

CHURCH, EUCHARIST,
AND PREDESTINATION IN
BARTH AND DE LUBAC:
CONVERGENCE AND
DIVERGENCE IN *COMMUNIO*

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“Communion and sacrifice are mutually constitutive.”

Hans Urs von Balthasar once suggested that the eighth chapter of Henri de Lubac’s *Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du dogme* ought to be read as an anticipation of Karl Barth’s famous doctrine of predestination.¹ What Balthasar apprehended in both de Lubac’s “Prédestination de l’église” and Barth’s *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik II: Die Lehre von Gott 2* was a common objective to recover a theology of *communio* as integral to the mediation and content of humanity’s predestination in Christ. And yet, as this essay argues, though Barth and de Lubac are indeed commonly concerned to establish a theology of *communio* as internal to the doctrine of predestination, nevertheless, their respective theologies of *communio* are constituted by significantly divergent premises. While for de Lubac, *communio* is sacramentally rooted in the Eucharist that “gives” the Church; for Barth, the efficacy of eucharistic mediation and participation is decidedly foreclosed.

¹Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac: An Overview*, trans. Joseph Fessio, S.J., Michael M. Waldstein and Susan Clements (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 41.

This essay, then, is an attempt critically to follow up Balthasar's suggestion.² In so doing, it argues that Barth's eucharistic minimalism leads to a poverty in his account of the concrete mode of the *communio* of the Church in Christ's divine personhood. Ultimately, I suggest, this eucharistic minimalism tends toward a problematic *communio abscondita*. Drawing on the Lutheran theologian Robert Jenson, I propose that this tendency toward a *communio abscondita* is due (at least in part) to Barth's apparently deficient pneumatology—the so-called “web of Spirit-avoidance,” according to which Jenson charges that Barth's trinitarianism reads more like a “binitarianism.”³ It is thus that I offer de Lubac: if he anticipates Barth, he also provides a theological resource by which more fully to complete the Barthian project of overcoming the practice of theology *in abstracto*. In this regard, the attention de Lubac pays to the pneumatological dimension of the Eucharist is crucial in that it can address precisely the Barthian lacuna in trinitarian theology while at the same time specifying the mode of the intermediation of

²The essay is also an attempt to follow up on Balthasar “with a difference,” insofar as I have left the Przywara-Barth debate on the *analogia entis* gently to one side. *Analogia entis*—famously named by Barth “the invention of antichrist” and the best reason not to be Roman Catholic—was, of course, at the center of Barth's ecumenical dialogue with Balthasar. I have avoided this language only to come at the issue of mediation and *communio* from a different angle, and so the substance of the *analogia entis* debate returns here (if covertly) in a pneumatological and eucharistic mode. For a synopsis of the Balthasar-Barth dialogue, see Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Divine Fruitfulness: A Guide Through Balthasar's Theology Beyond the Trilogy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 75–108.

³Robert W. Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” *Pro Ecclesia* 2, no. 3 (1993): 296–304, here at 302. The essay was commissioned by the Karl Barth Society of North America, and is bound up with an emergent consensus that there is something of a pneumatological lacuna in Barth's theology. Accordingly, Jenson describes the Society as coming to near unanimity on the fact that “long stretches of Barth's thinking seem rather binitarian than trinitarian” (296). Further, on the growing literature of Barth's pneumatological minimalism, see Robert W. Jenson, “Predestination,” in *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 2, ed. Robert W. Jenson and Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 134–42; Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., “The Eclipse of the Spirit in Karl Barth,” in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John McDowell and Michael Higdon (London: Ashgate, 2004), 173–90; id., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 19–23; Rowan Williams, “Word and Spirit,” in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 107–27; and id., “Barth on the Triune God,” *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, ed. Stephen Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 174–93.

the *communio* of Christ in his Body, the Church. Accordingly, I propose the sublation of *communio abscondita* through a Lubacian pneumatological-sacramentalism, a sublation that, I hope, is both a corrective correlative and an irenic complement to Barth's own effort christocentrically to re-center the *Deus absconditus*.

1. *Barthian predestination: Lubacian convergence and dyadic limit*

(a) *The double-predestined One*

For Barth, predestination is the content of the history of the encounter between God and humanity; it is the substance of the eternal decree of God's love for sinful humanity.⁴ The insight of Barth's doctrine lies in the weight of christological insistence he brings to bear on the doctrine of *praedestinatio gemina*.⁵ Associated with Isidore of Seville in the seventh century, but more explicitly tied to Gottschalk in the ninth, through John Calvin *praedestinatio gemina* became a decisive doctrinal mark of the Reformed tradition: the doctrine of the predestination of some to election and others to rejection.⁶ On Barth's view, the traditional doctrine suffered from a

⁴Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols., in 13, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley, et al. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956–75), II/2, 185–86.

⁵The christological key and basis of the doctrine of predestination, as developed by Barth, builds on an innovative lecture of Pierre Maury, "Election et Foi," delivered at the *Congrès international de théologie calviniste* in Geneva in 1936. Maury's lecture was something of a watershed for Barth, to the extent that Bruce McCormack has suggested that "More than any other influence in Barth's life, it was Maury who deserves credit for opening the way to that form of 'christocentrism' which became synonymous with the name Karl Barth." See Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 455–58, here at 458; cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 154–55.

⁶Calvin writes: "Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge [London: James Clarke & Co., 1962], 3.21.7; cf. 3.21–24).

practice of theology *in abstracto*, that is, a form of theologizing that prioritized speculation or epistemological description over “concrete” attention to the biblical text. The Bible must absorb the world into Christ; there can be no standard of theological truth outside the christological circumference of the biblical narrative. The traditional Reformed doctrine of predestination was hereby said to have failed to the extent that it supposed predestination concerned first and foremost an abstract aggregate of individuals elected or rejected by a hidden *decretum absolutum*.⁷

In that it failed to treat Jesus Christ as both the subject and object of election, the Reformed doctrine fell into the theological muddle of a “doctrine of God who elects *in abstracto*” and a “doctrine of man elected *in abstracto*.”⁸ According to Barth, the whole content of the decree of God resides in Christ: *Jésus Christ est le miroir et le patron où Dieu a déclaré les trésors infinis de sa bonté*.⁹ Jesus Christ is the “beginning of all God’s ways and works.”¹⁰ He is the mirror of God’s will and the revelation of the divine decree.¹¹ He is “electing God and elected man in One.”¹² Thus Barth retrieves the biblical

For Barth’s catalogue, rehearsal, and exegesis of the doctrine through Augustine and Aquinas up to and through the Reformed scholastics, see Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 14–18, and 36–41. Richard Muller has suggested these pages are proof that Barth could have been a historian of doctrine of the first rank: see Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Labyrinth Press, 1986). For another Barthian view (by a former pupil) that tries somewhat to reconcile Barth and Calvin, see Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956).

⁷Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 115.

⁸Ibid., 76, cf. 49.

⁹John Calvin, *Congrég. sur l’élect. Ét.*, 1562, C. R. 8, 108; as quoted by Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 120. Barth’s point of departure is subtly and consciously rooted in Calvin, not only in the latter’s characterization of Christ as “the mirror of God,” but also Calvin’s familiar insistence that doctrine be firmly grounded in the revelation of Christ: “To hold a balanced view we must turn to God’s Word, where we shall find true understanding” (*Institutes* 21.3). The irony is that Calvin’s doctrine ends up for Barth exemplifying doctrinal work *in abstracto*.

¹⁰Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 120.

¹¹Ibid., 95.

¹²Ibid., 3. Cf.: “What singles Him out from the rest of the elect, and yet also, and for the first time, unites Him with them, is the fact that as elected man He is also the electing God, electing them in His own humanity. In that He (as God) wills

content of election lost on the Reformers who abstracted from the trinitarian revelation of the Bible, identifying the Father alone as the electing God and thus proceeding in a speculative fashion forgetful of the Son.¹³ This practice of theology *in abstracto* ended up, so Barth claims, with a *Deus absconditus* whose will and decree became remote from the love revealed in the Crucified. Only in the mirror of Christ does the grace of the love that is the triune God, on the one hand, and the redemption that is fully given to humanity, on the other, come into revelatory view. “Jesus Christ reveals to us our election as an election which is made by Him, by His will which is also the will of God.”¹⁴

As electing God and elected man in One, Christ reveals the dynamic of the doctrine of predestination to be irreducibly double in the twofold reality of Christ’s unified person. Christ is both the One predestined to salvation and the One predestined to perdition.¹⁵ A Chalcedonian logic of duality in unity is hereby mobilized to ground the theme of Pauline exchange in the midst of *praedestinatio gemina*: Christ elects to be rejected as the Son of God in order that he may be elected as the son of man to redemption. By this interchange Christ’s election is “the original and all-inclusive election.”¹⁶ The election of humanity is thus revealed in the rejection of the One who alone is worthy of salvation: “The rejection which all men incurred, the wrath of God under which all men lie, the death which all men must die, God in His love for men transfers from all eternity to Him in whom he loves and elects them, and whom He elects at

Himself (as man), He also wills them. And so they are elect ‘in Him,’ in and with His own election” (117).

¹³Ibid., 79: “God is not *in abstracto* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the triune God. He is so with a definite purpose and reference; in virtue of the love and freedom in which in the bosom of His triune being He has foreordained Himself from and to all eternity.”

¹⁴Ibid., 115.

¹⁵Ibid., 162: “To the election of Jesus Christ there belongs, then, elected man as well as the electing God. There are two sides to the will of God in the election of Jesus Christ. And since this will is identical with predestination, from the very first and in itself it is a double predestination And because the eternal divine predestination is identical with the election of Jesus Christ, its twofold content is that God wills to lose in order that man may gain. There is a sure and certain salvation for man, and a sure and certain risk for God.”

¹⁶Ibid., 117.

their head and in their place.”¹⁷ Jesus Christ is the double predestined One:

If the teachers of predestination were right when they spoke always of a duality, of election and reprobation, of predestination to salvation or perdition, to life or death, then we may say already that in the election of Jesus Christ which is the eternal will of God, God has ascribed to man the former, election, salvation and life; and to Himself He has ascribed the latter, reprobation, perdition and death.¹⁸

Because Jesus is the Lord and Head of both the elect and the reject there is therefore solidarity for both in him.¹⁹ “The cross of Jesus Christ stands between them, and it is the only hope of both.”²⁰ For Barth, this means “predestination is the non-rejection of man.”²¹ And so, in fidelity to the Calvinist tradition, Barth figures predestina-

¹⁷Ibid., 123.

¹⁸Ibid., 162–63.

¹⁹On this theme Barth has long passages of scriptural exegesis on “doubles” throughout the Bible: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah, Ephraim and Manasseh. In each case there is one who is loved/favored and one who is rejected/cursed. Barth reads this theme into Leviticus 14 and 16, the rites of purification where pairs of animals are taken, one slain and the other set free. His exegesis extends through David and Saul into the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The dialectic then passes into the New Testament through the disciple whom Jesus loved (cf. Jn 19:26) and the disciple to whom Jesus said “Get behind me, Satan!” (Mt 16:23), and then to the two thieves crucified on either side of Jesus. The theme climaxes with Saul of Tarsus and Judas Iscariot. In each case, one figure is elected/loved the other is rejected/cursed. The point, for Barth, is that all these doubles are finally infolded into Jesus, who reconciles the elected and rejected in himself: “Jesus Christ both came down from heaven and ascended into heaven. And descended, He both lives by the grace of God and is branded by the wrath of God. He both claims the world as His own and is rejected by His own. And, since all this is the will of God, He is both the Elect of God and the Rejected of God, rejected because He is elect and elect in His rejection.” See Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 355–409, 419–49, and 455–506, here at 366.

²⁰Ibid., 348.

²¹Ibid., 167. Cf. Ibid., 3, *Leitsatz* § 32: “The doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel because of all words that can be said or heard it is the best: that God elects man; that God is for man too the One who loves in freedom. It is grounded in the knowledge of Jesus Christ because He is both the electing God and elected man in One.”

tion as incontrovertibly double; but in a recapitulation of that same tradition, Barth proposes that predestination is never dual:

It is not a will directed equally toward man's life and man's death, towards salvation and its opposite. If we look at it from the standpoint of the election of Jesus Christ [i.e., if we refuse to speculate *in abstracto*], and if we are consistent in finding the will and choice of God only in this election, then a "love" directed equally toward human salvation and human damnation would have to be described as a quite arbitrary construct—just as arbitrary, in fact, as that which would deny to God all right to a love of this kind.²²

(b) *Lubacian convergence and Barthian limit*

The real convergence of Barth and de Lubac, as Balthasar claims, is signaled in the fact that Barth "inserts a weighty chapter on the election of the Church between the election of Christ and the election of the individual."²³ There is always, between the election of Jesus and the election of this or that person, a constitutive and mediating community (either Israel, the community of Old Testament "expectation," or the Church, the community of New Testament "recollection").²⁴ According to Balthasar, Barth's move definitively "breaks open the narrowly individualistic coloring that the Church's claim to be the means of salvation now possesses and opens her to the world."²⁵ Election is no longer the election of individuals, but the election of Jesus Christ and in him the *communio* he establishes. As Keith Starckenburg writes: "The Elect of God, Jesus Christ, includes in his election other human beings—even all human beings. But, God does not elect 'private persons in the singular or plural' (II/2, 196). Instead, God elects human beings as a 'fellowship (*Gemeinschaft*)' (II/2, 216)."²⁶

²²Ibid., 171.

²³Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 41.

²⁴Cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/2, 45ff.

²⁵Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Edward T. Oakes, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 183.

²⁶Keith Starckenburg, "Of Corporate Growth in Karl Barth," unpublished draft of chapter 1 of "The Pleasure and Form of God's Glory: The Conditions of

The christological accent of Barth's doctrine of predestination is internal to his insistent focus on the community of election in Christ. This focus is shared by de Lubac for whom, likewise, the doctrine of predestination "is envisaged by St. Paul from the social standpoint."²⁷ For both de Lubac and Barth, "There is no *vocatio*, and therefore no *unio cum Christo*, which does not as such lead directly into the communion of saints, i.e., the *communio vocatorum*."²⁸ The harmony of Barth and de Lubac lies in this claim of *communio* as the intrinsic content of the human vocation, predestined from eternity in Christ (cf. Eph 1:4) to form a single Body of many members (cf. 1 Cor 12:12). Beneath this important convergence, however, lies a significant divergence concerning the mode of humanity's present participation in the encounter of God and man in Christ, a divergence which, on my view, is linked to Barth's self-limiting reliance on a strictly dyadic logic of predestination and election.

For Barth, the content of the encounter of God and man is enclosed in the logic of the double predestination of Christ.²⁹ Accordingly, communal mediation in Christ is conceived fully in terms of the couplet "elected" and "rejected." This leads Robert Jenson to lament what he perceives as Barth's "merely two-sided understanding of human community."³⁰ This strictly dyadic view of predestination and communion commended by Barth is internal to what Jenson further identifies as Barth's failure to understand the logic of predestination in terms that are open to the eschaton: like Calvin, Barth "described the event of election much in the protological past tense and little in the eschatological future tense."³¹

Corporate Growth in Barth's Doctrine of God" (Ph.D. diss.: University of Virginia), 52 (of typescript). I am grateful to Starkenburg for allowing me to consult and quote from this draft of his dissertation.

²⁷Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard and Sister Elizabeth Englund, O.C.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 275, n. 106.

²⁸Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.2, 682. Cf.: "From the very outset Jesus Christ did not envisage individual followers, disciples, and witnesses but a plurality of such united by Him both with Himself and with one another" (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.2, 681).

²⁹Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 185–86.

³⁰Jenson, "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went," 302.

³¹*Ibid.*, 301.

The encounter of *communio* thus—contained in a dialectically conditioned “event” itself enclosed in a “protological past tense”—tends to abstract itself from the sphere of further reciprocal contingencies, that is, from the genuine continuation of that event embodied in an as yet present and unfolding history. In this way, confined to the “protological past tense,” the Church’s communal relation to Christ inclines unwittingly to replace concrete communication with spectral apprehension. What is more (and concomitantly) the community itself becomes “spectral” to the extent that its concrete relation to (or communication with) Jesus risks being reduced to a shared appeal to a discretely idealized “life of Jesus,” which has become paradoxically a-historical to the extent this “life of Jesus” is circumscribed beyond further contingency.

In this way, dyadically conditioned and encompassed in the “protological past tense,” Barth’s doctrine inclines to posit the Head-Body relation of Jesus and the communion of his followers in terms congenial to a parallelism of discrete historical phenomenon: this first-century Palestinian Jew, on the one hand, and the Church, on the other.³² Thus the Barthian approach threatens to elide the possibility of a fully internal specification of the union of Head and Body, a *communicatio idiomatum* of the Incarnate Logos (his “historical” first-century life) with the Church (his “ecclesial” continuation). Only by specifying this mode of union—the pattern of the concrete

³²This dualism is broadly convertible with the Grace-Nature dualism deconstructed by de Lubac in his resourcing of Aquinas’s theology of *desiderium naturale visionis Dei*. In the context of recognizing a dualism in Barth between the Head and Body of Christ, the argument in favor of a Lubacian supplement to Barth links up with John Milbank’s conviction that Barth failed to question the hierarchical duality of grace and nature as discrete stages, and so remained within the logic and assumption of “modern theology.” See John Milbank, “The Programme of Radical Orthodoxy,” in *Radical Orthodoxy?—A Catholic Enquiry*, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 33–45; cf. id., *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (London: SCM, 2005). Cf. George Chantraine, S.J., “Beyond Modernity and Postmodernity: The Thought of Henri de Lubac,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17, no. 2 (Summer, 1990): 207–19. On the Lubacian “surnaturel,” see Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Surnaturel: Études historiques*, Coll. Théologie 8 (Paris: Aubier, 1946); id., *Augustinianism and Modern Theology*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard (New York: Crossroads, 2000); id., *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Crossroads, 1998); and id., *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, trans. Brother Richard Arnandez, F.S.C. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984).

ontological/narrative mutual indwelling of the Head in the Body—only this specification resists the drift toward parallelism. This specification will involve breaking open the discrete “protological past tense” by identifying the constitutive term according to which the Church herself is the perpetuation of the Son’s incarnate presence, how she “not only carries on his [the Son’s] work, but she is his very continuation.”³³

2. Predestination: Holy Spirit and eschaton

(a) Election and communal coinherence

The dyadic limitation into which the Barthian doctrine unwittingly tends (as I have provisionally sketched it above) converges with what Jenson identifies as Barth’s tendency to avoid the Holy Spirit in favor of a binitarian Father–Son relation.³⁴

³³de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 76. Cf. *Dominus Iesus*, Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2000), 16.

³⁴Jenson, “Predestination,” *passim*; and *id.*, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” *passim*. In Barth, Jenson discerns the reduction of the triadic nature of God to a mere two-sidedness: the Spirit, the “fellowship” between the dyad of Father and Son, is merely the common bond between two fully realized subjects. Indeed, for Barth, the Spirit is not fully “personal”—he is only a *modus*. Barth writes: “even if the Father and the Son might be called ‘person’ . . . the Holy Spirit could not possibly be regarded as the third ‘person’ . . . He is not a third spiritual Subject, a third I . . . He is a third mode of being of the one divine Subject of [the] Lord” (*Church Dogmatics* I/1, 469). Thus in the Barthian Trinity there are three *modi essendi* but only two *personae*. Accordingly (and contradictorily) Barth posits the Trinity as a *dyad* of persons in which the Spirit alone is not fully actualized to the dignity of that status Aquinas described as “most perfect in all of nature” (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 29, a. 23). For Jenson, this pneumatological minimalism in Barth is not discretely his own: it is an acute form of an apparently general Western poverty. On Jenson’s view, the *filioque* and the *vinculum amoris* lead Western trinitarianism to a “common difficulty in conceiving the Spirit’s specific immanent initiative in God,” which becomes pronounced in Barth: “a difficulty in conceiving the Spirit’s entire salvation-historical initiative” (“You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” 300). But is Jenson correct to suggest that Barth’s binitarianism results from an inherent Western trinitarian deficiency? Do the *filioque* and the *vinculum amoris* necessarily lead to the evacuation of the Spirit’s personhood?—his ontological reduction to a mere *modus*? David Hart, from an Orthodox perspective, and Joseph Ratzinger, from a Catholic perspective, have commonly shown the depth of the personal reality of the Spirit according to the Western/Augustinian theology of the

This dyadically reduced trinitarianism underpins the Barthian problematic.

As Starckenburg notes, for Barth, the perfection of the community elected in Christ involves participating in “God’s self-movement, which Barth summarizes as the seeking and finding of fellowship.”³⁵ The primordial pattern of this “seeking and finding of

Spirit as the *ineffabilis quidam complexus* of Father and Son. Defending the Augustinian view, they have identified “*communio*” itself as the crucial, *personal mode* of the Spirit, just as sonship and paternity are respectively the personal modes of the second and first persons (cf. David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 175–78; and Joseph Ratzinger, “The Holy Spirit as Communion,” in *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfür, trans. Henry Taylor [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005], 38–59). From this, one can perhaps go further, arguing that the fully personal nature of the Spirit is most perfectly secured by the *filioque*—as, for example, Stratford Caldecott has argued in the context of a defense of Meister Eckhart’s trinitarianism. Caldecott suggests that the Holy Spirit is only distinguished from the Father and Son by virtue of his “dual origin”: “the *filioque* tradition permits us to distinguish the Persons purely as relations within the Trinity. The Orthodox allege that this undermines our sense of the Father as the sole principle of the Trinity. The Latins might reply that by rejecting the *filioque* the East reduces the distinctive ‘spiration’ of the Spirit to no more than another ‘coming forth’ from the Father. Some theologians have suggested that the dispute could be solved by agreeing to speak of the Spirit proceeding from the Father ‘through’ the Son. But this also has a disadvantage: it presents the Son as a mere way-station or tunnel. The metaphor of ‘giving,’ as distinct from ‘generating’ or ‘proceeding,’ helps us remember that God is no impersonal substance but only and forever personal. But then, if the Son is truly to be the image of his Father, he must also be a giver in his own right, and not just a transmitter of the Father’s gift to himself. . . . The Father remains the sole principle, because the Son has nothing he has not received from this source. But the Trinity is asymmetrical reciprocity, not a symmetrical hierarchy proceeding from the Father. Its asymmetry is precisely the root of its dynamism as eternal Act, eternal *perichoresis*” (“Trinity and Creation: An Eckhartian Perspective,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 30, no. 4 [Winter, 2003]: 696–714, here at 709, n. 28). On this logic, Barth’s pneumatological minimalism cannot be inherently rooted in the *filioque*. My own hunch is that Barth’s binitarianism is more deeply planted in that other culprit Jenson identifies: the “merely two-sided understanding of human community and so of historical reality, inherited from the ‘I-Thou’ tradition of 19th-century German philosophical anthropology” (“You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” 302). Further on the *filioque*, cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologic*, vol. 3: *The Spirit of Truth*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 207–18; and John Milbank, “The Second Difference,” in *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 171–93.

³⁵Starckenburg, “Of Corporate Growth in Karl Barth,” 38 (of typescript); cf.

fellowship” is constituted by the triune self-movement of God. Accordingly, if the doctrine of God grounds the pattern of the community of the elect, a binitarian conception of God’s trinity will necessarily devolve to a dyadic sense of community. Thus Jenson’s charge: Barthian binitarianism is the crux according to which his doctrine of predestination is confined to the “protological past tense” and limited to a “merely two-sided understanding of human community.”³⁶ Jenson writes:

The “inner-divine” fellowship of Father and Son in the Spirit is explicitly described [by Barth] as “two-sided,” since the Spirit is the fellowship itself. Precisely this merely two-sided fellowship is then the eternal ground for there being fellowship between God and humanity . . . that is to say that this merely two-sided fellowship is the eternal ground of all salvation-history.³⁷

Thus, to move beyond the “merely two-sided understanding of human community” is to demand a reinvigoration of pneumatological reflection. The Spirit himself must complete Barth’s christological doctrine of predestination. It is to the Spirit that the tradition attributes the work of *communio*, and it is to the Spirit that the tradition attributes that mode by which “God’s time” drives forward toward the pleroma of the eschaton.

The upshot of Barth’s pneumatological forgetfulness is his failure to specify a concrete theology of *communio*, a theology of the encounter of God and man that passes beyond the merely “I-Thou” into the authentically ternary (i.e. “trinitarian”) fullness of “we.”³⁸ Thus, as Jenson writes, “[p]erhaps the final reason for the whole

Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1, 641.

³⁶Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” 302.

³⁷Ibid., 302; citing Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, 504.

³⁸Here I am thinking of a familiar insistence of Joseph Ratzinger: “The Christian’s relation to God is not simply . . . ‘I and Thou,’ but, as the liturgy prays for us every day, ‘per Christum in Spiritu Sancto ad Patrem’ . . . Christ, the one, is here the ‘we’ into which Love, namely the Holy Spirit, gathers us and which means simultaneously being bound to each other and being directed toward the common ‘you’ of the one Father” (“Person in Theology: Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17, no. 3 [Fall, 1990] 437–54, here at 453). Cf. Marc Cardinal Ouellet, *Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*, trans. Philip Milligan and Linda M. Cicone (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 51–56.

web of Spirit-avoidance in *Kirchliche Dogmatik* is avoidance of the church.”³⁹ According to Jenson, this avoidance is a force of necessity rooted in Barth’s own logic of the nature of “objective” revelation:

For if the Pentecostal creation of a structured continuing community were identified as the “objectivity” of the gospel’s truth *pro nobis*, then this community itself, in its structural temporal and spatial extension, would be seen as the *Bedingung der Möglichkeit* of faith.⁴⁰

The objective matrix of the Church as divinely inspired by the Spirit and therefore “the active *mediatrix* of faith” is precisely what Barth’s “web of Spirit-avoidance” intentionally seeks to foreclose.⁴¹ Barth’s pneumatological forgetfulness is thus not a lapse of mindfulness, but rather, a concerted attempt to suppress the possibility of making the Church herself an objective category of revelation—which is precisely what Catholic theology demands.⁴² Thus Jenson is led to ask whether “Barth’s impulsion to practiced binitarianism . . . [is] in fact the last resistance of his Protestantism?”⁴³

Jenson’s argument with Barth is an injunction for a constructive extension. He argues that Barth rightly identifies that “predestination is not the act of a God-the-Father abstracted from the triune relations, sorting fates in a pretemporal eternity.”⁴⁴ But, for Jenson, Barth’s move from the Father to the Son-related-to-the-Father is only the first step: “Although a christological interpretation of election is the first necessary step from the traditional [i.e., Calvinist] position, it cannot be the last one Barth’s systematics will not quite suffice.”⁴⁵ The Son-related-to-the-Father needs to be consummated in relation to the Spirit. Thus Jenson daringly calls for the Holy Spirit to be read as the electing God: to “make *Spirit*-discourse—rather than Father-discourse or Son-discourse—the

³⁹Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” 302.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 303.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²*Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 748–69.

⁴³Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” 302.

⁴⁴Jenson, “Predestination,” 137.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 137.

primary *locus* of our interpretation [of predestination].”⁴⁶ This dogmatic shift is based on the claim that “Predestination is simply the doctrine of justification stated in the active voice.”⁴⁷ And so: “logic leads us to the Spirit as the predestining God.”⁴⁸ The eternity of the divine decree is thus allowed to cross from the prefix “pre” to the prefix “post.”⁴⁹ The christological truth of predestination is pneumatologically opened: the un-cordoned life of Jesus now becomes the incipient ingathering of the cosmos by the Spirit into the eschatological Body of Christ. In this way, a doctrine of pneumatological-predestination reads the truth of the world from its christic *telos*. If the Holy Spirit is the eschatological efficacy of the truth revealed in the life of Christ, then Christology must both participate in and anticipate the *communio* of the eschaton or it is meaningless.⁵⁰

(b) *Election and sacramental encounter*

What Jenson offers as a pneumatological extension of Barth’s doctrine of predestination can be read as already implicit in the theology of de Lubac, for whom the horizon of predestination is the eschatological fulfillment of the *totus Christus*. If de Lubac’s doctrine is as christocentric as Barth’s, it is christocentric from a vantage point dislodged from the “protological past tense.” Thus, if de Lubac “anticipates Barth’s famous doctrine of predestination,”⁵¹ he also proleptically offers a correlative resource by which to fulfill it.

De Lubac’s doctrine of predestination is oriented by Irenaeus of Lyon’s expansion of the Pauline theology of the “dispensation of

⁴⁶Ibid., 138.

⁴⁷Ibid., 134.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 138.

⁵⁰Ibid.: “The trinitarian dialectics [*sic*] can be the appropriate conceptual scheme of predestination only if the whole scheme—of Father, Son, and Spirit—is used and only if the Spirit’s metaphysical priority (“God is Spirit”) is affirmed. The speaking of the gospel is the event of predestination in that the gospel gives what it speaks about, but this eschatological efficacy of the gospel is the Spirit. We must parody Barth: the Holy Spirit is the choosing [electing] God.”

⁵¹Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 41.

the grace of God” in the doctrine of recapitulation (*ἀνακεφαλαίωσις*).⁵² This Irenaean theology is sensitive to what de Lubac perceives as St. Paul’s insistent recollection of how both natural law and Mosaic law work pedagogically to ground the gradual intensification (through history) of the self-communication God makes to man of his own inner life,⁵³ the climax of which is the predestined fullness of time that completes the process of God and man becoming mutually accustomed to one another (*mutuae inter Deum et hominem assuetudinis*).⁵⁴ On this view, the human person is a being *in the midst* of divine predestination, where “to be” is “to be receptive” to the ontological transformation of divine pedagogy.

The directional openness of humanity’s predestined being issues from Irenaeus’s reading of the biblical account of the creation of Adam “in accordance to our image and in becoming to our likeness” (Gn 1:26, LXX).⁵⁵ Spoken through the Logos of God and sealed by the Spirit, the human is made according to the image of God to grow into the vocation of the divine likeness.⁵⁶ In this process, the human is gracefully prompted by God, who is “like a

⁵²de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 247.

⁵³Ibid. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 52–67.

⁵⁴*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 53; cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, III.20.2 (PG 7.944).

⁵⁵My translation of Genesis 1:26 (κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν) is meant to bring out something of the Greek Septuagint I take to underpin the Irenaean theology. The Greek word εἰκών means “semblance,” “likeness” or “image,” and signifies a manner of distinction from an original—a difference—and this without any temporal (or historical) implication; what is an εἰκών of an original remains always different, it *never becomes the original*, it is never absorbed into that which it reflects. The word ὁμοίωσις, on the other hand, signifies something subtly different: deriving from ὁμοίως, it is a word with a more ambiguous meaning, signifying something in the range of “like” to “most like” to “same.” In every case the word ὁμοίως unequivocally emphasizes the side of similitude over the “likeness in difference” of εἰκών. But ὁμοίωσις can also be understood as temporally (or historically) signifying the full range of similitude implicit in ὁμοίως (ὁμοίωσις, literally meaning “becoming like” or “coming into assimilation”). So where the word εἰκών stresses a *difference* of similitude (and even an integrity of differentiated-likeness outside of becoming) ὁμοίωσις can be understood to signify an integration into shared likeness and identity within a temporal (or historical) *becoming increasingly one with*.

⁵⁶Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* IV, preface (PG 7.973–5).

mother who at first gives suck.”⁵⁷ God nurtures his incipient creature, giving him time, natural law, Torah; until, in the fullness of time, God graces humanity with his very Self in the Incarnation. This is the means of habituation through which the human becomes divinely humanized, “formed little by little to the image and likeness of the uncreated God.”⁵⁸ The “image” and “likeness” thus structure the storied unfolding of humanity’s predestination into the deiform perfection of communion with God. As de Lubac writes:

[T]he doctrine of the Fathers is organized . . . around the double notion of the divine image and likeness, we can say that what is most common in their thought and in their terminology, is the conviction that the image of God in man is nothing other than the nature of spirit, or more exactly the image is that part of man that is superior to nature; that the divine likeness, when it is achieved, will be nothing other than the possession of the supernatural end; and in this end there is an organic linking of the image to the likeness; and in this sense man is created according to the image of God in view of arriving one day to his likeness.⁵⁹

The organic link of the “image” to the divine “likeness” is thus internal to the mode of predestination, the mode of the creature’s passage into the *communio vocatorum* of divine likeness.⁶⁰

De Lubac takes up the pedagogical accent of Irenaeus and blends it with an Augustinian sacramentality such that the final passage of humanity into the divine likeness involves a movement through the divine pedagogy of law (natural and Torah) into the sacramental grace of Incarnation. The final means of divine habituation, thus, is the Eucharist, the sacrament of the Paschal Mystery wherein humanity is integrated into the sacrifice of the Lamb and changed into Christ himself according to Augustine’s dictum: “You will not change me into you, as you do with the food of your body. Instead you will be changed into me” (*Nec tu me in te mutuabis, sicut*

⁵⁷Ibid., IV.38 (PG 7.1105–9); as cited by de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 248.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹de Lubac, *Summaeurel*, 475.

⁶⁰According to Irenaeus, this passage of humanity is the work of “the two hands” of the Father (Son and Spirit), who mold the human into the communion of God’s own love. See Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* IV, preface (PG 7.973–5).

cibum carnis tuae; sed tu mutaberis in me).⁶¹ The Lubacian theology of predestination accordingly can be understood as a theology of the sacramental predestination of the Church. The Church is the mother of creation in whose womb creation is drawn into God's parental love. As *Pastor Hermae* characterizes her, the Church is the mother who grows young, the One for whom all creation was made. She is the One to whom creation is predestined, which means that predestination is the paradoxical birth of creation drawn into the communion of the Church to become the Body of Christ. As de Lubac writes:

whereas, in the physical order, the child leaves the womb of his mother, and, withdrawing from her, becomes increasingly independent of her protective guardianship as he grows, becomes stronger and advances in years, the Church brings us forth to the new life she bears by receiving us into her womb, and the more our divine education progresses, the more we become intimately bound to her. Saint Irenaeus was already saying, "one must cling to the Church, be brought up within her womb and feed there on the Lord's Scripture."⁶²

Drawn into the Church to feed on Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, the pedagogy of the faithful becomes the ontological transformation of eucharistic participation, the "mysterious continuity linking the Incarnation to the Church."⁶³

⁶¹Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.10.16 (PL 32.742), as cited in Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmonds, C.J. (London: SCM, 2006), 178, and *Catholicism* (100). Paul McPartlan has discussed the importance of this quotation in de Lubac's eucharistic theology, pointing out that, in addition to *Catholicism* and *Corpus Mysticum*, de Lubac quotes the phrase (or alludes to it) in "Mysticism and Mystery" (in *Theological Fragments*, trans. Rebecca Howell Balinski [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989], 35–69, here at 67); in *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin* ([London: Burns and Oates, 1965], 58); and in *Christian Faith* ([London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986], 134). McPartlan writes: "In particular, de Lubac's use of the text to express the climax of the mystical life of the Christian in eternity . . . implies that reception of the Eucharist is the Christian's prime anticipation of his end and the prime occasion of his progress toward it." See Paul McPartlan, "'You will be changed into me': Unity and Limits in de Lubac's Thought," *One in Christ* 30, no. 1 (1994): 50–60, here at 54.

⁶²Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Motherhood of the Church*, trans. Sr. Sergia Englund, O.C.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 69; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 5.20.2.

⁶³As de Lubac describes the position of the Fathers: "Despite disagreements,

3. Ternary and eucharistic community

(a) *The Barthian Eucharist and the “infinite qualitative difference”*

A certain idea of *communio* is integral to Barth’s eucharistic theology. For Barth, the reality of the elected community is expressed pre-eminently in worship, which, as with prayer, properly belongs to Jesus and devolves from him to the community he gathers to himself.⁶⁴ The Church is most truly herself in common worship, “in all its elements . . . [but] reaching its climax in the celebration of the supper.”⁶⁵ The Lord’s Supper is the “most eloquent”⁶⁶ witness to the reality of what the elected community is called to be: “the earthly-historical form of [the] existence of Jesus Christ Himself.”⁶⁷ This “earthly-historical form” exists to the extent that election is evidenced in the community wherein there is “a dispensing and eating of the bread which is broken in common. Only in it is there

which were often distinguished more for their liveliness of expression than for their depth of content, the mysterious continuity linking the incarnation to the Church was strongly felt by all, even if it had to be admitted that it was not always clearly analyzed. Is the Church not the continuation of Christ? *Christ is transferred to the Church*: these simple words are pregnant with significance. And the passing of Christ into his Church was itself prepared, or even prefigured by an earlier passing, that of the Church into Christ: is the Church not in fact the greater body from which Christ drew his body? This last point strikes the monk of Fulda, Candidus, as essential: ‘*Take and eat.*’ *That is, Gentiles, make up my body, which you already are. This is the body which is given for you. What he took from that mass of the human race, he broke by his passion, and raised up after breaking . . . Therefore what he took from us he handed over for us. You are to ‘eat,’ that is, perfect the body of the Church, so that, whole and perfect she may become the one bread, with Christ as its head . . . Bread, therefore, is the body of Christ, which he took from the body, his Church . . .*” (de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 24; quoting Candidus, *De passione Domini*, c. 5 [PL 106.68–9]).

⁶⁴Starkenburg, “The Pleasure and Form of God’s Glory,” passim (of typescript); and Paul T. Nimmo, *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth’s Ethical Vision* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2007), 147–50. Cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 151f; id., *Church Dogmatics* II/1, 676f.

⁶⁵Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/2, 639; as quoted in Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth’s Theology*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 254; and cf. 253–56.

⁶⁶Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.2, 901.

⁶⁷Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 661.

the visible fellowship (κοινωνία) of this body.”⁶⁸ Herein we can indeed speak of a certain Barthian convergence with de Lubac, for whom the Eucharist is the sacrament of ecclesial communion, *sacramentum unitatis ecclesiasticae*.⁶⁹

For Barth, the Eucharist is the communal act that effectively demonstrates that the Christian community does in fact “correspond” to Christ himself.⁷⁰ Along with confession, baptism, and prayer, the Lord’s Supper is an integral mark of the Church.⁷¹ And while, for Barth, the Lord’s Supper does not have strict priority among these four marks, nevertheless, it does have a special pre-eminent function insofar as it regulates the pattern of ecclesial *communio*. As Barth writes:

[T]he Church order to be derived from the eucharistic action will necessarily embrace, protect, and claim the life of the community and its members as it is now lived in its totality and therefore at one and the same time in its physical and spiritual nature. It will aim at the living fellowship of Christians in both spheres. . . . It will remind the community that what is lawful and right in the Lord’s Supper is lawful and right everywhere: fellowship in heavenly and therefore also in earthly things; the *communio* of the *sancti* in and in respect of the *sancta*.⁷²

In this way, for Barth, while the Eucharist may not “give” the Church, nevertheless, it does most fully bear witness to the reality of what the Church is: *communio sanctorum*. Thus the eucharistic action will “embrace, protect, and claim the life of the community” if indeed this community is truly the Church. And yet, inasmuch as the Lord’s Supper is regulative of the *communio* of the Church, eucharistic “communion” remains something of an equivocal term for Barth insofar as he is clear that the Eucharist is not necessarily constitutive of communion with Christ. In this way, beneath this apparent convergence of Barth and de Lubac, there is, nevertheless, a significant divergence concerning the

⁶⁸Ibid., 665.

⁶⁹de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 89.

⁷⁰Cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/2, 696–705.

⁷¹Ibid., 699.

⁷²Ibid., 708; as quoted by Starkenburg, “The Pleasure and Form of God’s Glory,” 71 (of typescript).

nature and function of eucharistic *communio*: whereas, for de Lubac (as we will see below), eucharistic *communio* is a real participation in Christ, effecting what it signifies and thus constituting humanity's communion in the encounter of God and man in Jesus; for Barth, by contrast, the communion of the Lord's Supper is not a necessary participation or appropriation of communion in Christ whatever.⁷³

According to Barth, a sacrament is a revelation that belongs exclusively to God: it is "the self-witness of God . . . in a form which is adapted to our creaturely knowledge."⁷⁴ In this sacramental theology, the "self-witness of God" belongs exclusively to Christ such that Christ is a sacrament to the exclusion of all liturgical rites and ecclesial hierarchies. Barth's sacramental theology is an attempt to "demythologize" the traditional Christian sacraments, rejecting the language of "mystery," which he saw as indigenous to paganism and foreign to the New Testament.⁷⁵ In this regard Barth himself acknowledges: "we oppose in principle and *ab ovo* an ancient and overwhelmingly strong ecclesial and theological tradition."⁷⁶ None of the functions

⁷³Obviously Barth's sacramental theology is sharply at odds with the Roman Catholic tradition. What is perhaps less obvious is how radically at odds it is with the received "orthodoxy" of his own Reformed tradition. In the nineteenth century, the American Calvinist, John Williamson Nevin, cogently demonstrated what a high view of the Eucharist orthodox Calvinism actually had; and more, he shows definitively that Zwingli's position was categorically refused in all the original Reformed confessions. But more than simply recovering Calvin's eucharistic theology, Nevin also offered an extension of Calvin in the form of an explicit doctrine of Christ's union to the Church, maintained and accomplished in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Moreover, there is in Nevin a strong correlation between the gift of the ecclesial Body and the Eucharist, and in this regard Nevin represents perhaps the most promising possibility of a Reformed/Lubacian correlation. See John Williamson Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Calvinist Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (1846; reprint ed. Augustine Thompson, O.P., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2000), *passim*.

⁷⁴Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1, 52: "Revelation means the giving of signs. We can say quite simply that revelation means sacrament, i.e., the self-witness of God, the representation of His truth, and therefore of the truth in which He knows Himself, in the form of creaturely objectivity and therefore in a form which is adapted to our creaturely knowledge."

⁷⁵Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, 105, and 109.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 102.

or rites of the Church are worthy of the designation “μυστήριον” or “*sacramentum*.”⁷⁷ Only Christ effects what he signifies such that his “self-witness” cannot be identified with any ecclesial action: “Jesus Christ . . . is fundamentally alone as the only subject truly at work. The faithfulness of the man who is distinct from Him cannot be an answer to the word of divine faithfulness spoken in His history.”⁷⁸

Conceived of in this way, the Eucharist is not a necessary participation in Christ, much less an ontologically constitutive act of the community’s “correspondence” to God. This is especially evident in Barth’s rejection of the doctrine of the *triforme Corpus Christi*—the ternary mediation of the “ecclesial,” “sacramental,” and “historical” bodies of Christ. Barth writes:

[The scriptural references to the Church as Christ’s Body] do not provide any basis for the idea of a Church which exists *ipsa quasi altera Christi persona*, as fully proclaimed in the encyclical [of Pope Pius XII] “*Mystici corporis*” (p. 54). There are not two or possibly three bodies of Christ: the historical, in which He died and rose again; the mystical which is His community; and that in which He is really present in the Lord’s Supper.⁷⁹

For Barth, the eucharistic “body” is a symbol in the mundane sense.⁸⁰ It does not constitute communion in Christ (even while it is regulative of the ecclesial order). The Barthian Eucharist is not in any way a term of effective *communicatio idiomatum* of the ecclesial Body with its christic Head. The Lord’s Supper does not effect what it signifies: “We must be clear that the community is not made the body of Christ or its members, members of this

⁷⁷Ibid., 108–09: “In the New Testament *mysterion* denotes an event in the world of time and space which is directly initiated and brought to pass by God alone, so that in distinction from all other events it is basically a mystery to human cognition in respect of its origin and possibility . . . Faith as a human action is nowhere called a mystery, nor is Christian obedience, nor love, nor hope, nor the existence and function of the *ecclesia*, nor its proclamation of the Gospel, nor its tradition as such, *nor baptism, nor the Lord’s Supper*” (emphasis added).

⁷⁸Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, 19.

⁷⁹Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 666.

⁸⁰Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, 468.

body by . . . baptism and the Lord's Supper (as so called 'sacraments')."⁸¹

According to Barth, the elect are made the Body of Christ in the election of Jesus from eternity. And this eternal election has one temporal object: the Paschal Mystery. "And it [the community] became His body, they became its members, in the fulfillment of their eternal election in His death on the cross of Golgotha, proclaimed in His resurrection from the dead."⁸² The content of encounter—the reality of the election of the community—is the "content of Easter day."⁸³ The Body that embraced the death of humanity, which elected the rejection which all men incurred, is raised to new life in order to reveal the transference of the divine decree, the revelation that "God is for man the One who loves in freedom."⁸⁴ Thus is disclosed the mystery of the Church: that God has elected to make the lost cause of humanity his own Body, which becomes his Body in the election of Jesus Christ, in his life, death, and Resurrection. What distinguishes the Body of Christ from the rest of humanity, therefore, is not the objective inclusion of some or others in Christ, since Christ is Lord of the reject and elect. Rather, what distinguishes the Body of Christ is the *subjective* realization of this inclusion, which, for Barth, is the work of the Holy Spirit:

[T]he work of the Holy Spirit is *merely* to "realise subjectively" the election of Jesus Christ and His work as done and proclaimed in time, to reveal and bring it to men and women. By the work of the Holy Spirit the body of Christ, as it is by God's decree from all eternity and as it has become in virtue of His act in time, acquires in all its hiddenness historical dimensions.⁸⁵

The "subjective realization" of election is published and declared pre-eminently in the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper manifests the subjective realization of the community's election in the objective double predestination of Jesus Christ. But inasmuch as the Spirit

⁸¹Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 667.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., 664.

⁸⁴Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 3.

⁸⁵Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 667 (my emphasis).

effects “subjective realization” and the Eucharist manifests “subjective realization,” all this occurs in the sphere of the “merely” subjective—a sphere ultimately passive to the objective dynamism of participation in the constitutive contingencies of the event of encounter. Pneumatology is accorded an ontologically minimal role, which devolves to the Eucharist an abstractly declarative function: the Eucharist is not a real participation in *communio*, it merely represents “*communio*.” If it were otherwise, if the Spirit effected an objective realization through the Eucharist, then the *communio* that resulted from the Eucharist would be a constitutive agent, an active *mediatrix* of faith (as Catholic theology demands). Thus, Barth’s pneumatological forgetfulness is something like a requisite of his suppression of the community’s objective content in favor of its purely “subjective” value. The upshot of this “last resistance of Protestantism” means that the Spirit is not accorded the due respect of action otherwise attributed to the Father and the Son in the economy of salvation.

The Spirit having been left with no attribution of trinitarian urgency, the ecclesial and eschatological task of *communio* is accordingly minimalized, and with it traditional sacramentology. It is thus that Barth departs from the traditional understanding of the mode according to which Christ continues his incarnational presence in the Church, where Jesus is understood to have passed over into the Church’s sacramental life (*in sacramenta transivit*).⁸⁶ Barth’s concerted rejection of the traditional view leads (at least in part) to a *communio abscondita*, insofar as, in his revision of traditional sacramentology, the term of the concrete mediation of Christ in the Church is elided. This is the necessary detriment of ecclesiology since (on Barth’s own account) the Spirit makes possible the communication of the creature with God, because he is the “life-giving power” of the Christian community and so “the life-principle of the Christian Church.”⁸⁷ Barth’s eucharistic minimalism is correlative to his “Spirit-avoidance.” The Eucharist is minimalized in a theology where the Spirit does not fully alight, where he merely “touches the old world of the flesh . . . as a tangent touches a circle, that is,

⁸⁶Leo the Great, *Sermo* 74, “*De ascensione Domini II*,” 2 (PL 54.398A); cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1116.

⁸⁷Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 151–52.

without touching it.”⁸⁸ And herein, the “infinite qualitative difference”⁸⁹ Balthasar read in the younger Barth reemerges in the eucharistic minimalism of the older Barth in whom there is no concrete participational sign of the abiding incarnational presence of Christ’s alighting Spirit. To this effect, something of *Der Römerbrief*’s refusal of communication between God and humanity tends unwittingly to persist in Barth’s late work.⁹⁰

(b) *The Lubacian Eucharist gives the Church pneumatologically*

De Lubac’s eucharistic theology is grounded in a mutually constitutive reciprocity of sacramental and ecclesial spheres of existence, the heart of which is expressed in his *Corpus Mysticum: L’eucharistie et L’église au Moyen Âge*. Therein de Lubac sought to retrieve the patristic view of the Eucharist, which he famously articulated in terms of the Eucharist “giving” the Church.⁹¹ Reiterated thus, de Lubac posits the traditional view of the Eucharist as a corrective to the extrinsicism he perceived developing out of the latter half of the twelfth century.⁹² After the twelfth century,

⁸⁸Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwin Hoskins (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 30.

⁸⁹Balthasar described the early phase of Barth’s theology as a theology in which “the infinite qualitative difference is the only way of defining the relationship of God and the world.” See Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 72.

⁹⁰I am thinking of Barth’s description of prayer in *Der Römerbrief* as a cry in which merely the “possibility of God is secreted” (*Epistle to the Romans*, 298).

⁹¹The Lubacian thesis first appeared in 1938 in *Catholicisme* (cf. *Catholicism*, 100, n. 69), before it was fully developed in 1944 in *Corpus Mysticum*. The thesis was importantly reiterated in *Méditation sur l’église* (Paris: Aubier, 1953), where de Lubac wrote: “The Church gives/makes (*fait*) the Eucharist and the Eucharist gives/builds (*fait*) the Church . . . but in the strictest sense, it is the Eucharist that ultimately gives/builds (*fait*) the Church” (113, 129). This Lubacian thesis came to inform certain passages of *Lumen gentium* (cf. 3, 11), and was an especially crucial aspect of the eucharistic theology proposed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (cf. 21–26). Cf. Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., “Reflections on *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*,” *L’Osservatore Romano English Edition* (30 July 2003), 3; and Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 1–120.

⁹²Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), 86f.

according to de Lubac, the traditional understanding of the *triforme Corpus Christi* underwent a significant semantic transformation.⁹³ Before the twelfth century, the Eucharist was called “*corpus mysticum*” and the Church was called “*corpus Christi verum*.” But during the middle of the twelfth century this terminology was reversed: the Church came to be named “*corpus mysticum*” while the Eucharist was designated “*corpus Christi verum*.”⁹⁴ On de Lubac’s view, as the elements came to be designated *corpus verum* and the Church *corpus mysticum*, the relational mode of *communio* with the “historical body of Jesus” became abstracted from the Church community, while concomitantly the consecrated elements tended more easily to be reified and so abstracted from the integrity of ecclesiology and *communio*. Eucharistic piety thus could be dissociated from ecclesial unity, giving way to an increased fetishization of the “real presence” of the sacrament cordoned to the discrete sphere of individualistic piety.⁹⁵ As de Lubac writes:

[T]he total significance of the change that ensued can only be fully understood by insisting on the following observations. Of the three terms: historical body, sacramental body, and ecclesial body, that were in use, and that it was a case of putting into order amongst each other, that is to say simultaneously to oppose and unite them to one another, the caesura was originally placed between the second and the third. Such, in brief, is the fact that dominates the whole evolution of Eucharistic theories.⁹⁶

⁹³de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 23–29; on the *triforme Corpus Christi*, see Jean Borella, *The Sense of the Supernatural*, trans. G. John Champoux (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 69–77.

⁹⁴de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 3–9.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 246: “The ultimate reality of the sacrament, what was once upon a time its reality and truth *par excellence*, was thus expelled from the sacrament itself. The symbolism became extrinsic: from now on it could be ignored without damaging the integrity of the sacrament. From the moment when it became the *mystical body*, the ecclesial body was already detaching itself from the Eucharist. Durandus of Mente would one day write, condensing in one line the two terminologies that had prevailed: ‘*The form of bread . . . both contains and signifies the true flesh, while it signifies but does not contain the mystical flesh.*’ Once again, is this a minor detail in wording? No doubt it is. But this minor detail is the sign of an important fact. At the same time that it was being thrown out of the *true Body*, the Church was beginning to be thrown out of the *mystery of faith*” (quoting Durandus of Mente, *Rationale*, 4, c. 42).

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 256.

Michel de Certeau, in *La Fable Mystique*, drawing on the shifting caesura diagnosed in *Corpus Mysticum*, emphasizes precisely how the ecclesial-body-as *mystery* was lost/“hidden” by the semantic shift noted by de Lubac.⁹⁷ Certeau clarifies: shifting the caesura meant that the Church-as-social-body became “hidden” (a *communio abscondita*), while the sacrament-as-body was fixed as a visible signifier, becoming “the showing of a presence beneath the ‘species’ (or appearances).”⁹⁸ According to Certeau, what is crucial is the “punctuation of dogma”; that is, the placing of the term of separation that determines the meaning and relationality of the other two terms.⁹⁹

In the traditional theology of the *triforme Corpus Christi*, “the caesura has the effect of distributing in *two* (moments) the *three* (bodies).”¹⁰⁰ By contrast, the post-twelfth-century scheme reduces the “ternary to the binary.”¹⁰¹ Because the caesura of the traditional understanding is temporal, the *communio* achieved involves a real circumincession of two historical bodies, the Church and Jesus of Nazareth. As Certeau describes the distribution of the traditional understanding:

The . . . linear series extending from the apostolic origins (H) to the present (C) is sustained in its entirety by the sacrament (S), conceived as a unique and everywhere instituting operation (the “mystery”), linking the *kairos* to its progressive manifestation. Distinct times (H and C) are united by the same invisible “action.”¹⁰²

On this view, it is precisely the “*mysticum*” that mediates the temporalities of present and past and so effects *communio*. “‘Mystic’ is

⁹⁷Michel de Certeau, S.J., *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995). Cf. Conor Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism: Philosophies of Nothing and the Difference of Theology* (London: Routledge, 2002), 200–02; and Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 158–66.

⁹⁸Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, 82.

⁹⁹Cf. John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 123–26 and 134–37.

¹⁰⁰Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, 82–83.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*

the absent third term that joins two disconnected terms.”¹⁰³ Under the new mode, the apostolic origin (the “historical body”) is linked to the sacrament in such a way that the mediatory function of the sacrament is no longer historical, but rather a kind of “pure-individual access.” Accordingly, the Church tends to be cut off from *communio*, which now tends to be a-historically reduced and reified. There has been a passage from a temporal mediation of narrative-circumincision to a functionalist mediation in which objectification has triumphed over the passage of time and the communication of idioms in diverse histories. On the diagnosis of de Lubac and Certeau, the tendency for the reified object to replace the communal operation coincides with an a-temporal evasion of communal intermediation such that, as Joseph Ratzinger writes, the linguistic shift did indeed signify that “something of the eschatological dynamism and corporate character (the sense of ‘we’) of eucharistic faith was lost or at least diminished.”¹⁰⁴

The Lubacian diagnosis of this dissociation of sensibility in Catholic eucharistic theology (wherein a binary dialectic of visible/invisible displaces the ternary-temporal mediation of diverse bodies) can be applied to Barth, insofar as he concertedly wants to exclude the “*mysticum*” of traditional sacramentology (which ends up correlating with his binitarian and dyadic view of *communio*). Of course in Barth, the binary dialectic is not focused on an objectification of the sacramental body. Nevertheless, insofar as the eucharistic body is evacuated of its essential mediating reality as “*mysticum*”

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 87. The shift in terminology de Lubac diagnosed need not necessarily result in the immediate and full loss of authentic communion. John Milbank rightly cautions: “As long as an essential relation between the three bodies remained however, strong traces of the older view persisted—for example in the thought of Bonaventure or Thomas Aquinas. It remained the case that the historical body was mediated to the Church by the sacramental body. The Eucharist still ‘gave’ the Church . . .” (Milbank, *Being Reconciled*, 125). Accordingly, Pope Pius XII’s *Mystici Corporis Christi*, though it employs the post-twelfth-century designations, should be read as attempting to reinvigorate precisely the “essential relation” of the bodies in an effort to articulate a theology of the Church’s communion. Indeed, Pius’s encyclical was keenly attentive to the ternary intermediation of the *triforme Corpus Christi* (cf. *Mystici Corporis*, 19 and 81–84). Cf. Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 96–98, esp. 97, n. 5 (where Levering cites this passage from Milbank approvingly).

(pertaining to the sphere of the sacramental establishment of *communio*), the reality of the Church's participation in the perpetuation of Christ's personhood becomes "spectral" as opposed to "incarnational." Moreover, a eucharistic minimalism unwittingly colludes with sacramental reification insofar as it similarly privileges a quasi-empiricist description or dissection of the sacrament as encompassing its reality, a judgment concomitant with the logic of reification to the extent that the bread and wine are again thought of pre-eminently as "things" rather than vectoral conduits of *communio*.¹⁰⁵ This ultimately is to the detriment of a theological inability to account for the communal excesses of intermediation that lie beyond dyadic reduction, intermediations at the heart of the traditional eucharistic theology of mystical/sacramental mediation. In this way, Barth's retreat from the traditional understanding of the sacramental continuation of Christ's presence tends (inadvertently) toward an extrinsicism wherein the mode of communion in Christ can be abstracted from the incarnational possibility of a concrete historical continuation of Christ in a recognizably structured community, identified with the "objectivity" of the Gospel's *pro nobis*, and thus bearing the sign of Christ's own "objectivity." By contrast, de Lubac's theology of the Eucharist establishes a mode of incarnational perpetuation wherein the continuation of Christ can be said—through the Eucharist—to *subsistit in* a concrete historical body: the *communio* "governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him."¹⁰⁶ Thus a Lubacian theology of

¹⁰⁵Cf. de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 283ff. On the reduction of the ternary to the binary and the correlation between "reified presence" and "virtual presence" in the Eucharist, the words of Conor Cunningham are apt: "[The] reduction to the binary gave rise to the spectacle of the sacrament, because the Church, as an indistinct extension, could only legalistically receive, and not be the true body of Christ Consequently, it reflected a more literalist approach, a literalism reflected in another way in the protestant version of the binary structure [Thus] the new punctuation of dogma gave rise to a literalism . . . more in line with a secular logic, since such an understanding of the Eucharist will be less able to resist reductive approaches to creation, as it now involves discrete moments or entities, and these invite endless description, and dissection. In this way the pursuit of an essence, a kernel, colludes with nominalism, affording us but diacritical signification" (Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism*, 201–02).

¹⁰⁶*Lumen gentium*, 8; and cf. Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 13. Cf. de Lubac, "Particular Churches in the Universal Church," in *The Motherhood of the Church*, 171–335.

the *triforme Corpus Christi* can be mobilized to dislodge christological election from the “protological past tense,” and this, in tandem with the keen pneumatological insistence de Lubac brings to bear in his eucharistic theology (the very lacuna of Barth’s doctrine of predestination).

For de Lubac, the Spirit’s role in the Eucharist is crucial. The Spirit himself is the *ineffabilis quidam complexus* of Father and Son, and thus is attributed to him the work of the communion of Christ’s Body.¹⁰⁷ In this regard, the Anaphoras of the Eastern liturgies are of special importance to de Lubac, tending in their unambiguous Epicleses to emphasize fully the pneumatological dimension of the Eucharist.¹⁰⁸ In most Eastern Rite Anaphoras, the prayer for union culminates in the consecrational plea for the Holy Spirit to descend upon the bread and wine, thus bringing a Pentecostal complement to inform the mode of the participation of the gathered community in the Sacrifice of Calvary. The consecration and communion of the Spirit, prayed in one beseeching, effects the Church’s appropriation and participational repetition of the gift Christ makes of his very “Self” to the Father. Now, in the Church’s liturgy, the Spirit is the gift of Christ who makes possible the living sacrifice of the congregation offered back to God. Communion and sacrifice are mutually constitutive.¹⁰⁹ To the Spirit thus is attributed the work of the transubstantiation of the elements and therein the possibility of participation in the sacrificial union that

¹⁰⁷See de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 106–11.

¹⁰⁸When de Lubac wrote *Catholicism* there was, of course, only one Eucharistic Prayer of the Latin Rite, the Roman Canon (the Epiclesis of which is weaker than in most Eastern Eucharistic prayers). After the *Novus Ordo* of Pope Paul VI, the Latin Rite has come to include more explicit Epicleses in Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV (all of which are culled from or inspired by various Eastern Anaphoras). To say that the Eastern Anaphoras can help to specify the pneumatological aspect of the Eucharist is not to imply a “deficiency” inherent to the Roman Canon, it is merely to say that knowledge of the Eastern Anaphoras helps to make theologically explicit what is more or less latent in the traditional Western prayer. The question as to whether the newly introduced Eucharistic Prayers of the *Novus Ordo* have an organic place in the Latin Rite is another matter altogether—on this, cf. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of Its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 115–23; and Joseph Fessio, S.J., “The Mass of Vatican II,” *Catholic Dossier* 6, no. 5 (2000): 12–20.

¹⁰⁹On the mutual internality of communion and sacrifice in the Catholic Eucharist, cf. Levering, *Sacrifice and Community*, passim.

makes the congregation a *communio* in Christ.¹¹⁰ By the Spirit, the Eucharist is the present participation of creation in the predestined eschaton of the *totus Christus*. The predestining Spirit makes the communion of the Church in the eucharistic circumincession of Body and Head such that the Church, given by the Eucharist, is not a community of idealized memory or spectral imprecision. On the contrary, the Church is the *communio in concreto* of creation being changed into the divinized Body of Christ, the concrete perpetuation of his incarnational presence. As Stratford Caldecott writes: “The sacraments ensure that the Church is Christ’s ‘body,’ not a mere idea of him or a memory of him but his own life as a human being, lived out in the men and women he came to save.”¹¹¹

4. *The Church and the synaxis of Christ*

In his *Theologische Prinzipienlehre*, Joseph Ratzinger draws on de Lubac’s *Catholicism* in the context of his own argument for a “collective view of Christianity to replace the individual [and/] or purely institutional.”¹¹² Accordingly, the key to the theological vision of *Catholicism* is posited by Ratzinger in terms of de Lubac’s designation of the Church as the sacrament of Christ, the *corpus verum* “given” by the *corpus mysticum*.

According to Ratzinger, de Lubac’s theology of *communio* is intrinsically related to his critique of both secular humanism’s abstract communalism (whether the aggregate of bureaucratized individuals or the idealized political progressivism of “collective man”), and the false-bourgeois piety of Christian individualism (the condition of the possibility of secularism and the Church’s abiding accommodation with it).¹¹³ Ratzinger points to the quotation from

¹¹⁰Cf. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 110: “This Holy Spirit, by whom Christ’s carnal body was prepared, intervenes too in the confection of the Eucharist for the making of his Mystic Body.”

¹¹¹Stratford Caldecott, *The Seven Sacraments: Entering the Mystery of God* (New York: Crossroad, 2006), 9.

¹¹²Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 49.

¹¹³*Ibid.*

Jean Giono that stands as the first words of the Introduction to *Catholicism*, where Giono accuses Christianity of securing nothing but “my joy,” a joy which is always alone and isolated.¹¹⁴ This concept of Christianity, so Ratzinger argues, was decisively exposed by *Catholicism* as a corrosive caricature of the authentically “catholic” (social) nature of the Gospel. Such, for de Lubac, was the ecclesial failure that made possible the significant rise of atheism.¹¹⁵ Thus, the bourgeois piety of individualism which Barth sought to foreclose in his radically christocentric theology of *praedestinatio gemina*—with the concomitant weight he places on the election of the community as mediating the election of Christ—is decisively overcome in de Lubac through the recovery of the sacrament as constitutive of the mystery of communion in Christ: the pneumatological perpetuation of the Incarnation in his Body, the Church. The eucharistic sacrifice thus effects “the union of the human race through and in the One who stands for all and in whom, as Paul says (Gal 3:28), all are one.”¹¹⁶ The action of the Mass is “*synaxis*, that is to say the mystery of communion.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 13. More recently Ratzinger, as Pope Benedict XVI, has re-invoked this passage of de Lubac in the encyclical letter *Spe salvi* (2007): “Henri de Lubac, in the introduction to his seminal book *Catholicisme. Aspects sociaux du dogme*, assembled some characteristic articulations of this [individualistic] viewpoint, one of which [that of Giono] is worth quoting: ‘Should I have found joy? No . . . only my joy, and that is something wildly different . . . The joy of Jesus can be personal. It can belong to a single man and he is saved. He is at peace . . . now and always, but he is alone. The isolation of this joy does not trouble him. On the contrary: he is the chosen one! In his blessedness he passes through the battlefields with a rose in his hands.’ Against this, drawing upon the vast range of patristic theology, de Lubac was able to demonstrate that salvation has always been considered a ‘social’ reality” (13–14).

¹¹⁵Cf. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 309ff. Here de Lubac takes up and makes his own the words of Père Philippe de Régis: “Perhaps Marxism and Leninism would not have arisen and been propagated with such terrible results if the place that belongs to collectivity in the natural as well as in the supernatural order had always been given to it [by the Church]” (309).

¹¹⁶Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 49. Cf.: “The concept of sacraments as the means of a grace that I receive like a supernatural medicine in order, as it were, to ensure only my own private eternal health is *the* supreme misunderstanding of what a sacrament truly is” (49).

¹¹⁷de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 17, and cf. 96. On the Eucharist as *Synaxis*, see Denys the Areopagite, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* (PG 3.369–585); and Maximus the

The *synaxis* of humanity—both the horizontal communion of human fellowship and the vertical communication of man with God—is the heart of what Ratzinger reads in de Lubac, who is said to offer a “concentration on what is Catholic,” proclaiming the “original impulse” of Christianity itself, which is, “by its very nature, a mystery of union.”¹¹⁸ Accordingly, de Lubac is understood to rise to answer the charge of Jean Giono with a theology of *communio in concreto*: when Christianity is truly lived in its authentic “catholicity” it does so “as both the answer to and a force equivalent to the dynamism of humanistic atheism—to that humanism that seeks the unification of mankind.”¹¹⁹ Catholicism is true humanism.¹²⁰ According to Ratzinger, this is the heart of the new sacramental approach anticipated in *Catholicism*:

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. She not only carries on his work, but she is his very continuation, in a sense far more real than that in which it can be said that any human institution is its founder’s continuation. The highly developed exterior organization that wins our admiration is but an expression, in accordance with the needs of this present life, of the interior unity of a living entity, so that the Catholic is not only subject to a power but is a member of a body as well, and his legal dependence on this power is to the end that he may have part in the life of that body. His submission in consequence is not an abdication, his orthodoxy is not mere conformity, but fidelity. It is his duty not merely to obey her orders or show deference to her councils, but to share in a life, to enjoy a spiritual union.¹²¹

Confessor, *Mystagogia* (PG 91.658–722). Cf. Catherine Pickstock, “The Sacred Polis: Language as Synactic Event,” *Literature and Theology* 8, no. 4 (1994): 367–83.

¹¹⁸Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 49.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 50.

¹²⁰Cf. de Lubac’s spirited defense of Pope Paul VI’s Catholic humanism, “The ‘Cult of Man’: In Reparation to Paul VI,” in *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, 261–90.

¹²¹de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 76; quoted in a different translation and in slightly truncated form by Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 50. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics: New Endeavors in Ecclesiology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008).

Ratzinger names this passage “the sentence with which de Lubac opened the door to the new perspective.”¹²² The “new discovery of the post-conciliar period” is *communio*, the sacramental *synaxis* of the Church.¹²³ Pre-eminently a retrieval of the tradition, the “new perspective” initiated by de Lubac intended to be nothing other than a reinvigoration of the Church’s traditional theology of the ternary mediation of the sacramental gift: the *corpus mysticum* that makes the *communio* truly the *corpus Christi verum* and therefore *communio in concreto*. Only hereby does the Church continue “that work which was begun at the Incarnation and was carried up to Calvary.”¹²⁴ Only hereby does the Eucharist achieve its élan “toward union, the overcoming of the barriers between God and man, between ‘I’ and ‘thou’ in the new ‘we’ of the communion of saints.”¹²⁵

★ ★ ★

In 1950, having just completed his *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie*, Balthasar wrote to de Lubac:

I finished my Karl Barth, which is basically a discussion between you and him. I wished to have dedicated this book to you, for to you it is almost entirely indebted.¹²⁶

What Balthasar perceived in both de Lubac and Barth was a profound insistence on the “theological a priori,” making the self-communication of God in Christ “the starting point of all our reflections.”¹²⁷ Therein lay the common concern of both men to establish a theology of *communio* irreducibly grounded in the Paschal Mystery of the Incarnate Son.

In this essay I have taken up Robert Jenson’s critique of Barth, suggesting that Barth’s overly dyadic theology of christic inclusion is internal to his refusal of the doctrine of the *triforme*

¹²²Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 50.

¹²³Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 147–48.

¹²⁴de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 48.

¹²⁵Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 87.

¹²⁶Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Théologie dans l’histoire*, vol. 2, *Questions disputées* (Paris: Desclée, 1990), 399.

¹²⁷Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 296.

Corpus Christi, and further, that his “web of Spirit-avoidance” and his rejection of traditional sacramentology led him toward an unfortunate *communio abscondita*. It is thus that I have proposed de Lubac: in his pneumatologically sensitive ternary theology of the Eucharist I have discerned the means of articulating an irenic corrective to Barth. The Eucharist does not merely “embrace, protect and claim the life of the community”: the Eucharist gives the *communio* of the Church herself.¹²⁸ □

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¹²⁸In addition to Keith Starkenburg, I would like to thank Angus Paddison, Chris Hackett, Jedidiah Slaboda and Conor Cunningham for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. The errors are my own.