Remembering Who We Are: Liturgical Memory in the Symbolic Language of Louis-Marie Chauvet to Combat the Bifurcation of the Body of Christ

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REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE: LITURGICAL MEMORY IN THE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE OF LOUIS-MARIE CHAUVET TO COMBAT THE BIFURCATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the divide that is ever-present in the modern Catholic Church, and the distance between so-called ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive’ Catholics, who, with increasing regularity, prefer not to worship together, rather retreating to their own partisan camps. In this thesis, questions about personal and ecclesial identity are raised and the “foundational theology of sacramentality” of the renowned twentieth-century theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet is brought into dialogue with the present situation. Chauvet’s fundamental understanding of the sacraments as something we do as corporeal individuals gathered as the corporate Body of Christ (and not simply as some ‘things’ we get) has great implications for inculcating and instituting a common identity among the worshipping community, an identity that can be forged through the development of a common ‘language,’ which can take on many corporeal forms.

This thesis picks up Chauvet’s line of thought and suggests that liturgical memory - *anamnesis* - is itself a corporeal language that can be spoken by the gathered assembly, thus working to build up a common identity. A further argument is made that the way in which the Body of Christ learns to speak this language, together, can best be seen in the celebration of the Easter Vigil of the Roman Rite - the liturgy *par excellence* - where Head and Members gather to ‘hold’ memory, ‘share’ memory, and ‘future' their memories.
Acknowledgements

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## Bibliography
Introduction

At the Easter Vigil service last year at the undergraduate liberal arts college at which I serve as a chaplain, I had an experience which summed up well the situation I will attempt to flesh out in the first part of this thesis. Students in the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) program and their sponsors were gathered around the baptismal font during the singing of the Litany of the Saints, when the gathered community - as one - intones the names of those examples from our shared past who we believe are interceding on our behalf with God.¹ We lift their names in sung prayer, these whose lives have been acknowledged to be of outstanding holiness. The students who were about to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, thus completing their initiation into the Church, had, by way of long-standing tradition, chosen their own names: Augustine, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, and Mary, among others. Before the liturgy began, the director of music had asked for their chosen names, to include them in the litany we would all share (a pastorally sensitive and appropriately personalized act.)

During the singing, the litany unfolded as it normally does according to the rubrics, with the traditional names intoned.² Soon after, the director of music began to include the saint’s names chosen by the confirmandi, those soon to be received into the Church. These names were also interspersed with others who

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¹ Pope St. Paul VI put it well: “We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are attaining their purification, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and His saints is ever listening to our prayers, as Jesus told us: ‘Ask and you will receive.’ From Solemn Hac Liturgia (Vatican City: June 30, 1968), #30.
have been ‘raised to the altars’, and those whose causes for canonization are also underway: among them were St. Oscar Romero, the murdered Archbishop of San Salvador and voice of the poor; Pope St. John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope in a millennia and a worldwide voice for freedom and the search for Truth; and the Servant of God Pedro Arrupe, the so-called ‘second founder of the Jesuits,’ who as Superior General of the order in the years following the Second Vatican Council, called the Society of Jesus to an understanding that faith is empty without working for the justice that God calls us to.

As I stood next to the altar server holding the Missal for the presider, I caught sight of the student holding the Paschal candle aloft, that rich symbol which for Catholics is Christ during this liturgy. The server, an active member of liturgical ministry and the campus’ modern day version of the sodality, was stone faced during most of the Litany, but he had a visceral reaction when Pope St. John XXIII, who convoked Vatican II, was mentioned. He looked towards his friends, fellow members of the sodality, and rolled his eyes, barely stifling a laugh.

In the midst of this unifying moment at the font, I was keenly aware of the fact that the Body of Christ is terribly bifurcated, on my campus and in the world around us. ‘Progressive’ and ‘conservative’ Catholics (unhelpful labels as they are) seem less and less likely or willing to worship together, preferring to retreat to their own corners, scoffing at the other side and casually throwing around labels to castigate the beliefs and practices of the other side. To put it in general terms (to be fleshed out later), conservative Catholics presume that progressive Catholics do
not care about the deposit of the faith or Tradition, while progressive Catholics assume that conservative Catholics are modern day Pharisees, more intent on rules and rubrics than seemingly anything else.

In her work, *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy* (2002), Colleen Carroll sums up well what I myself have noticed in my own work as a chaplain on a college campus:

> young orthodox Catholics also are launching popular “renegade” fellowship groups at Catholic and secular universities, in a reaction against [what is perceived to be] more liberal campus ministry programs that have failed to clearly articulate the faith or spark student interest. Catholic campuses across the country are seeing revivals of rosary recitations and eucharistic adoration - traditional devotions that some older campus ministers have tried unsuccessfully to discourage.³

Indeed, the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dynamic is alive and well on college campuses, not least of all because “[y]oung adults have a natural tendency to see life in black and white, with no room for compromise even on minor matters. And conservative Catholics often are overly alert to the missteps of those they regard as inadequately orthodox.”⁴ Consider the letter I received in my first weeks as the assistant director of liturgy from a group of earnest students who objected to a litany of perceived abuses: tabernacle placement outside the sanctuary; the vesting practices of particular presiders; the type of vessels used at Mass; and the absence of bells in our campus liturgy, to name a few. Loaded and charged words like ‘heresy’ and ‘heretic’ are thrown around casually in these moments and the ‘us and not them’ phenomenon known as homophily can take on an ominous and ugly tone.

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⁴ Ibid., 280.
At the heart of this divide, which often plays out in the context of the Church’s liturgy, are really questions about identity: who is a Catholic Christian at their core? What do they believe? And how do they practice? If the ancient Christian adage is true - *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi - the law of praying is the law of believing which is the law of living* - then certainly we can look to the Church’s rich liturgical tradition, perhaps even to its oldest and most vital traditions, for answers to these questions. In this thesis, I will attempt to use Louis-Marie Chauvet’s dense sacramental theology to propose a reframing of the present moment as a way to help us better understand how we might live, pray, and believe together.

In the following pages, I aim to accomplish several things. In Chapter One, I hope to present a balanced ‘state of the problem.’ While avoiding caricatures, I will work to bring some understanding to the bifurcated identities in the Catholic Church. Some of this chapter will be devoted to sociological studies and first-person interviews conducted and published in recent years, as well as a discussion of devotional practices and preferences that seem to be increasingly connected with these chosen identities. My own experiences in both parish and college liturgical life will also come into play here.

In Chapter Two, I will take up the rich theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet who argues that, while holding that the sacraments have, of course, been instituted by Christ, they also have *instituting* qualities, that is, in their celebration, they ought to build up something of a common, unitive identity within the worshipping body.
This second chapter will serve primarily as a broad primer on Chauvet’s theological thought, and help lead us into the final section.

In that section, Chapter Three, I hope to apply Chauvet’s thought and bring it into dialogue with the Church’s celebration of the Easter Vigil. I will argue that the Easter Vigil, the liturgy *par-excellence* and the ‘mother of all vigils,’ long-celebrated as the only feast in the Church’s calendar, certainly has something to teach us about who we are through how we celebrate, which is revealed primarily through how we engage in the act of remembering seminal salvation events together. Indeed, it is through the sacraments celebrated in the context of the Easter Vigil that we best know how Christ intends to institute within us our common identity, thus breaking down the unhelpful categories and walls which we have erected between members of the Body.
Chapter 1 - Christ’s Bifurcated Body

1.1 The State of the Problem Today

The American theologian and ethicist Stanley Hauerwas [b. 1940] commented that “the problem with Christianity is not that it is socially conservative or politically liberal, but that ‘it is just too damned dull.’”\(^5\) With all due respect to Professor Hauerwas, I think his comment misses the mark. For while it seems that many might be able to name the growing separation or bifurcation in the Church today, there seems to be no common way of describing it, but rather many theories at play. In this section, I will present a few of these theories, each of which uses different definitions and stresses, but all of which point to the situation alive and, sadly, easily seen in the Church today: the worshipping Body is not unified, but rather fragmented and divided.

Among the most widely read (or watched) today is Catholic media personality, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, and founder of the media company, Word on Fire, Robert Barron (b. 1959). I begin with Bishop Barron’s thesis since he is an author and personality with a wide reach; indeed, many are introduced to his viewpoints via his popular videos, online newsletters, and books.

At its core, Barron argues, the Church is remarkably bi-polar, and yet has been increasingly unwilling to acknowledge this, let alone properly celebrate it. In his book, *Bridging the Great Divide: Musings of a Post-Liberal, Post-Conservative, Evangelical Catholic*, Barron says, “the chief difficulty we face is a lack of

\(^{5}\) Quoted in Robert Barron, *Bridging the Great Divide: Musings of a Post-Liberal, Post-Conservative, Evangelical Catholic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 256.
imagination, the inability to hold opposites in tension, the failure to be, boldly and unapologetically, bi-polar extremists.” In this work, Barron tries to shed the unhelpful labels of conservatives and liberals, political terms that been employed too often in Church circles, to the detriment of all. Instead, Barron tries to shift the dialogue back to the Church’s paradoxical roots, seem most clearly in dogmatic and doctrinal formulas. Barron highlights especially the Christological doctrine reached during the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.), which aimed to settle the matter brewing between the Arians, Monophysites, and Nestorians.

Each of these groups held a singular understanding of the Incarnation: that Jesus, sent to earth by the Father was a little divine and a little human (in the case of the Arians); or was solely divine (as the Monophysites believed); or was solely human (as the Nestorians preached). Instead, “[w]hat Chalcedon declares is something altogether strange and unexpected, something that breaks the categories of philosophy and mythology, something that cannot be caught in the easy options of left, right, or center: Jesus Christ is fully, emphatically, robustly human and fully, emphatically, and robustly divine - without mixing, mingling, or confusion.” Indeed, “[w]hat the orthodox fathers of Chalcedon saw, in short, was the bi-polar extremism of the Christ event: humanity and divinity lying down together in personal union and utter differentiation.”

By pointing to the Christological formula established at Chalcedon, Barron’s point is well-taken when applied to today’s circumstances: that “the poetry of the

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6 Ibid., 3.
7 Ibid., 6-7.
8 Ibid., 7.
Incarnation is not much in evidence in the weary debates today between liberals, moderates, and conservatives.”

There is no question: experience tells us that extremes are hard to hold together, but Barron’s writings remind us that the Church has been here before and emerged with a solution we could call ‘creative tension.’ However, somewhere along the way, Barron insists, the “poetry of the Incarnation” - the beautiful - was traded in for something substandard: ‘truth’ - the right. And “[o]ne of the mistakes that both liberals and conservatives make is to get this process precisely backward, arguing first about right and wrong.”

In summary, Barron invokes the prolific 20th century writer and so-called ‘prince of paradox’ G.K. Chesterton’s wonderful image: the Church (perhaps understood in this context best as the ‘People of God’, “has always had a healthy hatred of pink. It hates that combination of two colours which is the feeble expedient of the philosophers. It hates that evolution of black into white which is tantamount to a dirty gray.”

David Gibson, the award-winning religion journalist, and author of The Coming Catholic Church: How the Faithful are Shaping a New American Catholicism (2004) relates how the Jesuit Bernard Lonergan saw this dynamic coming into play not long after the Vatican II Council (1962-65), predating Barron’s own observations, when he wrote in 1967 that:

There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left,

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9 Ibid., 8.
10 Ibid., 31.
11 Lumen Gentium, A Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Vatican City: November 21, 1964), #9.
12 Barron, Bridging, 6.
captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half-measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.\footnote{David Gibson, \textit{The Coming Catholic Church: How the Faithful Are Shaping a New American Catholicism} (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004), 130.}

Prescient, indeed.

Another Jesuit, Franz Jozef van Beeck (1930-2011), a Dutch author and Christian theologian, wrote about the Church’s fragmentation in scriptural terms in the 1980s, in the wake of the Council. Weary of the many ‘causes’ and ideologies competing for the attention of a Christian, and mindful of how these can often surface in how we worship together (or keep us from that common table), van Beeck reminds us that

The Gospels are filled with efforts to “test” Jesus, to force him to take sides in the ideologies, causes, and concerns of the day, or to force him to add yet another cause - his own - to the welter of causes already competing for ascendancy. Jesus, however, always refuses to identify himself with any cause. His “cause” is the Kingdom of God; but that is not a cause in the same order with other causes, let alone in competition with them. Rather, the Kingdom of God places all causes in an eschatological perspective, and so it meets and tests and assays all causes and concerns. The only cause Jesus is totally identified with is the Kingdom of God.\footnote{Frans Jozef van Beeck, \textit{Catholic Identity After Vatican II: Three Types of Faith in the One Church} (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 58-59.}

van Beeck’s scriptural commentary is a powerful reminder of the long history of fragmentation in the Church, even from its earliest days. Indeed, the stage was set from the beginning, the temptation always to seek to divide into camps, rather than unite in the common Kingdom of which Christ preached. It remains a
current temptation, and we are witnesses even today to a struggle of competing cultures both within and outside the Church, across time and space.

This temptation has also, through the years, become somewhat institutionalized. In her recent work on the growing number of so-called ‘personal parishes’ in the United States Catholic Church (as opposed to the traditional model of ‘territorial parishes’), Tricia Colleen Bruce helps to flesh out the idea that “birds of a feather flock together,” that hackneyed phrase that describes people’s innate desire to join together with others most like themselves. Sociologists, she relates, “use the term ‘homophily.’” The term itself has no inherent value, good or bad, but rather one can think of homophily as a phenomenon, as a state of being in which humans in their finiteness often find themselves. Perhaps others could call this a form of tribalism or familialism. In any case, Bruce is quick to point out that “[h]omophily marks a line between ‘us’ and ‘them’” and that it “comes with a price.” For while these familial bonds “adhere a group together…[they] also [serve in] fragmenting that group from others. It both isolates and serves.”

Widening the scope of her observation, Bruce writes that our Church risks being “fragmented in such a way that it does not know what other fragments may be doing, nor how all fit together into a whole. Specialization [vis a vis personal parishes] means boldly ignoring other aspects of Catholic life (and people).”

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 139.
8 Ibid., 159.
9 Ibid., 161.
enduring challenge, then, is how and whether fragmentation can reconcile with a unified... Catholic Church.”

The challenge of ‘fragmentation through specialization,’ as Bruce lays it out, is perhaps seen most vividly in how fragmented groups worship in the Church today, off in their own small corners. This is the crux of the state of the problem today on my college campus, for example.

Others seem to agree. In her work, Bruce conducts a series of interviews with interested parties, including several bishops from the United States. One says,

there has never been a word of encouragement on, “Dear people of God: What we want you to do for the next three years is to go out and divide up the world in the way you like it! And that’s probably going to result in fantastic worship ceremonies, because you’re all going to want to worship the same way and do things the same way!” That’s a long, long cry from the fact that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and there’s neither male, nor female, nor Jew, nor... etc. No, no. This is an unmet challenge.

His concerns are well-taken: for while Catholics may find a parish that ‘meets their needs’ (in whatever subjective way that phrase may mean) “this does not grant open permissiveness to pick your own people because worshipping together is Catholic. Fragmentation is not the goal; the goal is acceptance, inclusion, and unification.”

Bruce is quick to point out however that the issues of fragmentation are deep-seated, and that the rise of personal parishes “are less the cause of fragmentation than the institutional sanctioning of it.” Indeed, some in personal

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20 Ibid., 166.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., 168.
parishes “think of their communities as protecting them from what is perceived as profane (irreverence, homophobia), while others see the church as empowering them to pursue a more transformational agenda.”

There is no easy fix here, for “erasing personal parishes would do little to erase the divisions that already characterize chosen parishes or homogeneous neighborhood clustering. Personal parishes [simply] name it” for good or for ill, and “intentional fragmentation is [employed as] a structural accommodation for big tent Catholicism.” Indeed, in “using personal parishes to organize local religion, the U.S. Catholic Church engages a parish structure that both empowers collective identity and perpetuates difference.” The result is that there is somewhat of a “crisis in postconciliar Catholicism...a sense that Catholics have lost, or are in the process of losing, a shared faith.”

For our purposes of understanding the bifurcation, I would like to turn next to two of these identities - ‘conservative' and ‘progressive’ - and unpack them a bit. Though we can state that the crux of the problem is a divide, a widening chasm expressed in multiple ways that “strikes at the image of the church’s unity,” it is worth going deeper. Indeed, there seems to be little doubt, in the literature or in

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25 Bruce, *Parish and Place*, 168.
26 Ibid., 163.
27 Ibid., 168.
the experience of the faithful, that there exists a fragmentation, the expression of which “may arise as either two stark, opposing poles engaged in ongoing ‘culture wars’ as sociologist James Davidson Hunter depicted them, or as a multitude of smaller and distinct subcultures, à la Robert Ezra Park: ‘a mosaic of little worlds that touch but do not interpenetrate.’”

1.2 Conservatives vs. Progressives: A Crisis of Authority

What has already been stated should be re-emphasized here: even though the “use of words like conservative and progressive to describe individuals and groups within the post-conciliar church has become relatively common…such terms are not always helpful. Catholicism to some degree is and must be both progressive and conservative.” Indeed, if the Church “is to fulfill its mission, it can neither cut itself off from its origins and its past nor close itself to the ever new present through which alone it can pass into the future. Although individual Catholics may be more progressive or more conservative, the Church as such needs to be both.” However, since these terms have come to be used with such frequency, it is essential that we attempt to pin down not necessarily was is meant by the terms, but the overarching breakdown that keeps these two camps so separate. The research tends to show that the breakdown can be understood in how each group appeals to (and longs for) authenticity and authority to establish unity and holiness, albeit in different ways.

30 Bruce, Parish and Place, 138.
32 Ibid.
A general statement may be helpful here, as Scott Appleby puts it in the edited volume *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America* (1995): “‘conservative’ American Catholics tend to be concerned, perhaps more than ‘liberal’ Catholics, with preserving or defending Roman Catholic orthodoxy (‘right belief’).”33 There is a presumed sense that if “the Catholic left is preoccupied with agendas and ‘rights talk,’ the so-called right is focused on wrongs - the wrongs of the countercultural sixties and the creeping moral relativism that is invading even the Holy Roman Church.”34 ‘We are what you were’, conservative Catholics proudly acclaim, holding that the “challenge of accountability... rests with those who have changed, whose hold on their Catholic identity is not as firm as conservatives think it should be.”35 Indeed, this perceived lack of orthodoxy can be seen in the writings of noted papal biographer and conservative commentator George Weigel (who once labeled the liberal Catholic establishment “Catholic Lite”36) as well as in “narrative accounts of converts to Catholicism who have taken up the traditionalist cause [and who] often underscore the need for old-fashioned certitude and the beauties of the old liturgy.”37 The Catholic psychologist and writer Eugene Kennedy referred to this as a split between ‘Culture One’ Catholics who

strongly identify with the church as a hierarchical institution to which they look for authoritative teachings, with which they then attempt to comply. [He contrasted this with] ‘Culture Two’ Catholics, who often still consider themselves serious Catholics, [and who] emphasize personal autonomy and

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34 Gibson, *Coming Catholic Church*, 127.
36 Gibson, *Coming Catholic Church*, 130.
accordingly are less willing to obey or even remain attuned to institutional directives.\textsuperscript{38} 

Kennedy saw this as a gradual supplanting of one culture for another.

van Beeck is also helpful here in helping us to understand the dynamics at play, though he uses alternative descriptors: the pistic (read: conservative) versus the charismatic (read: progressive). For van Beeck,

\[\text{[t]he pistic tends to see unity and holiness in terms of limitation, by means of enforcement of stability and boundaries. The charismatic tends to view them in terms of expansion, by means of commitment to action and openness. Both are man-made, that is to say, useful and even sacramental; but they do not in and of themselves carry the guarantee of the Spirit.}\textsuperscript{39}\]

This is an essential point: neither of these two extremes is the sole carrier of the Spirit; i.e., only God is God. This seems like an obvious point, but when God is equated with the Church (as is too often the case), and when this is then extrapolated out to various identities and corresponding practices within individual parishes or other faith communities, the line between God, camp, and self is easily blurred or obscured.

van Beeck casts his argument in terms of self-abnegation which, precisely because it is demanding, both camps seem keen to avoid. “The pistic Church tries to be rich by hoarding, while the charismatic Church seeks wealth by indiscriminate buying; both are reluctant to embrace poverty of the spirit.”\textsuperscript{40}

Indeed, there is too much self-interest and attachment to either a static and

\textsuperscript{38} Baggett, \textit{Sense}, Kindle Location 1636. 
\textsuperscript{39} van Beeck, \textit{Catholic Identity}, 66-67. 
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 75.
immovable status quo or to a radical upending of the system that a true self-emptying proves almost impossible.

There is an underlying fear here of what is to come (which is perhaps the most scandalous aspect of the fragmentation so prevalent in the Church today: Christians on both ends of the spectrum seem afraid of a future promised to them. It is as if there exists no hope.) “The pistic Church tends to be immobilized by the weight of the past, while the charismatic Church tends to be impressed and weighed down by the welter of causes, ideologies, and concerns of the present; but both are afraid of the call of the future,” van Beeck writes.

This is a brutal take with real-world consequences. For when consumed by fear, both camps - pistics/conservatives and charismatics/progressives - “reach, impatiently, for authoritative answers readily available. They give in to the urge towards self-maintenance, whether by rigidity or by spinelessness.” These two divergent approaches seek not common ground (which might be new, unfamiliar, even shaky) but rather familiar and comforting places (which may be filled with rot or are otherwise unstable.) Both places do not easily lend themselves to encounter with others or with the stranger, nor do they make for inviting places which others might seek out. Rather, the “pistic will quote the authoritative answers from the past, and the charismatic will recite the latest line, but neither will make it a point to get to know the stranger. But for a traveler looking for a place to stay, there is little difference between closed doors and no home at all.” “Travelers” are what

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
we could also call parishioners. And it is within the parish - and through the spiritual and devotional preferences that often accompany the ideologies - that these camps and identities are often on vivid display.

1.3 The Localization of the Problem: In the Liturgy

As I alluded to in the short vignette with which I began this thesis, it is within the context of the Eucharistic liturgy itself - the gathering of Head and members in remembrance and sacrifice - that often serves as the flashpoint for fragmentation. It is an understatement to call this situation lamentable, as the celebration of the liturgy ought be a place of unity and relationship.

Bishop Barron relates a passage from scripture to help us frame an understanding that the liturgy is not a place for protest or fragmentation, but a privileged place for unity. He recalls the first chapter of John’s gospel in which John the Baptist points out Christ to his disciples: “Behold the Lamb of God!” When these disciples inquire about where Jesus is staying, he invites them to “come and see.” We then hear that they “remained with him” for the rest of the day.44 With this passage in mind, Barron writes that “the liturgy constitutes a privileged ‘staying with’ the Lord Jesus, a participation in the world that he opens up. It is, as such, the practice that most completely embodies the kind of person that a disciple ought to be.”45 Barron is strong here: yes, the liturgy embodies the kind of person that a disciple ought be, but in “their dysfunction, human societies and institutions rest upon divisions, separations, stratifications, plays of power, political

45 Barron, Bridging, 37.
antagonisms. The Mass lures us onto a different ground.”\textsuperscript{46} Or at least it should.

Indeed,

\[\text{to the liturgy are invited people from varying social strata, different economic and educational backgrounds, a variety of races, both genders. This is, of course, an eschatological symbol, an icon of the Kingdom of God, a showing-forth of the Christ in whom ‘there is no slave or free, no Jew or Greek, no male or female’ (Gal. 3:28).}\textsuperscript{47}

Barron’s use of Galatians in discarding labels from the first century stands in stark contrast to our fragmented society and Church today where labels and insular identities have come to dominate too much of the landscape, political or otherwise. The passage from Galatians also serves to remind us that labels and identities have long been a reality in our world and in the human experience.

In his book \textit{Sense of the Faithful}, sociologist Jerome Baggett reminds us “that individual Catholics reappropriate the Catholic tradition together, in parishes, to resolve the dilemma of authenticity and authority.”\textsuperscript{48} In essence, parishes and other similar local faith communities are often on the ‘front lines’ of the large debates presented above, and thus the small sanctuaries of neighborhood churches end up being the setting for large disagreements.

These disagreements can often be seen in the different devotional practices and spiritual preferences that develop in parishes. Among those who place a premium on “restoring” Catholicism there is a notable increase in more traditional practices like Eucharistic adoration and rosary recitation (previously cited) and in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[Ibid., 38.]
\item[Ibid.]
\item[Bruce, \textit{Parish and Place}, 137.]
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the rates of participation in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (unhelpfully called the Traditional Latin Mass - TLM - in some places). Permission to celebrate the Extraordinary Form, in which Mass is celebrated primarily in Latin *ad orientem* (with the priest’s back to the people) had been rare in the years following the Council, but access was made more widely available to the global Church after the publication of the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) during the pontificate of Benedict XVI.⁴⁹ Indeed, in the aftermath of Vatican II it was presumed that requests for the use of the 1962 missal would be limited to the older generation which had grown up with it, but in the meantime it has clearly been demonstrated that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them.⁵⁰

For those less interested in “restoring” Catholicism, “the popularization of new devotional practices suggest[s] the increasing dominance of what scholars characterized as a ‘spirituality of seekers’ that emphasized experimentation, privileged a sense of tentativeness, or even skepticism, over certainty, and lent itself to informal exercises conducted independently by laypeople.”⁵¹ Where one camp seeks certainty in the authority and authenticity of a cleric whispering in a strange language, the other camp seems to shrug their shoulders at the idea of truth and makes space for authority and authenticity to be found in other persons and

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⁴⁹ Indeed, the landscape was already primed for “in 1999 a total of 131 of the nation’s [USA] 181 dioceses offered Mass of the pre-Vatican II variety; in 1990 only 6 dioceses offered this.” from James McCartin, *Prayers of the Faithful: The Shifting Spiritual Life of American Catholics*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010, 175.


places. “Each ‘represents morality,’ as [the German-American psychologist Erik]Erikson would have it, by engendering a sense of collective resistance to a set of perceived wrongs within both church and society.”52 The problem is that these two camps are on a path for an eventual collision, which many faith leaders have seen firsthand in their parishes.

One pastor, interviewed for Tricia Bruce’s book on the rise of personal parishes, relates the pain he felt when at the end of a parish meeting he heard one parishioner say to another, “We don’t want your church in our Church.”53 Still other leaders prefer the route of easy bifurcation rather than pursue the hard work of unity, as another pastor relates:

People are here because they like what we’re doing. If they don’t like it, then for heaven’s sake - go find another parish! I’ve had to tell people that, once in a while: Either go to [a different] Sunday Mass, or go to another parish. We’re not going to change what we are, and what we do, because of personal tastes or likes or dislikes or whatever. We are what we are.54 You can almost hear the exasperation in this pastor’s response, but his advice to those who are seeking something - for those travelers in pursuit of encounter and community - reveals a much deeper issue than simply likes and dislikes, preferences “or whatever.” There is a much deeper ecclesiological question afoot here: what is the identity of the Body that Christ leaves us to be?

As we step away from the local level of the parish or faith community, we can get a little more perspective on what is really at stake in these situations and the accompanying question I raised above. A diocesan bishop interviewed in

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52 Baggett, Sense, Kindle Location 2102.
53 Bruce, Parish and Place, 158.
54 Ibid., 162.
Bruce’s book puts it starkly and succinctly: “The challenge [of the Church], of course, is to ensure that integration is happening; that they’re not, they don’t become this sort of - ‘Those people, those churches’ - but that this is an integral part of the overall ecclesiology of a local church’s understanding.” This understanding is a complicated proposition and must lead us into a discussion of identity, a topic to which we must next turn.

1.4 Identity and Identity Types

In general, “the term identity refers to a person’s sense of self, his or her self-concept.” But this classical definition must necessarily take on new dimensions when we begin adding more descriptors and qualifiers. For instance: what does a Christian identity entail and how does that influence the identity of the Body?

The Jesuit theologian T. Howland Sanks notes that Vatican II has several important legacies arising out of it, with predictable lasting consequences. He writes that the council’s “juxtaposition of diverse ecclesiologies, [and] its internal incoherence and ambiguity, resulted in a lack of clarity of vision, a lack of certainty, and a massive identity crisis.” In essence, the People of God - so richly described in the Vatican II documents - no longer know who they are.

The late American sociologist, Dean Hoge (1937-2008), attempted to formulate a theory of Catholic identity in his 2001 work, Young Adult Catholics:

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55 Ibid., 164.
57 Baggett, Sense, Kindle Location 350.
Religion in the Culture of Choice. In this, he identified three specific types of Catholic identity, which can be instructive for our purposes.

The first Catholic identity might be called “parish Catholics.” These include those “persons whose Catholic identity is important and central, and it clearly includes parish life, the sacraments, and institutional authority.”58 I would include in this group, too, those young people on college campuses like those with whom I work who are actively engaged with sacramental life and appeal to institutional authority, even as we are not a parish or part of the diocese, per se.

The second group that Hoge identifies he calls “spiritual Catholics” and these includes those “persons whose Catholic identity is important and central, but it does not include taking part in the institutional church.”59 I put some of my own family members into this identity group. Indeed, my siblings intend on raising their children as Catholics, with baptism and preparation for the other sacraments of initiation seemingly as a given. They believe in God and may even pray at times. But a weekly commitment to a faith community - even one into which their children are being initiated - is not part of their understanding of their identity or their practice, even as it was part of their own experience growing up.

Finally, in the third group, Hoge places those he calls “contingent Catholics.” These are persons “whose Catholic identity is an extension of family or ethnic identity.”60 There is a commitment among those in this group to the label of being

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58 Dean R. Hoge, Young Adult Catholics: Religion in the Culture of Choice (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 180.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 181.
known as a Catholic, but not to a practice of the faith or of a commitment to a faith community in any real way. You might think here of those families who gather together to celebrate Easter or Christmas with gifts and a large meal, but for whom the reality of the Incarnation or Resurrection of our Lord is far from their thoughts or lips. The holy day of the holiday is thoroughly secularized in their experience, though they may still give their religion as Catholic, when asked.

These identity types are helpful, to an extent, but it should be noted that “there exists no one thing called...Catholicism. Rather than being something to which someone can point, it is actually a confluence of symbols, practices, and narratives with which people point to their multiform sense of the sacred, which, in turn, always evades whatever frames are used to depict it.”61 In essence, “Catholics always appropriate the religious culture available to them in disparate ways,”62 hence the establishment and growth of personal parishes closely aligned with identity groups unhelpfully labeled ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive.’ Let us turn now to a more detailed look about those two main groups, each of which seems to “possess their own internalized sense of...the rules and regulations that define a Catholic in good standing...[and] which among these are most central to the faith.”63

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61 Baggett, Sense, Kindle Location 917.
62 Ibid., Kindle Location 676.
63 Ibid., Kindle Location 1632.
1.5 Conservative Identity

Identity and labels exist always, of course, on a broad spectrum. On the far right of that spectrum lie the sedevacantists, literally vacant-chair-ists, those who hold that all of the popes elected since the death of Pope Pius XII in the mid-twentieth century (1958) have no true claim to the papal see, and thus it has remained vacant in the years since. The sedevacantists have deep-seated suspicions of the teachings and reforms of Vatican Council II, which they see as a break in the long, uninterrupted history of the tradition of the Church. The Council, these people say, was “the work of apostates and thus null and void.”

Clearly those holding sedevacantist views are a minority in the Church today, but we find a more mainstream group with similar ecclesial views (i.e. suspicions about a rupture, if not a break) in those people we might find located to their left on the Catholic-identity spectrum: so-called traditionalists.

Indeed, “the focus of Catholic traditionalism is primarily on internal ecclesial conflict...do[ing] battle in the sanctuary, not in the street.” While not going to the extremes of the sedevacantists, Catholic traditionalists “seek rather to clarify religious boundaries, to offset perceived secular trends within the fold, and to gather together ‘the remnant’ to hold fast to the true faith while launching a counterrevolution against those who have purportedly subverted it.”

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65 Ibid., 328.
66 Dinges, "What you Were", 261.
67 Ibid.
meant by the ‘true faith’ is, of course a rather nebulous and vexing detail, as is the membership of the faithful ‘remnant.’ Still, there is a purifying streak at work here, a strong desire to clean up the ‘mess’ that was wrought by a perceived improper rollout and implementation of the teachings of Vatican II.

Some traditionalists might also identify as so-called ‘restorationists,’ though the term is neither completely accurate nor fair insofar as it is used to imply that the goal of the restorationists is to bring back into being some form of Catholic theocracy or the alleged ‘good old days’ of a medieval Catholicism or even of the relatively golden era of a ‘1950s’ American Catholicism.68

Still, without resorting to caricature, the label itself can still be useful in pointing out that many restorationists have as their goals the “bringing [of] a dynamic orthodoxy back into the Church and of having it serve as a leaven in the larger society.”69 Practical examples of this could include institutionalizing a strong Catholic/Christian presence in the public square and of co-opting and strengthening whatever is useful in modern life to promote Catholic/Christian goals (e.g., scientific or technological advance, cultural and political ideas such as democracy and the separation of Church and State properly understood, rational systems to provide mass education and health care, etc.).70

The Napa Institute comes to mind as an instantiation of these ideas, a summer Catholic conference group founded by wealthy American businessman Tim Busch in 2010. Admittedly a group committed to the work of the New Evangelization and in assisting Church leadership, the group’s website also promises “a new renaissance for God and God’s people” and “challenges Catholics to not retreat

69 Ibid.
from the public square and...to renew our minds through the message of the 
Gospel.”71 It is worth noting, too, that along with conference speakers presenting 
on these general themes, “multiple masses of various traditions and rites”72 as well 
as devotions like adoration and the rosary are also celebrated during the 
conference. Clearly, Catholic identity and the implication for Catholic worship 
practice are never far apart.

Catholic restorationists like Tim Busch almost certainly found an ally and a 
source of inspiration in Popes John Paul II (1978-2005) and in his successor, 
Benedict XVI (2005-2013), and “as an increasingly outspoken segment of the laity 
 clamored for a return to older spiritual structures, they met with growing support 
among Church officials and clerics”73, many of whom were installed by those two 
pontiffs. Buoyed by this series of popes, restorationists continue in their fight for 
the soul of the Church, confident in “their belief that the ‘gates of Hell’ shall not 
prevail...will[ing] to sacrifice and fight for a cause that is for them holy, if perhaps, 
forlorn.”74

R. Scott Appleby, Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, 
writing in the epilogue of the edited volume Being Right: Conservative Catholics in 
America, sums up well the concerns of those on many points of the conservative 
end of the Catholic identity spectrum:

The Catholic Church once provided an enclave, buttressed by a coherent

71 “About the Napa Institute”, The Napa Institute, accessed September 12, 2019 
http://napa-institute.org/about/#overview.
72 “The Holy Mass”, The Napa Institute, accessed September 12, 2019 
http://napa-institute.org/liturgy/.
73 McCartin, Prayers of the Faithful, 176.
74 Varacalli, Catholic Experience, 53.
supernatural worldview, that effectively and dramatically resisted the incursions of outsiders who were not orthodox Catholics, but who instead blended their religious faith with political or cultural sensibilities derived from a godless economy or rationalist system of higher education. Some conservative Catholics mourn the loss of that enclave, it seems, because its passing has left them unprotected from the encroachments of the unbeliever.\textsuperscript{75}

In seeking this protection again, conservative Catholics have often sought refuge in the liturgy and in particular devotional practices that might somehow recapture a different time. Let us turn to their experiences now.

1.6 Conservative Experiences

Like identities, Catholic conservative liturgical and devotional practices also run the gamut. Still, we can speak generally here about some notable trends that have emerged in recent decades and how identity and practice are mutually informing one another.

Gibson writes that “there is a small but significant trend towards… Retro-Catholicism’ - a taste for bits of discarded Catholic culture that young people find comforting and even a bit cool, like vintage clothing and furniture.”\textsuperscript{76} Indeed, some young people that I work with would easily identify with the sentiment expressed thusly: “this stuff is so outrageous it’s attractive.”\textsuperscript{77} But there is more to it than simple attraction. Indeed, the comfort found in these ‘discarded bits’ - older devotional forms and practices like the wearing of the mantilla, Mass in the Extraordinary Form (or TLM, as previously discussed) - seem especially attractive

\textsuperscript{75} Appleby, “What difference?”, 333-334.
\textsuperscript{76} Gibson, Coming Catholic Church, 80.
\textsuperscript{77} McCartin, Prayers of the Faithful, 176.
to young adults “as a comforting port in a storm of uncertainty.”78 Indeed, “[a]mid the swirl of spiritual, religious, and moral choices that exist in...culture today, many young adults are opting for the tried-and-true worldview of Christian orthodoxy,”79 attracted to a worldview that they believe challenges many core values of the dominant secular culture.

Of course, what is remarkable about this is that of “those most eager for the return of older devotional forms were many born in the post-Vatican II era, who had no memory of these rites.”80 As one young adult interviewed for James’s McCartin’s book *Prayers of the Faithful: the Shifting Spiritual Life of Catholics* put it: “Young people are looking for an experience that is somewhat different from the quotidian reality...For us, this is something that was old and buried and is suddenly brand new again.”81 For those who self-identify in this group and with these practices, the quotidian, everyday things are suspect to a degree since these are, in some ways, seen to have supplanted the “moral and religious absolutes’ that they believed became obscured amid the transformation of the spiritual life in previous decades.”82 Instead, the need for real “reverence”83 and the “yearn[ing] for mystery”84 (nebulous terms in and of themselves) is sought out in devotional practices that work to solidify a Catholic and conservative identity and a “sense of apartness...
[where] uncertainty builds pride, strengthening shared identity."\textsuperscript{85} Those who prefer Mass in the Extraordinary Form/TLM, are a case in point.

“TLM Catholics embrace an alternative Catholic positionality at the conservative pole of the U.S. Catholic Church,"\textsuperscript{86} Tricia Bruce reminds us. The very label of ‘TLM Catholics’ reveals to us that “the Latin Mass appeals to a small minority of Catholics longing for a ritualized, past-looking, high-stakes variety of Catholicism only available via the [Extraordinary Form].”\textsuperscript{87} Though dramatic, ‘high-stakes’ seems not an overstatement, at least if that can be measured in the words of one TLM Catholic interviewed by Bruce about her TLM community:

Some have come as refugees, as those who have fought a war and are beat up in the battle. And they come here as a safe haven where they don’t have to - you know where they feel like they don’t have to do battle with liturgical abuse, or doctrinal abuse, or whatever. For them, I suppose the reverence would be part of the package, but for them, it’s a place of safety.\textsuperscript{88}

Other express their devotion to the TLM liturgy in terms of what it does not allow:

Communion in the hand - I’ve always loathed it. I think it’s disgusting! I think it’s horrendous, hideous practice. It fosters - no one will be able to convince me otherwise - it fosters disrespect to the Blessed Sacrament and a lessening of the knowledge, a lessening of the belief, I think, in the true presence. So, there are going to be people that want that. They’re going to want the hideous music, the dreadful happy, clappy music. They’re going to love the impromptu this and that that happens at the Mass. They’re going to love - they love the sign of peace. There are going to be people that loathe to give that up. But there are a lot of people that love to give all that stuff up.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{85} Bruce, \textit{Parish and Place}, 144.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 146.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 147.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 157.
In the words of just some of the People of God, the open conflict and ecclesial separation is easy to see. And for some, the answer has just been to keep like with like - homophily writ large - even as the communities might be small and fractured. Indeed, the pastor of a TLM parish stated in an interview that “having the Latin Mass in its own church kind of avoids all that unnecessary conflict.”

Can it be that Christ’s dream that ‘all might be one’ is just too messy?

The messy community is certainly downplayed in many TLM and traditional parishes. Indeed, the importance of community is almost a non-existent value in some of these places. In his study, Baggett interviewed parishioners at Saint Margaret Mary Parish in the Diocese of Oakland, a self-identified ‘conservative’ parish, and proudly so. When asked to define community at the church, one parishioner offered that

Here it means that people are joined in the same cause, the same ideas, the same thoughts, the same vision of what the future should look like. That’s community here: that people are on the same page with the same goals. What keeps this all together - and keeps us from splintering into all different directions - is the Mass. That’s where we all get the vision I’m talking about.

[Interviewer:] How would you describe this vision?
Oh, that’s easy. It’s having a sense of reverence. It’s a deep understanding of holiness and a respect for God.

Here again we see the appeal to undefinable ‘reverence’ and almost untouchable mystery, albeit implied. For the parishioners of Margaret Mary some extra liturgical practices might be O.K., “but [these are] not the Mass; that’s special.”

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90 Ibid., 162.
91 Baggett, Sense, Kindle Location 2460.
92 Ibid., Kindle Location 2473.
The Mass, this same parishioner says, must be celebrated correctly, because “once that host is changed, the body of Christ is there. Well, if Christ is abiding in our midst, then I think the proper response is “My God!””

This quote sums up well the ecclesial divide that becomes expressed in sacramental and devotional ways: that holiness is localized, and that localization has seemingly little to do with the community of people gathered around the altar. Indeed, it is the very community that is the source of suspicion for many conservative Catholics, including those at Margaret Mary parish.

What they are opposed to is what they see as an alarming disrespect among Catholics for their own tradition. To a degree unparalleled by members of the other parishes, these people are profoundly attached to the sense of mystery and holiness they experience through the symbols, practices, and overall devotionalism associated with the pre-Vatican II church. Unparalleled, too, are their expressions of contempt for those who neglect to accord this the proper respect.

Of course, what is meant by ‘tradition’ (or even ‘holiness’) here is up for debate, and there exist some common conservative talking points about this that would be helpful to analyze a bit.

1.7 Conservative Talking Points

Many of the most prevalent talking points that can be gleaned from the research and from interviews with ‘conservative’ members of the Church swirl around liturgy, of course, and about the reaction to Vatican II. One writer objects to the “modern” liturgy, claiming that it “does not teach the real presence as explicitly as is necessary; nay more, it can seem at times visibly to teach the
opposite!" 

In his airing of grievances, this same writer refers to the TLM as “the better half of the Roman rite”, seeming to dismiss the celebration of the Novus Ordo established after Vatican II. His argument lands in a predictable, if nebulous, place: “Let us just focus on the thing the Catholic Church is the best at: Tradition! If we do that, how can we lose?” Of course, his understanding of what is meant by ‘Tradition’ is unclear.

An additional argument issuing from conservative quarters, indeed, including from the hierarchy itself, is that the celebration of the Novus Ordo has led to confusion among the People of God about proper roles in the Church. For some, the Latin Mass “underscored both the ‘fundamentally unequal relationship between God and man’ and minimized the danger of ‘blurring of the distinction between clergy and laity, which is all too common today.’” A specific listing of perceived abuses and blurring of lines was published in a publication called *The Apostasy* in 1974:

> We want the Catholic Mass and the priests of God, not the ‘Meal’ and the updated ‘Presidents.’ We want the organ and the Gregorian Chant, not folk songs and guitars. We want the House of God, not houses where young people fondle each other at the ‘kiss of peace.’ We want adoration and reverence. We believe in the Gospel, not in Godspell; we adore Christ the Lord, not Jesus Superstar. We want our nuns to be true spouses of Christ, humble in appearance, their eyes cast down, and fully covered; not mini-skirted hussies with permed hair, lipstick, shapely calves, and see-through blouses. And we want our priests to wear the Roman collar and

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95 Menendez, “Youth”, 164.
96 Ibid., 173.
97 Ibid.
98 McCartin, *Prayers of the Faithful*, 175.
the cassock, not a tie with a suit. We want to be able to address them as 'Father,' not as 'Fred' and 'Bill.'

The mystery has been lost somehow, some believe, thus why it can said that these - many of them young - “are rapidly moving toward the third century,” and gladly so.

The worry for many of these conservatives can be expressed thusly: “The church woke up in 1968 and ached to find itself pluralist.” And the specific grievances of the perceived fallout following the mid-century ecumenical council are legion:

the decline in traditional popular devotions, the abandonment of distinctive clerical and religious dress, the political activities of clergy and religious, women’s abandonment of hats in church, the massive departures from the priesthood and religious life the decline in membership and even the dissolution of Catholic professional associations, the abandonment of Gregorian chant and its replacement by Protestant hymns or by music that imitates popular musical styles, the collapse of the unitary neoscholastic method and language of theology, the spread of dissent (particularly after the publication of *Humanae Vitae*), and the movement for the ordination of women.

The important point here is that these things listed above - traditional roles and devotional practices - are not merely religious frills to conservative Catholics. They are, for many, “what it means to be Catholic. They create a distinctive way of being religious that, in their absence, would no longer be possible.”

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100 Carroll, *The New Faithful*, 63.


103 Baggett, *Sense*, Kindle Location 2489.
mutually informed by practice, as it seems to be, then conservatives see a crisis of epic proportions, that “Catholicism is losing its soul and will, because it has already lost its mind.”  

1.8 Progressive Identity

Lest the reader think I am devoting too much ink to the conservative identity, let us turn to the progressive identity of Catholics. van Beeck’s categories can again be useful here. You will recall that we have already had some discussion of the pistic versus the charismatic Christian, van Beeck’s theological terms for conservatives and progressives. While pistic Christians seem beholden to a frozen and unyielding sense of ‘tradition’, “believers of the charismatic type tend to take their cue from present, actual situations.” The charismatic Church seems not afraid of social and moral developments in the culture, but rather takes them up as new causes, attempting (in some cases) to align these new understandings with what the Church teaches.

The phenomenon of trans-identity today, and the charismatic/progressive Church’s reaction is perhaps a good case-in-point. I have recently returned to my place of employment and, having been away for only three years, I have been stunned to see the open dialogue about transgender identity on campus, and how much time and energy is devoted to this in relation to my last stint here. My colleagues in the chaplaincy have jumped into the deep end of this pool, hosting gender non-conforming support groups and sponsoring panels and events that

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104 Appleby, “Triumph”, 38.
105 van Beeck, Catholic Identity, 56.
celebrate the trans-identities among us. There has been little dialogue on the understanding of Catholic anthropology that has been passed down (tradition?), but much has been made of the gospel call to accompany the *anawim*, the poor and marginalized of society.

This is representative of much of the progressive/charismatic identity: like conservatives, there is a selective cherry-picking of the Church’s teachings and ways of proceeding, one which attempts “to justify itself by being *uncritically and passively open* to whatever comes along.” It is a practice of asking ‘What would Jesus do?’ without also asking ‘what does the Church - which Christ left to us and many others before us - have to say to the present moment and the current concern? In other words, ‘where is the rest of the Body on this?’

That dynamic, of bending to the present moment without also appealing to the past (which are necessarily and always connected, for that is what tradition is) could be said to be the result of societal changes. Indeed, “most Catholics born after 1970 adopted their parents’ relaxed attitude toward the spiritual authority of ordained leaders, and they distinguished themselves from young Catholics a century before who were expected to know Church teaching and submit to clerical judgments.” Instead, there has been a movement towards what David Carlin calls ‘generic Christianity.’ Carlin, a politician, professor of sociology, and published columnist in some popular Catholic media outlets, argues that “generic Christianity is the dominant religion in the United States today, and Catholics

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106 Ibid., 75. Emphasis original.
(except for recent immigrants from Latin America) are fully Americanized. If one is fully American, is it surprising that one would embrace the dominant American religion?\textsuperscript{108} It is a replication, in a way, of “the previous movement of mainstream Protestant and liberal Judaism toward a much more secularized and less traditional religion,”\textsuperscript{109} one which necessarily has shifted identity and the religious practices that mutually inform one another.

Part of the progressive identity has also been a consistent movement from religious labeling towards a more diffuse “‘Lone Ranger’ spiritual individualism...not concerned about a specific denominational identity... [There are growing numbers, especially of young people, who] see little importance in the distinctiveness of Catholic institutional identity.”\textsuperscript{110} For many, religion “is about doctrine and institutions; [while] ‘spirituality’ is about a higher power and personal faith. These are [often seen as] ‘two separate things.’ Individuals with these views are weakly connected to Catholicism's sacramental and symbolic tradition or to its institutional character.”\textsuperscript{111} Sociologist Robert Wuthnow contrasts the difference between “a previously dominant ‘dwelling-orientated’ style focused on firm commitments to churches and traditional beliefs, [with a ‘seeker-oriented spirituality that] privileges journeying over steadfastness, questioning over obedience, and a commitment to personal growth at the expense of one's obligations to the gathered community.”\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{108} Varacalli, Catholic Experience, 246.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 245.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 245.
\textsuperscript{111} Hoge, Young Adult Catholics, 170.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Baggett, Sense, Kindle Location 1054.
1.9 The Effects of Fragmented Identities on the Whole

What I hope is clear by this point in this chapter is that the identities and the devotional and spiritual practices that often accompany these identities have become deeply entrenched parts of Catholicism, especially in the West. Separated communities (sometimes seen in personal parishes) have enabled “Catholics to choose their world”\(^{113}\) and the like-minded have been separated through an institutional fragmentation. “This kind of othering distances Catholics from each other, each side righteous in their stance vis-à-vis the wider...Catholic Church. In-group solidification begets out-group antagonism”\(^{114}\) and these stratified communities “present another ‘us’ that’s better than ‘them’ for Catholics to join and feel at home.”\(^{115}\)

However, it should be noted that this act of choosing and joining up with like-minded believers “require Catholics to choose what component of their multifaceted identities and commitments is most salient to their faith lives. Is it their ethnicity? Their liturgical preference? Their commitment to social justice?”\(^{116}\) “Given the parameters imposed by the specified mission [and understood identity of the given community or personal parish], this means privileging certain facets of one’s identity above others.”\(^{117}\) In other words, even as the Body of Christ is bifurcated along the conservative/progressive poles as we have seen, the members

\(^{113}\) Bruce, Parish and Place, 159.
\(^{114}\) Ibid., 158.
\(^{115}\) Ibid., 156.
\(^{116}\) Ibid.
\(^{117}\) Ibid., 157.
of the Body of Christ are also working to pull themselves apart within themselves. It is a disunion on multiple levels.

1.10 Whence a solution?

With all this in mind, it would be easy to throw up one’s hands, declaring a surrender. It is just too messy and too hard to try to effect any sort of *rapprochement* between the poles, some might say, to try to really gather and worship as a unified Body. Indeed, the fragmentation that has been increasingly institutionalized (seen in the rise of personal parishes) lends some credence and authority to this perspective. Still, I am not convinced that the solution to unity is to choose to highlight only the small slices of our identities that we self-select. This, rather, seems like a perfect route to increased *disunity*, and a further splintering of the One Body of Christ. Indeed, “[a]lthough the foundations for common ground are sometimes difficult to see, they are discernible to those who look beyond labels and rhetoric.”\(^{118}\) So, where does one look?

It should perhaps seem obvious that the beginnings of an answer to our bifurcation ought be found in Christ, for “in these circumstances the Catholic Church and her members can make no real sense, either of their identity or of their mission, unless they go back to their abiding foundation: the risen Lord.”\(^{119}\) Indeed, what is always true regarding individual persons is that “Christian identity is to be found nowhere apart from the person of Jesus Christ.”\(^{120}\) This is a

\(^{118}\) Julie Hanlon Rubio, *Hope for Common Ground: Mediating the Personal and the Political in a Divided Church* (Washington, DC : Georgetown University Press, 2016), xvi.

\(^{119}\) van Beeck, *Catholic Identity*, 55.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., 60.
foundational statement, as it aims to supplant identification with any specific camp or ideology. In this widely encompassing and fundamental truth we can extrapolate even further: because the Christian’s identity is wholly bound up in the person of Jesus Christ, the crucified and raised Son of God, it follows that “Church’s real identity lies in the unity which coincides with her holiness. No one [or one group] owns the Church; Christ ransomed her.”

Indeed, it is in the whole of the Paschal Mystery - in the birth, life, death, resurrection of Christ and in missioning that he hands on to those who will lead his Church - that Christians ought to know themselves, both as individuals and as a corporate entity. As the Jesuits once succinctly put it in one of their governing documents on their own identity, “Jesuits know who they are by looking at him.” This is a phrase that could be universally applied to all Christians.

Furthermore, it is the worship of that same Risen Lord, through the liturgy of the Church and the celebration of the sacraments which Christ institutes for us, that we will remember who we are. For the Church is not simply a congregation of spiritually interested people, but instead, according to Paul’s vivid suggestion, a body of interdependent members, drawing its life from Christ the head. Therefore, when they come together to the altar to partake of Christ, the faithful are, necessarily, drawn together and animated in their identity as a co-inherent company. They realize that they are connected to each other by bonds of love that transcend any social, cultural, or political divisions that might separate them.

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121 Ibid., 66.
122 Documents of 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (Rome: Jesuit Curia, 2008), Decree 2 #2.
123 Barron, Bridging, 49.
Indeed, we Catholics are always and everywhere in communio, “bound to each other through Christ and in God, [bearing] each other’s burdens, acknowledging that one person’s need is everyone’s need.”124 These bonds of communion are essential to who we know ourselves to be and “it is in the liturgy and in the life that feeds on the liturgy that the Church receives and celebrates, enacts and experiences her identity.”125 Furthermore, a “Church that lives out of worship will be patient and hospitable ad intra, too. It will, in other words, cultivate active, appreciative, and even creative tolerance of ambiguity and differences.”126 How this happens, i.e. how we celebrate the sacraments in a liturgical context, has much bearing on that outcome, and so I would like to offer the thought of an influential modern sacramental theologian to help us grasp all that the ‘how’ entails.

124 Ibid., 270.
125 van Beeck, Catholic Identity, 61.
126 Ibid., 76.


Chapter 2 - The Thought of Louis-Marie Chauvet

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I want to turn to the thought of acclaimed 20th century theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet, whose dense “foundational theology of sacramentality” I will rely on in chapter three of this thesis. However, in order to deploy his thought properly then, a primer on his argumentation is required for the casual reader, now. For, “while C[hauvet] is always rigorous in his logic and clear in his writing, he still demands a great deal of his readers.” My main interest in using Chauvet in proposing a way forward for the Bifurcated Body can be found in Part III of his seminal work, Symbol and Sacrament, but Part III is fundamentally built upon the previous two parts and cannot be separated out without doing damage to the whole. In order to understand Chauvet one must inhabit the whole arc of his thought.

It is also important to recognize here that Chauvet’s grand project is of a different order than much of what had passed for liturgical and sacramental theology in previous centuries and decades. Chauvet’s is not a study of liturgical rubrics, but “an innovative and foundational study in systematic theology with wide-ranging concerns, a familiarity with related areas in the human sciences, and highly original insights.” Chauvet’s work, then, is a continuation of the legacy of influential figures like the Belgian Benedictine Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960)

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129 Ibid.
who, with his colleagues, rediscovered and stressed the “priority of liturgical action over reflection” on the liturgical texts. Indeed, for too much of its history, “the lex orandi of the church was not grasped as a theological topic.” But in studying liturgical action, the subject of these new studies made an obvious turn towards the persons who prayed: presiders and their congregations, and the ritual actions of all gathered for worship which gave rise to a new understanding of corporate identity through worship together.

2.2 Chauvet’s Part I: “From the Metaphysical to the Symbolic”

Chauvet’s work is distinctive not only for its focus on the people who are doing the praying, but also because it aims for “a contemporary critique of metaphysics and an epistemological reorientation that invite[s] dialogue with both Aquinas and Heidegger.” ‘Contemporary’ is the key word here. Indeed, for a good portion of the Neo-scholastic period of the late 19th century, much of the thinking and writing about the sacraments was done from the starting point of Thomas Aquinas’ understanding of “the sacraments as objects that dispense grace.”

The Jesuit sacramental theologian Bruce Morrill rightly notes “that a key characteristic of sacramental theology in the second half of the 20th century has been the shift...to perceiving them as relational events of encounters between God and humankind.”

Chauvet’s work in Symbol and Sacrament fits squarely into this

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131 Ibid., vii.
132 Duffy, Symbol and Sacrament review, 551.
134 Ibid.
new model. For Chauvet, “the prevailing Neo-Scholastic theology of the sacraments failed to address the symbolic character of the human world shaped by language and culture.” These are major themes that he covers in Part I.

In chapter one of this work, Chauvet poses the question that he will seek to answer in the rest of the book: can the sacraments be delivered from the control of the “instrumental and causal system” of traditional metaphysics onto-theology and come to be understood as symbols, language, and acts that enable the “unending transformation of subjects into believing subjects”? The short answer is ‘yes’, according to Chauvet. Still, that question needs to be unpacked.

At the core of his objection is an objectivist understanding of the sacraments that has been held up by too many for too long. This theology, which focused on “the production of grace in the individual recipient,” where sacraments were seen as ‘dispensers of grace’ or as ‘things you get’, has been held “at the expense of the concrete existential subjects, who are not taken into account.” This point seems obvious, and yet worth making: the sacraments were made for people, not the other way around. As soon as you see fit to make that distinction, fine as it is, you have to acknowledge the complexities that human beings bring to this new equation. Chief among these complexities are the bodies, senses and languages that the people pray in and through. (The messiness, as it

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137 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
were, that others would prefer to ignore.) Chauvet seeks to begin here, in these complexities, for while the “body and the senses were not ignored [in the objectivist system he rejects]... they were treated more as a condition of the liturgy and thus more as a methodological point to be gone over by sacramental theology than as a place which was vital for such theology.”

Chauvet then slowly teases out his understanding of signs and symbols but begins here: by insisting that it is only a human with a body and with senses that are alive who can interpret the language that signs and symbols present. Talking about sacraments using only cause-and-effect language (as had long been the case) is completely unequal to the task at hand since he argues that “causality...is inevitably involved in a productionist view of reality, [therefore] incompatible with the understanding that sacraments are signs.” Indeed, cause and effect language are deeply problematic for Chauvet where it concerns the sacraments because “[t]alking about sacramental signs as causes ignores the complex context of human becoming in which sacraments participate. The language of cause and effect may help us to understand the interactions of billiard balls, but can it have anything to say about the life of grace?”

In his dismissal of cause and effect language, then, Chauvet offers something else, squarely in the tradition, but overlooked and underused, to his mind: a teaching that is centered on grace and that can be exemplified in the biblical image of manna as found in Exodus 16. Grace, he says, is “of an entirely

140 Chauvet and Lumbala, Liturgy and the Body, vii.  
142 Ibid., 342-343.
different order from that of value or empirical verifiability.”

As such, it is not a thing you can trade or prove. The reader will recall the story of Exodus 16: as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, they grumbled against Moses and Aaron, whom they blamed for a lack of food and comfort after leading them out of Egypt. But Yahweh heard their cries and promised flesh and bread, and the people of Israel found quail in their camps at night and manna sprinkled on the ground in the morning. The relevant detail here about the biblical manna is its primary characteristic: it would not last if the Israelites tried to retain it and store it. Instead, it would only decay. The sacraments are like this, Chauvet contends: they are not to be ‘gotten’ and stored as if valuable goods, but experienced in real time in real bodies with real language and in the context of real culture.

However, since this is how grace ‘works’, Chauvet is also quick to point out that it is also necessary that we recognize that the grace of God is always and everywhere a mediated event, and that God does not necessarily act in God’s own person, but rather in and through a world and a language that humans inhabit. That is, God makes God’s self and God’s gifts known by participating alongside human beings in the ‘symbolic order’ of human experience. This is true for all reality, as it were, and it is a “foundational principle of Chauvet’s sacramental reinterpretation of Christian existence.”

Chauvet reminds us that in everything we see and experience, “the perceived object is always-already a constructed object.” The world that we

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143 Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 45.  
144 Kubicki, “Recognizing”, 829.  
perceive is always a world that already bears our mark. Whatever I see is already placed within a web of signification and cultural values, the symbolic order of things into which I am formed and of which I help form. Language is, of course, part of this symbolic world and yet language only has meaning as it concerns “humans conscious of their presence in the world as speaking and acting subjects.”

All of human experience, according to Chauvet, is mediated through languages of all different types, which include words as well as images, signs, and symbols. As such, “[t]o be human is to live in a symbolic order...the convergence of meanings and values in which human identity is formed and through which human experience of the world occurs. Our experience of the world and of ourselves is mediated, and indeed constructed, by that order through language.”

In sum, Reality is never present to us except in a mediated way, which is to say, constructed out of the symbolic network of the culture which fashions us. This symbolic order designates the system of connections between the different elements and levels of a culture (economic, social, political, ideological - ethics, philosophy, religion . . .), a system forming a coherent whole that allows the social group and individuals to orient themselves in space, find their place in time, and in general situate themselves in the world in a significant way—in short, to find their identity in a world that makes “sense,” even if, as C. Levi-Strauss [1908-2009, the Belgium-born French anthropologist and ethnologist] says, there always remains an inexpungible residue of signifiers to which we can never give adequate meanings.

After laying the foundation for understanding mediation - a reality in which the reader must continually become grounded lest they become unmoored in Chauvet's dense theology - he turns to the concept of symbolic exchange - a process

\[146\] Ibid., 93.
\[147\] Mudd, “Schillebeeckx and Chauvet”, 342.
\[148\] Kubicki, “Recognizing”, 829.
through which we “consent to the presence of the absence of God.”¹⁴⁹ This, of course, deserves an entire chapter in this thesis, much more space than I can devote to it here. One of the most important features of this concept is that it occurs “outside the order of value.”¹⁵⁰ “Unlike market exchange, which functions according to a logic of value and calculation (‘how much for how many?’), symbolic exchange operates according to a logic of gift wherein having received a gift, one incurs an obligation to give to some other in turn.”¹⁵¹ Chauvet sets up “a cycle of gift, reception (obligation), and return gift (other)”¹⁵² which he will apply to a study of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

It is this very quality that helps us to understand how the relationship with God and humanity works, i.e. grace. The system of “obligatory generosity”¹⁵³ that Chauvet outlines, that something is given ‘for nothing’ is hard to comprehend when he is talking about human goods, whether that be the sack of grain or the golden object. Indeed, the capitalistic and utilitarian world that we inhabit leaves deep traces within us. But it is the multi-level exchange that he reminds us of: any temporal exchange involves also a symbolic exchange that has implications for one’s identity, place, and relationship. It is within this understanding that we can locate the symbolic efficacy of the sacraments: they help us come to ourselves, before God, and in consenting to symbolic mediation we consent also to “a conversion, in both our theologizing and our worship, to a God beyond any human

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¹⁴⁹ Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 98.
¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 100.
¹⁵² Ibid., 345.
¹⁵³ Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 101.
conception of ‘God.’” Our consent is a true ‘noli me tangere’ moment in which we, like Mary Magdalene in the garden, are asked to let go of the God we thought we knew to make space for something new.

Chapter four, “Symbol and Body,” is a fundamental section in Chauvet’s work. The categories he has been building up to this point now become clear: sign and symbol, while “always mixed...in the concrete world” are clearly distinct in their heuristic function. “The symbol does not refer, as does the sign, to something of another order than itself; rather, its function is to introduce us into an order to which it itself belongs, an order presupposed to be an order of meaning in its radical otherness.” Symbols, unlike signs, always “point one beyond the immediate experience...Hence the symbol carries with it the transmission of the whole even while its transmission is always epistemologically incomplete.”

Famously, Chauvet uses the example of a single slab of the concrete Berlin Wall to showcase how a symbol works: though these single slabs have been dispersed throughout the world on college campuses and as memorials in parks, the individual pieces can never be separated from the whole that they represent: the Cold War, totalitarianism, the ill effects of violence, etc. Symbols always “represent the whole..from which it is inseparable...[and] every symbolic element brings with

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155 John 20:17
156 Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 111.
157 Ibid., 113.
itself the entire socio-cultural system to which it belongs."¹⁶⁰ Indeed, “the symbol touches what is most real in our world and allows it to come to its truth."¹⁶⁴ Still, “the fact that sign and symbol, like exchange in the marketplace and symbolic exchange, belong to two different principles, two different logics, two different levels does not mean that we could choose one to the exclusion of the other; for the two hold concretely together.”¹⁶²

“For Chauvet, individuals are, by nature of their birth, born into a preformed linguistic world, and thus inherit a world of symbols with which they mediate...This symbolic world is inherited and navigated through the body.”¹⁶³ Circling back to his rejection of traditional metaphysical onto-theology, he notes that it is hopelessly “logo-phonocentric,” where words and language are held up at the expense of the body,¹⁶⁴ even as “the truest things in our faith occur in no other way than through the concreteness of the ‘body.’”¹⁶⁵ Indeed, for Chauvet, “corporality [sic] is the body’s very speech”¹⁶⁶ thus enabling him to claim that “[c]orporeality thus denotes the human subject as a signifying body or as a speaking body; a speaking body because it has always been speaking since its mother’s womb. That which is most spiritual thus comes only through the mediation of that which is most corporeal.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Chauvet Symbol and Sacrament, 115.
¹⁶¹ Ibid., 117.
¹⁶² Ibid., 124.
¹⁶⁴ Chauvet Symbol and Sacrament, 144.
¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 141.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 146.
¹⁶⁷ Chauvet and Lumbala, Liturgy and the Body, viii.
What I hope is clear by now is that Chauvet is speaking in the language and mode of paradox: that “physical mediation is necessary because we necessarily navigate the symbolic world corporally, yet because it is precisely a mediation, it can never fully disclose itself.”\footnote{Niebauer, “Anglican Sacramentology,” 57.}

In effect, those seeking \textit{knowledge} of “their identity and their place in their social world”\footnote{Kubicki, “Recognizing,” 829.} by actively wrestling with sign and symbol will certainly find some ‘answers’; those seeking only \textit{information}, however, will surely be disappointed.

2.3 Chauvet’s Part II: “The Sacraments in the Symbolic Network of the Faith of the Church”

The next section of Chauvet’s immense tome “profiles Christian identity by rethinking the connections between Scripture as the level of cognition, sacrament as that of thanksgiving, and ethics as that of action.”\footnote{Duffy, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament} review, 551.} This tripartite structure will be a consistent touchstone for his theology; having expounded upon the fundamental categories of symbolic exchange, sign, symbol, mediation and corporeality, Chauvet now turns to applying these in the context of the Christian community. To do this, a word must be said about what Chauvet means by ‘the Church.’

Firstly, one must understand that “the Church is not a privileged place in which one is granted special access to God, but the body of believers who consent to the presence of the absence of God in order to give God a body in history.”\footnote{Mudd, “Schillebeeckx and Chauvet,” 344.}
This is a fundamental for Chauvet, and you will notice that he does not subscribe to the conservative and liberal labels with which we began this thesis. Instead, he leans heavily into his understanding of mediation and corporeality and the unmistakable importance of coming to understand who one is in one’s body and as a member of the corporate believing Body who gather to celebrate the sacraments, which are themselves mediations of God. (Again, the astute reader will see how all of Chauvet’s thought is constantly building on itself.) This coming to understand oneself as a Christian, then

is to inhabit the Christian symbolic exchange – it is to inhabit a group of words, gestures, actions that mediate Jesus Christ. To inhabit this world is to acknowledge that God has appropriated these symbols to mediate himself, yet it remains a mediation. Christ still remains absent even in the midst of sacramental presence. One cannot abandon these symbols, nor attempt to claim a mastery of their meaning.\footnote{Niebauer, “Anglican Sacramentology,” 56.}

The Christian, however, is presented with a choice here: whether or not to consent to the ‘presence of the absence’ of God. If one consents, then one makes space for Chauvet’s all-encompassing mediation; if one does not, then one settles for an impoverished understanding of Christ’s sacramental presence in the world, likely by relying on and falling back into the metaphysics of onto-theology, which Chauvet spurns, as we have seen.

And it would be easy to fall back. In fact, Chauvet presents three temptations we must avoid if we are to consent to Christ’s presence in the Church, without taking leave to try to find him elsewhere: the first is that of “a closed
system of religious knowledge,” such as seeking Christ in the Scriptures to the neglect of all else. The second is belief in a sort of ‘sacramental magic’, (easily imagined in Roman Catholic circles). Finally, there is the sort of moralism (on both the left and right) by which one might seek to gain a claim over God.

Chauvet observes that each of these temptations arises from the isolation of one of the constitutive elements of the Christian faith from the others (whether that is Scripture, ethics, or sacrament) in search of a direct, immediate and ‘full’ presence of Christ. The only way to arrive at such a place is to consent to mediation, for God is making God’s self available in ways that can be grasped and known. It is ‘mediation or bust’; there is no other way but in “accepting the institutional mediation of the Church as a gift of grace.”

Having established a model for the structure of Christian identity in chapter five, in the next three chapters Chauvet proceeds to explore the interrelationships of the various elements of the tripartite structure he creates. For example, he examines the manner in which the Scripture grows out of the liturgy of Israel and the early churches, finds its place within the liturgy, the sacramentality of Scripture, and the manner in which Scripture “opens up sacramentality from the inside.”

Each of the elements that Chauvet highlights enables the believing Christian to participate (i.e. to be opened up “from the inside”) in the “process of symbolic exchange” (which is the title of chapter eight). For instance,

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173 Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 174.
174 Duffy, Symbol and Sacrament review, 552.
175 Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 190.
The moment of Scripture tells the story of God’s gift of salvation in history culminating in Christ’s self-offering in death of his life to the Father. In the moment of sacrament, human beings gratefully receive the gift of salvation mediated by the memorial of Christ’s passion. In gratitude for the gift they have received, Christians offer a return gift of love for others made concrete in practices of justice and mercy in imitation of Christ.\textsuperscript{176}

It could be said that the third part of his tripartite structure, ethics, is most likely to get short shrift, since it is not received in the same way as a sacrament is celebrated or Scripture is proclaimed and heard. Instead, it is a way of being, a way of acting and choosing. But Chauvet is clear: “Without the ethical moment of verification, a sacrament is easily reduced to idolatry - an idolatry of the self.”\textsuperscript{177} Instead, the sacraments should be seen as the bridge that connects Scripture and the ethical response demanded of any Christian, as “the symbolic place of the on-going transition between Scripture and Ethics, from the letter to the body.”\textsuperscript{178} Indeed, “one’s gracious reception of divine love in the sacraments [ought to result] in a gratuitous sharing of love with others”\textsuperscript{179} and “the symbolic order that constitutes sacraments provides Christians with the means by which that commitment to right relationships is communicated and nurtured.”\textsuperscript{180}

2.4 Chauvet’s Part III: “The Symbolizing Act of Christian Identity”

\textsuperscript{176} Mudd, “Schillebeeckx and Chauvet,” 345.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Duffy, Symbol and Sacrament review, 551.
\textsuperscript{179} Mudd, “Schillebeeckx and Chauvet,” 348.
We have taken a deep dive into Chauvet’s suspicion and rejection of traditional metaphysics onto-theology, and seen his dense attempt to replace these with a broad, holistic and groundbreaking understanding of language, grace, signs, symbols, mediation, corporeality, and the process of symbolic exchange (and its interrelated tripartite structure of Scripture, sacrament and ethics). With this foundation, we now must take a look at how sacraments ‘work’ in the life of the Church. Though we may seem far afield from where this thesis began, this is the section of Chauvet’s thinking that gets down to brass tacks, as it were. With a solid foundation in Chauvet’s work, we can now circle back to our discussion on identity and how the sacraments effect identities in their celebration, identities which are both personal and communal, helping believers to discover a “recognition [that] evokes participation and allows an individual or a group to orient themselves, that is, to discover their identity and their place in their world.”

A major theme of Chauvet’s Part III, then, is an examination of “sacrament as ritual and embodiment... as a dialectic between the instituted and the instituting dimensions of sacrament.” That is, what has been left to the Church by Christ (a “scandal” in and of itself, according to Chauvet) helps one to know, corporeally and sacramentally, who he or she is at their core and “what it means to lead a Christian life.”

\[\text{Kubicki, “Recognizing,” 830.}\]
\[\text{Duffy, Symbol and Sacrament review, 551.}\]
\[\text{Chauvet, Symbol and Sacrament, 187.}\]
\[\text{Mudd, “Schillebeeckx and Chauvet,” 345.}\]
First, Chauvet doubles down and reminds his readers that sacraments are not “something Christians do, [but] rather enactments of who Christians are.”\(^{185}\) This understanding necessarily implies all of Chauvet’s definitions and reconceptions, including corporeality. This cannot be overstated, for “[t]he Church is not defined first by its institutions and its actions, but by the local gathering of the people of God.”\(^{186}\) The local assembly, gathered concretely as a ‘body of bodies’ is the living Church, the Body of Christ there present, and the people who comprise Christ’s Body are the “fulfillment of its existence.”\(^{187}\)

Chauvet proposes a ‘law of symbolic rupture’ to capture the dynamic that occurs whenever the Body gathers, defining it as “an event in which one is taken out of the ordinaries of life and into ‘the threshold of the sacred.’ This rupture creates ‘an empty space with regard to the immediate and utilitarian.’”\(^{188}\) It is ritual - words, actions, languages of many types and forms - “which help create this symbolic rupture.”\(^{189}\) In Chauvet’s estimation, symbolic rupture, achieved through ritual, “is necessary because it forces us to encounter God without being able to master God.”\(^{190}\) Indeed,

Chauvet’s view of the symbolic rupture creates a separate axis that can serve as a foundation... It presents a way of viewing ritual that rejects a useful/useless categorization – the purpose (if such a word could even be applied) of ritual is not how useful it is in either recapturing a perceived golden age of sacramental worship, or in perfectly encapsulating the idiosyncrasies of the cultural zeitgeist, but in its ability to create space

\(^{185}\) Ibid., 346.  
\(^{186}\) Niebauer, “Anglican Sacramentology,” 52.  
\(^{187}\) Ibid.  
\(^{188}\) Ibid., 62.  
\(^{189}\) Ibid.  
\(^{190}\) Ibid., 63.
within cultural cacophony to enable God to be known in his difference, as wholly Other.\(^{191}\)

We can see here in this selection a direct correlation and refutation of the binaries that we saw presented earlier in chapter one of this thesis: Bishop Barron’s understanding of the divide as those arguing fundamentally from a place of ‘right’ and wrong; Bernard Lonergan’s prescient view that there would be a ‘solid right’ and a ‘scattered left’; and van Beeck’s ‘pistics’ and ‘charismatics.’

So too do we see how Chauvet’s dense theology offers an answer to this polarization and bifurcation: through ritual. Since ritual is wholly other - and must be necessarily mediated through language, signs and symbols - it is the only way to enable the people, the Body of Christ, in their individual and corporate bodies, to encounter the God who is wholly Other, without controlling or mastering God, thus coming to know themselves individually and corporately (i.e. their identity) as they stand before that same God.

That last part is what Chauvet means by the ‘instituting quality’ of the sacrament: that liturgical action celebrating the sacraments finds its “dominant value...situated in the order of signification. Because that is the case, recognition rather than cognition is the primary dynamic. The purpose of symbolic activity...is not to provide information but integration that results from recognition.”\(^{192}\) In other words, ritual action helps people to see who they are and how they become one in their worshipping together, even as their recognition must necessarily

\(^{191}\) Ibid., 64.
\(^{192}\) Kubicki, “Recognizing,” 831.
happen as a body of gathered individuals. The celebration of the sacraments teaches us something, yes, but not necessarily didactically, concerning doctrine or dogma; rather, it teaches us about ourselves and how “to find [our] identity as members of the community and followers of Christ.”

Christ’s dream that ‘all might be one’ therefore can be found in himself, and in the celebration of his paschal mystery, “the entire drama of salvation.” Let us turn then to the preeminent celebration of Christ’s Pasch, the Easter Vigil of the Roman Rite, and see what it holds for us in light of Chauvet’s work.

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193 Ibid., 835.
Chapter 3 - On the ‘Threshold of the Sacred’

3.1 Liturgy as Both the Cause and the Solution

Identity politics in the Church are too often, as has been shown, fought out in the open in so-called ‘liturgy wars,’ and so it would be easy for one to assume that liturgy is the very problem that needs to be solved and perhaps even excised. But liturgy, as Chauvet reveals to us, is fundamental to our meaning-making and identity-making capabilities, and so this is not a viable way forward for the believer. Instead, the solution must be found by wading through our liturgical rituals (i.e. the privileged ways we have of mediating our communion with God), the very thing that seems to be tearing the Body of Christ apart.

Still, we should remember that Chauvet’s insistent claim is that the fundamental flaw in most sacramental thinking “is the belief that the sacraments are a medium through which one moves from lesser to greater certainty, a movement towards further and further intellectual purification of concepts.” No - instead, he reminds us that our liturgical celebrations are “not a matter of ‘ideas’ but of ‘bodies’ or, better, of corporeality,” and that the focus of our worship must be on someone, not something. This someone, of course, is the Trinity - three persons: Father, Son and Spirit - and the relationship they have with us, which is necessarily mediated through our liturgical worship.

van Beeck is helpful here. He writes

*The person of Jesus Christ alive in the Spirit is the source of Christian identity-experience as well as the Christian experience of openness to the*
world. This means that neither the profoundest traditional Christian liturgy, doctrine, or discipline nor the most urgent Christian cause can replace the living Christ who is “yesterday, today, and tomorrow,” as the Easter liturgy has it.\textsuperscript{197}

His claim is simple: it is Christ who ought to rule our hearts and our identities, not any particular case or cause, and not any particular vantage point. van Beeck uses the example of Jesus’ centrality in the gospels, “most obvious in the Resurrection appearances where it is unmistakably the person Jesus Christ, alive and present in the Spirit, who is revealed by the Father as the first-fruits of the new world - he and nobody else.”\textsuperscript{198} No thing and no one else has the role and the effect that Christ, risen from the dead, had.

Or has. Since Christ has ascended to the Father and sent the Spirit to those first apostles, we are still being taught by the Divine Teacher who we are and whose we are as members of his Body, and “[t]he liturgy is the powerful pedagogy where we learn to consent to the presence of the absence of God, who obliges us to give him a body in the world.”\textsuperscript{199} In our liturgy, as we have seen, “symbols mediate reality by negotiating connections…[and] the connections allow subjects both as members of a social group and as individuals to make sense of their world and to find their identity by discovering relationships.”\textsuperscript{200} This \textit{connective-oneness} is what the Church means by ‘communion’ and, as Chauvet and Lumbala state, “Communion with the living God as shown in Jesus Christ, the liturgy reminds us,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{197} van Beeck, \textit{Catholic Identity}, 57. (emphasis original)
\item \textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 59.
\item \textsuperscript{199} Duffy, \textit{Symbol and Sacrament} review, 551.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Kubicki, “Recognizing,” 829.
\end{itemize}
does not take place other than in the opacity of a body of history, of culture, of the world and of desire.”

That is, the liturgy can never be separated out from the messiness of human life and experience, the discussion of which began this paper. Circumstances and cultural forces must be reckoned with and wrestled, of course, but never for their own ends. Rather, the wrestling must be at the service of keeping the community’s eyes on our Trinitarian God, always. How often we forget this!

In his groundbreaking encyclical, Mediator Dei (1947), the first of its kind focused exclusively on the liturgy, Pope Pius XII wrote that

Along with the Church, therefore, her Divine Founder is present at every liturgical function... The sacred liturgy is, consequently, the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members.

Pius XII knew well that communion was at the heart of the Church’s liturgy: Christ as Head gathering the members of his Body, in worship of the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. What ought be clear is that communion in the liturgy cannot be separated out in the ways in which too many try to do that today, i.e. conservatives vs. progressives, us vs. them, etc. Indeed, as soon as there is a separation, true communion, as the Trinity is modeling for us, is lost. “The Church, therefore, must treasure the liturgy and keep it deeply alive, as the summit to which all ‘the Church’s activity is directed’ and “the fountain from which all her power flows.’

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201 Chauvet and Lumbala, Liturgy and the Body, ix.
202 Mediator Dei (Vatican City, November 20, 1947), #20.
Keeping the liturgy alive means, of course, keeping the Spirit of the liturgy alive -
[for] there lies the guarantee of the Church's identity.\textsuperscript{203}

My worry is that we have forgotten.

\section*{3.2 Spiritual Amnesia}

In the Church's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium}, promulgated in 1963 as the first of the documents produced at the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers wrote solemnly of the Church's very nature and, thus, its important ritual work accomplished throughout the Liturgical Year:

Holy Mother Church is conscious that she must celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse by devoutly recalling it on certain days throughout the course of the year. \textit{Every week, on the day which she has called the Lord's day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection, which she also celebrates once in the year, together with His blessed passion, in the most solemn festival of Easter.}

Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and \textit{the expectation of blessed hope and of the coming of the Lord.}

Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, \textit{so that these are in some way made present for all time}, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace.\textsuperscript{204}

Clearly those gathered in Rome thought it important to highlight the cyclical work of the Church, those repetitive liturgical seasons and holy days through which “unfolds the whole mystery of Christ” and which, at their core, serve to unite the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[203] van Beeck, \textit{Catholic Identity}, 65-66. NB: the author is also weaving in quotes here from the \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}, #1074.
\item[204] \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} (Vatican City, December 4, 1963), #102. Emphasis added.
\end{footnotes}
Body. What is perhaps less clear is what is meant by the phrase “keep memory of the Lord’s resurrection” and how the faithful accomplish that through “recalling.” How does the Body go about recalling in liturgical worship? And can a common recalling serve to unite a bifurcated Body?

A study of the role of how memory functions in the life of a Christian seems increasingly necessary these days. On May 3, 2017, the Washington Post published a blistering op-ed by the conservative commentator George F. Will entitled, “Trump Has a Dangerous Disability.” Will ripped the President’s inability to “think and speak clearly,” pointing to Trump’s comments which implied that the President had only recently discovered who Frederick Douglass was, and seemingly had no idea that Andrew Jackson – his predecessor and unlikely hero – had died some sixteen years before the Civil War started. (Trump’s objectionable remarks on the latter intimated that Jackson could have ‘cut a deal’ to avert what William Seward called the “irrepressible conflict” that engulfed the nation in the mid-nineteenth century.) In Will’s estimation, “the problem isn’t that [Trump, a Christian] does not know this or that, or that he does not know that he does not know this or that. Rather, the dangerous thing is that he does not know what it is to know something...He lacks what T.S. Eliot called a sense ‘not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.’”

The President is not alone. In his seminal work, Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory, Bruce Morrill relates his study of the work of Johann Baptist Metz, the

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German scholar of political theology. Metz, he writes, tells of a “pervasive forgetfulness in society...[that] people's capacities for remembering (in all the senses) are deteriorating, and the results are proving humanly catastrophic... [as] the means for producing short-term results (i.e., "science" or profit) become ends in themselves.”

With no long-term vision and no sense of the arc from which we have come, humanity is quickly - and literally - becoming desensitized, with few able to truly know ‘not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.’

The catastrophe Metz writes about has implications for all aspects of society, of course, but his writings stress the point that faith communities who fail to remember well, who do not exercise, expand, and dig deep into their corporate memory will fracture, shrivel up, and are at risk of living ethically questionable lives unconcerned about others, thus breaking down community and the communal identity that their purported faith seeks to build up and ingrain. Still others have commented on “the condition of so many Christians as having spiritual amnesia” and that Christians of Western countries and cultures “are suffering a peculiar weakness of concentration” in this area. And Chauvet argues that stressing any one side of his tripartite structure of Scripture, sacrament, and ethics is a short-sighted approach, akin to forgetting the basics. Indeed, in many ways

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and in many places Christians have failed to ‘keep memory.’ Perhaps they just do not know how to do it.

3.3 Memory as a Chauvetian Language: Anamnesis

I want to propose here that how Christians exercise their memory, what we call *anamnesis*, is a sort of common language in the broadest Chauvetian sense. There is a corporate quality to Christian anamnesis as language that needs more attention (and development) in the life of the Church, which I will work to unpack here.

There are several qualities to human memory that adhere to Chauvet’s theology that support this proposal. First, memory is corporeal, as it is experienced in a real body and a real mind, experienced in real time with real language and in the context of real culture. As such, memory in the body *speaks*. And it speaks a language that seeks *integration* that results from *recognition*. Second, since God has fashioned humans with the capacity for memory, God has in some ways appropriated our memories to mediate himself. Indeed, God is always and everywhere seeking to make God’s self known. Remembering, then, is the work we Christians do, both individually and corporately.

Each time we gather for liturgy, to celebrate, “the Church remembers, it re-appropriates its identity. *Anamnesis* is remembering: who we are (the Church, the body of Christ), particularly through our actions (those of liturgy and mission), our words (credal [sic] and sacramental), and our naming (we are Christian).”

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But mere memorial is not enough, at least not for Christians who gather. Instead, there is a special quality to the Christian’s memory. Indeed, the Christian community does not simply realize, remember, or recall, but *actualizes* memory together through ritual, discovering something new for that day and time, even if the words, actions and movement have been repeated for generations.210

To many outsiders, the Church seems obsessed with tradition, and “immersed in anachronism.”211 Perhaps this includes many inside the Church, as well. But “it is a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,”212 Lewis Carroll cleverly wrote. Indeed, Christian worship is not static, but rather dynamic, constantly with our eyes on the future - our eschatological end - and always keeping in mind from whence we have come. To remember, therefore, is to keep alive this very dynamic even as remembrance is often expressed in various ways: “as celebration, proclamation, encounter, transformation; for remembrance is never a merely passive or neutral mental process.”213

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210 I am reminded here of a repeated line of dialogue in the 2014 film *The Imitation Game*: “Sometimes it is the people no one imagines anything of who do the things that no one can imagine.” This line is repeated three separate times in the course of the film: first given to Alan Turing by a classmate to comfort him as he is being bullied. Ten years later, Alan in turn repeats it to his colleague Joan Clarke to encourage her in the face of gender discrimination. Finally, at the end of the film, a further ten years on, Joan gives the line back again to Alan, who is in a deep depression. These words, separated by decades, are actualized in three different circumstances and times, and yet not one syllable of them is changed. The words are given and received over and over, passed back and forth not wholly unlike Holy Communion, yet each time there is something new, which is also intimately and mysteriously tied up in the past. This is the idea behind anamnesis in the Christian tradition.


These various ways of expressing how we remember point to the fact that while remembrance is the quintessential quality of Christian worship it is not without its vagaries. It is seldom simple, but “remembrance is not too small a thing to admit of precise description; rather it can be inferred from the New Testament that remembrance is too large and flexible an aspect of the Christian faith to be defined.”214 In the act of remembering, memory “acts like a magnet that attracts to itself an odd assortment of associations that enrich it with many layers of meaning.”215 So while some assumptions can be made, anamnetic memory in worship is - at its heart - a mystery, and will defy any sort of rigid classification. Still, mystery ought not be impenetrable, and so we press on to discovery, next looking at ways of speaking the language of memory in the Easter Vigil service of the Roman Rite, what Saint Augustine called “the mother, as it were, of all holy vigils.”216 It is my contention that the Vigil, the “most characteristic and central liturgical service”217 of Christian worship and “for a long time the only feast celebrated by Christians,”218 brings together many ways of Christian memory-making/anamnesis. As the high-water mark for the liturgical practice of the faith, it can serve as an exemplar for how individual and collective memory can work in other liturgical gatherings in the Church’s tradition, and that this example

214 Ginn, The Present and the Past, 76.
217 Pfatteicher, Liturgical Spirituality, 71.

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might help communities recover from ‘spiritual amnesia’ and arrive at a common core identity that unifies the people through their mutual recognition.

3.4 ‘Speaking the Corporeal Language’ of Memory in the Easter Vigil

I have chosen to look at the Easter Vigil because, in some ways, this ritual is the ultimate example of ‘symbolic rupture,’ to use Chauvet’s terminology, as it forces us to encounter God and God’s actions writ large without any hope of mastering God.

Indeed, “this is the night”, the Exsultet repeatedly and joyously claims\textsuperscript{219} at the outset, when “God delivers the children of Israel, when Christ rises from the tomb, when heaven and earth are joined. All the events of sacred history become contemporary with us and we with them as separation in chronological time is overcome.”\textsuperscript{220} In this service of symbolic rupture, this high-water mark and ‘moment of eternity’ in which the faithful come to know God as the wholly Other who breaks down all preconceived categories through the defeat of death itself, the Christian at worship can participate in three distinct ways of speaking the language of memory, here associated with three aspects of the liturgical celebration:

1. ‘Holding Memory’ in the expansive Liturgy of the Word.
2. ‘Sharing Memory’ in the public Rites of Initiation.
3. ‘Futuring Memory’ in the summit of the Eucharistic anaphora.

Let us take each of these ways in turn.

\textsuperscript{220} Pfatteicher, Liturgical Spirituality, 79- 80.
3.4.1  ‘Holding Memory’ in the expansive Liturgy of the Word

Following the lighting of the new fire and the singing of the Exsultet, the community that has gathered to hold vigil sits in darkness “and listens to the great deeds which God did for their fathers.” This is the next moment of the Vigil liturgy in which the people gathered enter into communion with God, “by discovering God’s presence in memory. This is the lesson of the scriptures.” For the most part a sequential telling of historical events, the scriptures used in this expansive Liturgy of the Word (seven Old Testament readings are included in the current Missal, in addition to an epistle and a Gospel narrative) are not simply read, but proclaimed, with each followed by a thematic collect that calls to mind the story just revealed. In this model, the events related become “the story of humanity’s encounter with God.”

The Liturgy of the Word at the Easter Vigil is thus the example par excellence wherein the Christian remembers that it is God who so often has taken the initiative with us. In other words, in the scriptures we hear, we have the opportunity to remember that throughout history, and right to the present day, God has remembered us. If the basis of our worship is the relationship between us and God, then it is precisely this give and take, this two-way exercise of memory that is further developed and deepened when we gather for liturgy. (This ‘give and

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223 The Third Edition of the Roman Missal, #20, 364.
take’ is the basis for what Chauvet means when he uses the phrase ‘symbolic exchange’: having received a gratuitous gift from God [i.e. grace], one must then in turn give it away to others.) The Easter Vigil’s Liturgy of the Word, in its expansive form, is an aid in helping us, then, to remember and hold onto the God who has first remembered *us* - not just me or my preferred crowd - for we “come to know God, not only from our own experiences, but also from the corporate experiences of our ancestors in the faith.”\(^{225}\) (It can be noted here, too, that the individual collects that following each reading are *our* speaking back in thanks and praise, further ritualizing the give and take.)

In his study of Holy Week, Phillip Goddard highlights the readings that have been used historically and that can be found in eleven lectionaries of the tradition celebrated in various localities from the 4th to the 20th century (e.g. Gregorian; Old Gelasian; Gallican; Mozarabic, etc.). Without the space or inclination to delve into a full comparison of these texts, it is enough to point out here that in the lectionaries Goddard presents, two scripture readings are found across all: Genesis 1, (the so-called ‘first’ Creation narrative) and Exodus 14-15 (the crossing of the Red Sea and the subsequent movement of the Israelites into the wilderness).\(^{226}\) It is perhaps clear, then, that we ought consider these two narratives as foundational texts and themes to our relationship with God, and thus our common identity as Christian people: God creates a world for us, and God liberates us from the bonds of slavery that have come to define too much of that world. Throughout time and

\(^{226}\) Goddard, *Festa Paschalia*, 248.
space, these two memorable ‘lessons’ have come to mean perhaps different things as the context of each successive generation has changed, but the fundamental reality they signify remains constant: God does not forget God’s covenantal people, chosen and provided for, from the beginning of time. This is who we are.

In any Liturgy of the Word, “we do not simply review what God has done in the past. As the ritual erases the separation of time and space, what is described in the readings becomes contemporary, and a personal experience.” The sacred texts that we hear proclaimed at the Easter Vigil, from the story of Creation to the glory of the Resurrection of Christ, tell “the story of the personal relationship which God initiated with God’s people. It is a moving love story - a love, threatened by the infidelity of one of the partners and saved by the fidelity of the other, - faithful until death.” This is not a quaint history we hear, disconnected from us, but rather a living tradition, one that lives inside of us, and that we can hold, tenderly and surely, by re-remembering the God who remembers us. Our common humanity is proclaimed to us, held up as a mirror, almost, in which we see ourselves, and we cannot help but see one another in the reflection.

It should be noted here that too often the Liturgy of the Word at the Easter Vigil is “treated like a stepmother; in the consciousness of priests and communities it is often obscured by the glow of the Exsultet and the splendor of baptism and the Eucharist.” Many, for dubious ‘pastoral reasons’, simply excise many of the readings. But if the Scripture section of Chauvet’s tripartite structure of symbolic

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228 Koster, “Recovering Collective Memory”, 33.
229 Berger, “Content and Form of the Easter Vigil”, 39.
exchange leads to cognition, i.e. understanding of who and whose we are, this is a short-sighted choice. Indeed, without the opportunity to first hold well the foundational, common memory revealed in this lengthy section of the Vigil, it will be impossible to move into the next way to speak the language of memory: by sharing it.

3.4.2 ‘Sharing Memory’ in the Public Rites of Initiation

Following the Liturgy of the Word, the Easter Vigil moves into a celebration of the Baptismal Liturgy and Rites of Initiation, bringing into the community those catechumens and elect who have been prepared for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and first communion. In a unique way, “the Easter Vigil compresses the whole of the ancient baptismal preparation into one night. As the lessons are read [i.e. the Scriptures], the congregation again becomes catechumens listening, learning, being shaped in mind and heart, encouraged to probe motives, to test commitment, to increase understanding, to change their lives.” This is key to this way of speaking the language of memory: the context of sharing is the community itself.

What ought go without saying is that all Christian liturgical celebration helps “worshipers discover themselves as members of a community who receive the meaning of their lives from the Father’s love.” There is no such thing as a solitary Christian; rather, when gathered as a community in liturgy, each person, as celebrant, “support[s] one another in a faithfulness that can be lived through the

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231 Pfatteicher, Liturgical Spirituality, 92.
232 Hall, We Have the Mind of Christ, 110.
whole of their lives.” Indeed, we “can only know who we are if we remember to whom we are related:” first to the God “who won’t let go” (as revealed in an expansive way in the Liturgy of Word previously discussed) and to the very persons with whom we stand shoulder to shoulder. We remember in the celebration of these rites of initiation the relatedness we share with one another as beloved children, remembered by God.

The rites of initiation celebrated at the Easter Vigil serve therefore to widen the circle of people with whom we stand. These newest members of the community are gathered into the language-of-memory fold through baptism, and in their reception new memories are thus created and then added, helping to form the community’s collective memory. The ‘old’ members of the community, those whose baptisms were celebrated perhaps decades ago, renew their baptismal promises, sharing with the newly baptized their memory of and belief in the God who first “remembers us as those known by name and claimed as part of God’s own people, called to honour [sic] and serve the divine will and purpose.” (This renewal of baptismal promises, though included in the Rite of Baptism celebrated throughout the year, is in that rite reserved for the parents and godparents, for reasons surpassing understanding.) It is only during the Easter Vigil that the

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233 Ibid.
234 Atkins, Memory and Liturgy, xii.
237 Atkins, Memory and Liturgy, 53.
community as a whole has the opportunity to be in touch with the memory of their own baptism through this renewal (though a pastoral minister worth his or her salt would include the gathered assembly in the profession of faith and, therefore, of memory.)

What is clear here is that “without opportunities to be in touch with the fact of our baptism, the memory of who we are [as Christians gathered] will fade away, only to be recalled in some crisis or in a fresh experience of the grace of God. Our memories need ongoing prompting for us to hold fast to the actions of God on our behalf.” Being a witness to, and an active participant in, this welcoming rite of the Church at the Easter Vigil is one of the foundational ways in which this is accomplished and Christian memory (and therefore identity) is driven forward: the ‘promises remembered’ in the Liturgy of the Word (i.e. the reason for our hope), are now transformed into an active ‘promise to remember’, (i.e. our hope must be shared). This movement propels us to the next way to speak the language of memory, wherein we remember with longing a future full of hope in the gift of the Eucharist.

3.4.3  ‘Futuring Memory’ in the summit of the Eucharistic anaphora

Perhaps it would be good to state plainly and simply the Christian notion of time here: in short, past, present, and future are melded together in the process of anamnesis. Thus we can speak the language of memory even as it concerns the future: our eschatological end as accomplished through the sacrificial self-gift of

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239 Atkins, Memory and Liturgy, 52.
God in Christ. Eucharistic anamnesis is perhaps the most familiar understanding of memory-making to the reader. Still, an overview, and a word about its unique character during the Easter Vigil, are worth spending some time on here.

Morrill is helpful here, providing a broad overview:

When Christians perform remembrances of Jesus they do so with the desire of knowing Christ more deeply and thereby being empowered to imitate him in word and deed. In the case of the Eucharistic Prayer, the remembrance of Jesus leads into the petition for the Holy Spirit to sanctify both the gifts and the community [the epiclesis]. This, in turn, elicits further intercessions for the salvation of various members of the Church and, ultimately, the whole world. Thus, within the offering of the anaphora itself the community undertakes its vocation of service to the world in the image of Christ; it intercedes for the living and the dead and concludes by raising all up to God in doxological acclamation [, Through Him, with Him, in Him...].

In giving thanks and praise, we recall and remind God what God has done in the rich Preface prayers to which we can only respond in jubilant admiration – Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of thy glory! Hosanna in the highest! In this prayer and the response – this ritual moment – we remember that we are bound to God, and that God is bound to us, and as we repeat these words and actions over and over, week after week, we are formed and oriented - consecrated, even - into the living Eucharist ourselves. God’s saving action happened once, for all, and for all time. But “the reality it initiates and signifies, however, is neither past nor contingent, but ever-present in God, and through faith to us, at every moment of our lives.”

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240 Morrill, Anamnesis As Dangerous Memory, 206.
Additionally, the epiclesis - the invocation of the Holy Spirit - is a memorial event in and of itself, for it serves to confirm what God has already done and is doing: making all things holy in God's self, not least of all through the saving action of the Son, for this is the source of our hope and the reason for our praise in any liturgy. Christ and his salvific act must be actively applied to the present, every second of every day so that the mystery of Christ's life becomes the mystery of our own lives. Here we can see the third part of Chauvet's structure: namely that the movement to ethics in the tripod implies action. For if we are formed into the living Eucharist ourselves, then we are being called upon to be Christ in the world, to act as Christ himself acted. As the eminent Jesuit liturgical theologian Robert Taft writes, “this is what we do in liturgy. We make anamnesis, memorial, of this dynamic saving power in our lives, to make it penetrate ever more into the depths of our being, for the building up of the Body of Christ.”

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, therefore, the gathered community remembers into the future, and the fullness of this way of speaking the language of memory is based on what has directly preceded it in the ritual: having remembered that the God who creates and engages us (heard and experienced in the expansive Liturgy of the Word, i.e. ‘holding memory’) in our relatedness (seen vividly in the celebration of the Rites of Initiation, i.e. ‘sharing memory’), the gathered community is now invited into a moment of eschatological fulfillment, what I am calling ‘futuring memory.’ It is only with trust in the Savior’s sacrificial

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242 Ibid, 18.
and efficacious self-offering (especially highlighted at the Vigil service on the night of his Resurrection and defeat of death) that we are able to place our future hope on the eucharistic table alongside the elements of bread and wine and can take seriously the invitation of the presider, in the name of Christ: ‘Take this all of you’, where ‘all’ necessarily includes one’s past, present, and future and that of our neighbors standing beside us in the pew, united in our common language of memory. Our future is part of what we offer to God and to one another, even as we can trust wholly in the promise of God and our neighbor.

Here is the source and summit of our faith, and to which all our language of memory is building: hope and trust for a tomorrow we can taste even today because of the memory of a yesterday spent in the care of a God who continually creates and saves. “We recall the presence of Christ for this moment of time, while also recognizing that Jesus is part of history and that his presence now foreshadows the coming again of Christ in future glory.”243 This is the eschatological fullness of the sacrament: a shared expectation and hope that should serve to unite us so that we may have a little taste of heaven here on earth and one’s understanding of this mystery - though practiced even daily by some - is perhaps best understood and revealed only at the Easter Vigil, where the many ways of speaking the language of memory are on display and activated, helping us to recognize, give thanks, and act within our common identity. ‘This is the night;’ indeed, this is our night.

243 Atkins, Memory and Liturgy, xi.
The ‘promises remembered’ in the Liturgy of the Word (i.e. the reason for our hope and our locus of recognition), which were transformed into an active ‘promise to remember’ in the Rites of Initiation (i.e. our hope must be shared, and for this we must give thanks), are now ‘remembered promises’ to be lived out in this world and in the next through the gift of the Eucharist and the gift of faith (i.e. our hope, which is assured, must be part of the ethical offering of our lives, even daily, to God and to one another.) The divine command, ‘Do this in memory of me’, “was at once the igniting spark of the memory power of the Church, and also its content.”

At the conclusion of the vigil, having taken the opportunity to speak well the language of memory, even into the future, the gathered community disperses once more, sent back into the dark to be the Body of Christ in the world, to be disciples ‘in his memory,’ and to live into the reality of Christ’s dream: ‘that all might be one.’

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Koster, “Recovering Collective Memory”, 33.
Conclusion: The Paschal Candle: Indictment or Celebration?

By way of concluding remarks, I want to circle back to the story with which I began this thesis: the student carrying the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil who rolled his eyes at the mention of Pope St. John XXIII. I was so disheartened then by his action, which brought to light this thesis and my own understanding of the disunity that plagues us. But when I step back and look again upon that scene, I try not to focus in on the rolling of the eyes, but rather the Paschal Candle which he held. You see, the Paschal Candle, “treated ritually as if it were Christ” in the Easter Vigil service, “almost indistinguishable from what it represents, Jesus Christ” should serve as a tangible reminder of the high-water mark of anamnesis accomplished at the Vigil, a symbol for the united community of the many ways of speaking memory outlined above that are engaged in the ritual. The candle's prominent place in the sanctuary during the Easter Season, and its ubiquitous presence for other sacramental moments of importance in the life of the gathered assembly (such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals), further speaks to its symbolic value. However, it can also serve as a tangible indictment of a community that suffers from spiritual amnesia, and that has forgotten who they are and whose they are. Indeed, it can be an indictment of a community that has forgotten how to speak the language of memory.

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245 Pfatteicher, Liturgical Spirituality, 85.
246 Ibid., 86.
247 The Third Edition of the Roman Missal, #70, 386.
If a Christian community is not united, but rather bifurcated, it could be said to be ineffectively preaching the coming kingdom of Christ. It could be a community of modern-day Corinthians, of which Paul could rightly charge, “It is not the Lord’s Supper you eat.”\(^{248}\) Indeed, we know these communities exist, where the “[l]iturgical memorial of Christ’s saving deeds might be sincerely but wrongly celebrated,”\(^{249}\) where the community has been divided into neat, manageable, homophilic parts instead of gathered as the mess we are, and led into speaking the language of common and corporeal memory.

Yet all need not be lost. What I have hoped to show in this paper is that the ways of speaking memory available to us in the Great Vigil of Easter are exemplars for what we ought strive for in our everyday liturgies; indeed, in our everyday lives. Speaking the language of memory in the Christian tradition is a year-round communal process and invitation, which cannot be reserved for the Easter Vigil alone, or just on Sundays, or solely for individuals. Rather, the Vigil “is the model for everything else we do in worship. It is, to put it quite simply, the service. It is a concentration in one service of what Christian worship does throughout the year.”\(^{250}\)

Or, at least, it should be. But “if a congregation fails to look beyond itself, then the process of remembrance is stifled. The central act of worship of the majority of denominations has at its center the anamnesis clause, with its implication ‘Live as I

\(^{248}\) 1 Corinthians 11:20
\(^{249}\) Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ*, 111.
\(^{250}\) Pfatteicher, *Liturgical Spirituality*, 104.
have lived.’ If a congregation is inward-looking rather than outward-looking, it is impossible to live as Jesus Christ lived.”

Still, “if the corporate memory is not constantly applied and adapted to the new context, the society can be frozen in the past.” This would be to settle for nostalgia, which “does not entail the exercise of memory at all, since the past it idealizes stands outside time, frozen in unchanging perfection.” But the language of memory as I have described it above is different. “Memory too may idealize the past, but not in order to condemn the present. It draws hope and comfort from the past in order to enrich the present and to face what comes with good cheer. It sees past, present, and future as continuous.” We are invited to participate in memorial acts by holding, sharing, and ‘futuring’ our memories, not just once a year, or even once a week, but always, and with all people.

If the community can do this, then the Paschal Candle, that rich symbol from the Easter Vigil and a potent reminder of the power of remembrance, need not be an indictment, but can serve instead as a ‘really-real’ symbol of a united community that is not afraid of the future, but is filled with hope as, together, they walk into it.

At the end of this thesis, however, I should also acknowledge that the Easter Vigil cannot be expected to solve all the problems that exist in a bifurcated parish. Indeed, the liturgy is not the only way (for some maybe not even the primary way)

252 Atkins, *Memory and Liturgy*, 76.
253 Ibid.
254 Ibid.
that a person might interact with their parish community and their fellow
parishioners. Still, perhaps it is enough to say that if the Easter Vigil is the liturgy
par excellence, as has been stated, then it surely has something to teach us about
how we might be together in all other areas in the life of a community. Indeed,
what we do at the Vigil - speaking the language of memory - could serve as a sort
of pastoral plan for all aspects of a community’s life, and could be usefully applied
to all of a parish’s ministries. I am reminded of the late Bishop Ken Untener of
Saginaw, Michigan who decreed in 1991 that all meetings in the diocese - at the
parish or diocesan level, no matter what their purpose - had to begin with the
following agenda item: How shall what we are doing here affect or involve the
poor?\

A similar challenge could be posed to parishes then, utilizing the tri-partite
structure I have outlined: How does this ministry - the RCIA, the parish chapter of
St. Vincent de Paul, the religious education program for children, etc. - help us to
hold the memory of who we are? How does a particular ministry, or a particular
plan of action within a ministry, help us to share the memory of whose we are,
together? And how do ministries in particular and as a whole contribute to a
shared futuring of memory, where we are living together always with our eyes on
the promised tomorrow?

This is, perhaps, a bit esoteric, but it could be enough for a parish council or
a pastor to hold onto and to develop a pastoral plan always with this basic question

Untener mused on his diocesan challenge in a piece entitled “How Should We Think About the
in mind: *How is the parish ‘speaking the language of memory’ together, not just on the one night of the Easter Vigil, but in and out, every day?* If Eucharist is the ‘source and summit,’ and the Easter Vigil is the liturgy *par excellence*, then what we celebrate on that holy night necessarily flows down into the rest of our experience, even daily. What it requires, though, is some intentionality on our part, that we wrestle with what the liturgy does, and what it draws out of us.
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