneously the Church that the Father addresses and it is in her that he unites all people to his Son, through the Holy Spirit.

The Logos that is present in Scripture is the efficacious voice of God the Father speaking to all human persons: Scripture is the vehicle, the sacrament, of the Logos that God the Father continues to address to the Church and, through the Church, to each person. Therefore, from within the ecclesial body, the human person must, according to de Lubac, make it his or her “constant preoccupation, through her and in her to listen to Him whom she proclaims and to rise toward Him for whom, solely, she exists.”

Scripture, manducated on in the communion of the Church, makes Christ’s voice resound in souls, not only granting them knowledge in an intellectual manner but transforming them into himself, the living and operative Word—the reality and truth of which the Scriptures and the Eucharist are effective symbols and instruments. In this rumination by the faithful, the Holy Spirit causes the Word of God to thoroughly permeate the human person, and creates in that person new depths that conform him or her with the depths of God. Using Eucharistic language, de Lubac proclaims that all people are invited to eat of the Bread of Life in Scripture, broken for all persons so that all might be made whole: “all men are invited to nourish themselves with the pure

445 De Lubac, Catholicism, 40.
446 De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 227. Written a decade before the Second Vatican Council, this thought mirrors the council’s vision of the importance that the Church listen to the Divine Word. See especially, Dei Verbum §1, 23-26.
447 See de Lubac, Catholicism, 82-111; 337-343.
wheaten loaves of Scripture in the Holy Church.” Prayerful meditation of Scripture is an attentive listening to the interior voice of the Logos (both from within the individual person and from within the Church).

The Church continues speaking this Logos to humanity, for it is only in the ecclesial body of Christ, through the effect of the Church’s preaching, that Scripture ceases to be a simple collection of letters or books to become a living language spoken to all persons. Moreover, it is primarily in the Church’s liturgy that the majority of people come into contact with Christ through his Scriptures. It is in the liturgy that the Church best prepares the human person to understand God’s Word, to help them penetrate to the mystery contained within, by means of the light thrown on Scripture by one another as they are placed together in the liturgy. It is in the liturgy that Christ breaks open for us the true Spiritual meaning of the Scriptures so that we can share in the thanksgiving (the Eucharist) that he offers in the Spirit to the Father. De Lubac writes, “it is only through the leavening of the Gospel within the Catholic community and by the aid of the Holy Spirit that this ‘divine Humanity’ can be established, unica dilecta Dei” (the unique beloved of God). In the Scriptures, Christ remains present, speaking to the Church, and from within the Church, uniting all those who hear the Logos of the Father, transforming them day after day into his ecclesial Body, the Whole Body (members united to Head), to which

449 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 422.
450 Hence, an important reason that both the Church’s liturgy and the Scriptures are celebrated and proclaimed in the local language, and an important reason that the Church’s liturgical proclamation of the Word begins with the Old Testament scriptures and concludes with the proclamation of the Gospel.
451 Recall the Emmaus account (Luke 24:13-35) that expresses this foundational aspect of the Church’s liturgy, both East and West. De Lubac (Corpus Mysticum, 69) observes, “the supper at Emmaus made possible an identical and more natural bringing together of the two, given the explanation of the Scriptures which had preceded the moment of recognition.”
452 De Lubac, Catholicism, 226.
all of humanity has been predestined. In fact, according to de Lubac, “the Church’s unique mission is that of making Christ present to men. She is to announce Him, show Him, and give Him, to all.”

Using Eucharistic language, de Lubac declares that “Scripture is bread, but bread which becomes for the Christian the life-giving food which it must be only after it has been consecrated by Jesus,” in whom the true meaning of Scripture is fulfilled and fully understood through the Holy Spirit. The historical sense remains the foundational sense in scriptural exegesis, but it is only one level of the fuller meaning of the divine mystery present in the letter, a meaning that cannot be fully grasped at any one level due to its divine nature. De Lubac insists that, the historical sense remains the foundation of the spiritual sense, however, it is ordered to something, or more accurately, someone beyond the letter: the Divine Word did not enter into history to remain at the corporeal level.

Indeed, the purpose of scriptural exegesis is to bring Christ, the mystery hidden within Sacred Scripture, into view and in doing so to enlighten the reader or hearer to desire to live more fully in the truth of his revelation, to come into a personal and ecclesial communion with the Logos, and thereby to participate more fully in the divine life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Church and the individual are not two separate realities—not because each Christian is part of the Church, but because the very mystery of the Church is in some way contained in every person. De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 220.

De Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 112.

See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 61-73; idem, The Sources of Revelation, 20f.; 86f.; idem, Catholicism, 112-119; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:137-140; Farkasfalvy, Inspiration and Interpretation, 127f. This goal cannot be attained without the actual presence of the Holy Spirit: it is by grace alone that the human person encounters the Logos and can ascend from the literal to divine meaning, can ascend from death to the fullness of life, so long as one does not stop at the literal sense, but is led by the Spirit to the inexhaustible depths of the spiritual level. Drawing extensively from patristic (particularly Origen and Gregory the Great) and medieval sources, Magrassi (Praying the Bible, 52-53), can suggest, echoing de Lubac: “It is not so much a matter of reading a book as of seeking Someone: ‘With all its ardor, the Church seeks in Scripture the One whom she loves.’ Exegesis is not technique; it is mysticism. The meaning of Scripture is not an impersonal truth but the fascinating figure of Christ: ‘The meaning of Christ, mysterious and hidden.’ The
Because Scripture is not merely a book, but an incorporation of the Logos, authored by the Holy Spirit, exegesis is less an academic work than it is a mystical experience that must take place within the Church to create the human person’s communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Exegesis is not meant to be solely a scientific study of a text, confined to the past. The Divine Word transcends the mere words used to reveal the Logos within all words and calls for more than an historical-scientific analysis.457 As de Lubac laconically writes, “spiritual understanding saves the believer.”458 And Origen, almost as succinctly observes, “this is the word that makes believers into gods [cf. 2 Pet 2:4].”459 If the human person stops at the letter of Scripture, that person has not penetrated to the heart of the mystery of Christ present within the letter, Christ who alone brings true beatitude.

The literality of scripture is meant to lead one to Christ, who alone is the true bread of the Christian, who alone enables the human person to grow in his likeness, to grow in divine communion.460 De Lubac does not hesitate to express the transfiguring power of Scripture:

the Word of God, a living and effective word, acquires true fulfillment and total significance only by the transformation which it effects in the one who receives it. This is why the expression whole science of exegesis is the ability to recognize Christ.” For a concise outline of patristic exegesis, see David Balás and Jeffrey Bingham, “The Patristic Exegesis of the Bible,” in The International Bible Commentary, ed. William R. Farmer, 64-115 (Minneapolis: Liturgical Press, 1998); see also Simonetti, Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church; John J. O’Keefe & R. R. Reno, Sanctified Vision. An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005); de Margerie, An Introduction to the History of Exegesis; Frances M. Young, Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002).

457 See de Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 46; idem, History and Spirit, 240; idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:79-82; Crouzel, Origen, 73f.
458 De Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 21.
460 See Scheck, Origen and the History of Justification, especially 32-51.
‘passing on to spiritual understanding’ is equivalent to ‘turning to Christ’—a conversion which can never be said to have been fully achieved. Reciprocal causality also exists between this conversion to Christ, or this ‘passage to Christ,’ and the understanding of the Scriptures.\footnote{De Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, 21.}

In *On Prayer*, Origen expresses the efficacy of the Word when he says, “the true bread is He who nourishes the true Man, made in the image of God; and the one who has been nourished by it will come to be in the likeness of Him who created him (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; Col. 3:9-10). And what is more nourishing to the soul than the Word?”\footnote{Origen, *On Prayer*, 26.2 (The Classics of Western Spirituality, 138).} Christ nourishes and transforms those who accept his Word in the Spirit, those who allow the Word to penetrate so that the Holy Spirit can transform them into children in the Son—to be divinized and to grow in the likeness of God.\footnote{In his treatment of Origen’s doctrine of grace, Scheck (*Origen and the History of Justification*, 34) declares that, according to Origen, “Christ nourishes us by his word and sanctifies us by entering into us by the Holy Spirit, as we for our part, constantly cling to him.”} According to Origen, in his *Homilies on Jeremiah*, the one who accepts the Logos, preached by the apostles “also dies, but he dies to the world, he dies to sin, and after having died to the world and to sin, he is made to live by the Word of God, and receives another life.”\footnote{Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah* 16.1 (FC:97.166).} In his *Homilies on Jeremiah*, Origen makes clear that those who do not come to believe in Christ are those who read and do not apprehend spiritually the Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament), they are not illuminated by the Holy Spirit to the saving presence of Christ within Scripture. Those who do not read spiritually remain at the letter, which may be edifying to the simple, immature Christian, but to the one who desires to truly grow in divine communion, he or she must be led beyond the corporeal sense to the mystical sense by the Holy Spirit.
Scripture itself is capable of transforming the spiritually dead to life because, for Origen, as well as for de Lubac, Scripture is not merely a book or collection of books that only reports past history. In Scripture, Christ’s personal, Life-giving, effective word is spoken to each individual from within the Church. As de Lubac observes,

now it is in the Spirit that the Church, ‘the authentic Israel,’ ‘Israel according to the Spirit,’ receives her inheritance and truly understands it. The ‘true’ meaning of the Scriptures, their complete and definitive meaning, can really be nothing other than the meaning ‘which the Spirit gives to the Church.’ Although the Jews still have the letter, the Christians, having the spirit, have the whole.  

In revealing God through his Scriptures, Christ is not so much concerned with historical or corporeal matters, important though they are. Rather, he seeks to incorporate each human person into the intimate dialogue with the Beloved that gives true beatitude and new life. As de Lubac declares, the Word continues to speak “to us still; it is he who reveals himself, ‘always the same, ever unchangeable and unfailing’; present on every page, ‘deploying his force from one end to the other,’ reaching the depth of our souls as the limits of the universe.” One of the main purposes of Scripture is to establish the human person’s communion with the Father in the Logos through the Spirit. In a similar way, the purpose or truth of sacramental communion is to increase the person’s life with

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466 De Lubac (*Catholicism*, 179) observes the following concerning this effectiveness when he says, Christ “comes not to explain it [Scripture] intellectually but to fulfill it in deed.”
467 De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, II:81. Origen brings this aspect out quite clearly in his commentary on the Song of Songs (*The Commentary on Song of Songs*, Prologue.2 (*ACW*:26.38-39): “the Scripture before us [i.e., the Song of Songs], therefore, speaks of this love with which the blessed soul is kindled and inflamed towards the Word of God; it sings by the Spirit the song of the marriage whereby the Church is joined and allied to Christ the heavenly Bridegroom, desiring to be united to Him through the Word, so that she may conceive by Him and be saved through this chaste begetting of children, when they—conceived as they are indeed of the seed of the Word of God, and born and brought forth by the spotless Church, or by the soul that seeks nothing bodily, nothing material, but is aflame with the single love of the Word of God—shall have persevered in faith and holiness with sobriety.” This is an aspect shared by *Dei Verbum*: cf. the prologue, §1.
the Father through the Eucharistic body that is dispensed by the Church.\textsuperscript{468} Those who accept the Word will partake of the ecclesial body of Christ by sharing in the Eucharistic communion of the Whole Christ.

2. \textit{The Eucharist and Ecclesial Communion}

Like Scripture, the Eucharist too possesses a spiritual meaning; it is necessary to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit so that in the Eucharist we may discover and appropriate the signified-other Body of Christ, the Church, to which the Scripture and the Eucharist are both ordered. As de Lubac declares, “it is therefore clear that through the unique bread of the sacrifice, everyone of the faithful who is in communion with the body of Christ is also by that same fact in communion with the Church. By receiving the Eucharist, each one ‘passes into the body of Christ’, each one participates in the body of Christ, that is always to say, in the Church.”\textsuperscript{469} As Scripture unites those who truly hear the Logos within his ecclesial body, so too the multitude who partake of Christ in the Eucharist are made one in the unity of the Church. This idea is developed in de Lubac’s seminal work, \textit{Catholicism}: “the final result, the ‘truth’ of sacramental communion, was union with the Church within whose heart the Word resounds, for she is indeed the real presence of the Logos.”\textsuperscript{470} In the Eucharist, Christ gathers the multitude of members together in the unity of his ecclesial body. In \textit{Catholicism}, de Lubac writes, “the Eucharist,

\textsuperscript{468} The Second Vatican Council teaches something similar to de Lubac when it writes in \textit{Lumen Gentium} §4: “through the power of the gospel he [the Holy Spirit] rejuvenates the church, continually renewing it and leading it to perfect union with its spouse.”

\textsuperscript{469} De Lubac, \textit{Corpus Mysticum}, 21-22.

\textsuperscript{470} De Lubac, \textit{Catholicism}, 101. In \textit{Theological Fragments} (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 73, de Lubac writes “the Christian community is formed by the coming together of many individuals who, participating in the unique Eucharist, become members of the unique body of Christ. This is the goal of the mystery and of sacramental communion.”
is also especially the sacrament of unity.” In the Eucharist, Christ transforms those he nourishes into the unity of his Whole Body.

On the other hand, the sinner who participates in the sacred banquet of the Eucharist is in communion with the Body of Christ, but for his own judgment. The sinner receives the “typical” body, but to no avail because this sacrilege does not unite him to the Body of Christ, the whole Christ, because, as de Lubac writes, it is not a true spiritual consuming of Christ himself. Only for those who receive Christ in the Eucharist after reconciliation with him and his Church, does communion in the “typical and symbolic Body” have the effect of manducation of the Logos, of that true Bread of which whoever partakes will live forever. Similarly, for de Lubac, it is necessary to be properly disposed to receive the spiritual meaning of Scripture. There is no spiritual fruit for that person who does not partake in the Spirit of “that flesh and that blood of the Logos which are the life of the Church and which one receives in the spiritual understanding of the Scriptures.” Sacred Scripture possesses a unitive aspect, but only for those who are led by the Spirit, from the image to the truth. The Eucharist and Scripture are both sacraments of unity and remain united, although not identical, so that it is impossible to separate the two.

The effect of meditation on Scripture and the reception of the Eucharist in the Church, is ultimately only still symbolic, in the sense that the full effect of spiritual exegesis and the faithful reception of the Eucharist will become fully realized only at the

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471 De Lubac, Catholicism, 89.
472 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 421.
473 De Lubac, History and Spirit, 420.
474 This aspect is endorsed by the Second Vatican Council when it states that the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist together make up one act of worship: see Sacrosanctum Concilium §56.
eschaton. As it is presently, not in its completed reality, Scripture disclosed in the Church, and the Eucharist received in the unity of the Church, remains incomplete or unfulfilled. Through Word and Eucharist, the human person begins to live by the one Bread, who is present to us at the One Table. Both Scripture and Eucharist lead to the spiritual manducation of the Logos who brings about our growth in the likeness to Christ in the ecclesial body. The purpose of both Scripture and Eucharist is to establish the communion of the saints: the unity of the body received in communion is a sign and promise of the unity of the ecclesial body, which all the saints are called to form. Reunited with God, the human person is reunited with one another and can work toward the reunification of all persons and the reunification of the cosmos through all persons.

B. The Ecclesial Communion and Its Eschatological Fulfillment

Although there may be beautiful and enriching aspects present outside the ecclesial body, all that abides outside this life-giving body remains incapable of attaining its ends towards which all things are ordered: to dwell in the all encompassing embrace of God the Father in Christ through the creative power of the Holy Spirit. According to de Lubac, “the Holy Spirit, manifested through them [the Apostles], is about to reestablish mutual comprehension among men, since each individual will understand in his own language the one truth which is to reunite him to his fellows.” Anticipating Lumen Gentium, de Lubac maintains the traditional doctrine of the necessity of the ecclesial communion for the theosis and salvation of the human person.

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475 See de Lubac, History and Spirit, 421-423.
476 De Lubac, Catholicism, 55.
477 I will clarify this assertion as it pertains the council in chapter 4.
The doctrine of the One Table is intimately related to the traditional teaching concerning the necessity of the Church, concerning the necessity of union with Christ in the Holy Spirit. For, it is from within the Church, through the One Table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ, that the individual person journeys towards his or her goal that gives true meaning to all relative goals: participation in the divine life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Participation in the communion of God takes place within the ecclesial body of Christ wherein Christians become a new creation. In this regard, de Lubac writes, “behold him, ‘this new being in the world’, the masterpiece of the Spirit of God. Henceforward one living being grows under the action of a single life-force, and vivified by the one Spirit attains to the stature of perfection.”

De Lubac’s understanding of the sacramental-exegetical nature and intimate connection of Scripture, Eucharist and Church leads to the conclusion of the necessity of the Church for the human person’s unity with God, with one another, and with the entire cosmos.

De Lubac succinctly sums up the ecclesial nature of the divine economy:

“revelation and redemption are bound up together, and the Church is their only Tabernacle.”

De Lubac upholds the traditional axiom, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, which has a very ancient tradition, but he approaches its explanation from within spiritual exegesis. This ancient axiom itself is entirely absent from the documents of the Second Vatican Council; however, because one of the concerns of the Council was to update...

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478 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 47.
479 Ibid., 226.
480 See Ibid., 234. For an historical account of this doctrine, see Francis Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). A positive and scriptural way of positing this axiom may be: God the Father has chosen humanity to share in his divine life in his Son, so that we can become his adopted children through the Holy Spirit. De Lubac wrote *Catholicism* in 1938, two decades before the Second Vatican Council was convoked, and his teaching on this doctrine remains in line with the teaching that would be explicated at the Council, especially as we find it in *Lumen Gentium*.
the Church’s doctrine—not abrogate it—in a more pastoral tone, this doctrine was only
restated in a more positive manner (perhaps following de Lubac) so that it not be
understood in an exclusivist sense. There is no explicit talk of membership in the
Church, there is instead an explication of perfect & imperfect realizations of belonging to
the Church. For example, the council declares:

this pilgrim Church is necessary for salvation. For Christ alone,
who is present to us in his body, which is the church, is the mediator
and the way of salvation; and he, while expressly insisting on the
need for faith and baptism (see Mk 16, 16; Jn 3, 5), at the same time
confirmed the need for the church, into which people enter through
baptism as through a door. Therefore, those cannot be saved who
refuse to enter the church or to remain in it, if they are aware that
the catholic church was founded by God through Jesus Christ as a
necessity for salvation.\footnote{\textit{Lumen Gentium} §14, see also idem §15-17.}

According to de Lubac, the account of this doctrine according to the distinction between
the visible aspect and the invisible aspect of the Church is an insufficient and imprecise
clarification. On the other hand, if interpreted from within the sacramental-exegetical
structure that de Lubac has recovered for us, this doctrine admits of greater depth.

Just as the letter and spirit of Scripture cannot be separated, but remain united, so
too, the visible and invisible aspects of the Church remain united and cannot be
separated.\footnote{As was shown in a section above, de Lubac’s understanding of spiritual exegesis is intimately related to his sacramental understanding of God’s economy. For example, de Lubac (\textit{The Splendor of the Church}, 159) is quite explicit, when he says, “it is the same with the Eucharist as it is with the spiritual sense of scripture, which does not eliminate the literal sense or add something to it, but rather rounds it out and gives it its fullness, revealing its depth and bringing out its objective extension. Through this ‘spiritual breaking’ the ‘mystery of the Bread’ is opened up, and we come to understand its ecclesial sense.” And elsewhere (\textit{The Splendor of the Church}, 203-204), he says “signs are not things to be stopped at, for they are, in themselves, valueless; by definition a sign is something translucent which dissolves from before the face of what it manifests—like words, which would be nothing if they did not lead straight on to ideas. Under this aspect it is not something intermediate, but something mediatory; it does not isolate, one from another, the two terms which it is meant to link. It does not put a distance between them; on the contrary, it unites them by making present that which it evokes.”}

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can the ecclesial body of Christ (visible and invisible) be divided, as if the Holy Spirit worked apart from Jesus Christ. The Logos calls for us to be led from the letter of the Scriptural body to its fuller depth present in the Spirit. So too, we are summoned beyond the mere visible, bodily aspect of the ecclesial body of Christ to actually become the Whole Body (the deeper and vital level of divine life) intended for all. Commenting on St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians 4:11-16, de Lubac says, “the Church will be ‘a perfect man’, the perfected body of all the saints together; all one, and now one in perfection, in the same Christ.” There is no ecclesio-centrism present in de Lubac’s thought. For de Lubac, the Church is not one body among many others, she is truly the ecclesial body of Jesus Christ and only in Christ is the Church able to convoke all people to dwell in his congregation, enabling them to participate fully in his divine life. Outside of the Body of Christ, communion with God is impossible, therefore, it remains necessary to belong to the ecclesial body in order to share in the divine life of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

De Lubac does not deny the distinction between the visible and invisible aspects of the Church. Rather, he stresses that, like the historical and spiritual senses of Scripture, so too, the invisible and visible natures of the Church can be distinguished, but without the possibility of any true separation. As Christ is truly divine and human, so in a similar fashion the Church possesses divine and human elements that cannot be separated. As de Lubac states, the Church is “human and divine at once even in her visibility, ‘without division and without confusion’, just like Christ Himself, whose body...
she mystically is.” As the whole body of Scripture (both Old and New) contains the Logos of God (inasmuch as he has condescended to become the written Word), so too can it be said that the whole ecclesial body, both visible and invisible, embodies Christ. As we come to embrace Christ in all the Scriptures, through both the Old and New, from letter to Spirit, so too, we come to embrace Christ in the Whole Church, through both visible and invisible elements. De Lubac acknowledges this correlation when he says, Christ “is the Head of the body of the Scriptures, just as he is the Head of the body of his Church.” Christ is present in this body, which is not a mere social body or human institution. Through this body, divine life is mediated to all human persons because Christ mediates to all people the mysteries of Scripture that he has accomplished.

The ecclesial body unites the human person not to a book or mere doctrine, but the very person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, according to de Lubac,

he who is not, in one way or another, a member of the body does not receive the influx from the Head; he who does not cling to the one Bride is not loved by the Bridegroom. If we profane the tabernacle, we are deprived of the sacred presence, and if we leave the temple, we can no longer hear the Word. If we refuse to enter the holy house or take refuge in the ark, we cannot find Him who is center and crown of both. If we are contemptuous of ourselves that we can do without this received light, we remain perpetually plunged in the night of ignorance...for each one of us Christ is thus His Church.

Furthermore, as de Lubac has pointed out, the axiom (extra ecclesiam nulla salus) most often refers to the body of the Church, “not to the soul but to the body of the Church, her

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485 Ibid., 102. De Lubac (The Splendor of the Church, 108) is not unaware of the paradoxical nature of the Church, which is simultaneously holy, yet full of sinners: “this is the Bride whose frailty is continually manifested in the spiritual prostitution from which He continually liberates her, purifying her by His union.”
486 De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:237.
487 See ibid., I: 239. And, through the human person, the cosmos once again is able to fully participate in the Trinity to be transfigured into a new creation.
488 De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 211.
social visible body”⁴⁸⁹ because it is the Whole Church that is saved and we enter into the spirit through the letter, the invisible through the visible. De Lubac remarks,

whole and entire he [God] will raise it [the Church] from the dead, whole and entire he will save it. Christ the Redeemer does not offer salvation merely to each one; he effects it, he is himself the salvation of the whole, and for each one salvation consists in a personal ratification of his original “belonging” to Christ, so that he be not cast out, cut off from this Whole.⁴⁹⁰

Apart from the wholeness of this body there can neither be life with God, nor can there be true happiness and peace for the human person, either in this life or in the life to come. As de Lubac remarks, “the Church is nothing else than humanity itself, enlivened, unified by the Spirit of Christ. She was willed by God ‘in order to give life to creation.’ Woe, then to him who separates himself from her.”⁴⁹¹ Just as the letter of Scripture cannot be separated from its spirit, so too, is it impossible to separate the body of the Church from its head. According to de Lubac, Christ “is the Head of the body of Scripture, just as he is the Head of the body of his Church. He is the Head of all sacred understanding, just as he is the Head of all the elect. He is the complete contents of Scripture, just as he contains all in himself.”⁴⁹² Paradoxically, it remains true that in some ways, notwithstanding that the Church is the Body of Christ, simultaneously, it is not identical to Christ, the head. In this regard, de Lubac comments, “this same body has a Head distinct from it, ruling it, directing its growth without growing itself, an organ of

⁴⁸⁹ De Lubac, Catholicism, 235.
⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 39.
⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 279. De Lubac (The Sources of Revelation, 205) writes, “the Head wills the members, the Word of God became incarnate only propter nos et propter nostram salvatem [for us, and for our salvation or health], and the Church is the ‘pleroma’ or the fullness of Christ.”
⁴⁹² De Lubac, The Sources of Revelation, 106.
command.”493 Apart from the Head, the body ceases to exist.

There can be no union with God outside the ecclesial communion of Christ. Belonging to the Church, according to de Lubac, “is an absolute necessity, and a necessary means to which there can be no exception.”494 De Lubac anticipates Lumen Gentium495 when he reformulates the ancient negative axiom into a positive one:

if it is thought that in spite of all these considerations the formula ‘outside the Church, no salvation’ still has an ugly sound, there is no reason why it should not be put in a positive form and read, appealing to all men of good will, not ‘outside the Church you are damned’, but ‘it is by the Church and by the Church alone that you will be saved’. For it is through the Church that salvation will come, that it is already coming to mankind.496

For the person outside the Church, the Church remains the predestined locus to which those amenable to God’s invitation (his con-vocation) to dwell in his divine life spontaneously tend.497

Therefore, those who have come into contact with the Church have an obligation to enter her communion because he or she already possesses a natural tendency toward her in mystery and that person would deceive himself or herself were he or she to deny that communion, which every person longs to enjoy.498 Those who do not know the Church are saved by her. They incur the obligation of belonging to her even externally as they come to know her. De Lubac makes clear that the invisible aspect of the Church cannot be separated from its visible element, especially with regards to human salvation:

493 Ibid., 122.
494 De Lubac, Catholicism, 236.
495 See Lumen Gentium §13-17, especially §16-17. I will more fully explain this assertion in chapter four.
496 De Lubac, Catholicism, 236.
497 Compare Lumen Gentium §8: “outside its [the Church’s] structure many elements of sanctification and of truth are to be found which, as proper gifts to the church of Christ, impel towards catholic unity.”
498 De Lubac, Catholicism, 237.
“they are saved not by belonging in a purely spiritual, intemporal manner to the soul of
the Church, but by means of a very real though indirect and more often hidden bond
with her body.”

Having been created in the image of God, all human persons possess an insatiable yearning for communion—within oneself, to be in union with others, and with God: this communion is accomplished only in the ecclesial communion of Christ’s whole body.

Insofar as the Church possesses an invisible or mystical aspect as the Body of Christ made one by the unifying power of the Holy Spirit, she is complete. Presently, the Church is a pilgrim on earth, but her foundation remains Trinitarian: the goal of humanity is to dwell in union with the Father, in the Son, and through the Holy Spirit within the ecclesial communion of Christ’s Body. The Church in Christ is simultaneously the means of salvation and the perfection of the redeemed.

Although the Church is necessary for the transfiguration of the human race, for the completion of humanity in the ecclesial body, she herself remains incomplete in her present earthly state. In fact, as de Lubac observes, the Church “is that mysterious structure which will become fully a reality only at the end of time: no longer is she a means to unite humanity in God, but she is herself the end, that is to say, that union in its consummation.”

In fact, as was stated above, in its present form, Scripture, as well as the Eucharist, remains transitory because the Church remains a work in progress, she is not yet the completed Body of Christ. The Church continues to summon and draw all persons into the life of Christ, divinizing them, making them adopted children of the

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999 Ibid., 240.
500 Ibid., 70.
501 See De Lubac, History and Spirit, 425.
Father by the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{502}

However, as de Lubac observes, this process is not the accomplishment of a short moment in time: “the Church is a growing body, a building in course of construction. Both metaphors suggest that her completion is not the work of one day….the work is long and exacting, and the laying of the foundation stone, that ‘corner stone’ which is no other than Christ, ‘the first born among many brethren’, required, as we know, vast preparations beforehand.”\textsuperscript{503} Christ has not come to fruition in all people, therefore, the Church continues to proclaim her head, Jesus Christ, at all times, to all peoples, so that all persons will partake in the eternal life he offers. The ecclesial body, which remains responsible for the entire human race, continues her pilgrim journey toward completion of the Whole Christ. According to de Lubac, “so long as the Church does not extend and penetrate to the whole of humanity, so as to give to it the form of Christ, she cannot rest.”\textsuperscript{504} Jesus Christ unites all of humanity to himself through his incarnation and all of humanity is capable of salvation, because they form part of that integral humanity taken up by Christ. The reunion of all human persons with God remains a work carried out in the communion of the Church and will only be complete at the eschaton.\textsuperscript{505}

Those ‘outside’ Christianity too are called to profit from the vital connection to the communion of Christ’s ecclesial body. God desires that all of his creation be divinized and enjoy his eternal beatitude. Those who answer his call, although they may not visibly be in the Church, participate to varying degrees in the divine communion,

\textsuperscript{502} According to de Lubac, (Catholicism, 65), the Church “summons all men so that as their mother she may bring them forth to divine life and eternal light.”

\textsuperscript{503} De Lubac, Catholicism, 230; see also, idem, The Splendor of the Church, 230-235.

\textsuperscript{504} De Lubac, Catholicism, 230; See also ibid., 49-50.

\textsuperscript{505} See ibid., 232-234.
through the Church.\textsuperscript{506} However, this insistence on the necessity of dwelling within the ecclesial body does not mean, for de Lubac, that everything or everyone outside of this communion is completely deficient. In anticipation of the Second Vatican Council, de Lubac too is aware that not all is depraved outside of Christianity:

Outside Christianity all is not necessarily corrupt; far from it, and the facts do not support that supposed law of degeneration in which an explanation was sought for the whole religious development of mankind left, so it was thought, to its own devices. All is not corrupt, but what does not remain puerile is always in peril of going astray, or, however high it climbs, of ultimate collapse. Outside Christianity nothing attains its end, that only end, toward which, unknowingly, all human desires, all human endeavors, are in movement: the embrace of God in Christ.\textsuperscript{507}

Human nature may be sick, but it is not completely cut off from God. Human reason may be weak and irresolute, but it is not permanently doomed to error because all persons have been created in the image of the Logos. The divine image in humanity may be marred and disfigured, but it remains nonetheless. All good that exists outside the ecclesial communion is not to be jettisoned because it remains ordered to its completion in the Church. De Lubac remarks to this point, the Church “by penetrating into the very fabric of human history—yet without rending it—it has come to transform mankind and to renew the face of the earth.”\textsuperscript{508} Without union in Christ, the human person remains incapable of fulfilling his or her deepest longing for unity with God, unity among other human persons, and peace within oneself.\textsuperscript{509}

\textsuperscript{506} Ibid., 234.
\textsuperscript{507} Ibid., 224.
\textsuperscript{508} Ibid., 286.
\textsuperscript{509} De Lubac observes (Catholicism, 342-343), “we are fully persons only within the Person of the Son, by whom and with whom we share in the circumincession of the Trinity…. [Christ] will never cease to make us complete, to make us persons in himself.”
Although outside Christianity not all is corrupt, outside the ecclesial embrace of God, nothing finds its completion because, separated from the Logos, the image in which one has been created, the human person remains separated from himself or herself, and becomes his or her own worst enemy.\footnote{See de Lubac, \textit{Catholicism}, 359.} Separated from Christ, the human person remains a slave to sin and death, cut off from the one who alone liberates, restores, and transfigures the darkened image. Separated from Christ, there is neither true unity among human persons nor peace for oneself. Without Christ, as de Lubac comments, the human person can never overcome all the opposing forces which are everywhere at work, forces which it contains within itself and is always producing or reawakening. Cities expand yet are always closed societies, they combine together but only fight more bitterly with one another, and beneath their outward unity there is always the personal enmity of the souls within them.\footnote{Ibid., 225. Although de Lubac wrote the above sentences in the early twentieth century, they continue to apply to the situation in the early twenty-first century. Despite all technological advances and communicative avenues opened up by cybernetics and other fields of human communication, human persons continue to battle among themselves and remain distant from one another.}

Just as the letter of the Scriptural body is completed and illuminated in the spiritual meaning of that body, so too the human person has been created to reach his or her fulfillment and illumination in the ecclesial body of Christ, which is the Whole Christ, eschatologically fulfilled.

The Church remains incomplete, for as de Lubac observes, the Church “has not even begun her work in some parts of the world.”\footnote{Ibid., 227.} The Church and each individual will only be complete when all people share at the One Table to enjoy the eternal beatitude of the Triune God.\footnote{See ibid., 131-133.} All of humanity, even those separated from her communion, remain indispensable for building up the Body of Christ. And, because the Body of Christ is
necessary for the human person to share in the divine life, those who do not know the Church, nevertheless, are saved by her.\textsuperscript{514}

\textbf{III. Conclusion}

In this chapter, I have continued examining the various incorporations of the Logos, specifically, his incorporation into the Scriptural body, the ecclesial body, and the Eucharistic body. It is clear that, for de Lubac, these are not three separate bodies, but a triform body united as one in the unity of the One Logos. Through these distinct, but united bodies, the Word presents himself in various modes to the human person. Moreover, the essential unity among the triform body (a unity maintained theologically, at least until the twelfth century) is further explained when they are analyzed according to sacramental-exegesis.

The exegetical context is necessary to avoid various misunderstandings of and an over-emphasis on the real presence of Christ primarily as it concerns the Eucharist (to the neglect of Christ’s presence elsewhere). Rather than deny Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, the sacramental-exegetical understanding of the Eucharist points to a more complete picture of the essential interrelationship of Church, Eucharist, and Scripture: the different modes of Christ’s presence in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist both point beyond themselves to the completion of each individual person within the ecclesial body of Christ. But, the Scriptural body and the Eucharistic body do more than prefigure the Whole Christ, they are instrumental to the building-up of the ecclesial body of Christ: together, Word and Sacrament help to make the Church, nourishing, sustaining and

\textsuperscript{514} See ibid., 237.
increasing her communion.

In chapter four, I will present the doctrine of the One Table according to the Second Vatican Council, drawing from various conciliar statements not confined to those found in *Dei Verbum*. In light of this and the previous chapter on de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual exegesis and his eucharist ecclesiology, I believe we will arrive at a fuller and dynamic understanding of the rich doctrine of the One Table as espoused by the Second Vatican Council.
CHAPTER 4: THE ONE TABLE AT THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL
AND BEYOND

Now that we have examined Henri de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual-sacramental exegesis (chapter two), and his eucharistic-ecclesiology (chapter three), we are in a better position to understand more fully the Second Vatican Council’s doctrine on the One Table. In this chapter, I will present a synthetic exposition of the One Table as it is found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and, I will also indicate the ways in which the de Lubacian recovery explained in the previous two chapters aids in a more complete understanding of this important, but often overlooked doctrine.

The importance of this doctrine cannot be over-emphasized. Recently, as I pointed out in chapter one, the Synod of Bishops (2008) devoted itself to the importance of the Scriptures to the life of the Church. Before his death in 2005, Pope John Paul II wrote his encyclical on the Church and the Eucharist (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 2003), which, according to Avery Dulles, seems to have been influenced by de Lubac’s rich thought.

I. The Logos of God: Personal and Sacramental

Henri de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual-sacramental exegesis was highly influential to the council’s understanding of Divine Revelation, and, because of its relation to it, the doctrine of the One Table. In fact, as Farkasfalvy observes, Dei Verbum “approached revelation according to the patristic perspective of a comprehensive ‘economy of salvation’.”

De Lubac certainly played a pivotal role in recovering this patristic

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515 Avery Dulles “Reflections on Ecclesia De Eucharistia.” L’Osservatore Romano, 2003, 3. See also Avery Dulles, “A Eucharistic Church: the Vision of John Paul II,” America 191 (2004): 8-12. The council itself pointed to the importance of Scripture and Eucharist for the Church and her mission to continue proclaiming Christ crucified and risen from the dead.
516 Farkasfalvy, “Inspiration and Interpretation,” 79.
perspective. For de Lubac, Scripture, because it is a true mode of Christ’s presence among us, is more than a set of teachings or written words that only touch the human person intellectually, and only then as something from the past: “whatever page I meditate upon, I find in it [Sacred Scripture] a means that God offers me, right now, to restore the divine image within me... It is the Scripture that measures us, and which scrutinizes us, and which makes the fountains of living water spring forth in us.”[^517] For de Lubac, Scripture is the Living Word of God, continually addressed by the Father, imbued with the life of the Holy Spirit, to all human beings in their present moment. For de Lubac, the Divine Word creates a living, vibrant personal relationship with the one who embraces his Word, and is led from letter to Spirit. This highly personal and intimate nature of Scripture was taken up and endorsed by the council.[^518]

A. The Personal Word of God Addressed to Each Individual

The very first sentence of *Dei Verbum* simultaneously establishes the proper rhythm involved in the reception of the Word of God, as it echoes de Lubac’s understanding of the personal-ecclesial nature of that divine Word: the council states that “the word of God calls for reverent attention and confident proclamation.”[^519] Similarly, de Lubac observed, “we must make it our constant preoccupation, through her and in her [the Church] to listen to Him whom she proclaims and to rise towards Him for whom, solely, she exists... Each of us, in his own way and his own degree, is meant to be a ‘servant of

[^517]: René Latourelle (*Theology of Revelation* (New York: Alba House, 1966), 456) has indicated that the preamble serves as an introduction to the entire work of the council.

[^518]: Although it is difficult to determine the extent that de Lubac influenced the council’s emphasis on the personal aspect of God’s revelation, it is easy to see that much of the council’s teaching on divine revelation is found in de Lubac’s work, much of it written before the council.

the Word’. Likewise, the council explains that first, it is the Church’s task—and each individual’s within the Church—to listen to the Word as it is spoken by the Father, receiving it in faith and reverence. According to the council, this divine Word addresses the human person, especially in the Church’s liturgy: “he is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when scripture is read in church.”

By revealing himself to humanity, God seeks to restore the human person to the divine likeness in which he or she has been created. According to the council, God, “in his great love speaks to humankind as friends (see Ex 33, 11; Jn 15, 14-15) and enters into their life (see Bar 3, 38), so as to invite and receive them into relationship with himself.”

Second, after having faithfully listened to the Word, the Church must proclaim it with apostolic confidence. The Church can only proclaim the Word of the Father, if it continues listening faithfully to this Word. Moreover, the Church is enabled to listen to this Word, because it is not some dead letter stuck in the past, but is the Living Word that has been entrusted to the Apostles under the abiding presence of the Spirit of Christ. Similarly, de Lubac will say, “we do not think that this was not said for us just because we were not there at the time”; for them it was a living Scripture, always animated by the Spirit who was speaking

521 *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7.
522 *Dei Verbum* §2.
523 According to Joseph Ratzinger (“Preface” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), 3:167), commenting on the introduction to the document, “the connection between the Constitution on Revelation and the Constitution on the Church thus becomes quite clear programatically. If sometimes it might appear that the council was tending toward an ecclesiological mirroring of itself, in which the Church moved completely within its own orbit and made itself the central object of its own proclamation, instead of constantly pointing beyond itself, here the whole of the life of the church is, as it were, opened upwards and its whole being gathered together in the attitude of listening, which can be the only source of what it has to say.”
524 Describing the teaching function of the Church’s magisterium, the council says: “This teaching function is not above the word of God but stands at its service, teaching nothing but what is handed down, according as it devotedly listens, reverently preserves and faithfully transmits the word of God, by divine command and with the help of the holy Spirit” (*Dei Verbum* §10). Emphasis mine. See also *Christus Dominus* §2.
through it.”525 By quoting the passage from the Gospel of John in the prologue, the council makes it clear that this Word effectively brings about a personal and living fellowship with God. 526

The personal aspect of Scripture is brought out more clearly when, like de Lubac, the council draws a parallel between the Incarnation and Christ’s condescension in Scripture. I am not aware if someone before de Lubac retrieved this analogy, which was taken up in Dei Verbum. Pope Pius XII previously proposed this analogy in Divino Afflante Spiritu in 1943, but de Lubac’s use of this analogy predates the pope’s use. It is prevalent in de Lubac’s works, especially those that were written years before the council.527 The analogy between the Word of God and the Incarnation was retrieved by de Lubac, who, in retrieving Origen, explained that the Logos incorporated himself in the words of Scripture: as Christ is fully human, so too Christ’s Scriptural body is fully human (the historical, literal sense). As Christ is fully divine, so Scripture is truly the divine Word of God and expresses the fullness of the revelation of God.528 Just as God’s spoken words have been expressed through human language and have taken on the likeness of human speech, so too has the invisible God made himself visible to humanity in his Incarnate Logos, whose mystery we hear, see and come into contact with in the Scriptures.

525 De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:81. See also de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:241, 264-266; Dei Verbum § 9.
526 “We proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us, and that our fellowship may be with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:2-3). Karl Rahner too developed a theology of revelation that expressed something similar: Christ, as the sacramental word of the Father not only spoke of God’s love and mercy, but also accomplished them in the person of the Son. See Richard Lennan, The Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner (New York: Oxford, 1995), 23-24. It is not my task to delve into the differences between Rahner’s theology of revelation and de Lubac’s spiritual exegesis, I merely want to acknowledge that Rahner spoke in a similar manner to both the council and de Lubac.
As the Logos accommodates humanity by condescending to become man, so too, in Scripture, the Logos accommodates humanity by revealing that which is incomprehensible, that which is beyond all human speech. In Scripture, the Logos has condescended to allow himself to be written and perceived on an historical level. However, as Christ is fully human and fully divine, so too the Scriptures are to be received not merely as human words about God, but as they truly are, “the Word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). It is not enough to accept the Word on a purely human level, but it must also be accepted in the Spirit, if one wishes to truly hear and obey the Father’s voice. This incarnational principle allows the council to endorse not only spiritual exegesis, but also the modern scientific methods of biblical interpretation.

I believe that de Lubac played a very significant role in recovering this sacramental principle of exegesis for the Church in the modern age. Without de Lubac’s retrieval of ancient Christian exegesis, it may have been impossible for the council to openly endorse the necessity of both the critical methods of hermeneutics and the ancient spiritual interpretation of Scripture. Furthermore, the retrieval of this sacramental aspect of Scripture allows for a greater veneration and personal engagement with the Word of God, which calls for more than an intellectual, historical understanding based on historical-scientific research alone. The council called the entire Church, both laity and clergy, to become more personally engaged with the Word of God.

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529 See Martin, “Revelation and Its Transmission,” 60.
530 De Lubac (Medieval Exegesis, I:76) emphasized the unity and depth of Scripture, despite it consisting of both human and divine elements: Scripture incites “us to do research... [and] will always have new mysteries to teach us, and the grandeur of these mysteries will always exceed us.”
531 As Donald Senior (“Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 124) remarks, “the role of the Council in validating the biblical movement within Catholicism should not be exaggerated nor should it be overlooked.” Perhaps, one can say the same for de Lubac’s role in establishing the necessity of spiritual-sacramental exegesis combined with the modern scientific methods.
532 See Dei Verbum §22-25.
the Incarnation (and through his condescension in the Scriptures), the Logos makes himself at home among all human persons, living with them, conversing with them, and inviting them to share in his divine life.

The personal and dynamic character of the word is shown in its essential orientation towards another person, towards all those created in the image of God. What is received in Scripture is not merely doctrine, but the self-revelation of God, who, in revealing himself, chooses to communicate with humanity. I believe that de Lubac’s retrieval helped to bring to the fore this personal and intimate aspect of Scripture: de Lubac observes, “the Christian mystery, because of the magnificent providential Economy which embraces both Testaments and links them together, has not been handed down to us as a collection of timeless definitions, unrelated to any historical situation.”

Moreover, according to de Lubac, all that is handed over to us in Scripture, is explained to us by the Word: Christ alone “explains it to us, and in explaining it to us he is himself explained.” The council declares that, “by divine revelation God has chosen to manifest and communicate both himself and the eternal decrees of his will for the salvation of humankind.” For this reason, the council encourages the faithful to “approach the sacred text with joy” and reminds them that “prayer should accompany the reading of holy scripture, so that it becomes a dialogue between God and the human reader.”

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533 De Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, 7. I do not mean to suggest that de Lubac alone was responsible for the retrieval of this aspect. However, he certainly played an important role.
534 Ibid., 106-107.
535 *Dei Verbum* §6.
536 Ibid §25. Although, according to the council (*Dei Verbum*, §2), “it has pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the secret [sacramentum] purpose of his will [see Eph 1, 9],” this does not mean that the doctrinal content of this Word is unimportant, for, if God manifests himself in his Word, then faith must be an assent to what he actually says. However, the emphasis is first placed on the personal, dynamic, and spiritual aspect of this Living Word that calls for a prayerful dialogue in the Holy
scripture, “no matter what suppleness of mind is brought to determining this meaning, no matter what changes are rightly envisaged in the ways leading naturally to it, the Spirit of Christ cannot be omitted. It is a gift of this Spirit. In order to receive it, it is not enough, therefore, to ‘press hard,’ to ‘seek’; it is also necessary to ‘pray,’ to ‘implore’.\textsuperscript{537} The council emphasizes the personal character of revelation further when it says, “by thus revealing himself God, who is invisible (see Col 1, 15; 1 Tm 1, 17), in his great love speaks to humankind as friends (see Ex 33, 11; Jn 15, 14-15) and enters into their life (see Bar 3, 38), so as to invite and receive them into relationship with himself.”\textsuperscript{538} The Father addresses each person in his Divine Word, seeking to establish a personal dialogue of life with those invited to dwell in his creative, all-encompassing love, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Through his Word, God steps out of his divine mystery and speaks to every individual, revealing the mystery of his divine economy.

Included in this Living Word is an interpersonal and living encounter that engenders a response: not only are we called to receive this Divine Word in faith, in reverent attention, but this Word calls for a reply and enables a response of confident proclamation to his divine convocation. Our response to his Divine Word is itself a personal (although ecclesial) answer to his Word. Because it is truly the Living Word of God addressed to each person, Scripture must be received in faith and reverence by each person. De Lubac called attention to this necessary feature for properly understanding Scripture: “all Scripture is perceived in a new light by the soul which is open to the

\textsuperscript{537} De Lubac, \textit{The Sources of Revelation}, 152-153.
\textsuperscript{538} \textit{Dei Verbum} \S 2. Revelation is not identical to Scripture, but encompasses Scripture has it has been mediated to the Church in Tradition. In this way, Scripture is situated in the larger framework of God’s economy.
Gospel and adheres to Christ.”\textsuperscript{539} In order to properly encounter God’s Word, we must listen with the aid of the Holy Spirit, and ascend “by faith to the very summits of a spiritual life which does not have its term here below.”\textsuperscript{540} For this reason, the council says, “the worshipping celebration of the word of God is to be encouraged.”\textsuperscript{541} What is encountered in the Divine Word is not an abstract deity or mere information about that deity. In the Divine Liturgy especially, the Church encounters the mystery of redemption and listens to the Father, who continues to speak his Word, personally addressing each person in the Spirit. The council declares, “in the liturgy, God is speaking to his people; Christ is still proclaiming his good news. The people are responding to God himself, both in their singing and in their prayers.”\textsuperscript{542} This encounter with the Living Word admits of various degrees of depth, that will never be fully realized here on this earth, but will only be completed eschatologically.\textsuperscript{543}

According to the council, the human person is only able to respond to the Father’s Life-giving Word because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit:

by this, a human being makes a total and free self-commitment to God, offering ‘the full submission of intellect and will to God as he reveals’, and willingly assenting to the revelation he gives. For this faith to be accorded we have need of God’s grace, both anticipating and then accompanying our act, together with the inward assistance of the Holy Spirit, who works to stir the heart and turn it towards God, to open the eyes of the mind, and ‘to give all facility in accepting and believing the truth.’\textsuperscript{544} Without the presence of the Holy Spirit, Christ would remain in the past, and the

\textsuperscript{539} De Lubac, \textit{The Sources of Revelation}, 22.
\textsuperscript{540} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{541} Sacrosanctum Concilium §35.
\textsuperscript{542} Sacrosanctum Concilium §33.
\textsuperscript{543} I will return to this eschatological aspect in a following section.
\textsuperscript{544} Dei Verbum §5.
Scriptures would remain a dead letter.\textsuperscript{545} Because Scripture is a dialogue, this dialogue is not brought to fruition unless what has been communicated is received and understood according to the intention of the speaker. Although the divine mystery in Scripture is mediated through human elements (orally and in written form), the Holy Spirit must be the primary guide to the process of interpretation. According to the council, “holy scripture requires to be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit through whom it was written.”\textsuperscript{546} The phrase in \textit{Dei Verbum}, “in the light of the same Spirit through whom it was written,” comes from Origen, and we can say with great probability that it was retrieved and found its way in \textit{Dei Verbum} through de Lubac. More than a decade before the council, de Lubac wrote, “Scripture cannot be explained ‘otherwise than in the same Spirit who was its author in the beginning’.”\textsuperscript{547} The council insisted on the necessity of the spiritual sense of Scripture, but not to the neglect of the historical sense.

Like de Lubac, the council too does not neglect the human elements present in the Sacred Scriptures: “since in the Bible God has spoken through human agents to humans, if the interpreter of holy scripture is to understand what God has wished to communicate to us, he must carefully investigate what meaning the biblical writers actually had in mind; that will also be what God chose to manifest through their words.”\textsuperscript{548} Consistent with de Lubac’s theology, who emphasized the necessity of both the letter and the spirit, so too, the council maintains both the importance of the spiritual meaning and the historical, human elements that serve to express the mystery present within the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{549}

\textsuperscript{545} See de Lubac, \textit{The Sources of Revelation}, 225-226.
\textsuperscript{546} \textit{Dei Verbum} §12.
\textsuperscript{547} \textit{History and Spirit}, 361-362.
\textsuperscript{548} \textit{Dei Verbum} §12.
\textsuperscript{549} De Lubac (\textit{The Sources of Revelation}, 87) was very clear to point out that the literal sense too derives from the Holy Spirit and to neglect it has grave consequences for the spiritual sense: “the spirit is not separate
Moreover, similar to de Lubac’s insistence that we must be led from letter to spirit so that we might partake in a fuller and more complete understanding of the divine mystery, the council too recognized that, in the Spirit, the Church continues increasing in her understanding of Scripture: “the church, ‘the spouse of the incarnate Word’, taught by the holy Spirit, strives to attain, day by day, to an ever deeper understanding of holy scripture.”

Because of the immeasurable depths of Sacred Scripture, there will always be new aspects that the Spirit brings to light. The council observes, “as the centuries advance, the church constantly holds its course towards the fullness of God’s truth, until the day when the words of God reach their fulfillment in the church.” Similarly, de Lubac explains, “what we today call the development of dogma or theology was readily considered to be a fruit of ‘the knowledge of Scripture’ (intelligentia Scripturarum).” And, because Scripture invites the human person to converse with the saving Word of God, this dialogue must continue throughout a person’s life-time, so that the relationship between the Divine Speaker and the receiver continues to deepen and make greater progress in the unity of the Spirit. According to de Lubac, “the Word of God never stops creating and burrowing within a man who makes use of his capacity to receive it, so that

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from the letter but is contained and, at least initially, hidden within it. The letter is both good and necessary, for it leads to the spirit: it is the instrument and the servant of the spirit.” Elsewhere, de Lubac (Medieval Exegesis, 266-267) writes, “science and spirituality are in no wise incompatible. In the normal course of things, they should help and support one another, and it is obviously desirable for them to be joined together in the confines of the same subject area. But it is not divinely decreed that the most learned should necessarily be the most believing or the most spiritual. Nor is it divinely decreed that the century that would see the greatest progress in scientific exegesis would, by virtue of that very fact, be the century that would best understand Holy Scripture. Thus we need both the learned, in order to help us read Scripture historically, and the spiritual men (who ought to be ‘men of the Church’) in order to help us arrive at a deeper spiritual understanding of it.” See also idem, Medieval Exegesis, II:41-50.

Dei Verbum §23. Moreover, in this connection, the council (Dei Verbum §23) recommended precisely what de Lubac (and those associated with the new theology) had already begun before the council: “the church appropriately encourages the study also of the fathers of the church, both eastern and western, and of the sacred liturgies.”

Ibid., §8.

De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:28.
the understanding which also believes can grow indefinitely... the new mystery can always be further interiorized and can always introduce eternity still more deeply into the heart." 553 Similarly, the council observes, “the holy Spirit, too, is active, making the living voice of the gospel ring out in the church, and through it in the world, leading those who believe into the whole truth, and making the message of Christ dwell in them in all its richness (see Col 3, 16).” 554 The Church continues nourishing its faithful with the food of the Scriptures so that they may continue growing in union with God. 555

The faithful personally encounter the Word of God and continue deepening in the communion he offers, especially in the Divine Liturgy. Like de Lubac, who retrieved (from Origen) various modes of Christ’s presence—in the human soul and the cosmos (chapter two), and in his triform body (chapter three)—the council lists similar ways Christ is present to his people during the Divine Liturgy:

Christ is always present to his church, especially during the liturgy, so that this great task can be fully accomplished. He is present through the sacrifice which is the mass, at once in the person of the minister—‘the same one who then offered himself on a cross is now making his offering through the agency of priest’—and also, most fully, under the eucharistic elements. He is present through his power in the sacraments; thus, when anyone baptises, Christ himself if baptising. He is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when scripture is read in church. Finally, he is present when the church is praying or singing hymns, he himself who promised, ‘where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them’ (Mt 18, 20). 556

Although the council does not reproduce identical modes of the Logos’ presence as retrieved by de Lubac, the list in Sacrosanctum Concilium is quite similar to what we have

553 De Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, 223; see also 225; idem, *Medieval Exegesis*, II:204.
554 *Dei Verbum* §8.
555 See Ibid., §23.
556 Sacrosanctum Concilium §7.
found in de Lubac above (as I have explained in both chapters two and three). It is this ‘presence’ of the Logos in Scripture and in the Eucharist that allows the council to express the parallel relationship of Scripture and Eucharist in the doctrine of the One Table. The sacramental presence of Christ is not limited to the Eucharist, but includes the Scriptures. Because this Word is truly the Logos of God, spoken by the Father and imbued with the Holy Spirit, it is the Living Word, possessing the power to effect what it declares.

B. The Sacramentality of the Word

The personal aspect of Sacred Scripture is fundamentally related to its sacramental character, which appears in the interpenetration and mutual support that exists between historical words and deeds. According to the council, Scripture is essentially personal and dialogical because it is God’s free, loving offering of himself, “through deeds and words bound together by an inner dynamism.” The One Word expressed by the Father simultaneously completes the Father’s words. The council declares:

after God had spoken in many and various ways by the prophets, ‘in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son’ (Heb 1, 1-2). He sent his Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all humankind, to live among them and to tell them about the inner life of God (see Jn 1, 1-18). Thus it is that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, sent as a human being among humans, ‘speaks the words of God’ (Jn 3, 34) and accomplishes the work of salvation which the Father gave him to do (see Jn 5, 36; 17, 4).

557 The council unites these two aspects of Scripture—the personal and the sacramental—in its explanation of Scripture received in Tradition (see Dei Verbum §8).
558 Dei Verbum §2.
559 Ibid., §3. According to Unitatis Redintegratio §40, God personally calls every human person and “opens the spirit of non-Christians to listen to the gospel, and makes fruitful in their hearts the word of salvation.” See also Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 457.
Although Sacred Scripture is not one of the seven sacraments, it is comparable to them as its soteriological function demonstrates.\textsuperscript{560} God performs salvific acts in history and then tells us the meaning of those works through his Word. The council’s explication in \textit{Dei Verbum} is similar to de Lubac’s teaching that it is through the letter or historical event that the mystery hidden within the letter is completed in the Spirit.\textsuperscript{561} As de Lubac states, “the Spirit is still ‘creating’ it [Scripture] each day so to speak to the extent that he ‘is working’ it.”\textsuperscript{562} De Lubac further explains, “the Action of Christ in fulfilling the Scriptures and conferring on them, at the same time, the fullness of their meaning is still compared by Christian tradition to the act of eucharistic consecration. For, in truth, Scripture is bread, but for the Christian this bread does not become the living food that it ought to be until it has been consecrated by Jesus.”\textsuperscript{563} According to the council, “God’s works, effected during the course of the history of salvation, show forth and confirm the doctrine and the realities signified by the words, while the words in turn proclaim the works and throw light on the meaning hidden in them.”\textsuperscript{564} The Logos of God not only speaks and informs, but as the Living, Spirit-filled Word, it \textit{effects} what it conveys by making present and accomplishing the event narrated by the Word—the theosis of the human person. Scripture not only expresses words about the divine economy, but they also mediate the presence of the Logos, who is an active, creative, and efficacious Word. God’s communication through his Word is not merely intellectual, but constitutes a real self-

\textsuperscript{560} I will return to this soteriological function in a subsequent section. Scripture can be likened to a sacrament because Scripture is a visible sign that effectively makes present the invisible divine mystery.

\textsuperscript{561} I am not suggesting that de Lubac is \textit{solely} responsible for the council’s retrieval of the sacramental character of Scripture. Nevertheless, his thought, which preceded the council by at least a decade, certainly contributed immensely, perhaps even primarily, in this retrieval.

\textsuperscript{562} De Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, II:205; see also idem, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, I:227.

\textsuperscript{563} De Lubac, \textit{Medieval Exegesis}, II:241.

\textsuperscript{564} \textit{Dei Verbum} §2.
communication that not only makes salvation known, but actually causes it.\footnote{565}{For example, Sacrosanctum Concilium §7 says, Christ “is present in his word, because it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the church.” Mariano Magrassi (Praying the Bible, 4) comments, “when it is God present who speaks, his Word retains its original power to save. It is a creative Word; it does what it says.”}

Therefore, God’s dialogue with the Church is never merely intellectual, it never merely conveys human words. It is a personal, living dialogue addressing each person in his or her concrete and present moment: the Living God freely offers himself not as something in the past, but alive and in our midst, always dwelling in our today. This thought concerning the ever-present, living Word mirrors de Lubac’s insistence that Scripture always addresses us in our present circumstance.\footnote{566}{For example, see de Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:138-143; I:265.} The council explains, “God who spoke of old still maintains an uninterrupted conversation with the bride of his beloved Son.”\footnote{567}{Dei Verbum §8.} Similar to the council’s statement above, de Lubac observes, the Word of God “speaks to us still; it is he who reveals himself, ‘always the same, ever unchangeable and unfailing’; present on every page, ‘deploying his force from one end to the other,’ reaching the depth of our souls as the limits of the universe.”\footnote{568}{De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, II:81.} The Word of God mediates the Divine Presence and through the proclamation of this Word, that which is being announced is being brought about. The council maintains:

thus it is that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, sent as a human being among humans, ‘speaks the words of God’ (Jn 3, 34) and accomplishes the work of salvation which the Father gave him to do (see Jn 5, 36; 17, 4)…He did this by the total reality of his presence and self-manifestation—by his words and works, his symbolic acts and miracles, but above all by his death and his glorious resurrection from the dead, crowned by his sending the Spirit of truth.\footnote{569}{Dei Verbum §4. See also Sacrosanctum Concilium §6, 10.}
The council’s insistence that divine realities are mediated through words and deeds echoes de Lubac’s retrieval of spiritual-sacramental exegesis and his emphasis on the living, dynamic, and efficacious nature of the Word. For the council, the pattern of God’s “revelation unfolds through deeds and words.” The words and deeds remain united, explaining one another. So too, for de Lubac, the letter and spirit of Scripture remain united and explain one another. The historical deeds and words of Scripture are united in the Logos who alone gives them meaning and brings them to fulfillment, revealing the event of his life, death, and resurrection. The Word of Scripture is not a mere word delivering ideas and concepts, but a living event that becomes present to the ecclesial community, primarily within her liturgical action. The council declares,

just as Christ was sent by the Father, he himself sent apostles, filled with the holy Spirit, and for the same purpose: that they should preach the good news to every creature, and thus announce that the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan and death, and carried us over into the Father’s kingdom. Not only this, however: they were also to enact what they were announcing through sacrifice and sacraments, the things around which the whole of liturgical life revolves.

It is especially in the Divine Liturgy that we hear the Father speak his Word to us in the deeds his Word has accomplished for us. We respond to the Father in the words he has given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit within the ecclesial communion.

Although the Father has expressed himself in many words, it is the One Logos who is spoken by the Father in all the words and deeds of the Old and New Covenant.

570 Dei Verbum §2.
571 Sacrosanctum Concilium §6. The council writes (Sacrosanctum Concilium §2), “the liturgy, through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the eucharist, ‘the act of our redemption is being carried out’, becomes thereby the chief means through which believers are expressing in their lives and demonstrating to others the mystery which is Christ, and the sort of entity the true church really is.”
According to de Lubac, “in Jesus Christ, who is its end, the ancient Law found its unity in advance. From age to age, everything in this Law was converging toward him... In him, the ‘many words’ of the biblical writers become ‘one Word’ for ever.” Similar to de Lubac, the council too insists that despite the multiplicity of words, there is only One Word spoken, and this Word effects what these words symbolize in his Holy Spirit.

After God had spoken in many and various ways by the prophets, “in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son” (Heb 1, 1-2). He sent his Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all humankind, to live among them and to tell them about the inner life of God (see Jn 1, 1-18). Thus it is that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, sent as a human among humans, “speaks the words of God” (Jn 3, 34) and accomplishes the work of salvation which the Father gave him to do (see Jn 5, 36; 17, 4). This One Word was first spoken by the Father in the Old Covenant as the prefiguration of the New Covenant that was the goal of the divine economy. These two dispensations are ultimately united because that which was spoken in the Old prepared for the New, “the new and definitive covenant.” Again, the council indicates something similar to de Lubac when it explains that the Logos unites both the Old and New Covenant because in the divine economy, all the persons, events, and institutions in the Old Covenant prefigure, prepare for, and point to the New Covenant: “the plan and pattern of the Old Testament was directed above all towards the coming of Christ, the universal redeemer, and of the messianic kingdom: to prepare for this, to announce it.

572 De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, III:140.
573 Dei Verbum §4. See also Dei Verbum §21: “There is such force and power in the word of God that it stands as the church’s support and strength, affording her children sturdiness in faith, food for the soul and a pure and unfailing fount of spiritual life. It is supremely true of holy scripture that ‘the word of God is living and active’ (Heb 4, 12), ‘which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified’ (Ac 20, 32; see 1 Th 2, 13).
574 See Dei Verbum §3-4.
575 Ibid., §4.
prophetically (see Lk 24, 44; Jn 5, 39; 1 Pt 1, 10) and to point towards it by various foreshadowing symbols (see 1 Cor 10, 11). The only Word ever spoken by the Father is the One Logos, who alone leads all humanity into the fullness of divine life.

Through the Logos, who is the source of the Church’s life, the human person’s fellowship with God and with one another is created, nourished, maintained and strengthened. The establishment of the human person’s divine communion with God and with one another is the primary purpose of God’s self-revelation: the Logos of God must be proclaimed to all people so that humanity can enter into fellowship with the Triune God. The council declares:

through Christ, God’s Word made flesh, and in his Holy Spirit, human beings can draw near to the Father and become sharers in the divine nature (Eph 2, 18; 2 Pt 1, 4). By thus revealing himself God, who is invisible (see Col 1, 15; 1 Tm 1, 17), in his great love speaks to humankind as friends (see Ex 33, 11; Jn 15, 14-15) and enters into their life (see Bar 3, 38), so as to invite and receive them into relationship with himself.

The Logos of God not only speaks the words of the Father, but also effects those words. The mission of the Son is to effectively reveal the Father’s love for humanity. Scripture is the sacramental presence of God communicated to each human person: through the Divine Word, the Holy Spirit leads every person, who does not place an obstacle before his transforming assistance, from the darkness of sin and death to participate in the divine communion, by partaking in the transfiguring light of Christ. In Scripture, the Logos

576 Ibid., §15. See also Lumen Gentium §2-4; 9.
577 See Dei Verbum §17. It is this One Logos, incorporated in Scripture, that the council (Dei Verbum §24) declares must be the foundation of theology, by which “it is made firm and strong, and constantly renews its youth, as it investigates, by the light of faith, all the truth that is stored up in the mystery of Christ.”
578 According to the council (Dei Verbum §1), Dei Verbum was written “to set forth authentic teaching on God’s revelation and how it is communicated, desiring that the whole world may hear the message of salvation, and thus grow from hearing to faith, from faith to hope, and from hope to love.”
579 Dei Verbum §2.
communicates his life-giving presence to those who are open to receive it.

I believe that it was de Lubac’s retrieval of both spiritual exegesis and eucharistic-ecclesiology that helped facilitate the council to re-conceive and articulate something that has been deeply imbedded in the Church’s life, but came to be neglected: the very personal, dynamic, and transfiguring address of God to each individual in his Living Word, which is intimately related to the Eucharist and received by each individual in the ecclesial communion.580

Similar to his or her encounter with the Logos in Scripture, the human person rooted in the Holy Spirit is able to encounter the same Logos in the Eucharist, although in a different mode of presence. The sacraments are highly personal encounters with Christ, simultaneously they mediate Christ’s presence from within the ecclesial communion. Therefore, in the following section, I will situate this personal encounter of Christ in the sacraments within the council’s retrieval of the sacramental nature of the Church. The council’s synopsis of the sacraments demonstrates how the Church is built up by the Logos of God mediated in the individual sacraments.

II. The Sacramental Nature of the Church and the Ecclesial Nature of the Sacraments

“Sacrament” is the English translation of the Latin word, sacramentum, which translates the Greek, mysterion. Thus, to a great degree, sacrament and mystery are synonymous, although they do admit of slight nuances, not in essential meaning, but in

580 The council’s retrieval of a more personal and dynamic understanding of the Word of God has important ramifications for ecumenical dialogue as well as important pastoral implications. I will return to these ramifications and implications in the concluding chapter.
emphasis. In the narrow sense, sacrament refers to the seven individual sacraments, as signs instituted by Christ that symbolize invisible grace and bring about what they signify.

In the broader sense, sacrament derives from the biblical and patristic concept of *mysterion*, and in this sense, it was customary to refer mystery to: Christ himself, sacred scripture, the liturgy, and the Church. In *Dei Verbum* §3, mystery refers to the whole economy of God’s salvific plan to unite all things in himself, a theme that permeates all of de Lubac’s work. In *Lumen Gentium* §3, the council observes,

> the Son came, therefore, sent by the Father, who chose us in him before the foundation of the world and predestined our adoption as sons and daughters, because he had decided to restore all things in him (see Eph 1, 4-5 and 10). Consequently, Christ, to carry out the will of the Father, has inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and has revealed the mystery to us, and through his obedience has brought about the redemption. The church, as the kingdom of Christ already present in mystery, grows visibly in the world through the power of God. This beginning and this growth were symbolized by the blood and water that issued from the open side of Jesus crucified (see Jn 19, 34), and were predicted by the words

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581 See De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 47f. “Mystery” connotes something hidden, and refers to the divine life hidden behind or within the mysteries, whereas “sacrament” emphasizes the visible aspect of the liturgical rite.

582 It is not my task here to delve into the various images used by the council to describe the nature of the Church. Suffice it to say, the ecclesiology of Vatican II cannot be limited to one image. The council describes the richness of the Church as a mystery that shares in the inexhaustible fullness of the divine mystery and therefore cannot be exhausted by a single concept. However, the Church as a sacrament in Christ seems to encompass all of the images taken up by the council. See *Lumen Gentium* §6 wherein the Church is likened to a sheepfold, a field, a building, a foundation, a vineyard, Mother-Virgin, and Spouse; and, in chapter two of *Lumen Gentium*, the Church is described as the People of God. De Lubac (*The Splendor of the Church*, 106-107, see also 210-211) anticipated the council’s use of these images by 11 years, when he presents a list of images similar to the above to describe the Church: “she is sheepfold and flock, mother and people; the mother who bears us into divine life and the reunion of all those who, by participating in this life to varying degrees, make up the ‘people of God’. The Church is at once our mother and ourselves; a maternal breast and a brotherhood.” See Whitehead, *The Renewed Church*, 51; Gerard Philips, “The Church: Mystery and Sacrament,” in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal*, ed. John H. Miller (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 188-189.


584 Economy (*dispensatio* in Latin) is thereby also synonymous with *mysterion*. See Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 39f.

585 See especially, *Catholicism*. 

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of the Lord concerning his death on the cross: ‘And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself’ (Jn 12, 32 Greek text). As often as the sacrifice of the cross, by which ‘Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed’ (1 Cor 5, 7), is celebrated on the altar, there is effected the work of our redemption. At the same time, through the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, there is represented and produced the unity of the faithful, who make up one body in Christ (see 1 Cor 10, 17). All people are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world; from him we come, through him we live and towards him we direct our lives.586

*Mystery* refers to God’s hidden plan of salvation that has been revealed by/in Christ, which will remain partially veiled to human reason.587 The divine economy finds its actualization in Christ. In Christ, the human person is transfigured to become a child of God: the human person is restored to fellowship with the Father in Christ’s body through the Holy Spirit.588

A. The Church as Sacrament

Before we delve into the council’s understanding of the Church as sacrament, it is worth noting that de Lubac had already recovered the social and ecclesial dimension of the sacraments. Walter Kasper observes, “a number of different developments helped overcome this individualistic understanding and brought to light again the community 586 Emphasis mine. The divine economy is more than simply the divine plan; rather, it is the divine plan laid out in successive stages, whereby the mystery that is Christ is brought to its completion. See Jean Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 16.
587 See Louis Bouyer, *The Liturgy Revived* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1964), 17-25. Walter Kasper (*Theology and Church*, 118) writes, “the term sacrament is intended to help prevent both a spiritualistic view of the church and a naturalistic and purely sociological viewpoint. What is visible about the church is also part of its essential nature. That is to say, it also belongs to the true church. But of course what is visible is essential only as a sign and instrument of the true, proper reality of the church, which can only be grasped in faith. The sacramental structure of the church, accordingly, means that what is visible about it is the actualizing and efficacious sign—that is, the real symbol—of God’s eschatological salvation of the world.”
588 The council (*Lumen Gentium* §4) states, “this is the Spirit of life or the fountain of water bubbling up for eternal life (see Jn 4, 14; 7, 38-39), through whom the Father restores life to human beings who were dead through sin, until he raises up their mortal bodies in Christ (see Rm 8, 10-11).” See also *Dei Verbum* §2; *Ad Gentes* §2; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §5.
character of Christianity and of the Eucharist... The most important factor, however, was
the rediscovery of the theology of the Church Fathers (Henri de Lubac), and not least the
reading of Sacred scripture itself.\textsuperscript{589} De Lubac introduced the notion of the Church as a
sacrament, in his seminal work, \textit{Catholicism}, which preceded the council by almost thirty
years. According to McPartlan, “de Lubac was the pioneer in this century [20th] of the
sacramentality of the Church, which duly became a leading doctrine of Vatican II.”\textsuperscript{590} It
is the retrieval of the broader, biblical and patristic notions that enabled Vatican II to
better express the christocentric and pneumatological foundations of all the seven
narrowly defined sacraments, and the sacramental nature of the Church, simultaneously
avoiding ecclesiocentrism.\textsuperscript{591}

Christ is the real author of all saving activity in the Church: Christ is the \textit{lumen gentium}, the light of the gentiles, who has been sent by the Father to \textit{effect} humanity’s union
in the divine Trinitarian life through his life, death, and resurrection.\textsuperscript{592} De Lubac writes,
“the Church, ‘the sacrament of man’s salvation’, is not the result of some fresh plan, as it
were, on the part of God, nor of any ‘belated pity’; it does not matter how far back you
go, you still find her... There has always been a people of God, and a vine which the
Father tends unceasingly; the union of Christ and His Church is prefigured in the union

\textsuperscript{589} Walter Kasper, \textit{Sacrament of Unity: the Eucharist and the Church} (New York: Crossroad, 2004), 134.
\textsuperscript{590} McPartlan, “The Eucharist, the Church and Evangelization: the Influence of Henri De Lubac,”
\textit{Communio} 23 (1996): 779. Rahner too developed a theology of the Church as sacrament of Christ, who is
the Sacrament of the Father. However, de Lubac, as McPartlan states, is the pioneer in the retrieval of the
sacramental nature of the Church, especially in his retrieval of patristic thought (e.g., \textit{Corpus Mysticum},
\textit{Medieval Exegesis, History and Spirit}). Rahner’s work on the Church as sacrament postdates de Lubac’s
thought.
\textsuperscript{591} See Philips, “The Church: Mystery and Sacrament,” 188.
\textsuperscript{592} See \textit{Lumen Gentium} §1, \textit{Dei Verbum} §2-4; Philips, “The Church: Mystery and Sacrament,” 188. De Lubac
(\textit{The Splendor of the Church}, 220) goes so far as to say, if the Church “is not the sacrament, the effective sign,
of Christ, then she is nothing.”
According to Sacrosanctum Concilium, the mission of God’s Word, the Incarnate Son, is to call all persons to communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit.

God’s desire is that ‘all human beings should be saved and come to the recognition of the truth’ (1 Tm 2, 4), and he ‘spoke in many and various ways in the past to our ancestors through the prophets’ (Heb 1, 1). When the fullness of time came, he sent his Son, the Word made flesh, anointed with the holy Spirit. He was to preach the good news to the poor, and bind up hearts that were broken—a healer who was both flesh and spirit, a mediator between God and human beings. For the humanity of this very Son, in the unity of the person of the Word, was the means of our salvation. Thus, in Christ, ‘the perfect peace which is our reconciliation came into being, and it became possible for us fully to express our worshipful relationship with God’. The great divine acts among the people of the old covenant foreshadowed this deed of human redemption and perfect glorification of God; Christ the Lord brought it to its completion, above all through the paschal mystery, that is, his passion, his resurrection from the dead and his glorious ascension. Through this, ‘in dying he destroyed our death; in rising he restored our life’. For the tremendous sacrament which is the whole church arose from the side of Christ as he slept on the cross.  

God the Father has deigned to re-unite, in the Son through the Holy Spirit, all of his children that are scattered and led astray because of sin. Furthermore, he has chosen to re-unite fallen humankind not as isolated individuals but as a community of persons with a common destiny. De Lubac writes, “God did not make us ‘to remain within the limits of nature’, or for the fulfilling of a solitary destiny; on the contrary, He made us to be

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593 De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 60.
594 Sacrosanctum Concilium §5. See also Sacrosanctum Concilium §§8, 47, 48, 59.
595 See Dei Verbum §2; Unitatis Redintegratio §2; Ad Gentes §1. See also Roch Kereszty, Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology [New York: Alba House, 1991], 278.
596 See Gaudium et Spes §§24, 32; Lumen Gentium §§2-4, 9; Ad Gentes §1. According to the council (Gaudium et Spes §14), “God did not create man a solitary being. From the beginning ‘male and female he created them’ (Genesis 1:27). This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons. For by his innermost nature man is a social being; and if he does not enter into relations with others he can neither live nor develop his gifts.”
brought together into the heart of the life of the Trinity.” The theme of the reunion of persons with the Blessed Trinity is found throughout de Lubac’s thought. In fact, from a de Lubacian point of view, Christianity is primarily concerned with restoring all people to the divine communion lost through sin: “thus does he [God] raise up again man who was lost by gathering together once more his scattered members, so restoring his own image.” Christ became man, so that all human persons might, in the Holy Spirit, become true children of God.

In the Son, all human persons are called to enter into the universal sacrament of salvation, i.e. the Church. The council states, “sitting at the right hand of the Father [Christ] is continually active in the world in order to lead men to the Church and, through it, join them more closely to himself.” In and through the Church, Christ unites all people of every age to God the Father, through the Holy Spirit. Intimate union with God alone will result in the unity of human persons. Similarly, de Lubac writes, “the redemption being a work of restoration will appear to us by that very fact as the recovery of lost unity—the recovery of supernatural unity of man with God, but equally of the unity of men among themselves.” It is in the Church that this union is effected because “the church is in Christ as a sacrament (veluti sacramentum) or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity.” As de Lubac says, the Church

598 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 36.
599 See *Lumen Gentium* §13; *Ad Gentes* §1-3.
600 *Lumen Gentium* §48. Emphasis mine. See also *Lumen Gentium* §2.
601 See *Lumen Gentium* §1.
602 *Lumen Gentium* §1. See also *Lumen Gentium* §9, 26, 48; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §5. As applied to the Church, this mode of expression—veluti sacramentum—was viewed suspiciously by many of the council fathers because, from around the twelfth century on, only certain specific signs that effected salvation were named sacraments. Furthermore, in 1439, the Council of Florence defined only seven sacraments, a definition confirmed again at the Council of Trent in 1547.
“summons all men so that as their mother she may bring them forth to divine life and eternal light.” Moreover, anticipating the council, de Lubac observes, “If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ; she represents him, in the full and ancient meaning of the term; she really makes him present.” By saying that the Church is as it were a sacrament (veluti sacramentum), the council clearly did not apply the traditional meaning of sacrament in an identical manner to the Church, as if the Church is an eighth sacrament.

The Church is only a sacrament in an improper, analogous sense: Christ is, absolutely, the light to all nations (lumen gentium), and, only in and through Christ is the Church the light to all nations. The Church’s task is to shed the True Light on the world. That the Church is lumen gentium only in Christ was similarly formulated by de Lubac in 1947, fifteen years before the Second Vatican Council: the Church’s “brightness is no longer, like that of the moon, intermittent and reflected; it is the very splendor of Christ, the true sun, in whom shines all Divinity... On [the Church] the light shines and it is in her that we shall be illuminated.” Writing about the patristic analogy of the moon

De Lubac, Catholicism, 63.
Ibid., 76. It is worth repeating that de Lubac wrote Catholicism in 1947, 15 years before the council was convened.
In fact, this is only one among many images the council fathers used to describe the nature of the Church precisely because, as mystery, the Church cannot be limited to one definition. The dual words, mystery and sacrament, were used to make possible a fuller, more complete understanding of the one, complex reality that is the Church.
Highlighting this same aspect, albeit without reference to the Church as lumen gentium, de Lubac (The Church, 15) observes, “the Church is, therefore, a mystery; but a mystery must derive from something. The Church is a mystery because, coming from God and entirely at the service of his plan, she is an organism of salvation, precisely because she relates wholly to Christ and apart from him has no existence, value or efficacy.”
De Lubac, Catholicism, 115. Commenting on the sacramental nature of the Church, Philips (“The Church: Mystery and Sacrament,” 187) writes, “the Church has a profound conviction that the light of the nations does not radiate from her but from her divine Founder; however, she also knows that the radiance reflecting from her countenance reaches out to all humanity and bathes it in the ineffable brightness that emanates from God alone.” See also Gaudium et Spes §10, 21, 92; Lumen Gentium §1, 25; Dei Verbum §10; Kasper, Theology and the Church, 117f; Grillmeier, “The Mystery of the Church,” 148f.
two years after the council, de Lubac observes, “Christ is the sun of justice, the only source of light. The Church (like the moon) at all times depends on this sun for her brilliance.”

By her intimate relationship to and unity in Christ, the Church is like a sacrament: a visible reality of God’s saving presence in human history offered for all humanity. The Church is a visible effective-sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all humankind. The Church is prior to the sacraments and it is from within her that the seven sacraments flow.

However, the Church is not merely the administrator of the sacraments, but is herself as it were a sacrament (veluti sacramentum). Therefore, the Church can never be an end in herself for she remains at the service of the invisible reality of grace and faith that is communicated in her and through her. As de Lubac remarks, “in the likeness of Christ who is her founder and her head, she is at the same time both the way and the goal; at the same time visible and invisible; in time and in eternity; she is at once the bride and the widow, the sinner and the saint.”

Similarly, the council indicates:

Christ, the one mediator, set up his holy church here on earth as a visible structure, a community of faith, hope and love; and he sustains it unceasingly and through it he pours out grace and truth on everyone. This society, however, equipped with hierarchical structures, and the mystical body of Christ, a visible assembly and a spiritual community, an earthly church and a church enriched with heavenly gifts, must not be considered as two things, but as forming one complex reality comprising a human and a divine element.

The Church is simultaneously visible and invisible: as a community of faith, hope and

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609 See *Lumen Gentium* §1; 9; 48; 45; *Ad Gentes* §1; 5; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §5; 26.
611 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 73.
612 *Lumen Gentium* §8.
love, the Church is constituted as a visible structure with hierarchical organs and is invisible as the mysterious, spiritual community enriched with divine gifts.\footnote{After the Protestant Reformation, the Church’s ecclesiology focused almost exclusively on the visible structures of the Church. This one-sided emphasis was corrected by Vatican II’s insistence on the sacramental nature of the Church. See Richard R. Gaillardetz, \textit{The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiaram} (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 43-44.}

To emphasize the unity of the visible but mysterious nature of the Church, the council draws a parallel between the Church and the Incarnation of the Word—with the proviso that this parallel is analogous.\footnote{See \textit{Lumen Gentium} §8.} Again, this same parallel—which was also made with Scripture—was drawn by de Lubac as early as 1947. In 1953, De Lubac remarks, “there, then, is the Church—human and divine at once even in her visibility, ‘without division and without confusion’, just like Christ Himself, whose body she mystically is.”\footnote{De Lubac, \textit{The Splendor of the Church}, 102. It is fascinating, but not surprising, to observe that this analogy is used both with Scripture and the Church.}

The Church is composed of both divine and human elements, but she is not two separate or distinct entities. The human and divine elements are inseparably united in the service of God’s saving deeds. The Church’s visible (bodily) reality is not that of a mere social institution: her visible structure serves the Holy Spirit who enlivens it for the expansion of the kingdom of God.\footnote{As de Lubac (\textit{Catholicism}, 116) succinctly says, the Church is “not just a spiritual community, but a community of the Holy Spirit.”}

According to \textit{Lumen Gentium} §8: “it is therefore by no mean analogy that it [the Church] is likened to the mystery of the incarnate Word. For just as the assumed nature serves the divine Word as a living instrument of salvation inseparably joined with him, in a similar way the social structure of the church serves the Spirit of Christ who vivifies the church towards the growth of the body (see Eph 4, 16).” As the Spirit of Christ animates his humanity, so too does the same Spirit vivify the Church to make of her the universal sacrament of salvation. The Church is entirely from Christ
and permanently related to him; on the other hand, through the seven individual sacraments, Christ transforms the Church to become a sign and instrument at the service of humanity and the world.

B. The Sacraments and the Church’s Communion

Having briefly examined the council’s understanding of the sacramental nature of the Church, I will now highlight the seven sacraments and their ecclesial relationship, primarily as it is presented in *Lumen Gentium* §11. De Lubac too explained the ecclesial nature of the sacraments in ways similar to the council’s: “since the sacraments are the means of salvation they should be understood as instruments of unity. As they make real, renew or strengthen man’s union with Christ, by that very fact they make real, renew or strengthen his union with the Christian community... It is through his union with the community that the Christian is united to Christ.”

Baptism is the mystery of the human person’s incorporation into the Body of Christ, of which the Holy Spirit is its life-force. In baptism, the human person created in the image of God, is re-made into the likeness of Christ, participating in his death and resurrection. In Chrismation or Confirmation, the human person is more intimately bound to the ecclesial body, and are under a greater obligation to spread the faith by word and example. In the mystery of Penance or Reconciliation, entrusting oneself to the mercy of God, the sinner obtains

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617 I do not mean to suggest that this ecclesial relationship is not expressed in other documents, e.g., in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §39, the council states: “the purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the body of Christ, and finally to express a relationship of worship to God.” After the council, de Lubac (*The Church*, 5) writes, “the Church is our mother because she gives us Christ. She brings about the birth of Christ in us.”

618 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 82.

619 Baptism, Eucharist, and Chrismation are traditionally identified as the sacraments of initiation, and for this reason, are typically examined together (and liturgically celebrated together, although in the West, liturgically, the intimate union of these three sacraments is no longer maintained), but for my purposes, I will return to the Eucharist in the following section.
remission of sins, and is, therefore, simultaneously reconciled with the entire Church, which is wounded by sin. The sin of the individual not only affects his or her relationship to God, but also his or her relationship to the Church. Through the Anointing of the Sick, the entire Church commends the sick to Jesus Christ that he might restore them to health, as they unite themselves with his passion and death to contribute to the good of the entire Church. Those who have been appointed to receive Holy Orders are ordained to nourish the Church at the One Table: through the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Those who have chosen matrimony, which is both a share in and symbolizes the unity of love between Christ and the Church, are called to help each other and their family grow in the divine communion. However, among all the sacraments, the Eucharist is the fullest expression of the new state of each person that dwells in union with God.\footnote{The council (Lumen Gentium §11) identifies the Eucharist as “the source and the culmination of all Christian life.”}

C. The Eucharist Makes the Church’s Communion

In the Eucharist, through the Holy Spirit, Christ gives himself to the Church and each individual within the Church, effecting and maintaining the unity of the People of God.\footnote{According to Moloney (“The Eucharist and the Church in the Thought of Henri de Lubac,” 346), “thanks to the work of de Lubac, we are now aware of the patristic teaching on the inseparable link between the Eucharist and the Church. We have to thank de Lubac also for the realization that the Eucharist is central to ecclesiology.” I hope that I have been able to show that we can extend this to include the inseparable link between the Eucharist, Scripture and Church. Moreover, this triform body of Christ is only fully understood if their unity is maintained.} In the Eucharist, the Church offers to God the Father, his son, Jesus Christ. Moreover, in offering Christ, each Christian, according to his particular role in the liturgy, is also called to offer himself or herself to the Father, together with Christ’s self-offering.\footnote{See Presbyterorum Ordinis §2, 5; Sacrosanctum Concilium §10; Lumen Gentium §28.}
This idea permeates de Lubac’s life-work, but can be especially seen in *Catholicism*. Joseph Ratzinger observes: “above all Henri de Lubac made it clear in a splendid work of comprehensive scholarship that the term ‘mystical body’ originally meant the holy eucharist and for Paul as for the Fathers of the Church the idea of the Church as the body of Christ was indissolubly linked with the idea of the eucharist in which the Lord is bodily present and gives us his body as food.”¹⁶²³ One of the most ancient names for the Eucharist is *synaxis* (‘coming together,’ or ‘assembly’).¹⁶²⁴ And, it is widely known that the Greek noun *ekklēsia*, which is a translation of the Hebrew *qahal*, is ‘assembly.’ It is not an overstatement, therefore, to say that the Church can be defined as a Eucharistic-assembly.¹⁶²⁵ Indeed, this is what the council seems to indicate: “when we really participate in the body of the Lord through the breaking of the eucharistic bread, we are raised up to communion with him and among ourselves….In this way all of us are made members of this body.”¹⁶²⁶ In the Eucharist, Christ brings together his assembly of many people, uniting them into his One body, the Church.

Our personal fellowship and union with Christ in the Eucharist always occurs within the communion of the Church and aims for the unity of all individuals within the Church. One’s incorporation into the communion of the Church impels the faithful to continue towards the Church’s completion in Christ. The council states, “as members of the living Christ, incorporated into him and made like to him through baptism as well as

¹⁶²³ *Church, Ecumenism, & Politics* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 7. Ratzinger is clearly referring to de Lubac’s *Corpus Mysticum*. Moreover, according to McPartlan (“The Eucharist, the Church and Evangelization,” 779), “it is largely thanks to his [de Lubac] profound scholarship and heroic perseverance that we now understand that grace is not individual and invisible but rather communal and concrete, that is, ecclesial and eucharistic.” See also McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation*.


¹⁶²⁵ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 752 teaches: “the Church’ is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a eucharistic, assembly.”

¹⁶²⁶ *Lumen Gentium* §7.
through confirmation and the eucharist, all the faithful are in duty bound to cooperate in
the expansion and spreading of his body, so that as soon as possible they may bring it to
fullness.\textsuperscript{5627} The Eucharist exists for the communion of the Church,\textsuperscript{628} or in de Lubacian
(sacramental-exegetical) language, we could say, the Eucharist is the image of the Church,
that is, the Eucharist effects the ecclesial communion.\textsuperscript{629}

The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and cause of the communion of all human
persons. De Lubac succinctly observes, “the Eucharist, is also especially the sacrament of
unity.”\textsuperscript{630} This unity is none other than the Church, the goal of all things, according to
the Council: “all the just from the time of Adam, from ‘Abel, the just one, to the last of
the elect’ will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church\textsuperscript{5631} and “all
human beings are called to the new people of God.”\textsuperscript{632} Through the reception of Christ
in his sacramental body, the Eucharist makes the faithful-recipient one with Christ and
unites him or her to himself more perfectly in his ecclesial body. The council states this
succinctly, “through the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, there is \textit{represented and produced}
the unity of the faithful, who make up one body in Christ (see 1 Cor 10, 17). All people
are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world; from him we come,
through him we live and towards him we direct our lives.”\textsuperscript{5633} The communion of this

\textsuperscript{5627} Ad Gentes §36.
\textsuperscript{628} The council (\textit{Lumen Gentium} §17) states, “though anyone can baptise those who believe, it is the task of the
priest to complete the \textit{building up of the body} through the eucharistic sacrifice….So the Church prays and
works at the same time so that \textit{the fullness of the whole world may move into the people of God, the body of the Lord and
the temple of the Holy Spirit}, and that all honour and glory be rendered in Christ, the head of all, to the creator
and Father of all.” Emphasis mine.
\textsuperscript{629} See e.g., \textit{Lumen Gentium} §§11, 17, 26, 48; \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} §§2, 59, 83; \textit{Christus Dominus} §15.
\textsuperscript{630} De Lubac, \textit{Catholicism}, 89.
\textsuperscript{631} \textit{Lumen Gentium} §2.
\textsuperscript{632} \textit{Lumen Gentium} §13. There is no ecclesiocentricism present in conciliar statements such as these, if it is
kept in mind that, although not identical to Christ, the Church cannot be separated from him. Moreover, it
is the Whole Church, Head and body, that is the goal of all human persons: Christ, come to full stature in
every human person, is the goal of all human history. See \textit{Nostra Aetate} §5.
\textsuperscript{633} \textit{Lumen Gentium} §3; see also, e.g., \textit{Gaudium et Spes} §45.
body is effected and accomplished through our participation in Christ, who, according to the council “is at work in the world to lead people to the church and through it to join them more closely to himself; and he nourishes them with his own body and blood to make them sharers in his glorious life.” Before the council, de Lubac had already clarified that it is in the Eucharist that the Whole Christ is given, that the members of Christ’s ecclesial body are joined to their head, who is Christ. The Eucharist is ordered toward our establishment and growth in the ecclesial communion. But, this establishment and nourishment takes place at the One Table of the Word of God and of the Body of Christ. And, although there is little explicit mention of the doctrine of the One Table, the underlying principles of that doctrine are found throughout the vast majority of the council documents.

III. Union in Christ’s Body at the One Table of Scripture and Eucharist

Our sacramental and ecclesial participation in Christ takes place not only through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, but also through contact with his living, saving and personal presence that is mediated to us in the Sacred Scriptures. To arrive at a clearer picture of the unity of Scripture, Eucharist and Church according to the Second Vatican Council, it will be helpful to examine the soteriological purpose of both Scripture and Eucharist. Therefore, in the following section, I will ascertain the role given to both Scripture and the Eucharist in the saving work of Christ by the Second Vatican Council.

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634 Lumen Gentium §48.
635 See Wood, Spiritual Exegesis, 56.
636 This assertion will become obvious especially in the following section.
A. Scripture, Eucharist, and Ecclesial Communion

Based on the observations above, it should be clear that partaking in the One Table of Word and Sacrament always takes place in the union of the Body of Christ. Moreover, both Scripture and Eucharist are meant for making and strengthening the communion of that other body, the Church. Writing almost a decade before the council was convoked, de Lubac states something very similar, although perhaps in stronger language:

the very bread of the word of God, which is broken and distributed without pause by those who are its witnesses and ministers, is not enough, on its own to vitalize the soul; we have to drink from the wellspring of the sacraments, which has been handed into the keeping of the sanctifying Church. And we must all be molten in that crucible of unity which is the Eucharist, the “sacrament of sacraments”, “the noblest of all”, which “consummates” them all and to which they are all “ordered”.

The council too encourages all of God’s people to be nourished at the One Table of Scripture and Eucharist: “they should be formed by God’s word, and refreshed at the table of the Lord’s body.” God reveals himself for the express purpose of the person’s theosis—so that all of humanity might truly become his sons and daughters in Christ.

God the Father addresses his people through his Divine Word, but this address is never a monologue, in which God speaks and the human person merely listens. Rather, through his Word, as the council says, the Holy Spirit enables the person’s response with a “total and free self-commitment to God,” who “has chosen to manifest and communicate both himself and the eternal decrees of his will for the salvation of

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638 *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §48. See also *Dei Verbum* §21, 23, 24; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §51; 56, 59, 83-84, 90; *Lumen Gentium* §4, 5, 7, 11; *Christus Dominus* §11; *Presbyterium Ordinis* §18.
639 *Dei Verbum* §5.
humankind.\textsuperscript{640} The purpose of this manifestation, this personal address to each human person, is for each person’s divinization: God revealed himself to the human person, so that the human person might freely respond to and enter into his gift of divine communion. Similarly de Lubac declares, “it is to the Church that the Father addresses himself as to his daughter. It is the Church that is led to Christ, and it is in her that souls, united by faith and virtue, are made one.”\textsuperscript{641} In the prologue of Dei Verbum, the council states that the goal of God's manifestation in and through his Word is for divine fellowship. According to Dei Verbum §2, through this Divine Word, “God’s Word made flesh, and in his Holy Spirit, human beings can draw near to the Father and become sharers in the divine nature.”\textsuperscript{642} The importance given to the proclamation of the Life-giving Word of God is exhibited in both Christus Dominus and in Presbyterium Ordinis.

In Christus Dominus §12, listed first among the teaching duties of the episcopacy is the proclamation of the good news of Christ: “in discharging their obligation to teach, they should proclaim to humanity the gospel of Christ. This stands out among the most important duties of bishops.”\textsuperscript{643} Presbyterium Ordinis clearly states that, as co-workers of the bishops, priests too are first called to preach the Gospel because the Church is made one by the Word of God:

the People of God is formed into one in the first place by the Word of the living God….it is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all men….and thus increase the People of God. For by the saving Word of God faith is aroused

\textsuperscript{640} Ibid., §6.
\textsuperscript{641} De Lubac, Medieval Exegesis, I:146.
\textsuperscript{642} Dei Verbum §2.
\textsuperscript{643} De Lubac made clear that the episcopacy is Eucharistic and as such is a source of ecclesial unity: see The Splendor of the Church, 150.
in the heart of unbelievers and is nourished in the heart of believers.\(^{644}\)

Sharing in the threefold office of Christ within his ecclesial body, lay people too are called to the evangelical mission of the Church.\(^{645}\) According to Moloney, “long before Vatican II, de Lubac had made clear that our radical incorporation into Christ’s priesthood is given already in the first sacrament. By this grace every Christian is drawn into a priestly people endowed with the role of mediating life and grace to others.”\(^{646}\) In *Apostolicam Actuositatem* §3, the council states that all Christians have the obligation “of working to bring all men throughout the world to hear and accept the divine message of salvation.” As co-workers of Christ, lay people are commissioned to spread the good news of Christ according to their respective vocation.

Through the Word of God, the human person is enabled to enjoy communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit.\(^{647}\) In *Apostolicam Actuositatem* §6, when defining the general apostolate of the Church and of the baptized, the council states: “the apostolate of the Church therefore, and of each of its members, aims primarily at announcing to the world by word and action the message of Christ and communicating to it the grace of Christ. The principal means of bringing this about is the ministry of the word and of the sacraments.”\(^{648}\) However, the council also expresses clearly that the divine economy, although intended for each individual person, possesses a truly ecclesial outlook, an outlook that is founded on the unity of the Blessed Trinity.\(^{649}\) God the Father has planned


\(^{646}\) Moloney, “Henri de Lubac on Church and Eucharist,” 335.

\(^{647}\) *Dei Verbum* §2 states, “through Christ, God’s Word made flesh, and in his Holy Spirit, human beings can draw near to the Father and become sharers in the divine nature.”

\(^{648}\) Emphasis mine.

\(^{649}\) See *Lumen Gentium* §2-4.
to unite all people as a community of persons to give humanity the gift of participating in his divine life in conformity with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.  

God does not address mere individuals with his divine Word; the Father always addresses his Word to the Church and each individual within the Church, especially through the apostles and their successors. This ecclesial locus of Divine Revelation corresponds to de Lubac’s insistence that the Church cannot be separated from Scripture: the same Logos who dwells within the Scriptures is the one the faithful are incorporated into within his ecclesial body. Moreover, only in listening to the Logos can the Church come to any self-realization. The Church receives the Word of God, who alone is the source of what the Church has to say: obediently listening to this Word, the Church is called to proclaim this same Word with apostolic confidence to all people throughout the world. The Word of God is the lumen gentium who has been entrusted to the Church, and through the Church, to all people who are called to be enlightened by the Word of God and made one in his ecclesial body. From the Divine Logos we come, through him

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650 The council (Gaudium et Spes §19) writes, “human beings have been called to communion with God. From its first moment a human being is invited to encounter God. It exists solely because it is continually kept in being by the love of God who created it out of love, and it cannot live fully and truly unless it freely acknowledges that love and commits itself to its creator.”

651 See Dei Verbum §7. Although the Second Vatican Council concerned itself to a large degree with the nature of the Church, it also established a more complete understanding of the ecclesial nature of divine revelation. These two aspects should not be separated because they are essentially connected, as we have shown in chapter three. See also Joseph Komonchak, “The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology,” in The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B., ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 70.

652 Fidenter (confident) corresponds with parrèsia, an attitude of confidence and assurance of the apostolic preaching; this attitude is repeated in §10. See Ratzinger, “Preface,” III:167f; Latourelle, Theology of Revelation, 456. According to the council (Dei Verbum §8), “the expression ‘what has been handed down from the apostles’ includes everything that helps the people of God to live a holy life and to grow in faith. In this way the church, in its teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to every generation all that it is and all that it believes.” This proclamation finds its source in God, but is carried out through Scripture in Tradition.
we live and towards him we direct our lives. The Word builds up the human person into a communion of persons united by the Holy Spirit because it possesses the power to truly unite divided humanity. *Dei Verbum* §21 proclaims, “it is supremely true of holy scripture that ‘the word of God is living and active’ (Heb 4, 12), ‘which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified’ (Ac 20, 32; see 1 Th 2, 13).” As the Spouse of the Word, the Church is essentially oriented to the Word. At this point in the dissertation, it should be obvious that establishment and growth in God’s divine life occurs in the Whole Christ, through Word and Sacrament.

B. Communion at the One Table

Like de Lubac, the council too emphasizes that Christ gives his life and fruitfulness to the faithful, not only in Word but also in Sacrament, especially the Eucharist.

Therefore, the faithful should, according to *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §48, “be formed by God’s word and refreshed at the table of the Lord’s body….they should be led towards their final goal of unity with God and among themselves through the mediation of Christ.” And, as we have explained above, like the Word’s power to unite divided humanity into one in the Holy Spirit, so too, the Eucharist establishes the faithful as members of Christ’s body, the sacrament of salvation, the sacrament of unity, for all people. *Lumen Gentium* §17 explains, “though anyone can baptise those who believe, it is

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653 See *Dei Verbum* §3. The council (*Lumen Gentium* §6) observes, “Christ is the true vine who gives his life and fruitfulness to us the branches; through the Church we abide in him and without him we can do nothing (see Jn 15, 1-5).”

654 This language, wherein Scripture is identified as possessing the power to build-up the Church and is called the life-source of the Church, echoes de Lubac’s insistence that Christ is truly and efficaciously present in the Scriptures. Those who faithfully receive Christ in the Scriptures are transformed, led by the Holy Spirit from letter to spirit, from image to truth. See also *Lumen Gentium* §1, 9, 20, 25-26.

655 See *Dei Verbum* §23; see also *Lumen Gentium* §4.

656 See *Lumen Gentium* §3, 8-9, 13; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §26.
the task of the priest to complete the building up of the body through the eucharistic sacrifice.” The Church is gathered into one through Word and Sacrament, and for this reason, *Christus Dominus* §11 explains, that the faithful are gathered by their bishop “into one flock in the holy Spirit through the *gospel and the eucharist*.” Together with his duty to proclaim the Gospel, the bishop is to unite the Church as the primary celebrant of the Eucharistic liturgy. As McPartlan observes, “it was Vatican II which restored centrality to the Eucharist as ‘the principal manifestation of the Church’ and which rehabilitated the bishops as its primary celebrants.” De Lubac anticipated the council’s teaching. For example, he remarks in language quite similar to the council’s:

> each bishop is himself ‘in peace and in communion’ with all his brother bishops who offer the same and unique sacrifice in other places, and makes mention of him in their prayer as he makes mention of all of them in his. He and they together form one episcopate only, and are all alike ‘at peace and in communion’ with the Bishop of Rome, who is Peter’s successor and the visible bond of unity; and through them, all the faithful are united.

Sharing in the episcopal office, priests too are called to unite the Church through the preaching of the Word of God and in the celebration of the eucharist.

The sacramental unity of Scripture and Eucharist is further emphasized when the council clarifies that both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist make up one act of worship:

> The two parts which in some way go to make up the mass, namely the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist, are so closely bound up with each other that they amount to one single act

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657 Emphasis mine.
658 McPartlan, “The Eucharist, the Church and Evangelization,” 780.
659 See McPartlan, “The Eucharist, the Church and Evangelization,” 780-781.
660 *The Splendor of the Church*, 150-151.
661 See *Christus Dominus* §30.
of worship. Therefore the synod strongly encourages those with pastoral responsibility to instill in their people, when they pass on instruction, the need to share in the whole mass.\textsuperscript{662}

Just as Christ cannot be separated from his body, the Church, so too the Eucharist and Scripture cannot be bifurcated, as though they do not share a congenial bond in the Word of God, and as if they are not both ordered to the communion of the Church.\textsuperscript{663} De Lubac illustrated the union of Scripture and Eucharist in his groundbreaking studies on Medieval exegesis (both \textit{History and Spirit} and \textit{Medieval Exegesis}). Moreover, as he uncovered in \textit{Corpus Mysticum}, before the 12th century, common theological thinking maintained the essential unity of Scripture, Eucharist and Church.\textsuperscript{664} According to \textit{Ad Gentes} §6, the Church “receives nourishment and life from the Word of God and the eucharistic bread.”\textsuperscript{665} Priests, who are called to preach the Word of God to increase the communion of the Church\textsuperscript{666} are encouraged by the council “to seek Christ in faithful meditation on the Word of God and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Divine Office,” so that they can help the lay faithful continue to be built up into the ecclesial body of Christ.\textsuperscript{667} For, it is from partaking of Christ in the Eucharist and in the Scriptures that the faithful’s life of communion in the Body of Christ will increase. The council expresses this aspect when discussing the ministerial role of the bishop: “by the ministry of the word they [the Bishops] communicate to the faithful the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{662} \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} §56.
\item \textsuperscript{663} According to the council (\textit{Lumen Gentium} §6), Jesus “has bound the church to himself by an indissoluble convenant and continually ‘nourishes and cherishes’ it (Eph 5, 29), wanting it cleansed and joined to himself and subject to himself in love and fidelity (see Eph 5, 24).”
\item \textsuperscript{664} See de Lubac, \textit{Corpus Mysticum}, 75-119.
\item \textsuperscript{665} Emphasis mine. The council (\textit{Ad Gentes} §15) writes, “the Christian community becomes a sign of the presence of God in the world: by the eucharistic sacrifice it unceasingly passes over with Christ to the Father; regularly nourished by the Word of God, it bears witness to Christ.”
\item \textsuperscript{666} See \textit{Presbyterorum Ordinis} §4, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{667} \textit{Optatam Totius} §8.
\end{itemize}
power of God for their salvation (see Rm 1, 16) and through the sacraments, the regular and fruitful distribution of which they direct by their authority, they sanctify the faithful.\textsuperscript{668} The council reiterates that the faithful “should be formed by God’s word, and refreshed at the table of the Lord’s body.”\textsuperscript{669} In Presbyterium Ordinis §18, the council makes the essential connection between Scripture and Eucharist clear: “those actions by which Christians draw nourishment through the Word of God from the double table of holy Scripture and the Eucharist hold preeminent place above all spiritual aids.”\textsuperscript{670} Through the Word of God and the Eucharist, the Church is constantly nourished, renewed, and led to a more perfect communion with Christ her head.

C. The Eschatological Nature of the Church

However, this salvific mystery has yet to be fully attained and will only attain its completion at the end of time. De Lubac too was aware of the eschatological character of the Church: the Church,

which lives and develops in this world and has a history to be followed, in the process of building itself up and growing until the day when it has reached full stature. That day will not break, as others have done, over this world; it will carry us outside history altogether. And in it the Church will be ‘a perfect man,’ the perfected body of all the saints together; all one, and now one in perfection, in the same Christ.\textsuperscript{671}

The council testifies to the mystery of the divine economy and simultaneously

\textsuperscript{668} Lumen Gentium §26.
\textsuperscript{669} Sacrosanctum Concilium §47; see also Dei Verbum §26.
\textsuperscript{670} See also Perfectae Caritatis §6, 15. Lumen Gentium §26 states: “In these [local churches] the faithful are gathered together by the preaching of the gospel of Christ and the mystery of the Lord’s supper is celebrated, ‘so that the whole fellowship is joined together through the flesh and blood of the Lord’s body’.”
\textsuperscript{671} De Lubac, The Splendor of the Church, 123.
acknowledges her provisional character.\textsuperscript{672} Although possessing a social and historical dimension, as a sacrament in Christ, the Church is simultaneously an eschatological reality, in that, the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus now continues in the Church. The salvation begun in the Church progresses toward completion, when all human persons will be perfectly transfigured in Christ by the Holy Spirit, made true children of God. The eschatological reality that has dawned in the Church is ordered toward the salvation of the whole world. Because this salvation is found only in Christ, the Church is the universal sacrament of unity, precisely because it is in the Church, primarily through Word and in Sacrament, that Christ remains present to his people throughout history.\textsuperscript{673}

Moreover, the Church, as sacrament, does not merely point like a signpost to a salvation that can be attained apart from her. Yet, the Church cannot simply direct humanity’s search to herself, as if she were the goal and source of salvation.\textsuperscript{674} Echoing de Lubac, the council elucidates the eschatological nature of the Church with its emphasis on the pilgrim Church,\textsuperscript{675} a notion already found in de Lubac as early as 1938: “her establishment on earth, a source of temptation for so many of her sons, can never be for her anything but a semblance, for she knows that after all she, like the Truth itself, is only a stranger on earth, scit se peregrinam in terris agere.”\textsuperscript{676} As a living, organic body, de Lubac observes, the “Church is a growing body, a building in course of construction.

Both metaphors suggest that her completion is not the work of one day….the work is long

\textsuperscript{672} See \textit{Lumen Gentium} §48.
\textsuperscript{673} See \textit{Lumen Gentium} §7-9; Philips, “The Church: Mystery and Sacrament,” 188. I do not meant to suggest that Christ is only present to his people through Word and Sacrament, but, it is primarily through Word and Sacrament that Christ makes a divided people into one.
\textsuperscript{674} According to \textit{Lumen Gentium} §14, “for Christ alone, who is present to us in his body, which is the church, is the mediator and the way of salvation.” In \textit{Lumen Gentium} §9 the council writes, the Church “has been set up by Christ….as the instrument of salvation for all.” See also Kasper, \textit{Theology and the Church}, 118ff.
\textsuperscript{675} See \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} §8; \textit{Lumen Gentium} §6
\textsuperscript{676} De Lubac, \textit{Catholicism}, 273.
and exacting.\textsuperscript{677} The council recognizes the unfinished nature of the Church, when it says, “the church awaits the day known only to God on which all peoples will call upon the Lord with one voice,”\textsuperscript{678} through the Holy Spirit, who leads the Church into perfect union.\textsuperscript{679}

The mystery of the Church is paradoxical: she is simultaneously holy and yet in need of reform, she is the seed of the reign of God but without the glory of the kingdom, she is universal, yet busy extending throughout the world.\textsuperscript{680} Commenting on this paradoxical aspect of the Church, the council says, the Church, “containing sinners in its own bosom, is at one and the same time holy and always in need of purification.”\textsuperscript{681} Moreover, the council uses a biblical image that de Lubac too used in 1938: as the “building of God,” the Church is finished, and yet, in it, the faithful continue to be “built up as living stones.”\textsuperscript{682} This enigmatic language echoes de Lubac, who reminds us that the Church is both “the wretched being on whom the Word took pity and whom he came to save from prostitution at his Incarnation; on the other hand, the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb ‘coming out of heaven from God’.”\textsuperscript{683} In the Eucharist, the Church becomes again and again what she will be at the eschaton.

The unity of the Church in Christ is made and strengthened by partaking of the

\textsuperscript{677} Ibid., 230.
\textsuperscript{678} Nostrae Aetate §4.
\textsuperscript{679} See Lumen Gentium §4.
\textsuperscript{680} According to the council (Lumen Gentium §39), “the Church, whose mystery is being set forth by this synod, is held to be indefectibly holy as a matter faith.” The Church, as Body of Christ, is perfect, but not a societas perfecta, because she remains a living body that belongs to salvation history, on its way to completion by the Holy Spirit. Sacrosanctum Concilium §2 remarks, “what marks out the Church is that it is at once human and divine, visible and endowed with invisible realities, vigorously active and yet making space in its life for contemplation, present in the world and yet in pilgrimage beyond—all this, moreover, in such a way that the human within it is ordered and subordinated to the divine, and likewise the visible to the invisible, activity to contemplation and the present to the city of the future which we seek.” See also Lumen Gentium §4-5, 8, 48.
\textsuperscript{681} Lumen Gentium §8.
\textsuperscript{682} See Lumen Gentium §6 and de Lubac, Catholicism, 336-337.
\textsuperscript{683} De Lubac, Catholicism, 68-69; see also 73-74.
One Table. The ecclesial communion will not be complete until all people are united as one at the One Table with the Father through the Holy Spirit. The council observes, all those chosen before time began the Father ‘foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren’ (Rm 8, 29). All those who believe in Christ he decided to call together within holy church, which right from the beginning of the world had been foreshadowed, wonderfully prepared in the history of the people of Israel and in the ancient covenant, established in these last times and made manifest through the outpouring of the Spirit; it will reach its glorious completion at the end of time. Then, as we read in the holy fathers, all the just from Adam onward, ‘from Abel the just right to the last of the elect’, will be gathered together in the universal church in the Father’s presence.

In *Lumen Gentium* §13, the council writes, “all human beings are called to the new people of God….who decreed that his children who had been scattered should at last be gathered together into one (see Jn 11, 52).” By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church is being led to the completion of what she already possesses. The Church remains incomplete until the eschaton, when the reign of God will be present in all its fullness. The Church is ceaselessly renewed and perfected by the Holy Spirit so that the faithful will continue growing in communion with the Father through Christ, in Word and Sacrament, in his ecclesial-sacramental body.
D. An Incomplete Union

The Church, the ecclesial body of Christ, remains a work in progress because not all human persons partake of its bond of unity and even those within the ecclesial body do not partake of its unity to the degree to which they are called. In *Lumen Gentium*, the Church teaches that all persons are called to this ecclesial communion and in various ways to it belong, or are related to it: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all of humanity. All human persons have been created in the image of God and are ordained to enjoy divine adoption as children of God in Christ. And, as has been shown above, this union takes place in Word and Sacrament, and, consequently, always through Christ’s ecclesial communion.

The necessity of communicating the gospel more effectively to the modern world was one of the reasons Pope John XXIII convoked the council. It is no surprise then that the council and post-Vatican II popes have shared this understanding as a desired outcome of the council. The Church is missionary in her very nature because she must continue to make all people partake in God’s communion by sharing in the ecclesial communion of Christ. According to McPartlan, de Lubac influenced the council’s and

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689 See *Lumen Gentium* §40. According to the council (*Ad Gentes* §39), by their priestly ministry, ordained priests "centered chiefly on the eucharist, which brings the church to its completion—they are in communion with Christ the head, and lead others to this communion, they cannot but be aware how much is lacking to the fullness of his body and how much accordingly needs to be achieved so that it may grow daily. Consequently they should so arrange their pastoral care that it may contribute to the spread of the gospel among non-Christians."

690 See *Lumen Gentium* §14-16.

691 See *Ad Gentes* §1. Pope Paul VI issued *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) on the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, summing up one of the primary objectives of the Church to become better fit for the proclamation of the Gospel in the modern age. Pope John Paul II issued *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council and made it clear that the ‘new evangelizations’ has its roots in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Thirty-five years after the Second Vatican Council (2000), in his document intended to orient the Church entering the third millennium, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Pope John Paul II again reiterated the missionary nature of the Church.

692 See, e.g., *Ad Gentes* §7.
post-conciliar thought on the missionary nature of the Church. De Lubac also demonstrated how this missionary nature is rooted in her Eucharistic nature. In *Ad Gentes*, the Church observes: the true goal of the Church’s “missionary activity is evangelisation and the establishing of the church among peoples and groups in whom it has not yet taken root.” The missionary nature of the Church is linked to the doctrine of the One Table: for it is from the seed of the Word of God, that all will be united in the one Church to partake of the holy communion offered at the One Table and it is from this Table, that the Church draws her strength to proclaim the good news of Christ.

The connection between the missionary nature of the Church and the One Table may not be systematically presented by the council, but it is organically linked and freely flows from the principles that have been elaborated above.

According to the council, the Father has spoken only one Word, and this same Word, “present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one mediator and the unique way of salvation.” Through this Word, the Holy Spirit continues to lead all persons to dwell in the fullness of the Son: “the Holy Spirit, too, is active, making the living voice of the gospel ring out in the church and through it in the world, leading those who believe into the whole truth, and making the message of Christ dwell in them in all its richness (see Col 3, 16).” For this purpose, asserts the council, Christ himself

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693 See McPartlan, “The Eucharist, the Church, and Evangelization,” 782-784.
694 *Ad Gentes* §6.
695 According to the council (*Ad Gentes* §15), “the Holy Spirit, who calls all to Christ by means of the seed of the word and the preaching of the gospel, stirs up in their hearts the submission of faith. When in the womb of the baptismal font, he generates to new life those who believe in Christ, he gathers them into the one people of God which is ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people’ (1 Pt 2, 9).”
696 *Lumen Gentium* §14. Nor, should we forget the ancient doctrine developed by certain early fathers (Justin the Philosopher, Origen, et al.) who held that every reality—even the non-Christian religions—contains fragments (logoi spermatikoi) of the Logos who appeared once and for all in Jesus Christ.
697 *Dei Verbum* §8.
“affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church.” 698 The Church, the ecclesial communion, is the universal sacrament of salvation, and the goal of all human persons.

All those who are saved are saved by Christ alone, who, according to Lumen Gentium §17, is “the principle of salvation for the whole world.” 699 It is through the Church, that all will enjoy divine communion to become adopted children of God, even those who have not had the opportunity to come into contact with Christ, because it is through the Church that Christ enters into an intimate communion with each person, in Word and in Eucharist. For, just as letter and spirit, image and truth, cannot be bifurcated and just as we must be led from the letter to the fullness of the Spirit, from the image to the truth, so too, the visible body of Christ cannot be separated from his invisible body and our increase in the Spirit is an increase in the communion of that Body. 700 Christ the Head cannot be separated from his body, and indeed, as has been shown above, the perfection of all persons is ordered toward the ecclesial communion because it is there that all will be made to grow in the divine communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 701 The Church remains a pilgrim on earth beckoning a world tormented with divisions and oppositions back to the love for which humanity was created, but has

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698 Lumen Gentium §14.
699 In Dei Verbum §15 the council observes, “the plan and pattern of the Old Testament was directed above all towards the coming of Christ, the universal redeemer, and of the messianic kingdom: to prepare for this, to announce it prophetically (see Lk 24, 44; Jn 5, 39; 1 Pt 1, 10) and to point towards it by various foreshadowing symbols (see 1 Cor 10, 11).”
700 The council (Presbyterium Ordinis §14) writes, “faithfulness to Christ cannot be separated from faithfulness to his Church.”
701 According to the council (Lumen Gentium §3), “all people are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world; from him we come, through him we live and towards him we direct our lives.” The council (Lumen Gentium §4) declares that through the Holy Spirit who calls all to Christ, “the universal church appears as a ‘people made one by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.’”
abandoned in sin. All persons must be led from the letter of the Word to its deeper, and life-giving Spirit, and from the image of the Eucharist to its truth (the Eucharist is ordered to creating and strengthening the communion of the Church). Likewise, the faithful must be led from the body of the Church (the visible aspect) to the heart of the Church (the interior, transfiguring mystery).

Indeed, the council reminds those within the body of the Church that their bodily degree of belonging to Christ’s ecclesial communion must increase: “that person is not saved, however, even though he might be incorporated into the Church, who does not persevere in charity; he does indeed remain in the bosom of the Church, ‘bodily’, but not ‘in his heart’.”702 Those within the Church are called to increase their union with Christ, especially through the partaking of Christ in Word and Sacrament.703

For those who have not accepted the Gospel, who do not know Christ and his Church, who search for God ‘in shadows and images,’ who, ‘through no fault of their own,’ have not yet come to the express knowledge of God, but strive to lead an upright life, they remain related to the Church704 because all human persons are called to enjoy the divine communion offered in the Son through the Holy Spirit. De Lubac states, “there is a place where this gathering-together of all things in the Trinity begins in this world; ‘a family of God’, a mysterious extension of the Trinity in time, which not only

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702 Lumen Gentium §14. See also Lumen Gentium §39-42. And non-Catholic Christians belong, according to the council (Lumen Gentium §14), to the Church, albeit in an imperfect realization of that ecclesial unity to which all are called to belong: “the church recognises that it is joined to those who, though baptised and so honoured with the christian name, do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve the unity of communion under the successor of Peter.” See also Unitatis Redintegratio §3-4. Compare with de Lubac’s similar statements made in Catholicism, 279.

703 This is the work (the liturgy) of the People of God, to continue increasing in the love of Christ. See, e.g., Lumen Gentium §37, 42, 48; Sacrosanctum Concilium §2, 6, 7, 10; Dei Verbum §8, 26. Just as the Holy Spirit is necessary to transform the bread and wine into the mystical presence of Christ, so too the Holy Spirit is necessary to lead us from the letter to the mystical presence of Christ, present in Scripture and in the Church.

704 See Lumen Gentium §16.
prepares us for this life of union and gives us a sure guarantee of it, but also makes us participate in it already.” Moreover, echoing de Lubac, the council overcame the previously held negative opinion that non-Christian religions only contain error and superstition. In *Nostrae Aetate*, the council clearly states that the Church does not deny the aspects that in these religions, which may reflect some of the truth of Christ, are true and holy: “the Catholic Church rejects nothing of those things which are true and holy in these religions. It regards with respect those ways of acting and living and those precepts and teachings which, though often at variance with what it holds and expounds, frequently reflect a ray of the truth which enlightens everyone.” No other religion or culture can add to or surpass the Christian dispensation of divine adoption; everything that is true and good contained in the non-Christian religions is a participation in what has already appeared in the fulness of Christ.

Recalling the ancient doctrine developed by certain early fathers (e.g., Justin Martyr, Origen, et al.) who held that every reality—even the non-Christian religions—contains fragments of the Logos (*logoi spermatikoi*) who appeared once and for all in Jesus Christ, the council spoke of the truth and grace of the seeds of the Logos that can be found among non-Christians thanks to a hidden presence of God. Having been created in and through the Logos, all creation possesses an intelligibility that can lead the mind and heart back to God. Moreover, again echoing de Lubac, the council stresses that Christ reveals the human person to himself:

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706 See chapter 3 of this dissertation, page 148-150.
707 *Nostrae Aetate* §2.
708 See *Ad Gentes* §9, 11.
709 Pope Benedict XVI (*Verbum Domini* §8) recently observed in 2010, “creation is born of the Logos and indelibly bears the mark of the creative Reason which orders and directs it.” Emphasis in text.
It is the church’s belief that Christ, who died and was raised for everyone, offers to the human race through his Spirit the light and strength to respond to its highest calling; and that no other name under heaven is given to people for them to be saved. It likewise believes that the key and the focus and culmination of all human history are to be found in its Lord and master. The church also affirms that underlying so many changes there are some things which do not change and are founded upon Christ, who is the same yesterday and today and forever. It is accordingly in the light of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God and first-born of all creation, that the council proposes to elucidate the mystery of humankind and, in addressing all people, to contribute to discovering a solution to the outstanding questions of our day.

Created in the image of the Image of the invisible God, every human person is destined to grow in the likeness to this image. Every person is made to grow in the likeness to Christ, who alone restores the image which sin has deformed. Christ alone fully discloses the person to himself, and reveals the noble calling of each person to divine adoption as a true child of God.

Although there might appear to be salvific paths to God outside the visible nature of the Church, in some way, all those who do enjoy theosis have come into contact with Christ, and are saved by participating in his death and resurrection. Therefore, in some way, those who are saved by Christ are placed in contact with his Body, the Church, because Christ the Head cannot be separated from his Body. In fact, the negative axiom, extra ecclesiam nulla salus, can therefore be taken in the positive sense elaborated by the council: the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation for all creation. De Lubac

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710 Gaudium et Spes §10. See also Gaudium et Spes §22.
711 According to Gaudium et Spes §22, “it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of humankind. For Adam, the first human being, was a representation of the future, namely, of Christ the Lord. It is Christ, the last Adam, who fully discloses humankind to itself and unfolds its noble calling be revealing the mystery of the Father and the Father’s love.”
712 Gaudium et Spes §22 observes, “since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery in a manner known to God.”
made this positive formulation of the axiom in 1938:

> if it is thought that in spite of all these considerations the formula ‘outside the Church, no salvation’ has still an ugly sound, there is no reason why it should not be put in a positive form and read, appealing to all men of good will, not ‘outside the Church you are damned’, but ‘it is by the Church and the Church alone that you will be saved’. For it is through the Church that salvation will come, that it is already coming to mankind.\(^{713}\)

Although the council does not use the traditional axiom, it does reaffirm the uniqueness and necessity of Christ and the Church in the divine economy.\(^{714}\) All grace flows from the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit. And in some sense, it can be said that all grace is ecclesial because the Church in Christ is the universal sacrament of salvation.\(^{715}\)

The Church, although not identical to Christ, remains his Body, intended as the dwelling place of all people. The visible and invisible aspects of the Church, according to the council, “must not be considered as two things, but as forming one complex reality comprising a human and a divine element.”\(^{716}\) The Church remains intimately united to Christ, irrespective of the sinfulness of those who dwell inside. However, although inside, they must continue growing in the communion Christ offers in his Body, the Church.\(^{717}\) All persons are called to increase in the likeness to Christ and to share in his glory. The council is aware that the Church is not yet complete: “this messianic people, although in fact it does not include everybody, and more than once may appear as a tiny flock,

\(^{713}\) De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 236.


\(^{715}\) Expressing something similar to de Lubac, the council (*Lumen Gentium* §8) remarks, “through it [the Church] he pours out grace and truth on everyone.”

\(^{716}\) *Lumen Gentium* §8.

\(^{717}\) The council (*Lumen Gentium* §3) expressed it clearly, when it proclaimed: “all people are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world; from him we come, through him we live and towards him we direct our lives.”
nevertheless it constitutes for the whole human race a most firm seed of unity, hope and salvation. It has been set up by Christ as a communion of life, love and truth; by him too it is taken up as the instrument of salvation for all, and sent as a mission to the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth’ (see Mt 5, 13-16).”

Through Word and Sacrament, the Church places each person in an intimate and dynamic union with Christ, a union that must increase until the Whole Christ is made complete in the Holy Spirit.

IV. Conclusion

It is difficult to determine with precision the various ways that de Lubac has influenced the councils’ explication of the One Table. Nevertheless, I believe, as I have tried to show in this chapter, that the underlying principles recovered by de Lubac certainly contributed, to varying degrees, to the council’s formulation of this important doctrine: the prominence given to the personal and sacramental character of Scripture as well as the stress given to the possibility for all people to participate, to varying degrees, in the ecclesial body for the completion of each person’s participation in the communion of the Blessed Trinity are among the distinctive features of the council’s achievements. In

\[718\] Lumen Gentium §9.

\[719\] According to the council (\emph{Lumen Gentium} §13), “all human beings are called to the new people of God….To this catholic unity of the people of God, which prefigures and promotes universal peace, all are called, and they belong to it or are ordered to it in various ways, whether they be catholic faithful or others who believe in Christ or finally all people everywhere who by the grace of God are called to salvation.” Elsewhere the council (\emph{Nostra Aetate} §1) states, “all nations are one community and have one origin, because God caused the whole human race to dwell on the whole face of the earth. They also have one final end, God, whose providence, manifestation of goodness and plans for salvation are extended to all, until the elect be gathered together in the holy city which the bright light of God will illuminate and where people will walk in his light.”

\[720\] I do not intend to overlook the contributions made by other important theologians and \emph{periti}, e.g. among others, Jean Danielou, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger, et al. I have merely tried to show that the numerous themes taken up by de Lubac are heavily present in the the council documents and have contributed not only to the renewal of the Church, but also theology itself.
the concluding chapter, I will offer some suggestions and examine the impact the doctrine of the One Table has for the life of the Church and for the modern-world.
CONCLUSION

Although the Second Vatican Council did not develop its retrieval of the One Table in any systematic fashion, this doctrine is organically woven throughout the council documents. This should come as no surprise, since the work on Dei Verbum itself spanned the entirety of the council. Moreover, the One Table doctrine is intertwined throughout the conciliar thought because this doctrine is central within Christianity, possessing ancient roots deeply entrenched in the Church’s life from her dawning.

A de Lubacian reading is not foreign to the council’s doctrine of the One Table, especially if we keep in mind that de Lubac was likely a major influence on Dei Verbum, and he certainly influenced the council’s Eucharistic ecclesiology. The One Table doctrine, itself retrieved from patristic and medieval thought by de Lubac, recovers the intrinsic unity between Christ in his Word, in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and in his Body, the Church. The recovery of this doctrine has important ramifications, not only theologically, but also liturgically, pastorally, and ecumenically. It is to these implications and the impact it has for the life of the Church and of the modern-world that I will now turn. My suggestions in this final chapter acknowledge various ways that this doctrine can influence our theological and pastoral thought. However, my intention in this final chapter is to offer only a cursory glance at areas that the doctrine of the One Table can be judiciously applied with great fruit.

I. Liturgical and Pastoral Implications of the One Table

Especially after the 16th century Reformation, there was a general proclivity among Catholics to focus one-sidedly on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and
to underemphasize the centrality of Scripture, in part in response to the Protestant emphasis on *sola scriptura*, but also in defense against some of the Protestant attacks against the traditional doctrine of the Eucharist. An understandable accent, regrettably it led to an impoverished understanding of the Church (one that focused predominately on juridical aspects), and an almost complete disregard of Scripture outside of its continued, but limited presence in the liturgy.\(^{721}\) “Thanks to the Second Vatican Council, having taken up or at least having been influenced by many important insights recovered by de Lubac, there has been an increasing awareness among Catholics that Christ makes himself present to his people and incorporates them into his Church in various manners: not only in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, but also through his mediated presence in the Scriptures.\(^{722}\)

A. Return to the Sacred Scriptures, Increase in Christ

This new-found awareness among Catholics after Vatican II has contributed to a greater thirst among the faithful to reacquaint themselves with the sacred page.\(^{723}\) Indeed, the council reminded the ordained that the Word of God is indispensable in forming the heart of a good shepherd and minister of the Word: “now a sacred minister’s knowledge ought to be sacred in the sense of being derived from a sacred source and directed to a sacred purpose. Primarily, then, it is drawn from the reading and meditation of sacred scripture.”\(^{724}\) And, the lay faithful too were encouraged to grow in their knowledge of

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\(^{722}\) See *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7: the council elucidated more than these two ways that Christ is present to his people, however, because of the focus of this dissertation, I have highlighted these specific manners of his presence.


\(^{724}\) *Presbyterorum Ordinis* §19.
Christ by increasing their knowledge of Scripture. The council advocated easier access to Scripture so that the faithful could learn by frequent study of the scriptures ‘the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ’ (Ph 3, 8), for ‘ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ’. They should approach the sacred text with joy—when it is expounded during the liturgy, or in private spiritual reading, or by means of bible courses or other aids to study... Let it never be forgotten that prayer should accompany the reading of holy scripture, so that it becomes a dialogue between God and the human reader.

Though the Church may remain far from having adequately carried out these words, the renewed devotion to Sacred Scripture can be seen in the increase and variety of bible study groups at any given parish, the increase of the lay faithful praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the plethora of biblical translations, which were also encouraged by the council, and are now made available to all.

The council hoped that this increased bond with Scripture would result in a renewed intensity in the union of the individual with Christ and with the Church: “just as faithful and frequent reception of the eucharistic mystery makes the church’s life grow, so we may hope that its spiritual life will receive a new impulse from increased devotion to the word of God.” The increased devotion to the Word of God and the resulting increase in clarity of vision of his face will lead to an increased devotion to the Eucharist. This strengthening of the person’s union with Christ, through Word and Sacrament, results in an increase in the communion of the Church.

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725 See Dei Verbum §25.
726 Dei Verbum §25.
727 The council (Dei Verbum §23) comments, “since the word of God ought to be available at all times, the church, with motherly care, sees to it that appropriate and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books.”
728 Dei Verbum §26.
Contact with God’s Word is a personal dialogue with Christ, one that far surpasses any human dialogue because it is a conversation and response enabled by the Holy Spirit to the Divine Word of the Father. And, although the human person can never fully plumb the depths of Scripture, if we believe Scripture is God’s personal address to each person, each individual will not only seek to grow in the knowledge of this Living Word, but he or she will also allow themselves to be led from the letter or history of the Scriptures to its life-giving Spirit. This of course entails an increase not only in our spiritual growth in Christ and in his Church, but also an intellectual development (which is not divorced or to be separated from spiritual growth) that seeks to increase knowledge of the human elements present in the Scriptures: by the use of concordances, maps, commentaries, etc. that have become more readily available to non-specialists. This life-giving dialogue with God’s Word in the Holy Spirit has the potential to touch and transform the human person from within his or her innermost depths. The Divine Word touches the mind and heart of the attentive listener and transforms all that it engages: the intellect, imagination, emotions, and will. Greater experience and familiarity with the Divine Word produces harmony within the individual and between the individual and God’s Word: the more intimate we become with the Word, the easier it will be to hear the voice of the Logos who dwells within us, inviting us in love to allow him to form us into his likeness.

If we truly believe that Sacred Scripture is the Word of the Father addressed to

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730 See de Moulines-Beaufort, “Word of God, Word of the Church, Mystery of Man,” 72-84.
every individual through the Church, than every Christian should crave to ruminate in
the Holy Spirit on the Life-giving words that have been spoken to us in the One Divine
Word. Our constant dialogue with the Logos is not meant to be one activity among
others, but an essential way of life that transforms the human person into the image of
Christ. Servais Pinckaers states something similar in his theological reflection on the
Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes and their centrality to living a fully Christian
life: “we can discern in it [the Sermon on the Mount] the characteristics of Christ’s life
and the features of His face which the Spirit would reproduce in us, so as to reshape and
conform us to the image and likeness of the Son of God.” Pinckaers too understands
the transformative power of Scripture, especially as it regards living a genuine Christian
life, which cannot occur without living according to the Spirit.

B. Praying the Scriptures and Actively Partaking in the Eucharistic Liturgy

In addition, as we have seen, the doctrine of the One Table makes it clear that the
Word of God proclaimed in the liturgy is the proper place and privileged means of
contact with Christ in his Scriptures. God the Father speaks his Word to every individual
person, and this Word forms each individual person into a communion of persons. In the
Divine Liturgy, every individual responds to God’s Word through his sacred words in the
liturgical dialogue of the Church. Moreover, according to the council:

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734 This is perhaps most clear in the praying of the Psalms. In the Psalms are expressed every possible human emotion that we place before God: joy and sorrow, distress and hope, fear and trepidation, praise and thanks, etc. There are also many other passages from Scripture that express our dialogue with God, a dialogue with the Word of God that reveals that our entire life is under his care, guidance, and call.
the importance of scripture in the celebration of the liturgy is paramount. For it is texts from scripture that form the readings and are explained in the homily; it is scripture’s psalms that are sung; from scripture’s inspiration and influence flow the various kinds of prayers as well as the singing in the liturgy; from scripture the actions and signs derive their meaning. The ancient tradition of both the eastern and the western rites tell of a heartfelt and living love for scripture. This love must be allowed to grow if there is to be a renewal, development and adaptation of the liturgy.735

We may have a renewal of rites, but without a corresponding renewal among the faithful towards Scripture, we will not have active participation in the Divine Liturgy. Our growth in the Scriptures takes place most fully in the Church’s liturgy, and conversely our growth in Scripture enables us to truly, actively partake in the Divine Liturgy. The return to and familiarization of the Scriptures among Catholics is one way to support the council’s desire for the active participation (which is not only outwardly manifested, but especially interiorized) of all who partake in the sacred liturgy.736 However, we will best attend the One Table if we do not separate Scripture from the celebration of the Eucharist, within the ecclesial communion.

Ruminating on the sacred text before hearing it proclaimed (and continuing that ruminating after it has been proclaimed) in the Divine Liturgy will help us to familiarize ourselves with it, will help us to grow in communion with the Son in the Holy Spirit as children of the Father. Individual rumination on Sacred Scripture is ordered to ruminating on the Sacred Scriptures within the liturgical setting of the Divine Liturgy,

735 Sacrosanctum Concilium §24.
736 See Sacrosanctum Concilium §14. The formation of priests too must be based on an in-depth familiarity with Scripture, which is fostered by lectio divina and daily attention to the Liturgy of the Hours, wherein one learns to listen through the Holy Spirit to that intimate voice of the Risen Christ who reveals himself in the sacred page.
which is itself ordered to the reception of Christ in the Eucharist. Indeed, the liturgical prayer of the Church, the Liturgy of the Hours, in the Roman rite is ordered to and flows from the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. According to the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours:

the Liturgy of the Hours extends to the different hours of the day the praise and thanksgiving, the commemoration of the mysteries of salvation, the petitions and the foretaste of heavenly glory, that are present in the eucharistic mystery, ‘the center and apex of the whole life of the Christian community.’ The Liturgy of the Hours is an excellent preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist itself, for it inspires and deepens in a fitting way the dispositions necessary for the fruitful celebration of the Eucharist: faith, hope, love, devotion and the spirit of self-denial.

Our faithful participation in the liturgical prayer of the Church, especially the Liturgy of the Hours—which consists predominately of Scripture—naturally leads to a greater participation in the Eucharistic liturgy, where we encounter Christ present at the One Table of Word and Sacrament. According to Pope Benedict XVI, participating in the Liturgy of the Hours “could only lead to a greater familiarity with the word of God on the part of the faithful.”

In conjunction with an increased participation in the Liturgy of the Hours among the laity, is the increase of lay people who have sought to return to the ancient practice of lectio divina, wherein, the sacred text is prayerfully consumed. This prayerful consumption of the divine Word, hopefully, will remain on our lips, in our minds, and in our hearts, to

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737 Pope Benedict XVI (see Verbum Domini §72) recently called attention to the need for preparing to encounter the Living Word of God in the liturgy.
738 Unfortunately, I cannot speak for the practice of the Christian East, though it would surprise me, if the praying of the office by the Orthodox and Eastern Catholics were not ordered and intimately connected to the Divine Liturgy.
740 Verbum Domini §62.
transform us from within.\textsuperscript{741} Similar to \textit{lectio divina}, there is the (re)discovery, especially among Western Christians, of the Jesus Prayer.\textsuperscript{742} This prayer is rooted in Scripture and developed out of the tradition of ejaculatory prayers or short arrow prayers, which were typically short verses taken from scripture, e.g., “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Psalm 50:12), used to help monks avoid distraction and to help them to pray continuously (Luke 18:1). These ejaculatory prayers were marked by their brevity and simplicity, which allowed for continued rumination on the Logos of God.

Liturgical participation most fruitfully occurs where there has been a preparatory rumination on Christ the Word by individuals, in our residences, in our workplaces, and communally within the celebration of the \textit{Liturgy of the Hours}, which reaches its apex at the One Table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body.

C. The One Table and the Missionary Nature of the Church

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in the Latin rite, the faithful are sent forth, empowered by the Holy Spirit through the reception of Christ in Word and Sacrament, to live out their baptismal consecration in the world: “go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”\textsuperscript{743} Renewed and transformed at the One Table, the faithful are sent back into the world to transform their communities, the world, and the Church through their daily lives lived in conformity to that which they have received at the One Table.\textsuperscript{744} According to the council, gathered together into the ecclesial communion of Christ at the One

\textsuperscript{741} See Sr. Maria of the Angels, “Vineyards and Landscapes: \textit{Lectio Divina} in a Secular Age,” 19-38.

\textsuperscript{742} The traditional form of the Jesus Prayer is: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!” This prayer is also called the prayer of the heart, and has as its goal to engraft this prayer on the heart. See Thomas Špidlík, \textit{The Spirituality of the Christian East}, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1986), 316-318; Liv Gillet, \textit{The Jesus Prayer} (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1987).

\textsuperscript{743} Three other possible dismissal prayers are: “Go in peace.” “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.” “Go forth, the Mass is ended.”

\textsuperscript{744} See \textit{Lumen Gentium} §31.
Table, the laity are “called as living members to work...for the growth of the church and its continual sanctification” and “to make the church present and active in those places and circumstances where only through them it can become the salt of the earth.”

According to *Apostolicam Actuositatem* §2, lay people exercise their threefold office of priest, prophet, and king, “when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order.” That which has been received in the Divine Liturgy at the One Table should overflow into the lives of the faithful, spurring them on to minister to others in the world. As Pope John Paul II explained, “the Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a promoter of communion, peace and solidarity in every situation.”

Having encountered Christ in Word and Sacrament in the Divine Liturgy, the faithful are now in a better position to be Christ for others, to encounter Christ in others, to reveal Christ to others, to serve Christ in others, to see Christ in the created world: to feed the hungry, to cloth the naked, to comfort the sorrowful, to be a steward of creation, etc. It is in the Eucharist that Scripture is actualized, that it effects what the Scriptures mean: for example, consider the words of Jesus: “your sins are forgiven,” or “come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest.” Meditation on the Scriptures enkindles one’s faith to participate in the mystery encountered in the Eucharist. On the other hand, the words of Scripture unfold their power in the life of the faithful when he or she encounters Christ in the Eucharist. The council observes, “only in the light of faith and meditation on the Word of God can enable us to find everywhere and always the God ‘in whom we live and exist’ (Acts 17:28); only thus can we seek his will in everything, see Christ in all men, acquaintance or stranger, make sound judgments

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745 *Lumen Gentium* §33.
746 *Mane Nobiscum Domine* §27.
on the true meaning and value of temporal realities both in themselves and in relation to man’s end.”

A deeper participation in the One Table will lead not only to the renewal of the Church, but also the renewal of individual persons and the world.

D. The Homily

The Divine Liturgy is the proper place for the Christian to participate in the divine mystery that has been made present in the proclamation of Scripture. Christ seeks to establish a relationship with the one who willingly listens to his Divine Voice, especially as he speaks through the Divine Liturgy. His Word continues to speak to us through the homily, which itself must be sourced in the Word. The liturgical homily must truly break open the mystery hidden within the Scriptures so that the faithful can be more easily transformed by Word and Sacrament.

Pope Benedict XVI observed recently: “the homily is a means of bringing the scriptural message to life in a way that helps the faithful to realize that God’s word is present and at work in their everyday lives. It should lead to an understanding of the mystery being celebrated, serve as a summons to mission, and prepare the assembly for the profession of faith, the universal prayer and the Eucharistic liturgy.”

This increased attention to scripture will express itself, not only in the daily lives of pastors transformed by the Word, but also in their homilies, which will draw from the wellsprings of Scripture. There is a great need for improved homilies among the ordained so that the lay faithful can be sufficiently fed at the One Table of Word and

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747 *Apostolicam Actuositatem* §4.
748 According to the council (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* §3), “on all Christians, accordingly, rests the noble obligation of working to bring all men throughout the whole world to hear and accept the divine message of salvation.”
750 *Verbum Domini* §59.
Eucharist.

II. Theological and Ecumenical Implications of the One Table

After the council, there has taken place a renewed attention and devotion to Sacred Scripture, but this renewal can only further deepen if we remain aware of the essential ecclesial and Eucharistic locus of Scripture.751 De Lubac’s retrieval of ancient Christian exegesis clearly indicates that the letter of Scripture cannot be separated from its spirit, and that spiritual exegesis is not antithetical to critical scientific methods.752 Likewise, the retrieval of the doctrine of the One Table helps to identify the necessary ecclesial-liturgical locus of the interpretation of Scripture: Christian hermeneutics must not be separated from the ecclesial celebration of the Divine Liturgy—for the Word and Eucharist are intimately ordered to the other body: the Church.753

A. The Liturgical and Ecclesial Setting of Christian Hermeneutics

It is not enough to be cognizant of the literary genres, historical setting, etc. of the various scriptural texts, we must also allow ourselves to be immersed in the life-giving Spirit of the Word of God. God’s divine economy, which began at creation and culminates in Christ, is present primarily in the worship of the Church: here one need only recall the liturgical celebration of the mysteries of God’s economy spread

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752 In addition, as Ignace de la Potterie (“Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the Spirit in Which it Was Written (Dei Verbum 12c),” 220-257) has indicated, the essential element in Christian hermeneutics is the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, which does not discard the letter of Scripture.

throughout the liturgical calendar (e.g., during Philip’s Fast/Advent and Christmas season we recall the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation; Great Fast/Lent, wherein we participate with greater intensity in Christ’s passion; Pascha/Easter, wherein we joyfully partake of the fruits of his death on the cross). In this regards, the council states: “the liturgy, through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the eucharist, ‘the act of our redemption is being carried out’, becomes thereby the chief means through which believers are expressing in their lives and demonstrating to others the mystery which is Christ, and the sort of entity the true church really is.”

In the Divine Liturgy, Christ’s life, death, and resurrection are effectively celebrated. In the Divine Liturgy, the Sacred Scriptures are proclaimed and explained to the faithful. The paschal mystery of Christ unfolds in the Church through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the sacramental ministration. In fact, the council reminds us that it is in the Church’s liturgical proclamation that we hear Christ speak to us: “he is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when scripture is read in church.” All of Scripture (both Old and New) find its fulfillment in Christ, and is itself ordered to the Eucharist, which is ordered towards its completion in the other body of Christ, the Church. Therefore, scriptural exegesis must retain the inherent unity of this triform body.

The interpretation of scripture is not merely the work of academics but must be taken up by all Christians, under the authoritative guidance and service of the Bishops.

As de Lubac observes:

754 Sacrosanctum Concilium §2.
755 In fact, the majority of the faithful only come into contact with the Scriptures during the Sunday liturgy.
756 See Sacrosanctum Concilium §6.
757 Sacrosanctum Concilium §7.
758 See Dei Verbum §10.
since Christian mysticism develops through the action of the mystery received in faith, and the mystery is the Incarnation of the Word of God revealed in Scripture, Christian mysticism is essentially an understanding of the holy Books. The mystery is their meaning; mysticism is getting to know that meaning. Thus, one understands the profound and original identity of the two meanings of the word mystique that, in current French usage, seem so different because we have to separate so much in order to analyze them: the mystical or spiritual understanding of Scripture and the mystical or spiritual life are, in the end, one and the same.\footnote{De Lubac, \textit{Theological Fragments}, 58.}

In fact, the purpose of Christian exegesis is to grow in union with the Living Word of God, and for this reason, hermeneutics is not the special reserve of academic specialists. I am not denying the need for biblical scholars, experts in linguistics, history, and archeology, but only emphasizing that the scientific study of Scripture must be done within the perspective of faith and from within and by the Whole Christ. While recognizing the validity and importance of the historical-scientific methods of biblical exegesis, the spiritual senses of Scripture cannot be overlooked, and indeed should maintain pride of place among Christians.\footnote{Adrian Walker (“Living Water,” 384) observes, “what \textit{Dei Verbum} calls ‘reading Scripture by the same Spirit by whom it was written’ is much more than private Bible reading with a little help from above. It is the Holy Spirit’s act of drawing us up, through the liturgical interplay of Eucharist and Scripture, into the Event that is Christ.” See also Robert Louis Wilken, “In Defense of Allegory,” \textit{Modern Theology} 14:2 (1998): 197-212; Magrassi, \textit{Praying the Bible}, 1-13. See also \textit{Verbum Domini} §37-41.}

**B. The Ecumenical Potential of the One Table**

Having recovered the importance of Scripture in the life of the Church and for each believer, while simultaneously not jettisoning the Church’s doctrine of the Eucharist, the One Table facilitates ecumenical dialogue.

The council called for opening wide the Scriptures to the faithful. This open access to the Scriptures was accomplished in one way through the revised lectionary used...
for the liturgy. According to this plan, the three Sunday readings (first, a selection from
the Old Testament, following typically by a passage from a New Testament epistle, and
concluding with a selection from one of the gospels) rotate in a three-year cycle
/designated as A, B, C/, covering all four Gospels, major passages from the New
Testament letters and significant portions of the Old Testament, especially the
prophetical and historical books. The weekday lectionary is based on a two-year cycle
/designated as I, II/, and offers a substantial exposure to portions of the Bible previously
unread in the Liturgy.\textsuperscript{761} This arrangement has been so well received that a number of
Protestant denominations have voluntarily adopted the lectionary. Therefore, now not
only are millions of Christians being fed a very substantial diet at the table of God’s
Word, but it is happening to them simultaneously—this is a great sign for future unity
among separated Christians.\textsuperscript{762} A more intense and consistent rumination on the Word of
God will result in the increased unity of the Church: those who seek the face of Christ in
Scripture will come to recognize the face of Christ present in his Church, which is
constantly nourished at the One Table of Word and Eucharist.

Although there is a renewed appreciation and love for the Scriptures among
Catholics, and many non-Catholic Christians proudly share in this devotion to the Sacred
Word, we must not stop there: Scripture itself points toward the Eucharist, and they both
point beyond themselves to the ecclesial communion, a communion that has yet to be
fully actualized, and is most fully actualized in the Church’s liturgy. Perhaps the

\textsuperscript{761} See Benedictines of Saint-André de Clerlande, \textit{Days of the Lord: the Liturgical Year} (Collegeville: The
\textsuperscript{762} See Paul Janowiak, “Preaching as the Presence of Christ: The Word within the Word,” \textit{Call to Worship}
re-examine their own understanding of Christ’s presence within the Eucharist. Moreover, perhaps by demonstrating that the One Table is clearly rooted in the early Church, and is not a doctrinal innovation of later centuries, the doors for further dialogue will be more widely opened.\textsuperscript{763} Both the Eucharist and the Scriptures are sources of unity because they are both distinct modes of Christ’s presence mediated to his people through his Body, the Church: one can hope that an authentic return to this ancient doctrine will help to renew the unity among all those for whom Christ died and in this way renew the unity of the ecclesial communion to which all are called.

Henri de Lubac contributed immensely to the retrieval of Spiritual-sacramental exegesis, but this retrieval seems to have been necessary primarily for the Christian West. Eastern Catholics and the Orthodox Churches of the East have, to varying degrees, maintained the ancient principles for spiritual exegesis. I do not mean to suggest that my interpretation of spiritual exegesis as presented in chapters two and three would be accepted completely by Orthodox Christians, but some general principles are shared between Catholics and Orthodox.\textsuperscript{764} For example, according to John Breck, “the only way we can avoid the futility of so much contemporary study of the Bible is by situating


the Word of God once again in its proper ecclesial and liturgical context. This ecclesial
and liturgical context is also called for in the doctrine of the One Table as it was retrieved
first by de Lubac, and then taken up by the Second Vatican Council. The retrieval of the
One Table, and its foundation in the shared common exegetical inheritance of East and
West is important for relations with the Orthodox Churches of the East. For example,
one can note the similarities between de Lubac’s insistence on the central place of the
Church’s liturgy for sacramental exegesis and the pioneering work of Alexander
Schmemann, who advocated a return to theology’s proper liturgical locus. Schmemann,
writing from within the Orthodox tradition, examines the interrelationship of Scripture,
Eucharist (especially within the liturgical setting) and Church. Schmemann elaborates
something similar to de Lubac’s own understanding: “in separation from the word the
sacrament is in danger of being perceived as magic, and without the sacrament the word
is in danger of being ‘reduced’ to ‘doctrine’.”  I have tried to bring these features out in
the personalism and sacramentalism of Vatican II’s understanding of God’s revelation in
chapter 4.

Unfortunately, the One Table remains an obscure doctrine among the majority of
Christians and one that has received scant attention among theologians. Two
postmodern thinkers have examined this topic from a Heideggerian philosophic point of
view. Both Louis-Marie Chauvet and Jean-Luc Marion comment on the Emmaus

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\textsuperscript{766} See See Alexander Schmemann, \textit{Introduction to Liturgical Theology} (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1966); idem, \textit{The Eucharist}, 11ff.  
\textsuperscript{767} Schmemann, \textit{The Eucharist}, 68. See also David W. Fagerberg, \textit{Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?} (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004).  
episode as central to the sacramental understanding of the Scriptures. Despite
approaching the doctrine of the One Table from an entirely different foundation
(Heidegger), both Chauvet and Marion arrive at a similar conclusion to de Lubac: in
order to fully participate in Christ and his Church the faithful must faithfully partake of
Christ in Word and Sacrament.\textsuperscript{769} According to Michael Witczak, the “emphasis on the
presence and change in the eucharistic species has led to a neglect of the theology of the
word in contemporary eucharistic doctrine.”\textsuperscript{770} Although since the council strides have
been made to overcome this situation, much work remains. Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI
recently observed, “there is a great need for a deeper investigation of the relationship
between word and sacrament in the Church’s pastoral activity and in theological
reflection.”\textsuperscript{771} With this dissertation, I hope to have alleviated some of this deficiency.
The One Table remains central to the life of the Church, and to the degree that
Christians rediscover the profound depths of this doctrine will they increase in the
ecclesial communion of Christ through the Holy Spirit so that Christ will come to full
stature in all people.\textsuperscript{772}

\textsuperscript{769} It is not my purpose to present the intricacies of Chauvet’s or Marion’s thought on this topic, an
deavor beyond me, but it is important to demonstrate that the doctrine of the One Table is a rich topic
that has also drawn interest from two modern Catholic philosophers who arrive at similar conclusions to de
Lubac. Fr. Sebastian Madathummuriyil directed me to these thinkers. In \textit{Sacrament as Gift} (Leuven: Peeters
Publishers, 2012), Madathummuriyil explains the unity of the two tables drawing on Marion.
698-699.
\textsuperscript{771} \textit{Verbum Domini} §53.
\textsuperscript{772} See Ephesians 4:1-24.
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