ON THE SACRAMENTAL NATURE OF HEALTH

José Granados

"The *healthy body* is the body in relation, situated in its environment and open to encounters and personal connections that sustain and animate it and point, finally, to the original mystery of life."

One of theology's primitive schemes for organizing the sacraments was to look at them as medicine for the various wounds of fallen man. No sooner did woundedness appear than God invented the remedy, so the sick would never find themselves without the means of care. Even as Adam was expelled from Paradise, the Lord had already prepared the bandage that would ease his pains. As St. Bonaventure puts it: "[the sacraments] are seven, and no more, because they are medicines, and medicine corresponds to the wounds it heals; healing wounds, it promotes the virtues; and promoting the virtues, it strengthens and arms against infirmities."[1]

In turn, these infirmities (again according to the Se-

1. St. Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.*, d. 2, a. 1, q. 3, resp. 1 (ed. Quaracchi, p. 53).

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raphic Doctor) are divided into faults and penalties, and they affect the body as much as the soul. With respect to faults, there is original sin, countered with Baptism; Reconciliation wipes out mortal sin; and the Anointing of the Sick remedies venial sin, when the transition into a new life is drawing near. As for the penalties, Confirmation is directed against weakness, the Eucharist against malice, and Matrimony against concupiscence. There remains the sacrament of Holy Orders, which is a remedy for ignorance—not the ignorance of the one ordained, at least not directly, but of those who will receive luminous doctrine through his preaching.

This way of ordering the sacraments, taken as medicine of body and spirit, offers us a theological key to understanding what health is: *the sacramental point of view.* If a sacrament can be medicine, not only for the soul but for the whole person, including his body, his time, and his relationships, it is because the form of health is inscribed on the sacrament. Only someone who knows what a sacrament is can understand what health is, while the essence of a sacrament will only be accessible to a person who understands health. The meeting point will be the precise way in which both health and sacrament are rooted in the incarnate existence of man. As we trace the path from the sacraments to the idea of health (1), another way will open to us, a return path that approaches the sacraments by way of health (2). Then we will have to consider the most profound infirmity of man (3) in order to find out whether a complete form of healing exists (4).

1. FROM THE SACRAMENTS TO HEALTH

In order to see how this medicine of the sacraments works, it is useful to understand the reasons God granted them to man. According to Hugh of St. Victor, whom the great doctors of the thirteenth century would follow with minor variations, the sacraments were instituted for three reasons: a) to enlighten man (*ad eruditionem*); b) to help him work toward his ultimate end (*ad exercitationem*); and c) to humble him (*ad humiliationem*).[2] Let

2. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei* II, IX, 3 (PL 176, 319–20): "Triplici ex causa sacramenta instituta esse noscuntur. Propter humili-

us consider these three ways in which the sacraments heal, thus revealing some essential features of health.

a) In the first place, the sacraments have an illuminating value. As *signs* of salvation they give light to man's eyes, clouded by sin. Guilt affects not only love but also knowledge. It not only weakens us but also places us in darkness.

Thus we understand that all sickness implies blindness and that every doctor is, in a certain sense, an oculist, who restores the true vision of things. The body's prostration, its rebellion, affects our way of knowing the world. Frontiers shrink for the man who is confined to a hospital bed, while domains he could once easily take control of recede into the distance. The street is no longer a place for strolls and encounters but has turned into outer space, unknown because unnavigable. When the body rebels, it seems that everything rebels. It becomes difficult to know anything from within, through connaturality with it. The world hides its symbolism from the sick person, its power to weave a net of meanings that permit discovery of the ultimate horizon of man's steps. Healing means recovering the concrete knowledge of the things that surround us, their harmony with our own being, their capacity to symbolize the harmonious unity of man's life in the cosmos.

b) The sacraments also have the value of exercise. Wounded by sin, Hugh explains, man tends to dissipation. He does not know how to order his steps. He is lost among unconnected moments, disordered affections, and pleasures with no guiding star. The sacraments restore health because they focus all of a person's powers into a single beam, giving him energy to walk the road until the end. Sacraments reveal the harmony between body and word (a unity of matter and form), as well as between word and the loving relationships that shelter us (a unity of sign and grace: *sacramentum et res*). In this way they assure the coherence of man's life in time and space.

Again we come to an important aspect of health, reflected in the etymology of the word and its connection to "whole." A healthy person is one who preserves integrity and cohesion in all aspects of his being. Health consists in a mysterious harmony of the body with the person and his environment, so that the

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ationem, propter eruditionem, propter exercitationem."

body is endowed with a language that has meaning (*logos*). It is open to relationships with the world and with others.

c) There remains a third way in which the sacraments heal: by humbling the proud. Since the human person has tried to get above himself, God requires him to bend back to earth in order to receive salvation through the basest physical elements. This is not only a moral humbling but an anthropological one. For it is precisely a question of being able to return to the *humus*, to the earth, accepting anew the enfleshed condition, being reconciled to one's own body. The sin at the origin of man's sickness implies, in reality, an abandonment of the body, with the desire to construct for oneself a liberty without limits, far from the original dependency that the body bears witness to. Thanks to the body, we remember that someone has given us life and that this life is only sustained in relation with others. The medicine of the sacraments thus brings with it the humiliation of a return to the corporeal.

Here the connection with the concept of health is this: all sickness is an alienation from our own bodies and is therefore accompanied by a rejection of the flesh that has become our enemy. Sickness leads us to think of the flesh in the Orphic mode as a jail or a tomb, with a great desire of freeing ourselves from it.

This reference to the body invites us to resolve a certain doubt. Reading medieval writers, one might easily get the idea that the medicine of the sacraments is corporeal only in order that man, being thus humbled, can learn to get beyond the body and subjugate it. On this reading, the sacraments would follow the economy of flesh, yes, since they are all sensible signs (Baptism—water, Eucharist—bread and wine, Confirmation—oil). But this disposition would not be original, since the sacraments were instituted only after the advent of sin, nor would it belong to the state in which man first sprang from the hands of God. The sacramental-corporeal would serve to *restore* health, but would not play an important role in the *living* of health, given that there were no sacraments in Eden. The mystery of a sacramental body would belong to the definition of medicine, but not to the definition of a healthy person.

But there is one sacrament that strikes at the root of this interpretation. It is the only one that, in the medieval theological

understanding, was given prior to sin.[3] This sacrament is not only a remedy for alleviating the disaster of the Fall but has existed ever since man was man, so it is necessary not only for understanding the sick, but also for understanding the healthy. This is the sacrament of matrimony, instituted by the Creator's words: "A man will leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Gn 2:24).

Thus we can see the strategic role of marriage in the whole sacramental dispensation. It is thanks to marriage that we recognize the sacraments' correspondence to the very definition of man, from his origin. God has given us the sacraments not only to remedy the Fall but because they contain the very secret of who we are and who we are called to be. And given that the corporeal is essential to the sacramental—given that the grace of the sacrament is only transmitted through the physical elements (water, bread, wine, oil . . .)—the body, already from its origins, has been the place where the life of man opens to relation with God. From here we discover a road that leads, through the sound body in its original health, to the sacramental body.

2. FROM HEALTH TO THE SACRAMENTS

In order to explore the connection between sacrament and health, one must refer to the harmony of man with his body, the secret of which lies always beyond the body. First let us note that health is hard to describe, that it seems hidden, that it cannot be pinned down with a definition. As Gadamer says, what is mysterious, what should produce surprise and awaken questioning, what is anomalous and inexplicable, is not the sick body, but the healthy body.[4]

In a certain sense it is the sickly body that should be expected and predictable. How could it not happen that the organs, so different from each other, would end up out of joint, enter into conflict, and rebel against each other? Moreover, when we

3. Peter Lombard, *Sent*. IV, d. 26, cap. I, 1 (Quaracchi, p. 416).

4. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On the Enigmatic Character of Health," in *The Enigma of Health: The Art of Healing in a Scientific Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 103–16.

are sick we feel alienated from the body and tend to look at it from outside. The body is an enemy to us, mutinies against us, until it becomes easy to regard it as a reality apart from our "I." Now, it is precisely what one looks at from a distance that is easiest to comprehend and to explain coherently. The person who seeks clarity of comprehension will find the sick body to be the most accessible, because it can be objectified. It is interesting to note, as Drew Leder has done, that Descartes almost always uses examples involving bodies with pathologies in order to corroborate his dualism.[5] It is as if modern thought were taking as its model the body bereft of health—the eye too clouded to see, the organ that rebels, abandoning its silence and transparency—in order to deduce from this an inescapable dualism.

And health? It is here that we find the real mystery, the fragile reality, always threatened, hard to define, whose essence ever eludes us. As Gadamer notes, one cannot define health from an external perspective. It is impossible to say anything useful about it using only measures external to the body.[6] All we can do is approximate it by negative definitions: when the organs are in silence, then the body is healthy. Health hides because, for the person who enjoys it, the body becomes invisible, transparent, performing its function as mediator, situating us in the world. The eye does not see itself when it sees, nor does the hand touch itself when it touches. Only when they function poorly do the organs make themselves visible; only then do they show themselves to consciousness. The healthy body is one that lives in an equilibrium that cannot be explained through the mere analysis of its parts, precisely because it puts us in harmony with a world distinct from ourselves.

Health has a mysterious character, that of an unmerited and original miracle that allows the body to function in harmony with itself and its whole environment. Because of this, health cannot be defined solely with reference to the isolated body. One has to consider the surrounding world in order to realize with amazement that the healthy body and the world correspond, like

5. Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 132: "This principle is etched on the Cartesian corpus—everywhere are disrupted bodies."

6. Gadamer, "On the Enigmatic Character."

hand and glove. So health will have to include the world of others, too: interpersonal relations, the capacity to discover one's neighbor, to accept him as part of one's own name and destiny. Health is never just individual but necessitates harmony with a wider environment. Thus the gratuitous character of health precedes all our efforts: man cannot give himself health by his own labor. No one can turn a white hair black by force, nor increase his own stature, nor prolong his life by even a single hour (cf. Mt 5:36, 6:27, and Lk 12:25). This coincides with the gratuitous character of the body, which no one designs for himself, and whose acceptance is possible if we discover at its root a maternal and paternal love.

In sum, health is a harmony that cannot be explained solely from the body. This is why openness to the world that surrounds us, harmony with the environment, and the ability to make connections with others are so intimately united with health. If we ask an elderly person to define health—what it means to be healthy—he will respond in relational terms: a person is healthy when he is cared for, when he knows that he is being attended to and sustained in his fragility by his family. [Translator's note: the Spanish word for "healthy" also means "safe, secure."]

The body—as soon as we discover the original wisdom of the Creator who shaped it, and as soon as we situate ourselves in the world and permit ourselves to encounter our brothers—opens the person beyond himself. We can say, then, that it has the value of an efficacious sign, since it is the domain where the reality of grace that is love is made present, and from which all the dimensions of our being are ordered. This is why John Paul II is able to speak of the body as an original sacrament.[7] From this point of view, health is the harmonic unity of the body, which comes from beyond the body and thus follows a sacramental logic, where the mystery of love is manifested in the flesh.

At this point a reflection on matrimony will be helpful,

7. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 509–11, 514, *et passim*.

as it is a particular plenitude of existence in the body.[8] Through the orientation of man's body to woman and woman's to man, both can constitute a new unity of mutual belonging, a "one flesh" (Gn 2:24), in which God makes himself present through mutual love (cf. Mt 19:6, "what God has united"). In this spousal experience the body shows that its identity embraces something beyond itself, receiving its unity and meaning from the other.

Thus man cannot come to know his body through mere self-contemplation; the key to the body's unity and harmony cannot be discovered with a simple analysis of its members and organs. On the contrary, the body reveals its secret from within, only when man accepts it and dwells in it; and this is possible—this acceptance of the body, this reconciliation with one's own body, that we call "health"—only if one understands that the unity of the body, its capacity to belong to one's personal identity, can only be found beyond the body, in its reference to the other—to parent, sibling, spouse, child, and, in the last analysis, to God.

We may say, then, that the healthy body possesses sacramental features, because it makes really present, in the here and now, something that is beyond: it makes parentage present in the name and mission of the offspring; it makes the body of woman present in that of man, and vice versa, in the mystery of affection; it makes present, in the conjugal embrace, the new life of the child who is born.[9] All these features can be called sacramental inasmuch as the sacrament announces the presence of mystery in the body of man. The *healthy body* is the body in relation, situated in its environment and open to encounters and personal connections that sustain and animate it and point, finally, to the original mystery of life. And precisely that is also the *sacramental body*, because it is capable of revealing, in the flesh, the mystery of the person, who is constituted in relation with the world, others, and God.[10]

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8. José Granados, "Bonaventure and Aquinas on Marriage: Between Creation and Redemption," *Anthropotes* 28 (2012): 339–59.

9. On this subject see Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 1991).

10. Thus we can see why sacred rites, which have their place in every culture, play an essential role in human health, because they provide a space for

3. ILLNESS: THE ANTI-SACRAMENT?

If health and sacrament go hand in hand, then it would seem that illness is anti-sacramental. The sick body rebels against us, makes itself foreign to us, resists our authority, and sets itself against the subject, thus seeming to negate the possibility of one's saying: "I am my body." It is as though the body ceases to express the person, or to be his efficacious sign—here we have the opposite of a sacrament. Thus the sick body also separates us from the world, preventing us from communicating with it and with others. The loss of health endangers our ability to form relationships.

The theological explanation of sin and its effects on human life after Adam is relevant here. The essence of sin is the denial of relations, the decision to constitute one's identity over and above them, to define oneself without taking them into account—without taking into account, uniquely, the fundamental relationship, the connection with the original and definitive mystery, the Creator who sustains all other relations. In pursuit of this end, a person must silence the body, the original testimony of the relationships in which human life is wrapped. What happens then is that the body, deprived of the relationships that give it harmony, loses its very principle of unity. Isolated from the world and others, it disintegrates into its basic components, just as filings of metal lose their orientation if the magnetic field that orients them vanishes. Absent from the relational domain that gave it meaning and cohesion, the body ends up losing the equilibrium of its organs, it tends to sicken, it is marked by infirmity. In the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo masterfully portrays the infirmity that afflicts the human body after relations are broken, painting Adam and Eve banished from Paradise. Their bodies have lost the beauty and grace that used to animate them and, at the same time, they have lost mutual harmony and now seem to jostle each other rudely.

And yet . . . and yet sacramentality is not completely lost in the sick body. Since the body is a testament to the original gift, which precedes all human action, it cannot be completely silenced by man, nor can it be isolated from human life like a

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the body's opening toward a higher mystery. A society without feast days will end up being a diseased society.

foreign object that one can manipulate from a distance. No, even the sick body contains and remembers the original unity that animated it. Even in the sick body the sacramental sense resonates, as the experience of pain, for example, illustrates. It is instructive to examine the huge difference there is between human pain and the sensor that warns a robot of dangers like collisions or mechanical faults. Pain cannot be reduced to a detector that warns, for example, of the danger of burns or poisons. In pain, we not only inform ourselves so that we can forestall danger, but we also make ourselves participate in the danger that threatens us. Not only does the body discover a sign that indicates a threat of death; it tastes this death in advance. It is as if the body contains the evil in itself, as if the body were the way in which evil touches us from within.[11]

The sick body continues, then, to be a sacramental body. Even though when deprived of its constituting relations it resembles the body of a machine whose unity comes only from the outside, this apparent likeness is never the whole story. It remains a sacramental body that expresses the calling of the person to relationality, although this now happens only in the negative, revealing the emptiness that the rupture and abandonment of connections leaves in man, awakening nostalgia for a lost unity.[12]

Sickness is thus not just an anti-sacrament but rather testifies to the value of relations, even if *sub contrario*. In this way—and here is the key to the possibility of healing—sickness can return to the body its original vulnerability, which through an encounter with the body of the other, recovers, if not immediately health, then at least contact with the integrating principle that might eventually infuse a new harmony into the body. Suffering and sickness can be beneficial if they reveal that most insidious hidden danger, that true mortal sickness, which, closing up man in self-sufficiency, deprives him of finding his place in the world and his way to fullness of life.

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11. Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), 55–58.

12. For a more detailed treatment of the sick body's capacity to open us to relationality, permit me to refer to my article, "The Suffering Body, Hope, and the Disclosure of the Future," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 36 (Winter 2009): 652–72.

Precisely because this sacramental quality continues to be present in the sick body, because the body continues to be man's point of opening to what lies beyond himself, the sacraments, signs in flesh, can work health in him. The theological tradition has discovered a number of sacraments, present already in the life of Adam and Eve after the Fall, supplemented later with the Law of Moses, and fulfilled in Jesus, so that every state of wounded man has a medicine adequate to the injury. Every bodily encounter, every encounter in human flesh, is sacrament, is medicine, that makes man enter anew into the sphere of relations, which remedies his alienation from connection and communion. In a full sense, only the sacraments of Jesus will restore an imperishable health, for they introduce man into the corporeality of the Risen Christ.

4. MEDICINE AND ANTIDOTE TO IMMORTALITY

The Christian concept of salvation (*salus*) given in the sacraments Christ instituted depends on the original meaning of the body as we have described it above. It is first of all a matter of recovering the body as a place of relations, in a way that corresponds to the original state of man; but the way to this recovery passes through the suffering body's capacity for opening itself to health in its deepest sense. Jesus himself, when he instituted the Eucharist, referred to the original experience of all the children of Adam when he surrendered his *flesh* and *blood*, since in the *flesh* the children of Adam live the mystery of life, symbolized in the *blood*. When he associated this flesh and blood with a bread that is *broken* and a cup that is *poured out*, he assumed the suffering meaning of the body with its paradoxical capacity of recovering radical health (*health* as *whole*-ness).

Moreover, the rite of Jesus, celebrated and lived by Christians, not only refers to the creation of man but allows man to recall the entire life of the Master in a new light, as the fount of salvation. If Jesus is able to communicate health to men in the sacraments, it is because he himself has obtained through the course of his life a completely healthy body, with a health that cannot be lost. The formula of perfect health is written in the body he assumed.

In fact, Jesus accomplished healing miracles in the course of his life, not by a divine power that worked independently of his humanity, but because in his humanity, the humanity of the Son of God filled with the Holy Spirit, he lived the process of radical health, recovering the harmony of the body with the Father and with men. Each miracle of Jesus passed through his life and was a communication of the life that was being given concrete form in him. Each one presupposed the assumption of man's infirmity—unto the Cross—and the anticipation of his definitive health—in the Resurrection. This is why St. Matthew could apply the prophecy of the Suffering Servant (Is 53:4, "he took upon himself our infirmities") to an episode where Jesus exercised his miraculous power (cf. Mt 8:17). The cures worked by Christ were possible because he himself assumed the broken body of the sick people he cured and communicated to them in advance the fruit of his glorified body.

Now our considerations can center on one image: the open side of Jesus, from which flow water and blood that symbolize the sacraments of the Church. From the wound, nay, from the death of Christ, flows the medicine.[13] St. John merges the death and Resurrection into a single vista, so it can be said that we have the symbol of health (*salus* in Latin means "salvation") in the open wound of Jesus' side. After the Resurrection, this wound is still present (Jn 20:27; cf. Lk 24:39–40), as if to say that the fount of the healing sacraments has not closed, and one can touch it, as St. Thomas could (Jn 20:27), in the community of the disciples who "ate and drank with him after his resurrection from the dead" (cf. Acts 10:41). This means that right in the middle of the question of man's salvation, there is a life and a death. Certainly, this revolutionizes the idea of health.

Healing is offered by means of an encounter with the Paschal Christ, an incorporation into his body, in such a way that the person recovers the place of relations with his brothers and with God.

Now, this body to which man becomes assimilated remains inscribed within him, on the one hand as the remembrance of a wound, of the rupture of the body's equilibrium,

13. Cf. Scott W. Hahn, "Temple, Sign, and Sacrament: Towards a New Perspective on the Gospel of John," *Letter and Spirit* 4 (2008): 107–43.

unto death. Only in this way, remembering the fragility of every human project of health, can the self-sufficiency of the subject be broken, ending the dream of the one who looks to be complete and perfect in himself alone, opening his life to a health that does not pass away.

On the other hand, in this body one finds, in an already operative hope, a fullness of health in body and soul. In this sense, the health that the sacraments communicate is not merely a "spiritual" health, having nothing to do with the health of the organism that the doctor pursues. On the contrary, the salvation Jesus brought passes through the body: he gave sight to the blind, made the lame to walk and the deaf to hear (cf. Lk 7:21). The health he promises is spiritual, not inasmuch as the spiritual is incorporeal, but inasmuch as the spiritual is the fullness of the relations that we can live in the body, that is to say, inasmuch as "spiritual" signifies "relational," inasmuch as the spiritual is that which belongs to the domain of love. It is not opposed to the bodily, but calls on it and completes it. The body of Jesus is a spiritual body, because he allows himself to be fully moved by the abundance of relationship that the Spirit communicates, relationship with his Father and with men. And so in the Gospel of John the miracles of Jesus are called "signs" (*semeia*), not because they point to a merely interior health, the health of the soul apart from the body, but because they point to the final resurrection of the flesh, toward the ultimate future of the risen body, which participates in the body of Christ. Remember that the sign that concludes the Gospel of John is the death and Resurrection of Jesus, the destruction and reconstruction of the Temple of his body (cf. Jn 2:18–21).

In sum, the sacraments incorporate us into the body of Jesus, be it the body dead through love, or the body raised up again. If they were only the remembrance of a death, the sacraments could not communicate life; if they were only the remembrance of the final plenitude of the Risen One, the sacramental body would end up being alien to our earthly body. Having this double reference, of wound and of glory, the body of Christ is given to us as a narrative body, a body that travels from origin to end, whose history is remembered, represented, and anticipated

in the sacraments.[14] So we learn that the definition of health cannot be made precise without taking into account the whole timeline of a life. Wounds and ruptures in one's personal history also affect health, as the importance of a medical history shows. So the cure always requires patience. The healthy person is only the one who, in addition to possessing equilibrium of body and soul, has equilibrium of past, present, and future.

Thus it is possible to say that the sacramental economy is precisely the economy of the healthy body, which is the body of Jesus inasmuch as, being received from the Father, it can be handed over to men. This body contains within itself the mystery of health, the mystery of openness to relations where the secret of human life is forged. The healthy body is the one that has been received completely from the Father and does not cease to be received from the Father; the one that shares this common origin with brothers; the one that knows how to establish relationships, living for others in nuptial self-giving and so generating in them a new life. The economy of the sacraments, from Baptism to the Anointing of the Sick, can be read according to this key: that of a body able to shelter health within itself and to communicate it.

And we can say this without forgetting that, at the deepest point of this health, there is a fragility, a rupture, a wound, because health is only obtained by means of a generous surrender, a gift that shares the lot of the sick person. Whoever suffers can thus encounter hope, not only in the possible recovery from suffering, but from within the suffering itself. Health is not only the endpoint of the process, but something that is built step by step during illness. It is generated from within pain, which is always that of a birth, because it will be revealed to be fruitful (cf. Jn 16:21). All sickness can be converted into a moment in the dynamism of health, can house within itself its own medicine, if we associate it with the transfigured wound of Christ.

Pharmakon athanasías, medicine of immortality.[15] This is the name St. Ignatius of Antioch gave to the Eucharist, borrow-

14. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, ST III, q. 60, a. 3, ad: "Unde sacramentum est et signum rememorativum eius quod praecessit, scilicet passionis Christi, et demostrativum eius quod in nobis efficitur per Christi passionem, scilicet gratiae; et prognosticum, id est praenuntiativum, futurae gloriae."

15. Ignatius of Antioch, *Eph* 20:2 (SC 10.90).

ing an expression that belonged to the cult of the Egyptian goddess Isis. In the Eucharist there is a medicine not only for certain illnesses but for the radical infirmity of death, which sooner or later will take possession of the body. The Eucharist is the root of all drugs, the ultimate drug, of which medicine has always dreamed, for it is capable of doing away with death itself. Modern medicine has looked for the *pharmakon athanasías* as though it were a possession under the control of autonomous man, able to conquer every disorder of the body, viewing the body from the outside and exercising dominion over its distinct elements. The medicine of which the bishop of Antioch speaks, on the contrary, has a sacramental character, for the health that it communicates arrives in the body through an opening beyond itself, through entering into the system of relations of another body, the body of Christ and his Church, from which life opens to its original source in the Father. Such a medicine can accept, in the heart of the idea of health, the gift of life, which the martyr of Antioch describes, foreseeing his martyrdom, as the grinding of wheat, crushed "by the teeth of wild beasts in order to be found the pure bread of Christ."[16] It is thus that we find a "concord without divisions, breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, an antidote that we may not die, but live forever in Christ Jesus."[17]—*Translated by C.M. Neulieb.* □

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16. Ignatius of Antioch, *Rom* 4:1 (SC 10.130).

17. Ignatius of Antioch, *Eph* 20:2 (SC 10.90).