PRAISE, O SION, YOUR SAVIOR

EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' SUMMA AND HYMNS

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ABSTRACT

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EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' SUMMA AND HYMN

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This thesis discusses the Eucharistic theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, focusing on the subject of Christ's true presence, within both the Summa Theologiae and four hymns which Aquinas composed for the feast of Corpus Christi. First, a historical survey is used to locate Aquinas within the history of the discussion of Christ's presence. Then, a separate theological analysis of St. Thomas' theology of Christ's presence first within the Summa and then within the hymns. Finally, the theological content of both hymns and theology are used to deepen the understanding of each, and build toward a Eucharistic theology drawing from both sources.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, AND A SURVEY OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY PRIOR TO AQUINAS

St. Thomas Aquinas has been described by Pope Benedict XVI as having “an exquisitely Eucharistic soul. The most beautiful hymns that the Liturgy of the Church sings to celebrate the mystery of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist are attributed to his faith and his theological wisdom.” Pope Benedict here makes a fascinating connection, one which has received little scholarly attention: a connection between Thomas' theological wisdom, as displayed in his writings on the Eucharist in the Summa, and his faith in the Real Presence within the most blessed Sacrament. This combination of saintly faith and brilliant intellect led not only to some of the Church's most foundational doctrinal writing, but also, as Pope Benedict points out, to beautiful hymns with which the Church still offers worship to Christ, as present in the consecrated Host.

However, there has not been a systematic examination of these hymns, which could both shed light on Aquinas' Eucharistic theology of Christ's presence in the sacrament, and also provide a grounding for this theology within his faith and liturgical practice. Therefore, in this thesis, I will set out to provide a full analysis of the four

hymns Aquinas wrote for the feast of Corpus Christi, both in their theological content and literary style, focusing on the particular issue of Christ's real presence. I will then use this analysis to expound upon his Eucharistic theology as seen in the *Summa Theologiae*, both in its content and as an example of realized faith in Jesus' presence within the Eucharist. The analysis of Aquinas' hymns will be preceded by a focused look at the history behind their composition and theological content, as well as a preparatory examination of his theology of the Eucharist. To conclude, I will show how both *Summa* and hymns can be used together to uncover a deeper understanding of Aquinas' Eucharistic theology.

Among other hymns attributed to Aquinas, I will deal here with four from the office of the newly-established feast of Corpus Christi, which he wrote between 1261 and 1265 for pope Urban IV. These are: *Pange Lingua Gloriosi*, also known by its last two verses as *Tantum Ergo*; *Sacris Solemnis*, again also known as *Panis Angelicus*; *Verbum Supernum*, once more also known as *O Salutaris Hostia*; and the sequence *Lauda Sion*. This office was promulgated by Urban IV in the 1264 bull *Transiturus*, and is still partially in use today. *Lauda Sion* is currently in the propers for the Mass of that day; the others are used as hymns during communion throughout the year, as well as at devotional adoration of the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass.

Aquinas wrote these hymns during his stay in Orvieto, which, at the time, was the location of the papal court. Called there in 1261 to be lector of the priory in Orvieto, he

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2 Ibid.
3 John-Pirre Torrel, *The Person and his Work*, Vol. 1 of *St. Thomas Aquinas*, Trans. Robert Royal (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 131. The antiphons and some of Aquinas' hymns are still in the office for the day, but the majority of the office has been changed in accordance with other widespread norms.
was tasked with the regular teaching of studious new Dominicans there. He had already become a theologian in widespread demand, being called to five councils within as many years. During this time, he continued his work on the *Summa contra Gentiles*, wrote his *Commentary on Job*, composed three separate works for Urban IV including the office for Corpus Christi, and finished a small army's worth of other, shorter documents.4

One theme which Aquinas deals with in both his hymns and his theology, and which serves as the focus for this thesis, is the mystery of Christ's true presence. Aquinas falls towards the end of a several-century debate concerning the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament of the altar. This debate has been cast by modern scholarship into many different lights – as increasing the precision of theological language, as resolving conflicts inherent in different statements of the fathers, and as forming a bulwark against medieval heresies, among others. It prompted councils, inspired devotional practices, and refined the language used to describe the most complete sacrament of the Church. In order to understand the concerns driving Aquinas' theology, it is necessary to understand the history to which he reacted.

In this chapter, I will trace the thought on the mode of Christ's presence within the sacrament through this several-century debate, from its beginnings through until the fourth Lateran council, by looking at the major figures in each period. Almost all of those engaged in the debate surrounding the Eucharist throughout this period believed that Jesus was “truly” present. The question was to what extent, and how exactly, this presence manifested itself. Was Christ, as Humbert would imply, ground by the teeth of the faithful who received Him? Or, as Berengarius would argue, was Christ truly present

4This biographical information comes from Torrel, Vol. 1, 117-141.
as a sign only, such that absurdities like Jesus' body being digested were completely avoided? Was Anselm of Laon correct in asserting that the spiritual reception in faith and love, even without physical reception, was primary, or was the Paschsonian tradition correct in asserting the physical union of the receiver and Christ as primary and salvific? The opposition from the Cathar heresy, in its staunch anti-materialism and derision of the sacrament, created a sense of necessity and urgency for such questions, amid other practical, pastoral, and devotional concerns. As such, the question of Christ's material presence, and that presence's salvific effect, are central to discussion of the Eucharistic controversy.

I will go about this examination primarily by looking to the works concerning the Eucharist of the theologians of the time. Of these, the works of Paschius, Berengar, Anselm of Laon, Peter Lombard, and Hugh of St. Victor will be the subject of the most focus. In addition, I will supplement this look at the ideas at stake with a short study of devotional, cultural, and social events of the controversy, as these pastoral concerns will be later be essential in interpreting the hymns.

The beginning of the Eucharistic Controversy is generally held to be with the writings of Paschius and Ratramnus, in the 9th century. Both belonged to the same abbey of Corbie, and both wrote treatises titled De Corpore et Sangine Domini between 830 and 845 ad. However, this does not necessarily mean that the two authors knew of each others' work, and, as such, does not imply a beginning of controversy or mutual dialogue. The two authors did, however, take two different positions on the Eucharist.

Paschius Radbertus “maintained that the body of Christ consumed in the mass
was identical to the historical body of Christ that was born of Mary, sacrificed on the cross, and resurrected from the tomb.”

This presence within the host at mass contained the true body of the Lord, to such an extent, that reception of the sacrament caused “the divine-human existence of Christ [to become] united 'naturally' with the body and soul of the believer.”

This natural union between Christ and the receiver was directly linked to salvation. As he states,

> If the word had become flesh, and we truly consume the Word as flesh in the Lord's food, how can it not be justly judged that he dwells in us by His nature, who being God born man, has assumed the inseparable nature of our flesh, and has mingled the nature of His flesh to His eternal nature in the sacrament of the flesh that was to be communicated to us? And therefore in this way, we all are one in God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, because it has been shown that the Father is in Christ and Christ is in us.

As a result of maintaining this mode of presence in the Sacrament, Paschasius tied the Sacrament, and thus also the hierarchy and liturgy necessary for it, soteriologically to the fleshly and “natural” presence of Christ on the altar. Unless Christ was united to the receiver of the Eucharist, 'naturally' and in true physical presence, that receiver could not be saved. Paschasius' position gained significant traction after his time, such that by the end of the tenth century, his position “gained wide acceptance in the ecclesiastical community.”

Although his views were not as widely used as those of Paschasius, Ratramnus of Corbie's *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* also set the stage for later, more explicit, controversy. Reading the same fathers as Paschasius, Ratramnus instead answered the

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7 Paschasius Radbertus, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, as quoted in Macy, 27.
8 Radding, 5.
question of Christ's mode of presence differently. In answer to the question, “did the faithful receive the body and blood of Christ in mystery or in truth,” posed by Charles the Bald, Ratramnus distinguished between reality in figura, a form of reality which betokens another hidden reality, from reality in veritate, a form of reality in which the nature of that reality is clearly apparent.”

The bread and wine, then, were the means through which the true, living Christ was apprehended in mystery. As such, the consumption was not physical, but rather spiritual, as Ratramnus states, “This is confessed most plainly by saying that in the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, whatever external thing is consumed is adopted to the refection of the body. The mind, however, invisibly feeds on the Word of God.” So, while the consumption of the Word was real, the Eucharist itself “was the body and blood of Christ only in figura.” This direct sacramental reception of the Lord, then, takes place on an individual level, between the “mind” of the believer and the Word invisibly, and thus non-physically, existing in the sacrament.

The tenth century was relatively quiet. Macy's study of The Theology of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period notes that during this time “the theological questions raised by the Carolingian scholars continued to be discussed.” True controversy would wait until the eleventh century to manifest itself, when Berengar of Tours would question the predominant Paschasian view, and would be heartily rejected by all. Berengar, at the time his Eucharistic teachings came under fire, was an archdeacon of Anger and a teacher at the cathedral chapter of St. Martin of Tours. His teaching on the subject of Christ's presence was initially challenged by local theologians,

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9 Macy, 28.
10 Ratramnus of Corbie, De Corpore et Sanguine Domini, as quoted in Macy, 28.
12 Macy, 31.
then condemned *in absentia* by two councils in 1050. He continued his teaching until 1054, where Hildebrand, then papal legate, officiated at a council which would again condemn Berengar's teaching with him present, at his native Tours. In 1059, Berengar made the journey to Rome where he was again condemned, and forced to swear an oath composed by Humbert, the contents of which shall be discussed below. Afterwards, Berengar claimed this oath to not bind him, since it was under duress, and further declared his own teachings. Finally, in 1079, Hildebrand, now the famous Gregory VII, would with finality condemn Berengar and his teaching, after which Berengar was barred from teaching and died within a decade.13

Berengar's teachings on the Eucharist are difficult to condense and summarize, as his work spans twenty years and is directed towards a variety of critics and circumstances. He rejected “all forms of naïve physicalism,”14 stating that, although the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Eucharist, the bread and wine continue to exist in some way. As Berengar himself explains, “by consecration at the altar the bread and wine are made into religious sacraments, not so that they cease to be that which they were, but so that they are that which is changed into something else, as the blessed Ambrose says in his book *De Sacramentis.*”15 Berengar's insistence both that the substance of bread and wine remain, and also that they are “converted by consecration into the flesh and blood of Christ,” leaves questions whether or not, then, the flesh and blood of Christ are physically present, or are truly there in a sacramental and mysterious, but non-physical, presence. Some others of his arguments shed light on this difficulty,

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13 Biographical details on Berengar's life are drawn from Radding, pp 7-31 and 86-113.
14 Stock, 275.
but do not resolve it. He did argue that Augustine's distinction between res and signum meant that Christ “did not say [coming]: 'into the hand, into the mouth, into the teeth, into the belly,' but 'into one's thought.'”\(^{16}\) However, he also acknowledged some kind of true presence: as he explained to the council at Tours in 1054, “he believed that the bread and wine on the altar after consecration were 'truly' [revera] the body and blood of Christ,” swearing to that effect in an oath of his own composition.\(^{17}\) As such, while it seems that Berengar leaned toward a non-physical interpretation of Jesus' sacramental presence, he did certainly believe that Christ was truly present, and may not have been quite as much a heretic as his accusers made him out to be.

His accusers, on the other hand, in their efforts to disprove his position, reached new heights of emphasis on Christ's physical presence. Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida perhaps composed the most straightforward of these statements in an oath of orthodoxy to be sworn by Berengar at the council of 1059 in Rome,

> The bread and wine that are set upon the altar, after consecration are not sacrament alone, but also are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and in sensory fashion and not only as a sacrament but in truth are handled and broken by the hands of the priests, and ground between the teeth of the faithful...\(^{18}\)

The graphic language here used emphasized the physical presence – Christ is so much physically present, that the faithful grind not bread between their teeth, but Christ himself. Later councils would be more moderate in their definitions. For instance, a council in 1075 in Poitiers stated, “that same bread and that same wine, after the consecration... is substantially transmuted into the true body and into the true blood of

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 13, quoting a letter of Berengar to Adelmann of Liege.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 17.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 19, quoting the oath as preserved by another of Berengar's opponents.
Christ – that is, into the very body that was born of the Virgin Mary... with no substance or nature of the bread and wine remaining beyond the likeness...”\(^{19}\)

Other contemporary theologians who refuted Berengar during this time made use of the soteriological connection and theology suggested by Paschasius. Guitmund, bishop of Aversa, questioned Berengar's idea of the Eucharist as figure, in plainly Pashcasian terms. “It is the true body of Christ which carries the richness of salvation, and in which we hope. How could man be substantially one with Christ, as St. Hilary said, if we receive only the shadow of Christ? An effect does not flow from the shadow of a thing, but from the substance of it.”\(^{20}\) Further, he criticized the “Berengariani” for holding “that the bread and wine do not change essentially,”\(^{21}\) attacking Berengar's position that some portion of the bread and wine remained afterward. Alger, canon of St. Lambert's in Liege, also echoed Pashcasius by stressing the Incarnation in his Eucharistic theology. “Christ, as man, is joined to the Father through his divinity. In the same sacrament of the Eucharist, we are joined to the body of Christ.”\(^{22}\) As such, Paschasius' ideas carried through the eleventh century as a rationale behind opposition to Berengar.

This focus on the physical, in opposition to Berengar, diminished as the twelfth century dawned, to such an extent that Berengar's own statement, “in sign the body of Christ is broken, in sign the body of Christ is accepted; nothing here is asserted against the incorruptibility and impassibility of the body of Christ,” became the “standard explanation of the theologically embarrassing oath of 1059.”\(^{23}\) Later theologians, while

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{20}\) Macy, 48.
\(^{21}\) Stock, 311.
\(^{22}\) Macy, 50.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., 43.
avoiding Berengar's mistake of denying a “substantial” conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, would understand this conversion in highly spiritual terms.

Anselm, chancellor of Laon in the mid twelfth century, taught a Eucharistic theology significantly more spiritual. One of the central tenets of his theology is, “The true work of God, the beginning and end of all good, is faith working through love.” This focus on the internal disposition of the faithful member allowed Anselm to speak of the Eucharist in a more mystical and personal way. If the beginning and end of all good is faith working through love, good reception of the Eucharist engenders a unity of charity, and a unity of wills “between Christ and the faithful.” This unity of faith, working through love became the defining end of Eucharistic reception, and, although this reception consisted of “the Word became Flesh,” the focus is spiritual. The presence of Christ within the sacrament is treated as less important than the signified union between Christ and the receiver, thus downplaying Christ's physical presence in favor of spiritual good.

A second mystical approach to the Eucharist is found in Hugh, canon of St. Victor in the mid-twelfth century. Echoing the earlier work of Anselm of Laon, Hugh emphasized “the central salvific act of Christ's death and resurrection” as supplying “the graces of faith and love.” Combining this central importance for the Paschal mystery with a mystical and personal interpretation of sacramental reception, Hugh held, “The sensible species and the presence of the body and blood of Christ are signs of the power and purpose of the Eucharist, which is the internal spiritual union with Christ, perfected.

24 Ibid., 73.
25 Ibid., 74.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 83.
by faith and love.”28 By abstracting from the mode of presence, Hugh is able to affirm a substantial presence while emphasizing and fleshing out an understanding of the sacrament's effect. This effect is a spiritual union: while Paschasius and his followers argued for the necessity of a natural and physical union between Christ and the believer, Hugh proposed one which existed entirely within the spirit of the receiver. As such, “this union was far more important than, and in fact could indeed exist apart from, either the outward ritual or the real presence.”29 Hugh thus found a way to accomplish the soteriological function, which Paschasius pointed out, without an oversimplification of the physical presence. As a result, the Eucharist itself became “an efficacious sign of the central act of our salvation,”30 with emphasis upon our salvation.

If Hugh of St. Victor and Anselm of Laon suggested a mystical, minimally physical interpretation of the Eucharist which emphasizes the union of the individual with Christ, Peter Lombard suggested, toward the end of the twelfth century, a similar interpretation, but instead emphasizing an ecclesiological union. For Lombard, “Salvation consisted of membership in the Church as the body of the faithful.”31 While thus differing from Hugh and Anselm regarding what specifically in the Eucharist is salvific, he mirrors their soteriological approach to the Eucharist. Instead of the Eucharist spiritually uniting the receiver with Christ, “the same sacrament signified the corporate and ecclesiological union between the Church and God.”32 This permitted Lombard to take the similar liberties with discussing Christ's mode of presence.

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 84.
30 Ibid., 83.
31 Ibid., 122.
32 Ibid.
Although he acknowledges an eating of Christ truly present, Lombard emphasized that “He who remains in the union of Christ and the Church, which this sacrament signifies, eats spiritually.” This does not preclude a physical presence, but does not require it for the Eucharist to function soteriologically.

It thus appears that theologians, through the twelfth century, backed away from the strongly physical interpretations of the eleventh, in favor of an emphasis on the spiritual effect on the receiver while still maintaining a substantial change. However, this shift is not merely a change in the intellectual world, but instead took place in a world of radically changing sacramental devotion. Within the twelfth century, devotion to Christ present in the sacrament, which took the forms of the elevation of the host during consecration and the adoration of the reserved host outside of mass, began to appear. Stories of miracles relating to the change of the host into actual flesh abounded during this period, as well as pilgrimage to the sites of such miracles as if they were relics. Both of these practices indicate a strong belief among the faithful, as well as the clergy, in the physical presence of a Christ who could be prayed to, worshiped, and adored. These miraculous transformations appear almost as a dramatic rendering of a physicalist insistence, found in Rupert of Deutz, that “the externally sensed species of bread and wine are merely a covering, a veil, taken up by Christ because of our natural repugnance to eating flesh and drinking blood.” These miracles were not so much a radical divine intervention into the mundane, but rather a mere lifting of the veil which covered the true identity of the sacred host and cup. Thus, there was a strong devotional adherence to the

33 Peter Lombard, Sententiae, in PL 191, 1647D; my translation.
34 Macy., 86-88.
physical presence of Christ within the Eucharist during the twelfth century.

An equally strong devotional practice, however, is evident in the practice of substituting other forms of reception for the actual, sacramental reception. As Macy notes, the rate at which the faithful received Communion during the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries was the lowest of any time in the Church's history.\(^3\) The reasons for such reluctance to directly receive the Eucharist had a variety of social and ecclesiastical motives, but a definite motive was a reverence for the presence of Christ, and as a result, a fear of unworthy reception.\(^3\) The faithful still sought a mode for union with Christ, however, if not a direct consumption. The distribution of bread blessed outside of mass, such that it did not become the body of Christ, and to merely look upon the host during elevation became substitutes for sacramental reception.\(^3\) This practice not only implies that the soteriological effect of the Eucharist was not a physical union, as Pashcasius had described, but also led to a more personal and mystical interpretation of reception, as discussed earlier. To achieve the salvific function of the Eucharist without actually chewing or consuming means that the “natural” presence of Christ within the sacrament, at all, is not necessary for salvation. These devotional practices thus shed light on the theological debates going on at the same time.

An alarmingly successful heresy of the time also catalyzed discussion of the Eucharist. The Cathars, a sect centered around southern France, were dualists. They rejected the material world as evil, “created by the devil himself,”\(^3\) while holding that

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36 Ibid., 119.
37 Ibid., 93-94.
38 Ibid.
good only resided in the spiritual realm. As such, they held it preposterous that the Word could have taken flesh in order to be eaten by the faithful. They rejected the sacrament of the Eucharist entirely, along with all the sacraments, keeping only a rite of initiation somewhat similar to Baptism, called *consolamentum*. This passage contained an altered version of the Our Father, in which “daily bread” was replaced by “supersubstantial bread.” This use of the term “supersubstantial” also indicates what an orthodox Catholic would have meant by a substantial presence. Because the Cathars held the material world to be evil, they could not request material food from God. Rather, they requested “supersubstantial bread,” which signified spiritual nourishment. As such, the Catholic response that Christ was substantially present meant a material, physical presence in truth.

The fourth Lateran council, in 1215, deals with the presence of Christ in the Eucharist within its opening creed, and also addresses the devotional practices and heretical concerns mentioned above. Although Macy argues that, “The creed of Lateran IV was neither the culmination of twelfth-century eucharistic theology nor a prohibition against further speculation about the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament,” it does serve as a microcosm of the debate. Moreover, it clearly speaks against a complete absence of a physical presence, and strongly leans toward an ecclesiological approach. The council's credal statement on the Eucharist is as follows,

> There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation. In which there is the same priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of

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40 Although not all Cathars were absolute Dualists, they all valued asceticism through rejection of bodily pleasures, and refrained from using any material sacraments.
41 Ibid.
42 Macy, 140.
the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (transubstantiation) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood, so that to realize the mystery of unity we may receive of Him what He has received of us.\textsuperscript{43}

This statement preserves much of each approach mentioned previously. The soteriological function of the Eucharist is dealt with by making it the principal sacrifice which constitutes the Church, in which, and only in which, there is salvation. This salvation is effected in Paschalian terms, where the faithful receive in Christ divinity because He has taken on humanity. The Eucharist itself is indeed described as existing precisely for this purpose – the divine power changes bread into the body, and wine into the blood, \textit{so that} the ecclesiological mystery of unity may bring about salvation through Christ. Additionally, there is a firm affirmation of the substantial change of bread into body, and wine into blood, although the literalist physicalism of earlier councils is notably absent.

The twenty-first canon also contains an order that states, “All the faithful of both sexes shall after they have reached the age of discretion faithfully... confess all their sins at least once a year to their own (parish) priest and perform to the best of their ability the penance imposed, receiving reverently at least at Easter the sacrament of the Eucharist...”\textsuperscript{44} This injunction, which describes itself as a “salutary decree,” dovetails with the theological statement of the creed. As mentioned previously, infrequent reception of the Eucharist was the norm during these centuries. However, the theologians and councils of this time connected reception of the Eucharist to the salvific function of

\textsuperscript{43} Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, in Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation, and Commentary, Ed. and Trans. by H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis: Herder, 1937), can. 1.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., can. 21.
the Church because of Christ's presence therein. If the Eucharist causes, to any extent, the union of the faithful to the Church, it follows that reception of the Eucharist is good and justifiably prescribed.

In surveying the controversy from the ninth through the early thirteenth century, it seems apparent that this history is one of significant diversity. There was no precisely formulated definition of the mode of Christ's presence, nor of the soteriological function that presence provided. Yet, it is not just to merely label the theologians of this period unable to agree. If the exact mode of Christ's presence, whether physical, spiritual, in sign or in truth, was left uncertain, it was by no means uncertain that Christ was present in substance and in truth, and such presence was repeatedly reaffirmed by Church councils and the majority of theologians. If it was unclear whether the Eucharist saved by uniting the faithful naturally to Christ, or spiritually to Christ or the Church, it was certainly agreed that the Eucharist had a unique and indispensable saving function. This discussion had increased in clarity, and popular devotion had increased to such a degree that this era has been called the Golden Age of Eucharistic devotion.

Aquinas inherited this legacy of increasing terminological precision, outpouring devotion, and mostly resolved controversy. His membership in the Dominican order, moreover, placed him directly in the center of the conflict with the Cathars – St. Dominic had, after all, founded the Order of Preachers to intellectually combat the heretics, and give sound guidance to the faithful. Further, as all students at the time began their work as bachelors by commenting on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Thomas also encountered thought on the Eucharistic debate early on in his intellectual career.
CHAPTER TWO

EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE IN THE SUMMA THEOLOGIAE

St. Thomas' theology of the Eucharist is robust and comprehensive. He details many parts of the sacrament, from its function, to its form, to its reality as Christ present. All of these individual details, however, are not viewed individually, but rather form a single whole. This theology also shows Thomas' high degree of knowledge about his forebears, most notably Peter Lombard, using terminology, answering questions, and showing continuity of faith with those theologians who came before him in the Latin tradition. However, his work also shows an increased precision in and application of Aristotelian terminology and categories to discuss his sacred subject. The final product of his theology of the Eucharist, as extant in the Summa Theologiae, is both a brilliant examination of doctrine and a testimony to his faith.

In this chapter, I will present a summary of Aquinas' statements on the Eucharist, drawn primarily from the Summa Theologiae, tailored to the analysis of his hymns, specifically in regard to the question of Christ's presence in that sacrament. This summary will allow for comparison between hymns and theology, and will allow for the presentation of Aquinas' Eucharistic theology drawn from both sources. In doing this, I will proceed by first discussing the soteriological function of the sacrament, in
preparation for a discussion of the true presence. This is for three reasons. First, the soteriological role of the Eucharist is a topic of significant importance within the hymns and also connects Aquinas' thought back to the soteriological portion of the centuries of debate preceding him, and therefore deserves a full treatment here. Second, one proof Aquinas provides for Christ's true presence is the saving function which that presences offers. As he explains, “This belongs to Christ's charity, out of which he assumed a true body of our nature for our salvation. And because it is most appropriate of friends to live with their friends, as the philosopher says [Ethics bk IX], he promised his bodily presence to us as a reward.”

Third, this ordering presents Christ's bodily presence as one part of the integrated whole which is Aquinas' Eucharistic theology, rather than as a question to be debated in and of itself. The discussion will then be permitted to flow from the role of the sacrament to its precise nature, grounding it both in Aquinas' ideas of sacraments as a whole as well as within the historical discussion of the Eucharistic presence preceding his work.

The Eucharist, for Aquinas, is the “whole mystery of our salvation,” and the crown of the seven sacraments. As such, it both acts as a sacrament like the others, but works in a deeper and slightly different way. All of the sacraments are “sensible things” which instrumentally signify “the very cause of our salvation, which is Christ's passion; the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues; and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life.” This creates within the sacraments a supra-temporal dynamic, serving as “a sign of the past,” a “foretelling of future glory,” and the

45 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae [S.T.], IIIa Q 75, a 1. See bibliography for note on references from the Summa.
46 Ibid., Q 60, a 4.
47 Ibid., Q 60, a 3.
means to sanctification in the present. In addition to the effects upon the recipient, in which the sacraments pertain “to God in reference to man,” each sacrament also serves as “worship of God,” pertaining “to man as referred to God.” Thus, in each sacrament, worship is given to God, and the human recipients are sanctified, by the gift of grace and inclusion within the Church as members of Christ.

Aquinas can thus use the same categories with which he describes the other sacraments to speak about the Eucharist. The trifold division into sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum, and res tantum is used here to clarify the work of this sacrament. The first, the sacramentum tantum, by which Aquinas denotes the material used to signify a further reality, is the bread and the wine. The second, the res et sacramentum, is the true body and blood of Christ, which both is the reality of the sacrament, and the sign of the sacrament's soteriological effect. That soteriological effect, the third category, the res tantum, is the grace which this sacrament offers, whereby it “refreshes the soul in every respect,” and joins the recipient to the body of Christ. Further, like the other sacraments, this one can be described in terms of matter and form, or, in other words, the sensible material used in signification, and the words by which the effect is brought about. The matter, as already stated, is wheat bread and grape wine mixed with water.

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., Q62, a 1.
50 Ibid., Q 60, a 5. It should be noted here that Aquinas does not mean to mechanize the sacraments by stating that they cause grace, inasmuch as they pertain to God in reference of man. As Aquinas stated earlier in the Summa, God is not related to human beings by absolute necessity, and as a result any grace which God ordains to grant to men is given entirely out of God's good will.
51 Ibid., Q 73, a 6.
52 Ibid., Q 77.
The form used to effect this sacrament is the words of Christ, spoken at the last supper. Aquinas here quotes St. Ambrose, saying “The consecration is accomplished by the words and expressions of the Lord Jesus. Because, by all the other words spoken, praise is rendered to God, prayer is put up for the people, for kings, and others; but when the time comes for perfecting the sacrament, the priest uses no longer his own words, but the words of Christ. Therefore, it is Christ's words that perfect this sacrament.”

The fact that this sacrament was instituted by Christ Himself is of great importance to St. Thomas. This institution fittingly took place at the last supper, for three reasons: first in order to leave His own presence with the disciples prior to His departure; second, as a sacrament of Christ's passion to replace the old rite of Passover; and third, because of the significance of last words, Christ “instituted this sacrament at His last parting with His disciples, in order that it might be held in the greater veneration.” The Eucharist holds a role as the sacrifice of the new covenant, which is sealed by Christ's blood on the cross. Its institution at the last supper thus creates a connection for believers to the acts of their Savior, “because without faith in the Passion there could never be any salvation, according to Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood."

Aquinas points out several differences between the Eucharist and the other sacraments. First and most notably, the sacrament of the Eucharist is completed at consecration, and not at reception. As Aquinas points out, “The sacrament of the Eucharist is completed in the very consecration of the matter, whereas the other

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53 Ibid., Q 78, quoting Ambrose's De Sacramentis, IV.
54 Ibid., Q 73, a 5.
55 Ibid.
sacraments are completed in the application of the matter for the sanctifying of the individual.”\(^56\) Although the other sacraments are completed only inasmuch as they are applied to a recipient – the application of water to the baptized, or oil to the confirmed – the Eucharist attains its perfection independent of sacramental reception, at the instant when the sacred words of Christ are pronounced by the minister.\(^57\)

This difference between the consecration of the Eucharist and the administration of other sacraments is manifested in the sacramental form. Here, the words of Christ are used in the consecration, such that the minister speaks "as if Christ were speaking in person,"\(^58\) whereas other sacraments are spoken in the person of the minister as performing the rite, e.g. "I baptize you...," "I absolve you from your sins..." The minister's passive role here signifies that only through God's power is the conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood possible. This ministerial passivity also signifies this sacrament's sacrificial nature, whereby it represents the passion, where "Christ offered himself a victim to God."\(^59\) This sacrificial nature of the Eucharist has a salvific power outside the Eucharist's reception by any member of the faithful. As Aquinas points out, "this sacrament benefits recipients by way both of sacrament and of sacrifice, because it is offered for all who partake of it."\(^60\) However, this distinction between Eucharist as sacrifice and Eucharist as sacrament cannot be taken too far. As Liam Walsh points out, “The distinction is not between two different parts of the sacrament but between two different aspects (ratio) of it. One and the same Eucharist is as sacrifice

\(^{56}\) Ibid., a 1.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., Q 75, a 7.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., Q 78, a 1.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., Q 79, a7.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
precisely as offered (offertur); it is a sacrament as consumed (sumitur).” Aquinas would not insist upon two separate effects, one for those present by sacrament, and one for all as sacrifice, but rather describes one aspect of the single sacrament's effect as being applicable to all.

Aquinas ties this effect of the Eucharist as sacrifice to the notion of spiritual communion which had been proposed by earlier writers. Aquinas justifies a division in the reception of the Eucharist with an unnamed quote from a gloss on 1 Corinthians 11:29, ""We hold that there are two ways of eating, the one sacramental, and the other spiritual." He further explains by asserting that sacramental reception (i.e., eating physically the species) is an imperfect reception, which signifies the perfect reception, a spiritual one, "whereby a man is spiritually united with Christ through faith and charity." Aquinas points out several things about this spiritual reception. First, that the unity with the mystical body of Christ which is the spiritual and perfect effect of this sacrament is necessary for salvation, for, “for there is no entering into salvation outside the Church.” This effect is, however, attainable without sacramental reception, through desire. Second, Aquinas asserts that, nonetheless, sacramental reception ought not to be discarded. “Now a desire would be vain except it were fulfilled when opportunity presented itself,” he explains, “Consequently, it is evident that a man is bound to receive this sacrament, not only by virtue of the Church's precept, but also by virtue of the Lord's command.” This creates, third, Aquinas' description of the perfect reception of the

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62 S.T., IIIa, Q 80, a 1.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., Q 73, a 3.
65 Ibid.
Eucharist: a sacramental reception by a person properly disposed to full union with Christ's mystical body, as his actions signify.

This distinction between the effect of the sacrament in the recipient and the completion of the sacrament in the words of institution give Aquinas the ability to distinguish, but correlate, the “true presence” of Christ under the sacramental species, and the mystical presence of Christ in his body, the Church, as effected by reception.66 This presence as effecting mystical body and as substantially the body of Christ are both connected. In explaining Christ's presence, Aquinas asserts that, “It is absolutely necessary to confess according to Catholic faith that the entire Christ is in this sacrament.”67 Because Christ's body is present substantially, the entirety of the rest of Christ is present by what Aquinas terms “Natural concomitance.”68 Although it is intellectually possible to distinguish between Christ's soul and his body, and between his humanity and his Godhead, Christ is not thus actually separable. Instead, from Christ's physical presence flows his Godhead, unification with which as part of the communion of the faithful constitute the grace which the sacrament gives. As Matthew Levering explains it, “The other sacraments receive their power from Christ's cross, but the Eucharist goes further and actually joins the believer to Christ's sacrifice by means of Christ's very presence.,” and thus “The Church participates in the reconciling and deifying fruits of Christ's liturgical sacrifice.”69

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66 I am aware of DeLubac's thesis in *Corpus Mysticum*, and his commentary on the appropriation of the term “mystical body,” but am unable to discuss that idea here, as it is outside the scope of this thesis.
67 Ibid., Q 76, a 1.
68 Ibid., Q 76, a 1.
Moving now from the effect of Christ's presence to Aquinas' view of that presence itself, it will be helpful first to discuss the means by which Christ becomes present. Aquinas holds that Christ becomes present at the words of Institution, through Divine power, by the process of transubstantiation. Transubstantiation, here, is a somewhat contested term, and deserves a full discussion. It had appeared as early as the mid-twelfth century, and “defined the change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ that is confessed in the tradition of faith as a change of the substance of bread into the substance of Christ's body, and of the substance of wine into the substance of Christ's blood.”\footnote{Walsh, 233.}

This term became widely used throughout the rest of the twelfth century, and entered the language of official Church decrees at Lateran Council IV. What, precisely, was meant by this inclusion is somewhat debated. Macy has argued that Lateran IV’s use of the term was not a formal, dogmatic definition, and was not viewed as such until after Aquinas' lifetime.\footnote{Gary Macy, \textit{The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholaistic Period} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 140.}

Agreeing on this point, Owen Cummings states, “After the [Fourth Lateran] council, theologians like William [of Auvergne] continued to discuss eucharistic change as though the council had not made a definitive binding judgment on the matter.”\footnote{Owen F. Cummings, \textit{Eucharistic Doctors: A Theological History} (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 135.}

Moreover, during this period immediately after Lateran IV and prior to Aquinas, Walsh argues that this term “had no technical philosophical connotations, other than the general sense derived from what the word “substance” meant in Graeco-Roman culture.”\footnote{Walsh, 233.}

When Aquinas picked up this discussion in the \textit{Summa}, he was to strengthen what the prior century's understanding had been, “a good, but not overwhelming,
theological case for saying that the substance of bread did not remain in the Eucharist after the consecration.”

Aquinas' description of transubstantiation relies upon his use of Aristotelian categories, brought up earlier in the *Summa*. Through his discussion of created matter in the first part, as well as his use of the term throughout the *Summa*, Aquinas uses the term “substance” to mean “that which exists independent of anything else.” A single substance can have different accidents, which may change, as a man changes in place when he walks across the room, but these changes to do not affect the substance – a thing can only be one thing; matter and form can only combine into one substance, regardless of changes in accidents. Aquinas' approach to “transubstantiation,” then, is centered around the idea that a substance is any one, distinct, existing, created thing. As such, Aquinas views it as a contradiction in terms that there can be any more than one substance within any one thing. As he explains, “It is said: "This is My body," which would not be true if the substance of the bread were to remain there; for the substance of bread never is the body of Christ.”

This Aristotelian language of substance and accident Aquinas has made use of brings to the fore the question raised by Berengarius centuries prior: If this is the body and blood of Christ in reality, and not in figure, why does the appearance of bread and wine remain? There must be something of bread and wine there, which is present to the

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74 Ibid., 237.
75 Ibid., 233. This is definitively Aquinas' definition and usage of the term, although Aquinas does not formally define “substance” anywhere in the *Summa*. That this is what Aquinas means by “substance” is clear in such articles as Ia, Q 60, a 5 and IIIa, Q 75, a 2.
76 As is clear in Ia, Q 60, a 2, reply to obj. 3, Aquinas holds that God is not a substance, but rather pure actuality. As such, in discussing the “substance” of the body of Christ, Aquinas is referring to Christ's physical body and blood, as discussed earlier.
77 S.T., IIIa, Q 75, a 2.
senses. Aquinas holds that nothing of the substance of the bread and the wine remain:

“By the consecration, the substance of the bread and wine is either dissolved into the original matter, or that it is annihilated.”\(^7\) This seems difficult to believe, as the senses apprehend bread and wine, and thus it would seem evident, as Aquinas presents among the objections to Q 75’s article 5, that,

The accidents of the bread and wine do not remain in this sacrament. For when that which comes first is removed, that which follows is also taken away. But substance is naturally before accident, as is proved in Metaph. vii. Since, then, after consecration, the substance of the bread does not remain in this sacrament, it seems that its accidents cannot remain.

Moreover, the body and blood of Christ have their own accidents, for instance, Christ's body is in heaven, the accident of place. And yet, Aquinas must insist that the accidents of bread and wine continue to exist, separate of the substance to which they were formerly attached.\(^9\)

St. Thomas justifies this apparent inconsistency through an argument from suitability, echoing the Fathers, “because it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood. And therefore Christ's flesh and blood are set before us to be partaken of under the species of those things which are the more commonly used by men, namely, bread and wine.”\(^8\) This accident without a properly existing subject, which ordinarily would be “outside the common law [of nature],” is made possible “by Divine power.”\(^8\) However, this is not a final admission of unintelligibility. Aquinas describes in extensive detail how such accidents, devoid of a subject, exist. His first explanation is philosophical: accidents exist only secondarily in the subjects to which they belong;

\(^7\) Ibid., a 3.
\(^8\) Ibid., a 5.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid., Q 77, a 1.
primarily, as in every created thing, their existence is caused by God. God, as such, is “is the first cause both of substance and accident,” and therefore “can by His unlimited power preserve an accident in existence when the substance is withdrawn.”

A further explanation is that these accidents are present entirely absent of a subject: neither are they a property of the surrounding atmosphere, nor are they taken on by the substance of the body and blood. Instead, the accidents of bread and wine are completely without subject, existing, in only a secondary sense of “existing,” unconnected to anything else. A third explanation points out that, among the other accidents of bread and wine remaining is the dimensive property – the appearance of physical width, breadth, and height which the species have after consecration. This size serves as a quasi-location for the other accidents, such as redness and liquidness in the wine, and whiteness and solidity in the hosts, while not serving as an actual, substantial presence.

This distinction of the accidents of bread and wine from the body and blood of Christ permits Aquinas to solve difficulties observed by earlier theologians. The first is an objection to Christ's true presence: if the host is broken, does this divide the one body of Christ into two? Aquinas' answer is that the fraction of the host is done “in the dimensive quantity of the bread, as in a subject, just as the other accidents,” whereas Christ's true body, that which is substantially present, remains unbroken. Similarly, Aquinas deals with the question of the decay of the sacramental species, stating that,

such accidents can be corrupted manifestly after consecration, because the dimensive quantity which remains can receive division and addition; and since it is the subject of sensible qualities, it can likewise be the subject of their alteration, for instance, if the color or the savor of the bread or wine be altered.

82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., a 7.
84 Ibid., a 4.
Further, Aquinas thus avoids the oversimplified physicalism of the confession Humbert had written for Berengarius, interpreting “the breaking and crushing” as applying to the sacramental species in their dimensive quantity, “under which the body of Christ truly is,” unharmed.85

Aquinas' understanding of transubstantiation in terms of “substance” and “accidents” is thus clear. Once the transubstantiation is effected by the power of Christ through the words of institution spoken by the priest, the substances of Christ's body and blood become present, but under the “sacramental species,” which are the accidents of bread and wine unconnected to any substance, but which serve as the sensible matter of the sacrament.

Having discussed the means by which Christ's body becomes present, we may now discuss the mode in which Christ's body is present in the Eucharist. An essentialized version of Thomas' description of Christ's presence could be the following: Jesus Christ, the second person of the Divine Trinity, born of Mary, is bodily present in His whole being, in substance, beneath the species of the Eucharist. This strong statement of faith is not given without support, but instead is described at great length with astounding philosophical precision.

As mentioned above, Aquinas holds that the entirety of Christ's being is present under each species, not merely His body under the appearance of bread and His blood under the appearance of wine. Within each part of each species, the substance of Christ's body or blood becomes substantially present through transubstantiation by the power of

85 Ibid., a 7.
the sacrament. This substantial presence of the body or the blood is not the limit or extent of the presence, however; as Aquinas explains, “the Godhead never set aside the assumed body, wherever the body of Christ is, there, of necessity, must the Godhead be,” and further, “Christ's blood is not separated from His body, as it was at the time of His Passion and death.” Christ's godhead is not separable from His humanity, both physical and spiritual, and thus wherever Christ's body is, His deity must be. Further, Christ's glorified, post-resurrection blood is within His post-resurrection body, and thus where the body is, there the blood must be. The parts of Christ are inseparably connected, and the presence of one necessitates the presence of the others by what Aquinas terms “natural (or real) concomitance.” This concomitance allows Aquinas to describe the whole Christ as present under the tiniest piece of bread, or a single drop of wine, and thus allows him to say that the reception of only one species is valid and sufficient.

Aquinas further discusses the location of the body of Christ. In article 5 of question 76, Aquinas states that “In no way is Christ's body locally in this place.” Thomas' explanation is that the subject of Christ's body is not the subject of the dimensive quantity of the species of bread and wine, but rather Christ's body, properly, is in heaven. If Christ's body in the fullest, actual sense, is in Heaven, it cannot also be in every chapel in Christendom. This leaves Aquinas to assert that location is not an essential, but actually an accidental property. As such, Christ's substantial presence within the sacrament is not movable, or the product of a motion. As above, the dimensive

86 Ibid., Q 76, a 1.
87 Ibid., a 2.
88 Reali or naturali concomitantia.
property of the bread serves as the quasi-subject for motion, fraction, and other movements, while Christ's body, sacramentally present, is not affected. This creates an intricate dance of descriptive philosophical language, as the substance of the thing occupying the space is not locally, but only sacramentally, there. Aquinas explains this difficulty as follows,

The place in which Christ's body is, is not empty; nor yet is it properly filled with the substance of Christ's body, which is not there locally, as stated above; but it is filled with the sacramental species, which have to fill the place either because of the nature of dimensions, or at least miraculously, as they also subsist miraculously after the fashion of substance. 89

Christ's body is truly present, but not according to the spatial categories by which we commonly define presence.

Another aspect of Christ's presence is the state in which Christ's body is, temporally. Aquinas ties the state of Christ's body present under the Eucharist as corresponding directly to the state in which Christ's body would be at the time when the mass is said. There is no question or article devoted solely to this matter, but Aquinas' position is evident from his discussion of other topics. For instance, Aquinas proposes that “The same Christ Who was upon the cross would have been in this sacrament. But He died upon the cross. Therefore, if this sacrament had been reserved, He would have died therein.” 90 Aquinas further explains that, “Christ's body is substantially the same in this sacrament, as in its proper species, but not after the same fashion; because in its proper species it comes in contact with surrounding bodies by its own dimensions: but it does not do so as it is in this sacrament.” 91 As such, if the mass had been said while

89 Ibid., IIIa, Q 76, a 5.
90 Ibid., Q 81, a 4.
91 Ibid.
Christ was in the tomb, the body as present under the sacrament would have been the dead body. What affects Christ's body, where it is in its proper species, affects Christ's body as sacramentally present, as the two are one and the same. However, the reverse is not true, as Christ's body as present under the sacrament is immovable and unaffected by external action done to the sacramental species. As Christ is in heaven, so is the true presence under the sacramental species.

In the conclusion of his question devoted exclusively to Christ's presence in the Eucharist, Aquinas directly addresses the question of Eucharistic miracles, which had become widespread through the boom in Eucharistic devotion through this period. St. Thomas divides Eucharistic miracles into two kinds: those which happen only in the perception of certain, but not all, beholders; and those which happen actually, so that all beholders might perceive it. In the first case, Aquinas asserts that, “Nor is there any deception there, as occurs in the feats of magicians,” but that God had created the change in perception in order to inspire faith. This does not, however, change the Eucharist present under such perceived species – because others see it as it was before, Christ's body continues to be present. The second case, however, is much more intriguing. When the species of bread and wine actually take on the appearance of “flesh, or blood, or a child,” and in no fleeting way, but sometimes abiding for great periods of time, Aquinas admits that it is easier to assume that “it is the proper species of Christ's body.” However, Aquinas insists that, “Christ's body under its proper species can be seen only in one place, wherein it is definitively contained. Hence since it is seen in its

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92 Ibid., Q 76, a 8.
93 Ibid.
proper species, and is adored in heaven, it is not seen under its proper species in this sacrament.”94 Even a bleeding host or the appearance of flesh does not become actually the body or blood of the Lord – instead, it is a miraculous change in the species in order to help the faith of those who perceive it.

This discussion of Eucharistic miracles reveals the practicality of Aquinas' theology. As mentioned before, miracles abounded in the twelfth through the thirteenth centuries. Macy reflects on this abundance of the miraculous, “The overwhelming impression given by these stories is of a great desire to see, to communicate somehow with the Lord present in the sacrament.”95 After many years of theological and clerical debate, the faith of the people resoundingly showed forth a certainty that Christ was present in the Eucharist, a presence that, as Aquinas frequently through his Summa points out, can be adored with latria.96 The Summa does not remain in the realm of airy or scholastic theology, but rather engages and provides useful answers to questions with profoundly practical applications.

As has been mentioned before, the Cathars can not have been absent from Aquinas' mind. Not only did Aquinas directly address some of their doctrines, as has been pointed out above, but the entire air of Eucharistic discussion at this time had become charged with resistance to the dualism of the Cathars. Aquinas' insistence on Christ's real presence, in a true and substantial way, definitely shows a resistance to their claim about “supersubstantial bread.” Considering that the Dominicans were founded particularly with this heresy in mind, it is not surprising that Aquinas would choose to

94 Ibid.
95 Macy, 87.
96 ST., IIIa Q 76, a 8, to name one place.
spend so much time addressing their critique of this sacrament.

A further example of Aquinas' willingness to engage in practical questions is with his discussion of participating in the sacrament without actually eating the species: spiritual communion. As Walsh points out, St. Thomas' analysis of this matter “was used to justify a separation of Mass and Communion,” through the Middle Ages. Aquinas does, indeed, describe a process of spiritual communion, which provides the effect of the sacrament, and which can be attained without sacramental reception. While this helps in justifying the widespread decrease in sacramental reception by laymen at the time of Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor strongly asserts that sacramental reception is necessary and should be encouraged. Referring to John 6:54, Aquinas shows that a reception both sacramental and spiritual is the perfect, and thus most desirable, reception of the Eucharist.

While other examples could be given of Aquinas' practicality in discussing the Eucharist, these are sufficient for the current discussion. In his account of this sacrament, Aquinas has proven to be exceptionally precise in his use of philosophical language, while also maintaining the reverence of faith. His account of transubstantiation, the soteriological function of the Eucharist, and the Lord's true presence in his entirety under the sacramental species reveals both his intellectual acuity and the depth of his belief. It is not surprising that the Thomistic language of transubstantiation and presence has become standard for the Catholic Church. It is similarly unsurprising that the man who wrote with such theological wisdom would also expound upon his faith in hymns.

97 Walsh, 239.
CHAPTER THREE
THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF AQUINAS' HYMNS FOR THE OFFICE
OF CORPUS CHRISTI

As mentioned before, Aquinas composed an entire office, including hymns, Mass
propers, antiphons, and many other parts, for the feast of Corpus Christi at the request of
Urban IV. As this is a Eucharistic feast, St. Thomas packed the hymns with rich
theological content, as well as deeply devotional language. The purpose of this chapter is
to examine the theological content of these hymns, especially in regard to the issue of
Christ's true presence in the Eucharist. In doing so, I will look primarily at their theology,
but also keeping the pastoral and devotional in mind. In order to access this content, I
will employ poetic analysis of factors such as rhythm, rhyme scheme, and traditional
poetic forms to supplement a more direct assessment of the theological meaning. I will
focus, again, on the question of Christ's presence, paying close attention to the words
used.

There have, in the past, been doubts concerning the authenticity of Aquinas'
authorship of these hymns. However, recent scholarship has generally agreed that the
following four, at the very least, belong properly to the Thomistic canon. Jean-Pierre
Torrell cites numerous studies in recent times which show that, “Attribution to St.
Thomas can no longer reasonably be placed in doubt.”98 Close study of the texts of the hymns, in their theological content and language, show clearly their authorship, as Liam Walsh explains, “There is a remarkable parallel between the Eucharistic thought expressed in the sequence [Lauda Sion] and the Summa.”99 As such, I will move forward with my analysis of these hymns with the assumption that they are authentically of Aquinas' authorship.

Hymn writing, by the 13th century, had taken on a solemn liturgical role. “A multiplication of new feasts as the middle ages progressed” created a “new demand” for hymns and sequences, leading both to a large increase in hymns and changes in their composition.100 Adam of St. Victor had initiated a newer form of sequence writing in the mid 12th century, characterized by a trochaic meter and imagery drawn both from scriptural meditation and new scholastic theology. The abbey of St. Victor, at which Adam worked, along with his contemporaries and fellow theologians Hugh and Richard, itself served as a microcosm of the fusion of poetic worship and budding scholasticism. This new method developed as hymns were written almost by the hundreds, such that 174 new feasts had sequences written for them in the Victorine style during this time.101 Aquinas' hymns inherited this tradition.

The first hymn to be considered here will be Pange Lingua. This as assigned in the Roman Breviary for both vespers within the feast, and is also used on Maundy Thursday during the transposition of the host to it's place of reposition until Good Friday.

101 Ibid.
Additionally, the last two verses are frequently used by themselves during Eucharistic benediction.\textsuperscript{102} It consists of six stanzas in trochaic meter, with six lines of eight syllables each. I will present this hymn, as well as the others, in my own translation, stanza by stanza, with analysis following each.\textsuperscript{103}

The first stanza:

\begin{quote}
Acclaim, O tongue, the mystery
of the most glorious body and the most precious blood
which the king, the fruit of the most noble womb,
poured out in the world for the reward of all nations.\textsuperscript{104}
\end{quote}

The first word, \textit{pange}, rendered here as “acclaim,” holds a much deeper meaning than can be translated in a single word into English. The Latin word, in more usual usage, means “fix, agree upon,” or even “make a contract.” Although it is generally translated as “sing” or “acclaim,” the Eucharistic context of the hymn and the legal meaning of \textit{pange} immediately calls to mind the “new covenant” initiated at the last supper.

The first two lines focus the singer or listener upon the historical event of the Last Supper, while meditating upon that event's role within the larger narrative of passion and redemption. The first word, \textit{pange}, translated typically as “sing” or “acclaim,” also

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{102} Catholic Encyclopedia, “Pange Lingua.”
\textsuperscript{103} The Latin text from which I am translating comes from \textit{Devoutly I Adore Thee}, a collection of St. Thomas' hymns and prayers, edited by Robert Anderson and Johann Moser, (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1993). The full Latin text of each hymn is presented in the appendix at the end of this document.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Gentium} here in the last stanza, in the genitive plural, could equally be modifying either \textit{Rex} or \textit{pretium}. In terms of word order, \textit{gentium} is much closer to \textit{Rex}, but it is placed at the end of the line in order to rhyme with \textit{pretium}, causing there to be no real way to judge by word order. Further, either translation makes sense: “King of the nations” describes Christ about as well as “reward of the nations” describes the effects of Christ's sacrifice. I have chosen to render it as “reward of the nations” here, because of the echo it would thus have with the words of institution both in the Gospels and in the liturgy, which Aquinas describes in \textit{ST} IIIa Q78, “pro vobis et pro multis effundetur.”
\end{flushleft}
carries a legal connotation. In other contexts, it would mean “fix, agree upon,” or “make a contract.” In the wider context of this stanza's discussion of the last supper, this calls to mind the “new covenant” established by Christ at that event. The past perfect tense used here indicates the historical nature of the event described; St. Thomas is recounting the story of Christ's presentation of Himself at supper, the night before He died. The first line, however, makes use of an earlier hymn in honor of the Cross, “Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis,” written in the 5th century for Passion Sunday and Good Friday by Claudianus Mamertus. By using the first line of this well-known hymn about the cross, Aquinas creates a direct connection between the two events in the theology of his hymns. Thus, to sing the glory of the Eucharist at the Last Supper is to sing the glory of Christ's cross, and its redemptive power. This allusion to the soteriological function of the Passion, made present in the bread and wine, is strengthened by the last line of the stanza, “Rex effudit gentium.”

The rest of the stanza foreshadows the deeper mysteries which the rest of the hymn will describe in greater detail. “Most glorious,” describing the “body,” serves both as a superlative word of praise and also as an indication of the presence of Christ's body as that of the glorified body in heaven, but still that body which was “the fruit of the most noble womb.” “In the world” further cements the connection between the Eucharistic presence and the presence of the Word in time and space, within the person of Jesus. This grounding in actual history is furthered by the phrase “the fruit of the most noble womb,” describing the King, which emphasizes His full humanity. The choice of the

105 Catholic Encyclopedia, “Pange Lingua Gloriosi.” It is interesting to note that both hymns share the same entry in the encyclopedia. Mamertus' hymn was contained in the Roman Breviary for good Friday during Aquinas' time, and thus was certainly known by him, as well as his contemporaries.
word “effudit” connects vividly this hymn with the Gospel accounts of the Institution, used in all three Synoptics.106

The second stanza:

Given to us, born for us
Out of an untouched virgin,
And lived [with us] in the world,
The seeds of [His] word having been sown,
His stay ended the obstacles/hindrances [to our salvation] in wondrous order.

This stanza continues the work of the last, presenting in short poetic form Christ's stay on earth, in its soteriological function. The double repetition of “nobis” in the first line clearly emphasizes Christ's self-giving action for our sake. The reference to Christ's virgin birth both completes the reference to the “most noble womb” in the prior stanza, and repeats that earlier phrase's point that Christ was both fully human, and yet miraculous from birth. Christ's mission is succinctly described in terms of the parable of the sower, “semine” and “verbum” being the same key words used in Mt. 13. Christ came, and sowed the seeds of His word across the nation of Israel while on Earth.

As the first part of the stanza describes Christ's teaching mission, the second part describes the passion. “Incolatus,” the word I translated here as “stay,” really has a much longer meaning: “residence as an alien,” or “time in exile.” The use of this word allows St. Thomas to strongly emphasize the paradox between Christ's fully human nature, and yet His Divine nature and origin. He was truly born as one of us, but born in a

106 Mt 26:28, Lk 22:20, and Mk 14:24. Biblical citations in my are drawn from the 1598 Vulgate, as accessed online at http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/vul/index.htm. Aquinas himself is believed to have used the Parisian Text of the Vulgate, among other versions he accessed during his travels around Europe, which may have had slight differences from the later version I have used. Further, Aquinas frequently quoted Scripture from memory, leading to further discrepancies between even quotations in Aquinas' work and the Parisian Text he most frequently used.
completely unique way, pre-existing his virgin mother as creator of the universe. Further, “incolatus” here is clearly in the nominative, making it the subject of the verb “clausit,” “to end.” His exile to earth, in its entirety, is thus ordered towards salvation: the ending of “the obstacle” resulting from Adam and Eve's fall.

The third stanza:

In the night of the supreme meal,
Reclining with his brothers,
Having completely observed the law in legal food,
He gave to each of the crowd of twelve food
With his own hands.

There is a stark contrast in language used for the Apostles in this stanza. First we hear “brothers,” referencing the tight bond between Jesus and His disciples. This shows an echo of a scriptural theme, evident in Mark's gospel, where Jesus proclaims to the crowd that, “Whoever does the will of God is my brother.”\textsuperscript{107} This is high praise for the disciples. And yet, a few lines later in this stanza, the twelve are referred to with the term “turbae,” meaning “crowd” or “mob.” This dark language shows that even around the table of the “supreme meal,” the disciples are still like the fickle “mob” who will reject Jesus before Pilate.

This stanza as a whole serves two further purposes. First, it introduces the contrast between Old Testament ritual, and the New Testament ritual. Aquinas here speaks of Jesus observing “lege plene,” the complete, or arguably “fulfilled” law, and then follows with the qualification, “in legal food.” In contrast to the “legal food” which follows the “complete [Old Testament] law,” Jesus at the end of the stanza gives them

\textsuperscript{107} Mk 3:35.
food with His own hands, issuing a new commandment in love and communion. This
talk of hands, meals, and reclining, as the second purpose of this stanza, further grounds
this “supreme meal” into authentic history, while also pointing to Christ, God Himself, as
the source of the Eucharistic bread. Against the Cathars, who disparaged any physical
sacrament, this hymn holds up the Eucharist as being given and commanded directly by
the hands of God.

The fourth stanza:

The Word made flesh\textsuperscript{108} made true bread [into] His flesh,
And made wine into the blood of Christ.
And if sense should fail, faith alone is sufficient
To strengthen a pure heart.

The play here between Christ, as the incarnate Word of God, and the form of the
sacrament, the words of consecration, is particularly striking. Just as God formed the
universe with His Word, so now Christ forms the new covenant with His most precious
words, remembered and repeated through history in memory of Him. This hymn, thus,
spells out the form and matter of the sacrament of the Eucharist – from “true bread” and
“wine” are made, by the precious words of institution are made present the “flesh and
blood of Christ.” Although the word is not used, the emphasis on “true bread and wine”
implicitly hints at a substantial conversion. Before the words are spoken, it is truly bread
and wine, but afterwards, it is truly the body and blood of Christ.

\textsuperscript{108} “Caro” can mean either “flesh,” in the most likely scenario in which Thomas Aquinas is making a
reference to John 1:14, or it could be translated as an adjective modifying “Verbo” in the second line,
meaning “A precious/dear word.” This alternate, second meaning would highlight the significance of
using Christ's words within the liturgical reenactment of the Last Supper, a theme which runs through
all of the hymns. The former is more likely, and is more common among other translations, but it is
entirely possible that Aquinas could have included a double-meaning, here.
The second half of this stanza speaks directly to the heart of the one listening or singing the hymn, jumping suddenly from past perfect to present tense. This movement from history to present liturgy will be made more obvious in the next stanza, but here the heart and mind's ability to grasp the wondrous change on the altar is described, both concerning present liturgy and at the first institution. “Sensus” here, in the singular, could refer to all five senses, but more probably refers to the intellect informed by those senses. If our minds are unable to grasp such a mystery, “faith alone is sufficient.” “Ad firmandum cor sincerum,” spelled out here as “to strengthen a pure heart,” must be simplified in order to make sense completely in English. “Firmandum” carries with it a subtle necessity, and is a passive participle, rendering it more completely “for the pure heart needing to be strengthened.” Even when the mind fails, and the heart is weak, sincerity and faith can suffice.

The fifth stanza:

Before such a sacrament, therefore,
Let us worship, lying prostrate,
Let the old law make way for a new rite.
Let faith surpass and fill out the deficient senses.

Three present commands form the second-last stanza: “Let us worship,” “Let the old law make way,” and “Let faith surpass.” These bring strongly what was in the past, the history described through the first four stanzas in past perfect tense, into present liturgy, where it is again available to our worship. Each of the three commands serves a distinct purpose, descriptive of the new liturgy's role. “Let us worship” describes the action of the faithful before Christ, truly present. As the historical reality described
earlier in the hymn is now present, the only proper response is to lie prostrate in worship.

“Let the old law make way for a new rite” describes the saving function of the new liturgy. Whereas before, the “old law” was only able to present figures of Christ's actions still to come, Christ has instituted “with his own hands” a new bread, a new testament, that saves. “Let faith surpass” hearkens back to the end of the prior stanza, where faith and sincerity of heart sufficed for a deficient mind. Now, even when our sight, taste, hearing, touch, and smell are unable to detect the truly present mystery, faith steps surpasses and fills out the naturalistic cycle of death and sin, bringing us into the mystery of salvation through Christ's passion.

The last stanza:

To the Father and the Begotten One
Be praise and jubilation,
And also salvation, honor, strength, and blessing.
To the One proceeding from both
Be equal adoration.

It was common in the Victorine style to conclude a hymn with a Trinitarian doxology, and this one is no different. This doxology shows remarkable precision in its language, ascribing equal (compar) adoration to all three Persons. Aquinas ascribes seven adjectives of praise to the Trinity, drawing on such Biblical sources, such as Revelation 19:1. This doxology, however, is not merely a customary addition at the end, unrelated to the prior stanzas. Instead, it is connected by the verb “veneremur” in the prior stanza: because we can worship Christ, the Divine Word, present in “such a sacrament,” the doxology of praise at the end can be addressed directly to a God who has made Himself present.
In general, then, *Pange lingua* describes the event of the Last Supper, both in its salvific effect, but especially in our participation in it. The remarkable change from past tense to present, combined with the host of concrete, physical descriptions both poetically brings to life the past and meditates in awe upon the transcendence of time which allows us to partake of such a salvific event. Christ's presence, here, is assumed more than explained. Because He is present, we can fall before the sacrament in worship. Because He is present, the events of His life which effected salvation bring that effect to us.

The next hymn to be analyzed is *Sacris solemniis*. This was the hymn for Matins of the feast of Corpus Christi. It consists of seven stanzas, utilizing a rhythmic sequence from earlier hymns and from classical Latin poetry, having “three Asclepiadic lines and one Glyconic.”

This structure allows Aquinas to emphasize metrically the fourth line. The rhyme scheme is also complex, not only rhyming at the end of lines but at the end of each foot. This is easily seen by breaking up the four lines into seven, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sacris solemniis /</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>juncta sint gaudia,</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et ex praecordiis /</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sonent praeconia.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recedant vetera /</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nova sint omnia</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corda, voces, et opera.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first stanza:

Let joy be joined to the most solemn rites,  
and from the breast let praises sound forth,  
let the old traditions retire, and all things be new:  
hearts, voices, and works.

The opening stanza of this hymn sets its tone and perspective. The quadruple

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subjunctive of “let joy be joined,” “let praises sound forth,” “let the old traditions retire,” and “let all things be new,” places this hymn firmly in the present, in a union of the singer's will with the actions of the “most solemn rites.” Given the context of the entire hymn, “the most solemn rites” here refer to the Eucharist. The singer of this hymn is thus accepting and concurrently willing the action of this new, salvific rite, with joy and with praises. The hymn is thus sung in the person of those singing and witnessing this new rite, uniting such singers with the liturgy before them.

This unity with the liturgy also produces an effect, according to this first stanza. By actively willing the rite in participation with its unfolding before them, the participants become the object of its new creation also, so that their hearts, voices, and works are also transformed. By singing sincerely “from the breast,” and by joining their joy to the solemn rites, they are joined also to its salvific and transformative effect. This change within them is not limited to the liturgy and within the hearts and voices, but instead extends also to the “works,” or the concrete life of the participant.

The second stanza:

Let the night of the last supper be recalled,
Let it be believed that Christ gave to [His] brothers
Lamb and unleavened bread, following the legitimate handing down
From the ancient fathers.

This stanza continues the focus on the present solemn rite by discussing its historical origin. The same present-tense, subjunctive verbs are continued in “let it be recalled” and “let it be believed.” Again, these actions – remembering and believing – are not merely reactions to the rite, but rather constitutive of the rite itself. In both this
and the next stanza, the hymn echoes the Institution Narrative from the Mass, where the repeating of Christ's words makes present the remembered Last Supper of Christ. The participatory remembering of and believing in, therefore, of the past actions of Christ result in the transformative power discussed in the previous stanza.

Aquinas points out here that the meal consisted specifically of “lamb and unleavened bread,” given to the disciples by Christ as the new passover, fulfilling the tradition of the old. Christ's fulfillment of the old tradition is evident here, as His giving of lamb and bread mirrors the handing-down of the practice from the patriarchs. However, the “newness” of the rite given here by Christ is not absolute or exclusive, but rather follow the “legitimate handing-down” from the Old Testament patriarchs. There is newness, and yet this newness is expressed in continuity with the old. By mentioning both agnum and azyma in the history of the Last Supper, Aquinas lays a hint under the old actions, pointing to the new rite, where the Pascal Lamb is given under the sign of unleavened bread. This new interpretation of the traditional meal is detailed in the next stanza.

The third stanza:

After the lamb of the feast, a figure, had been completed,  
We acknowledge His hands, that gave the body of the Lord  
To the disciples, thus complete for all as it was  
Complete to each of them.

The lamb of the feast, here, is specifically called a figure, for the corpus dominicum. The old rite, where the father of the house gave lamb to each member of the household, is described as typicum, as a figure or a type, for the new rite established by
Jesus in the giving of His body. Thus, where lamb and bread were given before, the
Lamb is now given under the species of bread.

This discussion of typology is not limited to Christ's historical institution of this
new rite. Instead, the present active is still used to connect the narration to present
liturgy. Although my translation above does not reflect this, as it would have produced a
convoluted word order in English, the phrase “We acknowledge His hands,” or “Ejus
fatemur manibus,” is the final line of the stanza, placing a considerable amount of weight
on that phrase. This produces two effects. First, it continues the focus of the previous
stanza on Jesus as the new law-giver, providing us with a new rite with His own hands.
Second, it connects to concrete action of Christ – giving His body with His own hands –
to the present action of the faithful by their participation in that same rite at the present,
through their active belief. This connection between past and present in reinforced by the
third line's “Complete for all as it was complete to each of them.” Christ's total giving of
Himself to each of the disciples during the historical event is also His complete gift to us.

The fourth stanza:

He gave to the weak the food of [His] body,
And gave to the sorrowful the cup of [His] blood,
Saying, “Accept this small vessel\textsuperscript{110} that I give,
All of you drink from it.”

The first two lines of this stanza emphasize the nourishing effect of the sacrament.

“Food,” or more literally “platter,” and “drink” are used metaphorically here to refer to

\textsuperscript{110} The word used for “small vessel,” \textit{vasculum}, could mean “seed” in another context. This second
meaning could have been in Aquinas' mind during this line's composition, suggesting that the received
blood of Christ would grow spiritually in the receiver, increasing their faith. It is impossible to know
whether Aquinas intended such an allusion, and therefore this is only speculation.
the spiritual nourishment which the body and blood give, as is figured by the type of bread and wine. The recipients of this gift, the “weak” and the “sorrowful,” show its power, and the deep love of its giver. To those most in need, Christ supplies enough nourishment for even the weak and the sorrowful to attain eternal happiness, along with the “joy joined to the solemn rites” until that happy end.

The second half of the stanza is a direct reference to the words of consecration of the chalice. By using the words from the Gospel accounts, and therefore also from the Mass, Aquinas solidifies the connection being built over the last few stanzas between the historical institution of this rite by Christ, and the present repetition of that rite. Aquinas' word choice for give, “trado,” cements this idea of tradition and passing-down.

The fifth stanza:

Thus, He [Christ] instituted that sacrifice,
Whose office He willed to attach only to priests,
Whom He made it thus fitting that they
Should support and give to all the rest.

The first line is a recap: thus, as the previous lines has presented, did Christ institute the sacrifice which is offered presently. The rest of the stanza performs two functions: pedagogy, and challenge. Pedagogically, the stanza teaches about the role of priests in continuing the officium: the duty, or the office of sacrifice. This duty-bound role to offer Christ's sacrifice is given specifically to priests by divine ordinance. Their position, according to the hymn, is thus established upon divine will. This could be intended to contradict Cathar charges against the Church of Rome, and against the priestly hierarchy belonging to that Church. The second function of this stanza, however,
works against a “clericalist” interpretation. Aquinas' word choice in the last line, *sumant et dent*, places a firm challenge and defined role upon the priests. The hierarchy, according to this stanza, exists explicitly for the service of the laity in a self-emptying fashion. The use of *dare*, “to give,” in this context of Christ's self-giving through the Eucharist, produces the meaning of “give up,” or “give of one's self.” The logic of this stanza necessitates that the priests assume a position of service, not of self-aggrandizement. Their position, for which Christ has made them fitting by the implied sacramental character of Orders, is defined, modeled, and dependent upon the sacrifice of Christ. Their priesthood gains its meaning from the sacrifice which they carry out as their duty – the sacrifice of the Eucharist, in which He who made them what they are is present.

The sixth stanza:

Now that the angelic bread has been made the bread of men,  
The heavenly bread gives an end to figures.  
O wondrous matter! The poor, the slave,  
And the lowly eats the Lord.

In this second-to-last stanza, Aquinas provides perhaps the strongest statement of Christ's presence within the sacrament thus far in this hymn. The verb at the end, *manducat*, is tactile, and could be translated as “chew,” or “gnaw,” in a different context. This strongly physical verb is balanced, however, with the adjectives describing the bread earlier in the stanza: angelic and heavenly. Angels and heaven do not have true, mutable corporeality, but rather a higher order of existence that is tangible only in the most metaphorical of senses. This supersubstantial bread, this heavenly food outside the reach
of mortals, is made the bread of men by Christ's human presence made available in the Eucharist to even the most lowly and ignoble of humans.

The second line also provides a conclusion to the comparison between the old sacrifices of the patriarchs and the new sacrifice of the Eucharist. The true presence of the Lord, which the lowly, poor, and slave eat, is itself the present reality of God, dispensing of the need to communicate with God through mere signs and figures. Previously, the bread and lamb were a sign of the Lamb of God to come. Now, that Lamb who is the Lord is present under the bread, wonderfully accessible to those who need Him most.

Access to the Lord is not accomplished in a simply individual manner in this description. The three types of people who eat, according to Aquinas: servus, pauper, and humilis, eat together as one action. Manducat is singular, as represented in my translation as “eats” instead of “eat.” This casts an ecclesial framework across the Lord's gift of Himself. Instead of one man eating, we instead have the lowly, the slave, and the poor eating together of the Lord, who makes Himself available to all through this heavenly meal.

The seventh stanza:

Thus we ask you, three and one God,  
That you visit us as we worship you;  
Lead through your paths we who look  
To the light which you inhabit.

This concluding stanza sums up the effects of the liturgical action of remembrance. By performing the solemn rite, the participants ask God to make Himself
present in a real and true way, and thus by means of this presence lead them into union with God. This unity with God, the designated result of the sacred rites, is granted to those who perform a particular action: tendimus, translated here as “look to,” but could also be translated as “live with” or “pitch a tent within.” As a result, the effects of the liturgy are given to those who actively look to the Lord, and choose to dwell within His eternal light. Aquinas is careful here to exclude any Pelagian interpretation, however: the faithful are not saved by their own action, but rather the Lord leads to salvation those who actively look to Him.

As an entire poem, then, Sacris solemniis describes the liturgy's ability to transcend time. The joyful yet solemn rites make the past saving action of Christ available through present ritual to lead to a future of eternal union with God. The clergy's role in carrying out this ritual is explained briefly, but the whole of the rest of the hymn describes the faithful's active participation, rather than passive acceptance. The clergy's role is to perform the rite, so that the historical acts of Christ, with their salvific effect, can become present in order that the faithful may participate in them and thus be properly disposed for God to lead them to their reward. All of this salvific action, in both clergy and laity, is made possible and effected by historical institution and power given by Christ's words, quoted in the fourth stanza. The solemn rite, most properly, is Christ making Himself available as food and drink to the weak and sorrowful.

The third hymn for analysis is Verbum supernum. It contains six stanzas, each with four lines. It is not as complex in its construction as the prior two, each line sharing the same accentual rhythm in eight syllables, and rhyming in a simple alternating pattern.
The first stanza:

Heavenly Word proceeding,
But not leaving the Father’s right hand,
Going to His own work,
He came to [His] life's evening

Aquinas begins by describing the incarnation as leading up to the passion. The first line, *Verbum supernum prodiens*, is again borrowed from an earlier hymn: an anonymous one for the Advent season dating back to as early as the 5th century.111 This reference to an Advent hymn, in the context of a hymn dedicated to the Eucharist, emphasizes Jesus' divinity during his passion and death. According to St. Thomas, in this hymn, there is no room for interpreting Jesus as a political rebel, an ordinary criminal, or even a good man put unjustly to death. Rather, Christ's divinity and divine agency is clear. The Word's coming into the world is a function of His own work, the work of the redemption of mankind. The end of His life, the crucifixion, is of His own choosing, His own self-giving, while not relinquishing His proper position at the right hand of God. The participles in the first three lines, “proceeding,” “leaving,” and “going,” are all in present tense. Thus, they both describe the historical descent of the Word to die on the cross, and also the sacramental coming of Christ during the Eucharist.

The second stanza:

By a disciple handed to death
By the work of His rivals.
But first, He gave Himself over
As the food of life to His disciples;

111 Catholic Encyclopedia, “*Verbum supernum prodiens*.”
This stanza sets up a description of the historical event of the Last Supper. The same word, *discipulus*, is used twice, once positively and once negatively, to draw light to the conflict which brought about the death of the Word. The betrayer is one of Christ's disciples, to whom He had given Himself as the food of life. The conflict comes about because of the sin of a disciple, one who had eaten with and of the Lord. Similarly, the same verb is used to describe the disciple's betrayal and Christ's giving of Himself: *tradere*. The work of human sin is pitted against the saving action of God within the drama of the Eucharist. This is emphasized by Aquinas' word choice for rival, *aemulis*, which has the connotation of meaning “a rival in love.” The two sides, betrayal and salvation, are fighting over the individual disciples. However, it is important that Aquinas does not present these sides as equal. Christ is still in control, still acting as God at the right hand of the Father, as the prior stanza pointed out. Moreover, the betrayer and the rival are relegated to a participial phrase, while Christ performs the main action of the stanza. Of the two sides, Christ and the salvation He brought about through His self-giving is victorious.

The third stanza:

To whom under twofold species  
He gave [His] flesh and blood,  
So that he might feed the whole human,  
According to their twofold substance.

This stanza is a direct continuation from the prior stanza: the antecedent of “to whom” is “His disciples” from stanza two. Flesh and blood are thus the twofold manifestation of the “food of life,” in which form Christ gave Himself. The food of life,
as flesh to eat and blood to drink, feeds the disciples, nourishing them and bringing them into life. Just as humans need to both eat and drink, so there are two species given as part of this one sacrament. Further, the twofold nature of the species corresponds to man's twofold being, as body and soul.

The use of _substantia_ above deserves further explanation. In its precise, philosophical sense, as discussed in the prior chapter, any one being can only have one _substantia_. This is its being-ness, its fundamental being as a single unit. Thus, no human could remain a single human and have two substances. Rather, the Latin text here indicates that the single substance of man is expressed in two distinct ways, i.e., as body and spirit. Thus, the parallel to the sacrament becomes clear: just as a single sacrament is given in twofold form, as blood and flesh, just so is the human recipient fed, in soul and body.

The fourth stanza:

Being born, He gave Himself as a ally,  
Eating with us, He gave Himself in food,  
Dying, He gave Himself as ransom,  
And Reigning, He gives Himself as our prize.

This stanza contains four present participles which summarize the effect of Christ's actions across time, echoing the prior stanzas. Once again, the tie to the Incarnation is made, establishing Christ as an ally to our good in human nature. The concrete verb “_nascens_” strongly emphasizes the true physicality of Christ's becoming human. Next, “eating with us” continues the emphasis on historical action in the world,

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112 The resemblance to John's Bread of Life discourse, especially Jn 6:53-56, is striking.  
113 The miracle of the Incarnation excepted from this discussion.
while also building upon the fourfold exposition of the action and effect of Christ's life. The two center lines are the center of the stanza's meaning as well, as they carry on the connection made between Christ giving Himself as food the the disciples and His being handed over to death from the prior two stanzas. The last line brings the verb, “give,” into present tense, showing that Christ, who died after presiding over the Last Supper centuries ago, is still active in bringing about the final end of His sacrifice: our redemption and union with Him in paradise.

The fifth stanza:

O saving Victim,
Who opens the gates of heaven,\[\text{114}\]
The military force of the enemy oppresses us.
Give us strength, give us aid.

The explication about Christ's historical actions and their effects in the prior stanzas flow into this prayer to Christ as Victim. As the innocent, incarnate Word, His death opened the gates of heaven to believers as a reward. As friend and table-companion, He communicates the effect of His own sacrifice to those believers as the sacred Host to be eaten, nourishing those who receive in their fight against the enemy. The interplay between Christ as food and Christ as victim is striking here. "Hostia," the term Aquinas uses for bread that is to be consecrated, is also the word used here for “sacrificial Victim,” tying the sacrifice to the table. Moreover, the verb used for “open” is “pandis,” a verb which specifically refers to the action of stretching out one's arms:

\[\text{114} \text{“Ostium,” the word which Aquinas uses here for “door,” may be borrowed from Revelation 4:1, which reads “vidi et ecce ostium apertum in caelo,” or “I looked, and behold! In heaven an opened door.” This would strongly connect this stanza to the eschatological victory which Christ's sacrifice, presented in the Eucharist, provides to the disciples.}\]
reference to Christ's arms stretched out on the cross. In this stanza, Christ's action of self-sacrifice is united to the Eucharistic self-donation as strength-giving food.

The imagery of military opposition between Christ and those who oppose Him throughout the hymn creates a tension which reaches a climax here, but with the conflict securely resolved. The disciple who betrayed Christ handed Him over to His enemies, but in doing so helped Christ carry out His own purpose. They killed Him, stretching out His arms on the cross, but His total gift of self in this death secured the reward of salvation for those who would believe in Him. And now that His enemies have become their enemies, He continues to make His victory accessible in the Eucharistic banquet, through which His disciples can find strength and salvation.

The sixth stanza:

To the one yet threefold God
Be perpetual glory,
Who gives us life without end
In heaven, our homeland.

Once again, this hymn ends with a short doxology of praise, and once more this one sums up in praise what the rest of the hymn describes in poetry. After describing the work of Christ, the divine and eternal Word incarnate, Aquinas calls the singers to praise Him who shares His eternal happiness. Because of Christ's actions, His birth, His supper, His death, and His victory, the eternity which He inhabits is available in a partial way to His disciples and followers. The Latin which Aquinas uses here to describe eternity emphasizes the great heights from which God descends to save human beings. For God's eternal glory, he uses *sempiterna*, which is a fusion of the words “always” and “forever.”
For the gift which believers receive from Him, Aquinas uses instead the phrase “life without end,” signifying the participatory nature by which they partake as a gift in God's natural eternity. However, the gift is not a mere bestowal external to the disciple who receives it. Rather, eternity is given to the saved truly, such that heaven becomes their native country.

*Verbum Supernum* focuses on Christ's saving action having past, present, and future effect. His whole life is described as a purposeful divine gift to those who believe, so that such disciples can turn from His enemies to life with Him in heaven. The Eucharist serves as the focal point, the means of transmission, and the act of saving sacrifice itself in this salvific coming-down from the heavenly Word. In the ritual presentation of the Eucharist, the body and blood of the Lord are presented as food and drink to nourish the entirety of the human, soul and body, on towards everlasting life. Thus Christ's salvific action is presented as affecting disciples through time: as a total act of love in the past, as nourishment given to the disciples in the present, and as the certain promise of an open gate in heaven.

*Lauda Sion*, the last of the hymns to be discussed, is the sequence for Mass on the feast of Corpus Christi. It features twenty stanzas, with the first eighteen in three lines each, the next four in four lines each, and the final two in five lines. The stanzas are divided into sets of two by rhyme scheme: the last line of each set of two consecutive stanzas rhyme. The first two stanzas illustrate this, as indicated by underlining:
These units of two stanzas, connected by rhyme, allow St. Thomas to create a dual unfolding throughout his hymn. Frequently, the first stanza in a set introduces a theme or idea concerning the blessed sacrament, while the second one expounds upon, explains, or deepens that idea. As a result of this format, I will depart slightly from the analytical format used in the first three hymns of one stanza at a time, and will instead discuss the hymn in units of two stanzas.

The first two stanzas:

Praise, Zion, the Savior,
Praise the leader and shepherd
In hymns and canticles,

However much you are able, as much as you dare,
Because the greatest of all praise
Does not praise [Him] sufficiently.

The sequence begins as a call to praise for the savior, leader, and shepherd. This invocation is worded in the singular, but applies to all for whom Christ fulfills those roles, as indicated by the collective noun “Sion,” which is transitively applied to the Church as typified by Jerusalem. This opening also raises the issue of the Church as fulfilling the old covenant, and of Christ's identity and activity as savior. These themes will continue to be expounded upon throughout the hymn.

These first two lines go to great lengths to insist upon the greatness of Christ's
saving action. He is accorded titles from the Old Testament,\textsuperscript{115} and accorded praise beyond the amount of praise which can be given. Moreover, the Church as a whole is called to enter into and participate in this praise as much as they are able. Christ's Church, His body, is to give Him as much praise as it is able, praise which should resound from every member to their Head. Given that the first word of the hymn is this call to praise, this action of the Church toward Christ in the Eucharist takes a central position in this hymn.

The second two stanzas:

A theme of particular praise
For the living and life-giving bread
Today is put forward

Which on the table of the holy dinner
To [His] brothers of the crowd of twelve
He gave, of which there is no doubt.

This set of stanzas focuses the praise from this hymn on Christ present within the Eucharist. This praise is connected both to the present ritual and the historical institution, in concrete terms. The “bread” is described as both “living,” a reference to Christ's living presence within it, and as “life-giving,” a reference to its effect upon the recipient. This shows the dual-dynamic of completion within the sacrament, which is Christ truly present, and as existing for the edification of its recipients. The connection to Christ's institution of the sacrament is also drawn through the participants, as the “brothers” to whom Jesus gave the sacrament historically are extended to the recipients praising that same Christ today.

\textsuperscript{115} See Ps 23:1, II Sam 22:2-3, and Ps 106:21, as examples.
The historical reality of Christ's institution is emphasized heavily in the second of these two stanzas. The phrase at the end, “non ambigitur,” by itself testifies to the indubitability of Christ's action, but is aided by the concrete words which Aquinas uses to describe the action. The table itself, upon which Christ consecrated the bread, takes a prominent place in the first line, as it will again later on in the hymn. The common term for dinner, “coena,” and the familial term “brothers” create a down-to-earth, real description of the past which supports Aquinas' insistence upon its physical and historical reality beyond doubt.

The third two stanzas:

Let praise be full, let it be sonorous,
Let it be delightful, let it be graceful,
Jubilation of the soul.

This day is indeed given to solemnity,
In which it is cultivated afresh in the mind
The first institution of this [feast].

This set of two stanzas concludes the six at the beginning of the hymn which describe at length the praise given by the Church to Christ within the Eucharist. These last two justify the existence of the feast of Corpus Christi, and describe the attributes of the praise itself. This praise is explicitly praise of the “mens,” of the mind or the soul, reflecting John 4:23, “…adore the Father in spirit and in truth.” However, the other descriptors indicate an artistic physical manifestation of this praise, especially words like “graceful” and “sonorous.” Spiritual jubilation, given to Christ in the Eucharist by the Church, is expressed through vocal, and thus physical, actions.

“Recolitur,” Aquinas' word which I translated as “cultivated afresh,” indicates a
the mental process of mullling over and meditating upon something from the past. The focus of this remembering is the institution of the sacrament, the “sacred meal” mentioned in a previous stanza. But just as the praise and jubilation are not merely spiritual, but are sounded forth vocally, just so the remembering of Christ's action is through ritual, reenacted as well as in mental meditation, as the subsequent stanzas will demonstrate. This focus on physical action, on the sacramental communication between God and humanity, can be seen in light of the controversy with the Cathars, who denied the good of matter. Instead of using sacraments or reenactments, the Cathars would consecrate their initiates with only words.

The fourth two stanzas:

On this table of the new King,
The new Passover *[Pascha]* of the new law
Concluded the old Passover *[Phase]*

Antiquity flees from what is new,
Shadows flee from the truth,
And the Light eliminates the night.

Once again, Aquinas treats the relation of the new law and ritual to the old. He uses the two different words for “Passover,” the Hebrew word to refer to the old rite, and the Latin term to refer to the new. This hints at the precise meaning of the actions described in the second of these stanzas. Prior to Christ's coming, sacrifices which foreshadowed the true lamb of the new law were used. After His coming, the new Paschal rite replaced the old, as the light of Christ's true presence within the Eucharist replaced the prior figures. The old law was the proper form under Mosaic law, but now has faded into the past of salvation history, and as such is no longer valid, having fled
from what is new.

The fifth set of two stanzas:

What Christ commanded in [that] dinner  
Ought to be thus imitated\textsuperscript{116} 
In His memory.

Taught by holy custom,  
Bread and wine for salvation  
We consecrate as sacrificial offering [\textit{hostia}]

Aquinas lays out the tradition of repeating Christ's actions on the night of the last supper as that new rite, replacing the old one. Passed down by “holy custom,” the tradition of the Church preserving the institution of Christ, bread and wine are consecrated as a sacrificial offering. This consecration serves as a ritual remembrance, as discussed several stanzas above, which takes meditation upon the life of Christ and enacts it through physical imitation of His actions. Thus, His memory becomes present in a true and physical way through the repetition of His actions, just as He Himself becomes truly present through the repetition of the words He spoke.

The sixth set of two stanzas:

This dogma is given to Christians,  
that bread and is turned into flesh  
And wine into blood.

What you do not grasp, what you do not see,  
A courageous faith proves  
Outside the realm of ordinary things.

This is the most succinct statement of Aquinas' concept of the real presence within

\textsuperscript{116} Or, more literally, “is an imitation needing to be done.”
a hymn: a dogma, given to Christians by Christ through His own institution, carried out in ritual repetition of His actions, which states that bread becomes Christ's flesh and wine becomes Christ's blood. Although this reality cannot be comprehended by touching or seeing the host, courageous faith in Christ and His Church provides reassurance and conviction of this fact. This is Aquinas' strongest statement of the essence of Christ's presence under the sacrament, in simple terms so that the faithful might believe.

Aquinas uses simple yet precise language to match the overall pedagogical tone of this hymn. He uses the term “transit,” a perfect-tense verb meaning literally “go over,” to imply a complete change from bread to flesh and wine to blood. Moreover, he uses the most basic terms to describe the bread, “panem,” and wine, “vinum,” to make clear the proper matter for the sacrament, whereas in other more poetic and less dogmatic lines, he refers to them using synecdoche and metaphorical language with words like “poculum,” “drinking vessel;” “cibum,” “food;” or “ferculum,” “platter;” among others. Even if the listener may not be able to intellectually grasp the reality of the sacrament, they can at least know with precise language what is to be believed, and what would be false.

The seventh set of two stanzas:

Under separate species,  
Signs only, and not the reality,  
Lies the extraordinary reality

Flesh is food, blood is drink,  
Yet the Whole Christ stays  
Under both species separately.

St. Thomas continues to provide exact language with which to describe the Eucharist. The first is the insistence upon two species, the wine and the bread, which
make up the single sacrament. These species themselves are not the reality, but merely the “signum tantum,” which can be interpreted as referring to the sacramentum tantum. Underneath these signs lies the true, extraordinary reality of Christ's true presence. This presence is real, for His flesh can truly be eaten, and His blood can truly be drunk. And yet, the entirety of Christ remains whole and entire under both species, separately. This implies a concomitance, in order for the entirety of Christ to be where His blood or body is.

The eighth set of two stanzas:

Taken up, not broken up,
Not cut in two, not divided,
But he is accepted untouched.

If taken by one, if taken by thousands,
However many that receive, yet still He is one,
Received, but not devoured.

Christ's flesh and blood are truly present, but not in some simplistic, physicalist, or absurd way. The whole Christ is under both species, but Christ is not divided in two. He is received by the faithful, but is not devoured, extinguished, or destroyed. Any number of Christians across the centuries can partake of the sacrament, and yet Christ is still whole and entire. As a result, Christ's mode of presence is different from what is normally understood. Christ remains unaffected by eating, fracturing, and being presented under two different species, and thus is not the kind of presence which can be affected by physical touch or division in dimensive or local quality. But yet, He is truly present, and is truly eaten.

117 See Jn 6:55.
The ninth set of two stanzas:

Received by the good, received by the bad,
They receive an unequal fate:
Life or ruin.

Death is for the bad, life for the good.
See that they equally receive
While they end unequally.

Aquinas states firmly and unequivocally the solution to an argument among his predecessors. Although some before had stated that Christ ceased to be present when a sinner or heretic received, Aquinas clearly states, in two sequential stanzas, that Christ is present under the sacrament no matter what. The difference is not in the reception, not in Christ's presence, but rather in the effect. The good receive the true result of the sacrament, and are nourished unto eternal life. The sinners, on the other hand, receive unto their own condemnation, leading to their eternal ruin. Both receive Christ, equally, but the result is unequal. Christ's true presence has an effect upon whoever partakes of the sacrament, whether or not that reception is to their benefit.

The tenth set of two stanzas:

The sacrament at last broken,
Do not doubt; but remember
The whole [Christ] is under a fragment
As much as is covered by the whole [host]

No reality is split apart.
The sign alone is fractured,
Which neither in state or stature
Diminishes the one signified.

Aquinas increases the number of lines per stanza to four here, increasing this
section's poetic intensity. These two stanzas repeat what was stated earlier about Christ being whole under both species, but with language that more specifically deals with the problem of reception and fraction. Again, the problem which Aquinas addresses is too simplistic an understanding of Christ's presence. If Christ were present as if in a place, or somehow transported from heaven, He would be chewed and destroyed by the faithful. Instead, the sign only is affected, and Christ remains whole. The last two lines of the second stanza here make this absolutely clear. Christ suffers no change in state: He does not move from heaven, He is not injured, and He is not multiplied by many Masses. Christ also suffers no change in stature: His godhead, post-resurrection life, and lordship persist even as He is received by the poor and lowly, whole and entire to each.

The eleventh set of two stanzas:

Behold the bread of angels
Made the food of wayfarers.
Truly the bread of the sons
Is not sent out to the dogs.

In figures it was foreshadowed:
When Isaac was to be sacrificed,
When lambs were set aside for Passover,
And when manna was given to the patriarchs.

These two stanzas meditate upon the whole sequence preceding them. The first two words of the first of these stanzas, “Ecce panis,” serve as a dramatic summation: “Behold the bread,” perhaps echoing Pilate's presentation of Jesus to the Jews in John's gospel.\textsuperscript{118} The bread which is Christ Himself, adored by the angels in heaven, is given to wayfarers to nourish them on their way to that eternal end. The connection to the Old

\textsuperscript{118} Jn 19:5 has Pilate “pvpureum vestimentum et dicit, 'Ecce homo.'”
Testament, discussed above, is reiterated at length. Whereas before signs and figures were given, the new ritual is the fulfillment of all signs that precede it. The Eucharist is described as fulfilling the actions of the patriarchs, the Jewish feasts and rituals, and the providence of God as typified by manna. Christ, who is the sacrificed Son, who is the lamb that was slain, and who is nourishment for the faithful, fulfills all these signs within the bread which the faithful now behold.

The last two lines of the first stanza are difficult to interpret. Who are the sons, and who are the dogs? There is a clear reference to Matthew 15:26, in which Jesus states, “It is not good to take the food of the sons, and to give it to the dogs,” in which Jesus seems reluctant to solve the need of a Samaritan woman because His mission is to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This creates one potential interpretation of Aquinas' lines: the bread of life is not given to any but “sons,” or those within the Church which Jesus established. The “dogs,” then, would be those outside the Church, heretics, or potentially even public sinners excluded from communion. However, in Matthew's story, the Samaritan woman replies, “Yet even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from their master's table,” after which Jesus agrees to exorcise a demon from the woman's daughter. This suggests instead a more complex interpretation, dependent upon the first two verses of the stanza. Just as the bread of angels can be given to wayfarers, so can “dogs,” or all of mankind who are unworthy, be made worthy to join the table as adoptive sons. The next set of stanzas features a request that Jesus “make us...your joint heirs.”

119 The Latin is strikingly similar: compare Aquinas' “Vere panis filiorum / non mittendus canibus” to Matthew's “Non est bonum sumere panem filiorum, et mittere canibus.” The word choice is identical, with slight differences in wording.
120 Mt. 15:24.
121 Mt. 15:27.
lending evidence to this interpretation.

The last set of two stanzas:

Good Shepherd, true bread,
Jesus, have mercy on us.
Feed us yourself, protect us.
Yourself cause us to see goodness
In the land of the living.

You who see and know everything all at once,
Who feed us mortals here,
Make us your table companions there,
Your joint-heirs and friends,
And citizens among the saints.

The last two stanzas of this sequence are a prayer to Jesus as truly present. It uses high language to emphasize His deity, contrasted with the request to feed, protect, and bring eternal life to those who receive the Eucharist by His own actions, and by Himself as personally present. By doing so, Jesus raises the recipients to become His “table companions, joint-heirs, friends, and citizens.” This contrast is enhanced by the language “us mortals here,” compared to the place to which they will be raised, “there... among the saints.”

Aquinas includes one final reference to the reality of Christ's presence. The direct address, “have mercy on us!” is directed to the “Good shepherd,” who is also the “true bread,” a request to the Eucharistic sacrament which indicates its divine presence. Throughout the requests, Aquinas emphatically almost to the point of redundancy repeats the second-person pronoun in reference to Jesus, again and again calling out to the Lord who is there beneath the sacramental species.

*Lauda Sion* is a pedagogical exposition of Eucharistic teaching, presented in
significantly clearer language than the other three hymns. It deals directly with errors and misunderstandings, including physicalism, anti-clericalism, and anti-material dualism. It makes clear and precise statements about the nature of the Eucharist, using language echoing definitions within the *Summa*.

All of these hymns, hundreds of years after their composition, remain in use liturgically today. This is a testament to Aquinas ability to compose lyrics of both theological depth and poetic beauty. All four of the hymns provide a similar focus on connecting the historical action of Christ to the present reenactment of His salvation, carried out through the Church, and effected by His true presence.
CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGY OF THE REAL PRESENCE DRAWN FROM BOTH
SUMMA AND HYMNS

Having discussed St. Thomas' concept of Eucharistic presence contained in his theology and in his hymns, it has come time to discuss how these concepts are similar to each other, and how each can assist in understanding the other. In this fourth chapter, I will first compare the content of the theology with the content of the hymns. Second, I will show how the theology in the Summa fills in the hymns with more precise language and deeper explanations. Third, I will demonstrate how the hymns contain the same theology in a more accessible pedagogical form, how they contribute to a more concrete and liturgical understanding of what might otherwise be a merely intellectual doctrine, and how they provide more complete context for the doctrine of real presence within the broader theological goal of the Church. With these three tasks accomplished, I will hope to have shown that an understanding of Aquinas' Eucharistic theology of Christ's presence, drawn from the Summa Theologiae, can be deepened through a study of his hymns, and that therefore the two literary forms should be studied together in order to better understand St. Thomas' ideas on the subject.

Both the hymns and the Summa make Christ's real presence a theme of great importance. In both genres, Christ's presence is defended by historical institution by
Christ, confessed to be “true flesh and true blood,” and described as a presence beyond all others, which necessitates faith in order to see the reality that lies beneath the mere signs. Both hold that receiving Christ as truly present communicates grace, as nourishment and as eventual inclusion into heaven.

St. Thomas makes it very clear that the Eucharist, as a sacrament, ritual, and Christ's giving of Himself, is rooted in and founded upon the historical reality of the Last Supper, its institution. The hymns make this a point of significant focus, with all four mentioning the Last Supper to at least some extent. In *Pange Lingua*, the third and fourth stanzas are dedicated to the account of that meal, in which Jesus gives “food to each of the twelve” which He had “with a precious Word made true bread [into] flesh.” *Verbum Supernum* provides a more passing reference to Jesus giving “Himself over as food to the Disciples” before being handed over to death. *Lauda Sion* attributes its praise to God for the Eucharist “Which on the table of the holy dinner” Christ gave to His disciples, “Of which there is no doubt.” The most clear designation of the Last Supper's importance is within *Sacris Solemniiis*, where Aquinas describes the present ritual Eucharist as using Christ's own words, “Accept this small vessel that I give, All of you drink from it.” The use of the institution as a guarantee of Christ's presence is mirrored in the *Summa*, where Aquinas states,

> This sacrament was appropriately instituted at the supper, when Christ conversed with His disciples for the last time. First of all, because of what is contained in the sacrament: for Christ is Himself contained in the Eucharist sacramentally. Consequently, when Christ was going to leave His disciples in His proper species, He left Himself with them under the sacramental species; as the Emperor's image is set up to be reverenced in his absence.\(^{122}\)

Aquinas states that because Christ is present in the Eucharist, it was most appropriate that

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\(^{122}\) S.T., IIIa Q73 a 5.
it be instituted on the night of the Last Supper, before Christ was to be killed and taken away. Therefore, He left Himself under the sacrament in order to remain with those disciples, even through the ages.

That the Eucharist becomes truly flesh and truly blood is important in both hymn and Summa. In opposition to the claims of Berengarius, Aquinas firmly states in the Summa, “Yet meanwhile in our pilgrimage He does not deprive us of His bodily presence; but unites us with Himself in this sacrament through the truth of His body and blood.” Similar statements are made throughout the hymns. In Lauda Sion, Aquinas asserts the dogmatic, Christian truth that “Bread is turned into flesh, And wine into blood.” Pange Lingua contains the statement that “The Word by a precious word made true bread [into] His flesh, and made wine into the blood of Christ.” In a like manner, Aquinas states in Verbum Supernum that “Under twofold species He gave His flesh and blood.” Both within the Summa and these hymns, St. Thomas emphasizes the true reality of Christ presence under this sacrament, as true flesh and true blood.

The dense description Aquinas gives of the mode of Christ's presence in the Summa is mirrored in poetic form at length in Lauda Sion, and in references in the others. According to Verbum Supernum, Christ is present “Under two-fold species,” and yet, as Sacris Solemnis points out, was “complete to one as complete to each of them.” Lauda Sion carries this idea into a full-fledged discourse on how the reality of Christ lies underneath the signs of bread and wine. “Flesh is food and wine is drink,” but “The whole Christ stays under both species separately.” “Taken by one, taken by thousands,” yet “still He is one.” He is “received,” but not “devoured.” According to this picture,

123 Ibid., Q 75, a 1.
Christ is truly present in His whole self under each of the sacramental species, but remains unaffected in heaven. This rings true with the presentation that Aquinas gives of Christ's presence in the *Summa* Regarding Christ's total presence under both species, he states that “the Godhead never set aside the assumed body, wherever the body of Christ is, there, of necessity, must the Godhead be,”124 “it must be held most certainly that the whole Christ is under each sacramental species.”125 “In no way is Christ's body locally in this place,”126 as if it could be touched, divided, or devoured. Christ is truly present under the Eucharist, but in a way which requires faith to fully appreciate.

Aquinas ascribes a central role to faith in apprehending Christ's presence in the Eucharist, strongly in the *Summa*, and repeatedly in the hymns. In the question on transubstantiation, Aquinas asserts that “The presence of Christ's true body and blood in this sacrament cannot be detected by sense, nor understanding, but by faith alone, which rests upon Divine authority.”127 Everything visible or tangible in the sacrament is but the accidents of bread and wine, making the reality of Christ's presence inaccessible to the senses.128 Two of the hymns speak directly to this need for faith. In *Pange Lingua*, St. Thomas states that “If sense should fail, faith alone is sufficient To strengthen a pure heart,” and later repeats this with the hortative, “Let faith surpass and fill out the deficient senses.” Similarly, in *Lauda Sion* Aquinas holds that, “What you do not grasp, what you do not see, A courageous faith proves outside the realm of ordinary things.” Faith,

124 Ibid., Q 76, a 1.
125 Ibid., a 2.
126 Ibid., a 5.
127 Ibid., Q 75, a 1.
128 This is not out of a deception or defect of the senses, but rather a deficiency. Aquinas strongly asserts that God's works do not deceive, and that therefore what the senses perceive – the accidents of bread and wine – are truly there. See Q 75, a 5, reply to objection 2.
according to Aquinas, is a virtue necessary for realizing Christ's true presence.

The grace which the Eucharist imparts is also a topic discussed in both hymns and *Summa*. *Sacris Solemniis* states that “He gave to the weak the food of His body, And gave to the sorrowful the cup of His blood,” showing that to those who most need it Christ provides Himself to strengthen them. Similarly, *Verbum Supernum* holds that “He gave Himself over as the food of life,” and even describes the twofold species under which the sacrament is presented as existing in order to “feed the whole human, according to their twofold substance.” *Lauda Sion* calls the Eucharist “living and life-giving bread,” which nourishes the good to the reward of life. This sequence ends with a request for the effect of the sacrament: that Christ “feed us, protect us, and cause us to see goodness in the land of the living,” which, in the next stanza, is explained as “make us citizens among the saints.” In other words, the hymns describe the Eucharist as nourishing the recipients towards virtue and eternal reward, and uniting them with the saints in heaven. These descriptions of the Eucharist's effects mirror that given in the *Summa*, where Aquinas describes the result of the sacrament as “refreshes the soul in every respect,” because it serves as “spiritual food.”

As the mind which created them is the same, the ties which these four hymns and the *Summa* share are unsurprising. Both present a strongly similar picture of the Eucharist. However, the task of using one to augment our understanding of the other is a more difficult task. Poetic language and theological jargon are not obviously commensurate, and so it is impossible to simply extract from one to fill a gap in the other.

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129 Ibid., Q 73, a 6.
130 Ibid., a 1.
Instead, the two serve different purposes in furthering a single understanding of Aquinas' Eucharistic theology. While the *Summa* provides an extensive list of disputation, arguments, reasons, and ideas, the hymns provide a unified vision communicated through experience.

The *Summa Theologiae* helps in understanding the meaning of the hymns by precision of language. Fitting a precise term, like *transubstantiation*, into a line consisting of eight syllables is difficult, considering the word itself contains seven. As a result, it is unsurprising that Aquinas found synonyms for otherwise precise language in the hymns. One such example is *sacramentum*. In *Lauda Sion*, Aquinas uses the phrase “*signum tantum*” to refer to that in the Eucharist which is only a sign – the species, the accidents of bread and wine – while the term he uses throughout the *Summa* is “*sacramentum tantum*.” The distinction between *signum*, a sign, and *sacramentum*, a sign instituted by Christ which effects the grace it signifies, is certainly important. The use of “*signum*” must have been out of necessity.

Similarly, Aquinas does not use the term *transubstantiation* throughout the entirety of all four hymns. To describe the change from bread and wine into body and blood, he uses terms like “*fit*” and “*efficit*” in *Pange Lingua*, and “*transit*” in *Lauda Sion*. Although these shorter words do describe a complete change from bread to body and wine to blood, they lack the philosophical underpinning of substance, which had played such a crucial role in the debate surrounding Berengarius and his aftermath. Although the hymns, without the term *transubstantiation*, still manage to provide clear evidence that nothing of bread remains after consecration, they do not do so with as much precision about method,
effect, or essence as transubstantiation does.

A third term which Aquinas omits in the hymns is concomitance. In the Summa, concomitance serves as the joint between having a single sacrament of Christ's nourishing presence and yet two separate species. As was discussed in chapter two, the unity of Christ's being, as both human and divine, makes His entire self present under either species in what is called “natural concomitance.” Lauda Sion and Verbum both contain descriptions of the Eucharist's twofold species, and yet concomitance is neither mentioned, nor explained. Thomas Bell, in his article discussing the similarities between the theologies of Lauda Sion and the Summa, is struck by the lack of the mention of this term,

If Thomas did indeed write Lauda Sion, one wonders why he did not draw on this notion of concomitance to explain how the whole Christ is equally in each species, and equally in one or a thousand hosts. It is most certain that the author of the sequence believed that anyone partaking only of the bread receives, nonetheless, the totus Christus. However, there is no clear evidence in the sequence that he taught the notion of concomitance that we find in Thomas's Summa. Bell is correct that Lauda Sion does not use the word “concomitantia,” nor does it offer a complete explanation of the workings of that principle. The strong distinction which he draws here may have been influenced by the doubt still lingering on the Thomistic authenticity of Lauda Sion at the time, which, as mentioned above, has subsequently been cleared. I would argue that the relative absence of a formal definition of concomitance within Lauda Sion comes from the format of the sequence, in the aforementioned difficulty with numbers of syllables, and also from its simpler pedagogical tone. What

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131 See page 26.
the hymn does is clearly and unmistakably lay down an account of the effect of concomitance: that “The whole Christ stays under both species separately.” This is not an adequate explanation for why such a phenomenon should occur, as would be found in the *Summa*, and as a result the *Summa* can fill in what the hymns lack in precision. Bell's criticism does not point out a difference in theological content as he contends, but rather illustrates the different functions of hymn and *Summa*. This is further exemplified by the similar place of *transubstantiatio* in *Lauda Sion*, which term is also not used or fully explained, but does receive a mention and a rudimentary sketch.

The *Summa* also provides a much deeper and more extensive account of Christ's presence. Whereas the Hymns comprise only forty-three stanzas of no more than five lines each, the *Summa*'s account ranges across eleven questions and eighty-six articles. As an example, between all four hymns, Aquinas discusses the sacrament's two separate species in three stanzas. Over the course of his discussion of the Eucharist in the *Summa*, on the other hand, dedicates at five articles to this question exclusively. The *Summa* is a monumental work, and as a result the hymns cannot compare to it in scope.

St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* has rightly been used as the representative and quintessential example of his thought. Drawing from it, the minor lacks in precision of the hymns can be filled in. As such, it is fairly simple to use the *Summa* as an aid in understanding and studying the hymns. That the reverse should be true, that songs could help in understanding the monumental *Summa*, is harder to grasp, and yet Aquinas' Eucharistic hymns for the feast of Corpus Christi have much to offer in unraveling, centering, and realizing the *Summa*'s Eucharistic theology. These four hymns offer a
simpler and more accessible pedagogy, they use experiential, concrete language to help emphasize the reality and historicity of the sacrament, and they provide perspective on Aquinas' Eucharistic theology which helps in fitting it in with the broader theological aims of the *Summa*.

Although the hymns lack the theological depth of the *Summa*, they offer a more accessible exposition of the same theological vision. As was discussed in the first section of this chapter, the majority of the most essential points within Aquinas' Eucharistic theology are contained in the hymns, especially in *Lauda Sion*, in simple, short dogmatic and poetic form. An example of this pedagogical approach of the hymns is this line from *Lauda Sion*,

This dogma is given to Christians,
that bread is turned into flesh
And wine into blood.

This simple, elegant statement clearly conveys the core of what happens at the words of consecration, in wording similar to how my younger brother, who is eleven, explained the transubstantiation when formally surveyed for this project. All of the hymns, as has been discussed amply in chapter three, exhibit this focus on ease of understanding.\(^{133}\)

But if the hymns only added a condensed, bite-sized *Summa*, they would be no different from a *Baltimore Catechism*. Instead, they offer much more than bite-sized Eucharistic dogma, painting Christ's extension of grace to the faithful through the ritual of the Eucharist as a solid, real, historical event. St. Thomas' Eucharistic hymns focus repeatedly on the historicity of Christ's institution of the Eucharist, not as an event of the

\(^{133}\) Although it is commonly thought that only the clergy could understand Latin during the later Middle Ages, Messenger contends that, although clergy would have primarily been the singers of these hymns, that the laity would have generally been sufficiently educated to understand and be familiar with them. See Ruth Ellis Messenger, *The Medieval Latin Hymn*, (Washington DC: Capital Press, 1953), 56-57.
far past, but as truly present through ritual reenactment. As Bell comments, “The sequence places the present Eucharistic celebration within the framework of the historical acts of God, affirming that Christ is the center of redemptive history.” Aquinas illustrates this inclusion of the present ritual within the salvific act of Christ by repeatedly focusing on the institution at the Last Supper. *Verbum Supernum* exemplifies this linking of historical institution to present salvation in its fourth stanza:

Being born, He gave Himself as a ally,
Eating with us, He gave Himself in food,
Dying, He gave Himself as ransom,
And Reigning, He gives Himself as our prize.

St. Thomas repeatedly uses present participles to refer to the actions of Christ thousands of years prior throughout this stanza – “being born,” “eating,” and “dying” – while expanding upon those actions in the past tense, “He gave himself in food.” This stanza's interplay between past and present tense in the single narration of Christ's self-donation both on the cross and on the altar creates a narrative, historical link between the experience of the sacrament's recipient and the founding of that sacrament far in the past. This experiential presentation of the Savior's presence in the hymns allows for a realization of the sacrament's meaning, within the personal experience of the faithful, which the *Summa*, in its disputation format and logical argumentation, does not do as well.

The most important contribution of the hymns is the perspective and focus they can lend to the *Summa*. Although the St. Thomas Eucharistic theology is more fully developed in the *Summa*, it is presented as a series of articles on many different individual questions concerning the sacrament, all of varying importance and with no

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134 Bell, 167.
internal designation concerning which among them are central, and which are peripheral. This is not a flaw in the *Summa*, rather a side-effect of its organizational structure, but it does force any examination of its Eucharistic theology to find some external source for evaluating the significance of each point. The hymns provide exactly such a focus and context. I will show this through an example, using the hymns to present an account of how Christ's real presence within the Eucharist fits into and contributes to a broader Eucharistic theology.

The real presence of the Eucharist creates a link between the recipients – the faithful of the Church and the Church herself – and the salvific act of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. *Verbum Supernum* offers a synopsis of Christ's life as giving life to all Christians, in His birth giving “Himself as ally,” in His institution of the Eucharist giving “Himself as food,” in His death giving “Himself as ransom,” and in His resurrection and ascension giving “Himself as reward.” Christ's self-donation through His life, death, and resurrection are continually given to the faithful through the celebration of the Mass, which is the reenactment of the last supper. *Verbum Supernum* connects the institution of the Eucharist directly to the Passion,

By a disciple handed to death
By the work of His rivals.
But first, He gave Himself over
As the food of life to His disciples.

“Handed over” and “gave over” are both the same Latin word here: *tradere*, linking the two actions of being given over to death and distributing Himself as food together as the single act of salvation. *Sacris Solemniiis* then shows that the sacred rites constitute a means for the faithful, centuries after, to partake of the same meal of Christ truly present.
The Mass, celebrated in accordance with the institutional and eternal Church, is the access point by which Christ gives Himself, so that “The poor, the slave, and the lowly eats the Lord.”

Christ's true presence, which He gives under the sacramental signs, then becomes the sacramental source of grace, poured out from Christ's death, to the Church who receives. *Pange Lingua* uses this language of “poured out” to describe Christ's sacrifice, given through the Eucharist, as securing the “reward of all nations.” Because the sacramental signs are made, by words of the Word, into His flesh and blood, the faithful are thus able to “worship, lying prostrate” before the God present on the altar. Christ under these species “gives to the weak the food of His body, and gives to the sorrowful to cup of His blood,” as *Sacris Solemnis* states. *Verbum* Supernum explains that by giving this twofold sacrament Christ can “nourish the whole human according to their twofold substance,” so that He can “give us life without end in heaven, our homeland.” *Lauda Sion* thus describes the Eucharist as both the “living and life-giving bread,” for Christ is alive and present, hidden beneath the sacramental species, so that He may thus give life to His Church.

This panorama of the real presence's role in Eucharistic theology drawn from the hymns helps reveal the Thomistic answer to the Eucharistic controversy preceding Aquinas. In that controversy, the Patristic tradition of “true body” was questioned in expanding philosophical categories, and examined according to increasingly precise accounts of sacramental soteriology. Paschasius wanted Christ's physical presence to unite the faithful to Christ's body “naturally” or “physically,” but the embarrassing
physicalism of the anti-Berengarian oath Humbert penned, which states that Christ in the Eucharist is “handled and broken by the hands of the priests, and ground between the teeth of the faithful” showed that this naturalism was undesirable. Spiritual interpretations by Anselm, Hugh of St. Victor, and Lombard drifted away from direct physical union toward a spiritual communion with Christ either individually or within the Church, but this spiritualization also resulted in less emphasis on the connection to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and His resulting true presence. Aquinas' hymns provide a vision of the Eucharist which answers these lingering questions. They praise the truly present God, pouring Himself out as true flesh and blood for the nourishment of the faithful, while also describing this presence as different from any simply physical kind. They teach that the Eucharist is Christ's flesh and blood given as food and drink, nourishing the faithful toward eternal life, while also describing the same salvific effect as Christ uniting the receiver with the hosts and citizens of heaven. The meeting between communicant and Eucharist is described as one where the lowly, poor, and slave can meet the Lord, but also where the King can pour Himself as the ransom of the nations. While the history of this debate presents many points pulling against each other over time, the four hymns present a unified account which can then be used as a pattern to draw more complete theological reasoning from the *Summa*.

Using both Corpus Christ hymns and the *Summa Theologiae* together to extrapolate St. Thomas Aquinas' Eucharistic theology can provide a complete, experientially communicated idea of the sacrament containing depths of theological wisdom and faith. With the theology, the hymns can be fleshed out with increasing detail
and argumentation, and with the hymns, the theology can be seen through a personalistic lens of Aquinas' faith and experience of the sacrament in a unified and contextualized vision. This is evident in the case of Christ's real presence. The *Summa*’s list of disputations about locality, concomitance, and transubstantiation becomes more concrete when studied with the hymns, grounded in history and experience. The hymns’ ambiguities and references to things like true flesh and true blood, or signs only versus reality only, can be filled in and expanded by the *Summa*’s depth of reasoning and content.

In the end, the process of writing this thesis itself lends weight to the idea of studying Thomas' Eucharistic theology in both hymns and *Summa*. Having studied the *Summa* prior to this project, and having grown up singing the hymns regularly at Eucharistic adoration and benediction, I found myself writing about the one while constantly hearing and being corrected by the other. Perhaps that is appropriate: as the author of the one was also the composer of the other, so the thesis writer years later is both student and singer of them both.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


135 The English translation by the Dominican Friars was the primary source for the *Summa* in this thesis. All quotations within the text are from that source. However, this work would not have been possible without frequent reference to the Latin text indicated second.
APPENDIX

This appendix contains the Latin text, from *Devoutly I Adore Thee*, side-by-side with my English translation.

Pange lingua, gloriosi
Corporis mysterium
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
Quem in mundi pretium,
Fructus ventris generosi,
Rex effudit gentium.

Acclaim, O tongue, the mystery
of the most glorious body and the most precious blood
which the king, the fruit of the most noble womb,
poured out in the world for the reward of all nations

Nobis datus, nobis natus
Ex intacta Virgine,
Et in mundo conversatus,
Sparso verbi semine
Sui moras incolatus
Miro clausit ordine.

Given to us, born for us
Out of an untouched virgin,
And lived [with us] in the world,
The seeds of [His] word having been sown,
His stay ended the obstacles in wondrous order.

In supremae nocte coenae
Recumbens cum fratribus,
Observata lege plene
Cibis in legalibus,
Cibum turbae duodenaer
Se dat suis manibus.

In the night of the supreme meal,
Reclining with his brothers,
Having completely observed the law in legal food,
He gave to each of the crowd of twelve food With his own hands.

Verbum caro panem verum
Verbo carne efficit;
Fit sanguis Christi merum.
Et si sensus deficit,
Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Sola fides sufficit.

The Word made flesh made true bread [into] His flesh,
And made wine into the blood of Christ.
And if sense should fail, faith alone is sufficient
To strengthen a pure heart.
Tantum ergo sacramentum
Veneremur cernui.
Et antiquuum documentum
Novo cedat ritui.
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori genitoque
Laus et jubilation,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benediction.
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudation.

Sacris Solemniis

Sacris solemniis juncta sint gaudia,
Et ex praecordiis sonent praeconia.
Recendant vetera, nova sint Omnia
Corda, voces et opera.

Noctis recolitur coena novissima,
Qua Christus creditor agnum et azyma
Dedisse fratribus juxta legitima
Priscis indulta patribus.

Post agnum typicum expletis epulis,
Corpus dominicum datum discipulis
Sic totum omnibus quod totum singulis
Ejus fatemur manibus.

Before such a sacrament, therefore,
Let us worship, lying prostrate,
Let the old law make way for a new rite.
Let faith surpass and fill out the deficient senses.

To the Father and the Begotten One
Be praise and jubilation,
And also salvation, honor, strength, and blessing.
To the One proceeding from both
Be equal adoration.

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Let joy be joined to the most solemn rites,
and from the breast let praises sound forth,
let the old traditions retire, and all things be new:
hearts, voices, and works.

Let the night of the last supper be recalled,
Let it be believed that Christ gave to [His] brothers
Lamb and unleavened bread, following the legitimate handing down
From the ancient fathers.

After the lamb of the feast, a figure, had been completed,
We acknowledge His hands, that gave the body of the Lord
To the disciples, thus complete for all as it was
Complete to each of them.
Dedit fragilibus corporis ferculum,
Dedit et tristibus sanguinis poculum,
Dicens: Accipite quod trado vasculum,
Omnes ex eo bibite.

Sic sacrificium istud instituit,
Cujus officium committi voluit
Solis presbyteris, quibus sic congruit,
Ut sumant et dent ceteris.

Panis angelicus fit panis hominum,
Dat panis coelicus figuris terminum.
O res mirabilis!  Manducat Dominum
Pauper, servus et humilis.

Te trina Deitas unique poscimus:
Sic nos tu visita, sicut te colimus;
Per tuas semitas duc nos quo tendimus
Ad lucem quam in habitas.

Verbum Supernum

Verbum supernum prodiens,
Nec Patris linquens dexteram,
Ad opus suum exiens,
Venit ad vitae vesperam.

In mortem a discipulo
Suis tradendus aemulis,
Prius in vitae ferculo
Se tradidit discipulis,

Quibus sub bina specie
Carnem dedit et sanguinem,
Ut duplicis substantiae
Totum cabaret hominem.

He gave to the weak the food of [His] body,
And gave to the sorrowful the cup of [His] blood,
Saying, “Accept this small vessel that I give,
All of you drink from it.”

Thus, He [Christ] instituted that sacrifice,
Whose office He willed to attach only to priests,
Whom He made it thus fitting that they
Should support and give to all the rest.

Now that the angelic bread has been made
the bread of men,
The heavenly bread gives an end to figures.
O wondrous matter!  The poor, the slave,
And the lowly eats the Lord.

Thus we ask you, three and one God,
That you visit us as we worship you;
Lead through your paths we who look
To the light which you inhabit.

Heavenly Word proceeding,
But not leaving the Father’s right hand,
Going to His own work,
He came to [His] life’s evening

By a disciple handed to death
By the work of His rivals.
But first, He gave Himself over
As the food of life to His disciples;

To whom under twofold species
He gave [His] flesh and blood,
So that he might feed the whole human,
According to their twofold substance.
Se nascens dedit socium,  
Convescens in edulium;  
Se mortiens in pretium,  
Se regnans dat in praemium.

O salutaris hostia,  
Quae caeli pandis ostium,  
Bella premunt hostilia.  
Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino  
Sit sempiterna Gloria,  
Qui vitam sine termino  
Nobis donet in patria.

Ladua Sion  
Lauda, Sion, salvatorem.  
Lauda ducem et pastorem  
In hymnis et canticis.

Quantum potes, tantum aude,  
Quia major omni laude.  
Nec laudare suffices.

Laudis thema specialis,  
Panis vivus et vitalis,  
Hodie proponitur,

Quem in sacrae mensae coenae  
Turbae fratrum duodenae  
Datum non ambigitur.

Sit laus plena, sit Sonora;  
Sit jucunda, sint decora  
Mentis jubilatios.

Dies enim solemnis agitur,  
In qua mensae primae recolitur  
Hujus institution.

Being born, He gave Himself as a ally,  
Eating with us, He gave Himself in food,  
Dying, He gave Himself as ransom,  
And Reigning, He gives Himself as our prize.

O saving Victim,  
Who opens the gates of heaven,  
The military force of the enemy oppresses us.  
Give us strength, give us aid.

To the one yet threefold God  
Be perpetual glory,  
Who gives us life without end  
In heaven, our homeland.

Praise, Zion, the Savior,  
Praise the leader and shepherd  
In hymns and canticles,

However much you are able, as much as you dare,  
Because the greatest of all praise  
Does not praise [Him] sufficiently.

A theme of particular praise  
For the living and life-giving bread  
Today is put forward

Which on the table of the holy dinner  
To [His] brothers of the crowd of twelve  
He gave, of which there is no doubt.

Let praise be full, let it be sonorous,  
Let it be delightful, let it be graceful,  
Jubilation of the soul.

This day is indeed given to solemnity,  
In which it is cultivated afresh in the mind  
The first institution of this [feast].
On this table of the new King,  
The new Passover of the new law  
Concluded the old Passover  

Antiquity flees from what is new,  
Shadows flee from the truth,  
And the Light eliminates the night.  

What Christ commanded in [that] dinner  
Ought to be thus imitated  
In His memory.  

Taught by holy custom,  
Bread and wine for salvation  
We consecrate as sacrificial offering  

This dogma is given to Christians,  
that bread and is turned into flesh  
And wine into blood.  

What you do not grasp, what you do not see,  
A courageous faith proves  
Outside the realm of ordinary things.  

Under separate species,  
Signs only, and not the reality,  
Lies the extraordinary reality  

Flesh is food, blood is drink,  
Yet the Whole Christ stays  
Under both species separately.  

Taken up, not broken up,  
Not cut in two, not divided,  
But he is accepted untouched.  

If taken by one, if taken by thousands,  
However many that receive, yet still He is one,  
Received, but not devoured.  

Received by the good, received by the bad,  
They receive an unequal fate:  
Life or ruin.
Mors est malis, vita bonis.
Vide paris sumptionis
Quam sit dispar exitus.

Fracto demum sacramento,
Ne vacilles; sed memento
Tantum esse sub fragmento
Quantum toto tegitur.

Nulla rei fit scissura.
Signi tantum fit fractura,
Qua nec status nec statura
Signati minuitur.

Ecce panis Angelorum,
Factus cibus viatorum,
Vere panis filiorum,
Non mittendus canibus.

In figuris praesignatur,
Cum Isaac immolator,
Agnus paschae deputatur,
Datur manna patribus.

Bone pastor, panis vere,
Jesu nostri miserere,
Tu nos pasce, nos tuere,
Tu nos bona fac videre
In terra viventium.

Tu qui cuncta scis et vale,
Qui nos pascis hic mortals,
Tuos ibi commensales,
Coheredes et sodales
Fac sanctorum civium.

Death is for the bad, life for the good.
See that they equally receive
While they end unequally.

The sacrament at last broken,
Do not doubt; but remember
The whole [Christ] is under a fragment
As much as is covered by the whole [host]

No reality is split apart.
The sign alone is fractured,
Which neither in state or stature
Diminishes the one signified.

Behold the bread of angels
Made the food of wayfarers.
Truly the bread of the sons
Is not sent out to the dogs.

In figures it was foreshadowed:
When Isaac was to be sacrificed,
When lambs were set aside for Passover,
And when manna was given to the patriarchs.

Good Shepherd, true bread,
Jesus, have mercy on us.
Feed us yourself, protect us.
Yourself cause us to see goodness
In the land of the living.

You who see and know everything all at once,
Who feed us mortals here,
Make us your table companions there,
Your joint-heirs and friends,
And citizens among the saints.