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For many years, the Roman Catholic Church has used the term ‘transubstantiation’ to express the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Of late, however, although proposed replacements have not found favour, the term itself no longer has the place and setting it once had, and debates about transubstantiation have died down. This book is written in the belief that reflection upon the matter is indispensable. It submits that transubstantiation and its proposed replacements are fundamentally similar in their confusions – they divorce appearance from reality because they fail to do justice to the Eucharist as a rite. The changes in Roman Catholic worship have sharpened the need for an account that will do justice to this, and the book is an attempt to provide one. It is also an endeavour to discuss problems which affect all Christians.

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IN BREAKING
OF BREAD

The Eucharist and ritual

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*To my mother ; and to
the memory of my father*

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*Natis in usum laetitiae scyphis
pugnare, Thracum est –*

Wine-cups were made for joy;
only barbarians use them as weapons.
Horace, *Odes* i. 27

Ἦσαν δέ τινες Ἕλληνας ἐκ τῶν
ἀναβαινόντων ἵνα προσκυνήσωσιν
ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ

Now there were certain Greeks among
those that went up to worship at the feast.
John xii 20

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Preface

Years ago, back in the seventies, I wrote a book on the eucharistic presence. In it I expressed my dissatisfaction with the account associated with transubstantiation, and my belief that recent attempts at other accounts had not succeeded. The book was given a friendly turn-down by a publisher, on the grounds that its theme was too much tied to Roman Catholicism to interest Christians of other traditions, while the Church of Rome itself would regard its contents as offensively heterodox. The verdict did not surprise me, the typescript went into honourable retirement on the upper shelf, and I turned my attention to other matters. But I was wrong to think myself rid of the topic. In the eighties, Stephen Sykes (now bishop of Ely) was editing a volume on sacrifice. The contributors were for the most part colleagues of his in the Department of Theology at Durham, but he asked me too for an essay, on eucharistic sacrifice in the middle ages, and I accepted the invitation. The topic – to my surprise – turned out to be rather a snakes-in-Ireland business, but I learned a good deal in the process, not least about the setting of the Eucharist. And then the Cambridge University Press, which was publishing the volume, expressed interest in publishing my book. And so it was that I set out upon a lengthy journey. The length was due in part to matters wholly alien to the life of the mind – administrative offices that were as uncongenial as they had been unsought. It was due in part to the need to complete other pieces of writing on which I had embarked. But it was due most of all to the need for a radical refashioning and extension of what I had written. What I offer the reader now is another book.

What it offers – and what it does not offer – I have tried to hint at in the two mottoes prefixed to it: one from Horace, the other from St John's Gospel. Horace remonstrates with some friends who were turning an occasion for fellowship and happiness into a brawl.

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Preface

Disagreement about the Eucharist is only one of the many disagreements among Roman Catholics today. That disagreement should touch the Eucharist is natural enough – it is meant to be a sign of unity among those who celebrate it, and sign and signified go together. But I shall be submitting that disagreements here point to the widespread unease there is in the Roman Church, an unease which has many causes and shews itself in many ways; and that not only do eucharistic disagreements point to this unease, they indicate the morals to be drawn from it, and ways in which it might be mended. But if Horace provides me with a motto for the task I have undertaken, the Fourth Gospel has given me a text which shews something of how I have undertaken it. The verse I cite refers to Greeks who had come up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast, and I understand from the commentators that these for St John are not Greek-speaking Jews but ‘God-fearers’, people outside the law like other pagans, but seekers after the true God. I do not think it is pretentious to take the text as describing my own undertaking, because I know that many others would see themselves described there as well. I have come up, as they have, to Jerusalem to worship – I take part in the Eucharist that is done in memory of Him, and I join in its unique thanksgiving for the redemption He came to bring. But I am, as they are, ‘a Greek’: I inherit a tradition of debate and enquiry that goes back to Athens, not to Jerusalem. These pages are a contribution from outside to the various theological debates that will be met in them. I neither am nor wish to be regarded as a theologian, and this observation is not a personal quirk, it touches the course that the book will take.

I have come to see, in the reflexions which have led me to the new book, that debates about the Eucharist point to themes that go far beyond what is eucharistic. Or – and this is better – because the Eucharist is what it is, disagreements here in speculation and in practice are bound up with what human beings are and with what they seek to be. In the first two chapters, I give an exposition and critique of older and newer accounts, finding fault with them both for much the same reasons. But the reasons touch topics like human knowledge, the relationship between present and past for us, and the language which we inherit and develop – and so in the third chapter I am obliged to think on these things. And thinking on them demands in its turn that I take the thoughts further. Knowledge, time and language are bound up here with a tradition which is valued and to

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which those who are disagreeing all claim to belong. The tensions and differences which have arisen about the Eucharist are examples of what can arise and does arise in any temporally extended activity, where past and present both matter. My disagreement with older and newer accounts turns out to be a disagreement with a style of thought that appears in many places: in particular, a style that appears in eucharistic speculation and practice, and in the life of the Church.

I have given various names to the style, and just what is bound up with it the book itself must shew; here and now I give one of the words, which is *insulation*. I claim to detect, in what is written of Eucharist and of Church alike, a propensity to isolate and to fence off what is most precious. The propensity is understandable, and it leads to what seems comfortingly definite; in my submission, the definiteness and the comfort alike are deceptive, and the propensity must be resisted. When I turn in the fourth chapter to distinguish between signs and disguises, and make the former into the path towards the Eucharist, not the latter, I claim to see a confusion made between the two by older and more recent accounts alike; and I claim that old and new fail to take the eucharistic ritual on its own terms: I claim that ritual must not be reduced to what is in another category.

The fifth chapter is in consequence devoted to what I have called 'The Way of Ritual', an approach to the Eucharist that I see as respecting the irreducibility of ritual to anything else. But I have already disabled myself for offering any account that can compete with those I have rejected, if to compete means to offer anything as definite. My rejection of insulation, whether in eucharistic theology old and new, or in the relations between present and past, or in the nature of language, condemns me – and condemns readers who agree with me – to a posture that is awkward. Once more, the awkwardness will appear as the book goes on, but the phrase 'The Way of Ritual' points to where the awkwardness lies and points to the nature of the whole book. Ritual is of its nature incomplete: it resists translation without remainder into language, it both builds on and surpasses that which it puts to ritual use, it has links with what has gone before and with what is still to come. It is a way, a journey, and the book is meant to be one as well; but the journey is one where each stage calls for the others. My dissent from older and newer accounts leads to reflexion on time and on language; but those themes were already present in the first two chapters, as was the

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theme of insulation, and the confusion between signs and disguises. Just so, the Way of Ritual I put forward, while it does not possess the apparent definiteness of what I oppose, does have consequences for time and language in religious belief, and for the need to accept what I have called an uncomfortable posture. And so it is that the sixth and final chapter draws out these consequences for the setting of the eucharistic celebration: the Church, of whose unity in Christ the Eucharist is the sign. Present and past, the tensions between them and the attempts to ease the tensions; language and its temporal spread; the place of language in worship and the place of worship in the Church, and the place of the Church in the wide world – all our themes come together, as our journey comes to its end.

Which means that the book needs to be read as a whole, whether or not the whole proves more persuasive than the parts which make it up. The bibliography is already too long, but it would be very much longer if I were to include all the material I have examined. As it is, some readers will regret the absence of this or that theme – for instance, there is little about oecumenical matters, and nothing about the celebration of the Eucharist in Christian traditions other than that to which I belong (I am a Roman Catholic priest). Conclusions can, I think, be drawn from many things I have written, but I have deliberately refrained from drawing them, just as I have deliberately held back from entering into many topics that invited entry. I have tried to give, if I may take up the phrase again, a perspicuous concreteness to what I have written, concentrating upon specific matters and endeavouring to draw from them morals just as specific. If there be any methodological lesson that writing the book has taught me, it is not to say what must be the case, but look and see. The wisdom of Wittgenstein's command (cf. *Philosophical Investigations* §66) is matched by the extreme difficulty of obeying it: I have tried, but I dare say I shall be seen to have tried at times in vain.

The etymology of 'Eucharist' connotes the giving of thanks, and here it is not only meet and right but a pleasure so to do. I know that my family and friends will be glad to see me released and restored to human society: I also know that their gladness is as nothing compared with my own. The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press have shewn me a confidence and a patience for which I am most grateful, and I give here a special word of thanks to Alex Wright at the Press – the completion of the book is due as much to *mon raseur sympathique*

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as it is to myself. Many people have over the years discussed topics of the book with me. I mention Professor Eric Mascall and Fr Herbert McCabe, O.P., with whom I exchanged views in *New Blackfriars* when writing the earlier version; and I was both touched and grateful in 1987 when Fr McCabe gave a place to my side of the exchange in *God Matters*, a collection of his own writings. Their two names I give, because our discussions were printed, but after some deliberation I have decided to limit myself to a general acknowledgment to the many others. Some of them were in agreement, but others were not, and I do not wish to mention names in a setting where some of those named might not wish to find themselves. I assure them all that I much value the trouble they took, and that – whatever be thought of the result – I pondered their comments.

The book called for the obtaining a wide range of material, and I was given much help in my search for it. Most of the texts by Schillebeeckx that I translate and discuss come from his book on the eucharistic presence (Schillebeeckx 1967 (1968)). The Dutch original, *Christus' tegenwoordigheid in de Eucharistie*, is published by H. Nelissen of Bilthoven, and here I am obliged to Mr Dick Boer for his helpful kindness. Mr Thomas Downie supplied me with a variety of cuttings and other printed matter. The Librarian of the University of Nijmegen provided microfilms of articles not otherwise obtainable. And, inevitably but with a feeling of personal gratitude for willing help, I extend my thanks to five libraries in England: to the British Library obviously, and I am grateful in particular for the trouble taken there in photocopying or microfilming materials I needed; to the library of Heythrop College London, where the wealth of periodicals was of special value; to the Warburg Institute, the range of whose holdings is an education in itself, and to which I am indebted for – among many other things – a much needed inter-library loan; to the University Library at Durham, both for material and for the help so readily given over the years; and – last of all and most of all – to the library of Ushaw College, Durham, and to its Librarian, the Revd Michael Sharratt: without the facilities there, the book would have been neither begun nor ended.

I was glad to receive assistance from among my students in the Department of Philosophy. Miss Sabine Scharnagl checked some of my translations from the German, and Miss Tineke van Putten and Miss Maaïke Liebert checked some of my translations from the Dutch. But none saw all my versions, and any readers who can

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improve what I have provided will be thanked in (any) future editions. Miss Sharon Elizabeth Ney generously undertook the word-processing of collateral writings, and bravely undertook the initiation of myself into the mysteries of that art. To all four, my grateful thanks. I add something that indeed I hope does not need adding. I have preferred to work whenever possible from original texts and to make my own translations. This is a personal choice, it is no reflexion upon the worth of what translations I have seen; their worth is real, and I have profited by those I have read. In some cases, the original could not be obtained – I have been glad then to use a translation, and have made an acknowledgment at the appropriate point.

The preparation of the book spanned that great turning-point in civilisation, the transition from typewriting to word-processing. On both sides of the divide I was given good help. Mrs P. A. Dryden undertook much of the work involved in the first drafts; for work later on I am indebted to Mrs C. Dowson, Mrs E. Soley, and (as at other times) to Mrs H. Coppen. Then, for the word-processing of the final drafts, I am glad to express my appreciation of Computerised Document Preparation Services (CDPS, 79 Broadmeadows, Sunderland). Mrs K. I'Anson had to work from material that was both complex and recondite; time and again, she proved better than I at seeing what I had written or even what I ought to have written.

On this occasion as on so many other occasions, Mrs C. M. L. Smith gave generous help – in the obtaining of photocopied material, in the typing of earlier drafts and of collateral work, and above all in the monumental task of preparing the index. I express to her my deep appreciation. I also express my gratitude to her, and to Sister Mary Francis of the Convent of Mercy, Sunderland, and to Miss Angela McAllister for reading the proofs, so patiently and so inexorably.

I hope it is in order to end this giving of thanks with an acknowledgment to two groups. The first group is made up of the numerous authors – popes, theologians, fathers, councils, Thomas Aquinas and all the rest of it – who appear in the pages ahead. They tend to appear when I disagree with them, for such is the way of books. But let us not forget what is the way of disagreement. As a philosopher of our time has reminded us, profitable disagreement calls for a background of massive agreement among those who are disagreeing. (I can differ from Snooks about the strengths and weaknesses of Eden, because Snooks and I share beliefs about the course of history in this century; the disagreement collapses if Snooks

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turns out to associate the word only with a garden in the Old Testament.) ‘We know in part and we prophesy in part’ is a quotation that occurs more than once in the book, and I acknowledge that the phrase applies to arguing as well. That I disagree does not mean that I have not learned in the process; nor does it mean that there is nothing to these authors except what has provoked my disagreements.

The second group I thank comes to my mind because of what the book is and how it has come to be. Its composition has called for a survey and critique of a wide range of specialised material; but I like to think – and indeed I have reasons for thinking – that the result is not some professional speculation remote from the common concerns of those who think. I hope it interests theologians, for I suspect that at times they are hard up for things to interest them; but I should be sorry if it interested nobody else. And that is why I express my thanks to this second group, which is simply all those with whom over the years – nearly forty of them now! – I have celebrated the mysteries. For that is where all reflexion here must start, and that is where all reflexion here needs to return, if there is to be any life in the thoughts we have. Be it said in favour of what follows that it admits as much.

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Abbreviations

(Where needed, fuller details are available in the References)

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
AG	Abbott, W. M. and Gallagher, J. (eds.), <i>The Documents of Vatican II</i>
ARCIC	Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission
ASS	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i>
DD	<i>De defectibus</i> : section in Missal on defects
DS	Denzinger, H. and Schönmetzer, A., <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i>
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i>
ET	English translation
F	Flannery, A. (ed.), <i>Vatican Council II: the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents</i>
H	Jedin, H., <i>Geschichte des Konzils von Trient</i>
J	Jorissen, H., <i>Die Entstehung der Transsubstantiationslehre bis zum Beginn der Hochscholastik</i>
MG	Migne, J. P. (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: series Graeca</i>
ML	Migne, J. P. (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: series Latina</i>
RCM	<i>Ritus celebrandi missam</i> : section in Missal on rite of celebration
RG	<i>Rubricae generales</i> : section in Missal on general rubrics
SM	<i>Sacramentum mundi: an encyclopedia of theology</i>
ST	Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>
SzT	Rahner, K., <i>Schriften zur Theologie</i> (collected writings)
TI	Rahner, K., <i>Theological Investigations</i> (translation of the above)
W	Wohlmuth, J., <i>Realpräsenz und Transsubstantiation im Konzil von Trient</i>
ZkT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>

Methods of citation

All citations are listed in the References, and I give them by author and year of publication. I attempt to mitigate the oddities of this method ('Aquinas 1935' and the like) by what I write in the text. Whenever I could find the original, I have made my own translation from that – I renew here the thanks, already expressed in the Preface, to the librarians who made access possible. In one or two cases the original was not to be had, and I acknowledge at such points the translation I have used. I have tried to give references, whenever I could, in a way that is in some measure independent of the edition or translation available to the reader – for example, my references to Jungmann's work on the Mass apply to the English version as well. Some items by Rahner I found reprinted in his collected *Schriften zur Theologie*; I have added when I could the corresponding reference to the English translation of the collection, *Theological Investigations*. Readers might care to note that the numeration of the volumes in the two series diverges for some reason after a while; and that the items are in some cases revised versions of what Rahner originally wrote. I add when I can the date of first appearance. Some of my own early items in the References bear an asterisk. This means that they originally appeared under the pseudonym 'G. Egner'. For Egner's origin, achievements and eventual demise, see FitzPatrick 1987c. References to patristic and early medieval authors I give by title, book and the rest; and I add the location in Migne's Latin or Greek series: ML or MG, preceded by volume number and followed by column number.

Two kinds of reference call for separate treatment, those to ecclesiastical documents and those to Aquinas.

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*Methods of citation**References to ecclesiastical documents*

The official source for documents from Rome is the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* or ‘*Acta*’, which continues the *Acta Sanctae Sedis* begun in the pontificate of Pius IX. Whenever possible, I have translated texts from this and given references by volume and page number. A standard anthology of ecclesiastical documents is Denzinger and Schönmetzer 1963 (DS) which replaced Denzinger and Umberg, itself the last of a long line of new editions of a work going back to the last century. DS is very helpful, but it needs to be used with caution. The critical accuracy and the arrangement of the texts printed are much superior to what went before, but the editors, while inserting some items not previously present, have tactfully removed other items that now embarrass – I notice one in the text.

The *Acta* classifies the documents it prints according to their source, whether the pope or this or that ‘Congregation’ – ‘Ministry’ more or less – in the Roman curia (civil service). It also classifies them according to their status, and there is often a time-lag between a document’s date and its printing in the *Acta*. Matters are further complicated by the fact that there was a re-ordering of the curia some years ago in which various congregations were re-named. I have given some appropriate cross-references. One re-naming was of something already re-named. ‘The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’ is what used to be ‘The Holy Office’, and ‘The Holy Office’ is what used to be ‘The Roman Inquisition’. I am reminded of what an aged economist said to my brother Desmond about J. M. Keynes: ‘very brilliant man of course... funny sort of chap, though – always changing his address’. And I have left it as ‘The Roman Inquisition’.

I give reference by name of pope or of congregation, together with year of printing. References to councils are under their place of meeting. Many papal documents have been given English translations published by the Catholic Truth Society, and where I knew such a translation to exist, I added ‘(C)’ to the item in the References. There are of course other translations accessible. The *Acta* prefixes descriptions – usually ponderous and sometimes misleading – to the documents it prints, and the documents are or were often referred to by the opening words of the (usually Latin) original. I have in some cases given these words; in all cases I have inserted in square brackets a standardised description of date, topic, language (if other than Latin) and place of issue or delivery (if other than Rome).

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The decrees of the Second Vatican Council appeared in the *Acta* (its proceedings are also published, but they do not concern us here). Translations of the decrees were again published by the Catholic Truth Society, and there are two collections that deserve separate mention. Abbott and Gallagher (1967) gives the decrees and other material, each decree preceded by an introduction, and then followed by a response from someone not a Roman Catholic. Flannery (1975) is wider-ranging. It gives the decrees, but also post-conciliar documents connected with them. It has gone to sources other than the *Acta* for some of these, and in an appendix gives references to yet more documentation. This admirable book is a mine of information and an excellent guide to material. Its one defect is a preface by somebody signing himself 'John Cardinal Wright', who takes occasion to comment unfavourably upon earlier translations, and upon the salutary arrangement – found in Abbott and Gallagher – of having conciliar documents followed by comment from an outsider. For him, the book he introduces 'is *the* collection of Council documents and their authentic interpretation'. The pompous silliness of all this is well matched by its hermeneutical stupidity. I add 'AG' and/or 'F' to items in the References, whenever a translation may be found in one or both of these two helpful collections.

I have naturally cited the service-books of the Roman Church. Although these exist in many editions, their arrangement is standard and references may be followed up without difficulty.

References to Aquinas

Most references to Aquinas are to his *Summa Theologiae*. This work of his maturity – begun it would seem because he was dissatisfied with available manuals – is divided into three parts. The first treats of God and creation. The second treats of human acts and of the good and evil in them (with general principles laid down in the first division of the part, and their applications in the second). The third part – which principally concerns us – treats of the redemptive work of Christ, and of the sacraments. Each part is divided into questions, and each question into articles. Each article begins by asking whether a given proposition is true; gives objections against its truth; gives reasons for its truth; and concludes by giving responses to the objections. This structure makes references easy to give. 'ST 3.75.4' is '*Summa Theologiae*, part 3, question 75, article 4'; 'ST 1/2.13.2 ad 3' is '*Summa Theologiae*, first division of the second part, question 13,

article 2, response to objection 3'. And so on. Aquinas also composed *Quaestiones Disputatae*, in which arguments for and against a given opinion are surveyed, a general solution offered, and the conflicting opinions assessed (for more information, sources like van Steenberghe 1966 and Knowles 1962 can be consulted). The arrangement here, by question and article, is that followed in the *Summa Theologiae*.

Matters are more difficult in an early work of Aquinas, his Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter the Lombard. We must not lose sight of the fact that the Commentary on the *Sentences* is an early work, and it would be an interesting exercise to compare its treatment of eucharistic questions with that given them in the *Summa Theologiae*. The later work is immeasurably more impressive, in the 'architectonic' of its composition and in the economy with which it deals with its topics. But the earlier Commentary does have an interest of its own – and, I shall be suggesting, does have the advantage in one place over the *Summa*.

Some information about the nature of the earlier work may be useful, and some information about the way of interpreting references to it will be more than useful. Peter the Lombard (+c. 1160) composed the *Sentences* at Paris about 1150, a skeletal work of theology, where texts from the fathers were accompanied by a meagre commentary. It became the custom to write 'Commentaries' on Peter's *Sentences*, where the writer would in fact simply use Peter's divisions in order to set out his own opinions. The custom lasted into the sixteenth century, giving the original a curious 'Nachleben by proxy'.

Reference to the Commentary of Aquinas on the *Sentences* is complicated, and can best be explained by the imaginary example 'In 4 *Sent.*, dist 1, q. 2, art. 3, qu. la 5, obj. 6 and ad 6; 789/101, 793/124'. This means: go to his Commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences*, and to the first of the 'distinctions' into which Peter divided each book. Inside this distinction, go to the second question which Aquinas puts, and inside that to the third Article into which the question is divided. Inside that, go to the fifth quaestiuncula ('mini-question'), and inside *that* to the sixth of the objections Aquinas raises, and to the reply he offers. All that is bad enough, worse is to follow. Not all the distinctions divide into questions; not all the articles divide into quaestiunculae; and (particularly foxing) all the quaestiunculae of an Article with their objections are printed first, only then come the responses Aquinas offers. All the more

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welcome then is the edition by Moos of the third and fourth books of Aquinas' work, in which everything under a given distinction is divided into continuously numbered paragraphs (the first and second books, with another editor, unfortunately lack this help). In the imaginary reference, the two numerals divided by a solidus give the page and the paragraph on it where the texts begin.

I use also the commentary of Aquinas on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. Each book of Aristotle's work is divided by Aquinas into *lectiones*, or passages for comment, and then each *lectio* is expounded. Reference is therefore by book and lectio (notice, not by chapter). The much-used edition by Cathalà (Aquinas 1935) divides the Commentary into numbered paragraphs; I add the number to all references I give.