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(3a. 60-5)

David Bourke

Excerpt

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 60, 1

POST CONSIDERATIONEM eorum quæ pertinent ad mysteria Verbi incarnati, considerandum est de Ecclesiæ sacramentis, quæ ab ipso Verbo incarnato efficaciam habent. Et prima consideratio erit de sacramentis in communi; secunda, de unoquoque sacramentorum in speciali.

Circa primum quinque considerata sunt:

- primo quid sit sacramentum;
- secundo, de necessitate sacramentorum;
- tertio, de effectibus sacramentorum;
- quarto, de causa eorum;
- quinto, de numero.

Quæstio 60. quid sit sacramentum

CIRCA PRIMUM quærentur octo:

1. utrum sacramentum sit in genere signi;
2. utrum omne signum rei sacræ sit sacramentum;
3. utrum sacramentum sit signum unius rei tantum vel plurium;
4. utrum sacramentum sit signum quod est res sensibilis;
5. utrum ad sacramentum requiratur determinata res sensibilis;
6. utrum ad sacramentum requiratur significatio quæ est per verba;
7. utrum requirantur determinata verba;
8. utrum illis verbis possit aliquid addi vel subtrahi.

articulus 1. utrum sacramentum sit in genere signi

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod sacramentum non sit in genere signi. Videtur enim sacramentum dici a *sacrando*: sicut medicamentum a *medicando*. Sed hoc magis videtur pertinere ad rationem causæ quam ad rationem signi. Ergo sacramentum magis est in genere causæ quam in genere signi.

¹cf IV *Sent.* I, 1, 1, i; 3, 1, 1, i ad 3

²See Foreword to *Tertia Pars*

³Most other commentators, and St Thomas himself in his earlier works, had approached the sacraments initially and primarily as efficient causes of grace. In the present treatise St Thomas is reverting to the approach of St Augustine by regarding them initially and primarily as signs—further prolongations, that is to say, of the divine gesture of the Incarnation, the mode in which God, in his mys-

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WHAT A SACRAMENT IS

NOW THAT WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR CONSIDERATION of the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, our next field of investigation is the sacraments of the Church, seeing that it is from this same Incarnate Word that these derive their efficacy.^{3a} First we shall consider what is common to all the sacraments, and then we shall go on to consider the special properties of each sacrament in turn (66 et seq).

The first field of investigation will involve five main questions:

- first, what a sacrament is;
- second, the necessity of the sacraments (61);
- third, the effects of the sacraments (62);
- fourth, their cause (64);
- fifth, how many sacraments there are (65).

Question 60. what a sacrament is

THE FIRST question will involve eight points of enquiry:

1. whether sacraments fall under the general category of signs;
2. whether every sign of a sacred reality is a sacrament;
3. whether sacraments are signs of one reality alone or of several;
4. whether a sacrament is the sort of sign that is an object of sense perception;
5. whether it takes some specifically assigned object of sense perception to constitute a sacrament;
6. whether a verbal formula expressing its significance is needed to constitute a sacrament;
7. whether some predetermined form of words is needed;
8. whether this form of words admits of anything being added to or subtracted from it.

article 1. do sacraments fall under the general category of signs?^b

THE FIRST POINT:¹ I. It seems that sacraments do not fall under the general category of signs. For it seems that the word 'sacrament' is derived from the Latin verb meaning *to make sacred*, just as the term 'medicament' is derived from the Latin word meaning *to heal*. Now this designation seems to refer more to its function as cause than to its function as sign. Therefore sacraments fall under the general category of causes more than under that of signs.

terious plan and counsel, chooses to present himself to man as an object of faith and worship as well as a bringer of redemptive grace.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 60, I

2. Præterea, sacramentum videtur occultum aliquid significare, secundum illud *Tob.*² *Sacramentum regis abscondere bonum est, et Eph.*³ *Quæ sit dispensatio sacramenti absconditi a sæculis in Deo.* Sed id quod est absconditum, videtur esse contra rationem signi, nam *signum est quod, præter speciem quam sensibus ingerit, facit aliquid aliud in cognitionem venire*, ut patet per Augustinum.⁴ Ergo videtur quod sacramentum non sit in genere signi.

3. Præterea, juramentum quandoque sacramentum nominatur: dicitur enim,⁵ *Parvuli qui sine aetate rationabili sunt non cogantur jurare: et qui semel perjuratus fuerit, nec testis sit post hoc, nec ad sacramentum, id est ad juramentum, accedat.* Sed juramentum non pertinet ad rationem signi. Ergo videtur quod sacramentum non sit in genere signi.

SED CONTRA est quod Augustinus dicit,⁶ *Sacrificium visibile invisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est sacrum signum, est.*

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod omnia quæ habent ordinem ad unum aliquid, licet diversimode, ab illo denominari possunt: sicut a sanitate quæ est in animali, denominatur sanum non solum animal, quod est sanitatis subiectum, sed dicitur medicina sana in quantum est sanitatis effectiva, diæta vero in quantum est conservativa ejusdem, et urina in quantum est significativa ipsius. Sic igitur *sacramentum* potest aliquid dici vel quia in se habet aliquam sanctitatem occultam, et secundum hoc sacramentum idem est quod *sacrum secretum*; vel quia habet aliquem ordinem ad hanc sanctitatem vel causæ vel signi vel secundum quamcumque aliam habitudinem. Specialiter autem nunc loquimur de sacramentis secundum quod important habitudinem signi. Et secundum hoc sacramentum ponitur in genere signi.

I. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, quia medicina se habet ut causa effectiva sanitatis, inde est quod omnia denominata a medicina dicuntur

²*Tobit* 12, 7³*Ephesians* 3, 15⁴*De Doctrina Christiana* II, I. PL 34, 35⁵*Decretals* XXII, 5, 14⁶*De Civitate Dei* X, 5. PL 41, 282

^eIn this treatise on the sacraments two kinds of analogy are used, of which this, the *analogy of attribution*, is the first. In it the same name is applied to a number of different things in virtue of all of them being related, though in different ways, to a single primary thing. The second kind of analogy is the *analogy of proper proportionality*. Here the proportion or relationship between one pair of things is similar to that which exists between another pair even though the two pairs are in

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2. Furthermore, the term 'sacrament' seems to signify something hidden. Thus we find in *Tobit*,² *For it is good to hide the secret of a king.* And again in *Ephesians*,³ *How the mystery that has been kept hidden in God through all the ages is to be dispensed.* Now it seems that the very nature of a sign is such that it cannot be constituted by that which is hidden. For a sign is something which, over and above the specific form which it impresses upon the senses, causes some further object to enter our cognition, as Augustine makes clear.⁴ Therefore it seems that sacraments do not fall under the general category of signs.

3. Furthermore an oath is sometimes called a sacrament, for the following statement is found in the Decretals,⁵ *Children under the age of reason should not be compelled to swear an oath. Nor should anyone who has once committed perjury subsequently be called upon to testify or admitted to take a 'sacrament', i.e. an oath.* Now there is no sense in which an oath can be called a sign. Therefore it seems that sacraments do not fall under the general category of signs.

ON THE OTHER HAND we have the following statement of Augustine,⁶ *The visible sacrifice is the sacrament, i.e. the sacred sign, of the invisible sacrifice.*

REPLY: Whenever many things are related to one and the same thing, even though they may be related in different ways they can all derive their designation from it.^c Thus in the case of health in a living being the term 'healthy' is applied not only to that living being as the subject in which health resides; medicine too is said to be healthy inasmuch as it causes health, while a diet is said to be healthy inasmuch as it preserves health, and urine is said to be healthy inasmuch as it is symptomatic of health. So too it is, then, with the term 'sacrament'. It can be applied to something for several different reasons: either because the thing concerned contains some hidden sanctity within it, so that, as applied to it, the term 'sacrament' is equivalent to 'sacred secret'; alternatively the term 'sacrament' may be applied to something because it is related to this sanctity either as its cause or as its sign, or in virtue of some other kind of connection with it. Now for our present purposes when we speak of the sacraments we have in mind one specific connection with the sacred, namely that of a sign. And it is on these grounds that we assign sacraments to the general category of signs.

Hence: 1. With regard to the fact that all those things deriving their designation from medicine are so designated in virtue of their reference to a single prime agent, the reason for this is that the connection between

themselves dissimilar and may exist on two different planes. Thus as physical washing is to the body so spiritual washing, or baptism, is to the soul.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 60, 2

per ordinem ad unum primum agens: et per hoc medicamentum importat causalitatem quandam. Sed sanctitas, a qua denominatur sacramentum, non significatur per modum causæ efficientis, sed magis per modum causæ formalis vel finalis. Et ideo non oportet quod sacramentum semper importet causalitatem.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod ratio illa procedit secundum quod sacramentum idem est quod *sacrum secretum*. Dicitur autem non solum Dei secretum, sed etiam regis, esse sacrum et sacramentum. Quia secundum antiquos sancta vel sacrosancta dicebantur quæcumque violari non licebat: sicut etiam muri civitatis, et personæ in dignitatibus constitutæ. Et ideo illa secreta, sive divina sive humana, quæ non licet violari quibuslibet publicando, dicuntur sacra vel sacramenta.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod etiam iuramentum habet quandam habitudinem ad res sacras, inquantum scilicet est quædam contestatio facta per aliquid sacrum. Et secundum hoc dicitur esse sacramentum: non eadem ratione qua nunc loquimur de sacramentis; non tamen æquivoce sumpto nomine sacramenti, sed analogice, scilicet secundum diversam habitudinem ad aliquid unum, quod est res sacra.

articulus 2. utrum omne signum rei sacræ sit sacramentum

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod non omne signum rei sacræ sit sacramentum. Omnes enim creaturæ sensibiles sunt signa rerum sacrarum: secundum illud *Rom.*,² *Invisibilia Dei per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur*. Nec tamen omnes res sensibiles possunt dici sacramenta. Non ergo omne signum rei sacræ est sacramentum.

2. Præterea, omnia quæ in veteri lege fiebant, Christum figurabant, qui est *Sanctus Sanctorum*: secundum illud *I Cor.*,³ *Omnia in figura contingebant illis*; et *Col.*,⁴ *Quæ sunt umbra futurorum, corpus autem Christi*. Nec tamen omnia gesta Patrum veteris Testamenti, vel etiam omnes cæremoniæ legis, sunt sacramenta, sed quædam specialiter: sicut in *Secunda Parte* habitum est.⁵ Ergo videtur quod non omne signum rei sacræ sit sacramentum.

¹cf *IV Sent.* 1, 1, 1, 1²*Romans* 1, 20³*I Corinthians* 10, 11⁴*Colossians* 2, 17⁵*1a2æ*, 101, 4

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medicine and health is that medicine is its effective cause, and in virtue of this the term 'medicament' does imply a certain causality. But the kind of causality involved in the significance of sanctity, from which the designation of sacrament is derived, is not that of an efficient cause but rather of a formal or final cause. And for this reason it is not necessary for the term sacrament to imply causality in all cases.

2. The idea underlying this line of argument is that the concept of sacrament is equivalent to that of a *sacred secret*. Now it is not only God's secret that is said to be sacred and a sacrament but that of the king as well. For according to the ancients all those things which men were forbidden to violate were said to be sacred or sacrosanct. This also applied to the walls of the city and the persons of those on whom dignities had been conferred. It is in this sense, then, that those secrets, whether divine or human, which we are forbidden to violate by making them the common property of all are called sacred or sacraments.

3. Even an oath has a certain connection with sacred realities: to the extent, namely, that it is a certain kind of attestation made by means of some sacred thing. And it is in virtue of this that it is called a 'sacrament'. But this is not the sense that we have in mind when we speak of the sacraments in the present context. Yet in all this the term 'sacrament' is being used not equivocally but analogically, that is in different senses according to the different relationships which the realities so designated bear to some one thing which is the sacred reality.

article 2. is every sign of a sacred reality a sacrament?

THE SECOND POINT:¹ 1. It seems that not every sign of a sacred reality is a sacrament. For in *Romans* we are told, *The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood through the things which have been made.*² According to this, then, all created entities perceptible to the senses are signs of sacred realities. Yet not all realities perceptible to the senses can be called sacraments. Therefore it is not the case that every sign of a sacred reality is a sacrament.

2. All the things that were done under the Old Law were types pre-figuring Christ, who is the *Holy One of all holy ones*. This is borne out by the following passages from St Paul: *All these things happened to them in figure,*³ and *which are shadows of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*⁴ Yet not all the deeds related of the fathers in the Old Testament, nor even all the ceremonies of the Law, constitute sacraments. Rather it is certain specific deeds and ceremonies which have this force. This has been set forth in the *Secunda Pars*.⁵ It seems, therefore, that not every sign of a sacred reality is a sacrament.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 60, 2

3. Præterea, etiam in novo Testamento multa geruntur in signum alicujus rei sacræ, quæ tamen non dicuntur sacramenta: sicut aspersio aquæ benedictæ, consecratio altaris, et consimilia. Non ergo omne signum rei sacræ est sacramentum.

SED CONTRA est quod definitio convertitur cum definito. Sed quidam⁶ definiunt sacramentum per hoc quod est *sacræ rei signum*: et hoc etiam videtur ex auctoritate Augustini supra inducta.⁷ Ergo videtur quod omne signum rei sacræ sit sacramentum.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod signa dantur* hominibus, quorum est per nota ad ignota pervenire. Et ideo proprie dicitur sacramentum quod est signum alicujus rei sacræ ad homines pertinentis: ut scilicet proprie dicatur sacramentum, secundum quod nunc de sacramentis loquimur, quod est signum rei sacræ in quantum est sanctificans homines.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod creaturæ sensibiles significant aliquid sacrum, scilicet sapientiam et bonitatem divinam, in quantum sunt in seipsis sacra: non autem in quantum nos per ea sanctificamur. Et ideo non possunt dici sacramenta secundum quod nunc loquimur de sacramentis.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod quædam ad vetus Testamentum pertinentia significabant sanctitatem Christi secundum quod in se sanctus est. Quædam vero significabant sanctitatem ejus in quantum per eam nos sanctificamur: sicut immolatio agni paschalis significabat immolationem Christi, qua sanctificati sumus. Et talia dicuntur proprie veteris legis sacramenta.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod res denominantur a fine et complemento. Dispositio autem non est finis, sed perfectio. Et ideo ea quæ significant

*Leonine: *proprie*

⁶Lanfranc, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* 12. PL 150, 422. Hugh of St Victor, *De Sacramentis* 1, 9, 2. PL 176, 317. Peter Lombard, *Sent.* IV, 1, 2

⁷See art. 1, n. 5

^aOne purpose of this article seems to be to broaden the definition of sacrament so as to allow it to apply to Old Testament sacraments too, as being signs, though non-causative ones, of the same sacred reality as those of the New. But as a matter of definition it also adds the specific difference to the genus of sign as explained in the previous article. What distinguishes the sacraments from other kinds of sign is that they represent *a sacred reality as sanctifying men*.

^bAs signs the sacraments have an informative or revealing function in that they tell man something about God. But they also have a practical function in that they summon him to a response of self-commitment in faith and worship by his use of them.

^cHence the meaning of the sacraments is based upon something more than the

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3. Even under the dispensation of the New Testament many things are done as signs of some sacred reality, without, however, being called sacraments. This would apply to the sprinkling of holy water, the consecration of altars, and similar acts. Therefore not every sign of a sacred reality is a sacrament.

ON THE OTHER HAND, in logical discourse a definition and the object it defines are interchangeable. Now some⁶ take as their definition of a sacrament the fact that it is *a sign of a sacred reality*, and this also seems to be supported by the authority of Augustine cited above.⁷ Therefore it seems that every sign of a sacred reality is a sacrament.⁸

REPLY: Signs are given to men.^b Now it is characteristic of men that they achieve an awareness of things which they do not know through things which they do know. Hence the term 'sacrament' is properly applied to that which is a sign of some sacred reality pertaining to men; or—to define the special sense in which the term 'sacrament' is being used in our present discussion of the sacraments—it is applied to that which is a sign of a sacred reality inasmuch as it has the property of sanctifying men.

Hence: 1. With regard to such created entities perceptible to the senses they signify something sacred, namely the divine wisdom and the divine goodness, inasmuch as these are sacred in themselves, but not inasmuch as we are sanctified by them.^c It follows that such created entities cannot be called sacraments in the sense which we have defined for the purposes of our present discussion of the sacraments.

2. Some of the things pertaining to the Old Testament had the force of signs pointing to the holiness of Christ inasmuch as he is holy in himself. Others, however, had the force of signs pointing to his holiness inasmuch as we are sanctified by it. In this sense the immolation of the passover lamb signified the immolation of Christ, by which we have been sanctified. And it is proper to call such things as these latter the sacraments of the Old Law.

3. Things derive their names from the end which they are designed to achieve and from that which constitutes them as complete. Now the end which a thing is designed to achieve consists not in a disposition in it to some further state, but in its ultimate perfection. Hence those things which signify a disposition to sanctity are not called sacraments, and it is things of this kind to which the objection refers. The term sacrament is

natural similitude of an effect to its cause. It is a *willed* meaning, corresponding to that of a physical gesture reinforced and given further precision by the words accompanying it.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 3a. 60, 3

dispositionem ad sanctitatem non dicuntur sacramenta, de quibus procedit objecto; sed solum ea quæ significant perfectionem sanctitatis humanæ.

articulus 3. utrum sacramentum sit signum unius rei tantum

AD TERTIUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod sacramentum non sit signum nisi unius rei. Id enim quo multa significantur est signum ambiguum, et per consequens fallendi occasio: sicut patet de nominibus æquivocis. Sed omnis fallacia debet removeri a Christiana religione, secundum illud *Col.*,² *Videte ne quis vos seducat per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam.* Ergo videtur quod sacramentum non sit signum plurium rerum.

2. Præterea, sicut dictum est,³ sacramentum significat rem sacram inquantum est humanæ sanctificationis causa. Sed una sola est causa sanctificationis humanæ scilicet sanguis Christi, secundum illud *Heb.*,⁴ *Jesus, ut sanctificaret per suum sanguinem populum, extra portam passus est.* Ergo videtur quod sacramentum non significet plura.

3. Præterea, dictum est⁵ quod sacramentum proprie significat ipsum finem sanctificationis. Sed finis sanctificationis est vita æterna, secundum illud *Rom.*,⁶ *Habetis fructum vestrum in sanctificatione, finem vero vitam æternam.* Ergo videtur quod sacramenta non significant nisi unam rem, scilicet vitam æternam.

SED CONTRA est quod in sacramento altaris est duplex res significata, scilicet corpus Christi verum et mysticum, ut Augustinus dicit.⁷

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, sicut dictum est,⁸ sacramentum proprie dicitur quod ordinatur ad significandam nostram sanctificationem. In qua tria possunt considerari: videlicet ipsa causa sanctificationis nostræ, quæ est passio Christi; et forma nostræ sanctificationis, quæ consistit in gratia et virtutibus; et ultimus finis nostræ sanctificationis, qui est vita æterna. Et hæc omnia per sacramenta significantur. Unde sacramentum est et

¹cf IV *Sent.* 1, 1, 1, i ad 1²*Colossians* 2, 8³art. 2⁴*Hebrews* 13, 12⁵art 2 ad 3⁶*Romans* 6, 22⁷Prosper of Aquitaine, *Liber Sententiarum*; cf Lanfranc, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* 14. PL 150, 424⁸art. 2⁸The sacraments are here related to saving history as such in its dimension of past, present, and future. Sacraments are not merely signs but symbols, and as such they bear not one, but several meanings. They signify the past event of Christ's Passion

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reserved, rather, solely for those things which signify the perfection of human sanctity.

article 3. is a sacrament a sign of one reality alone?

THE THIRD POINT:¹ 1. It seems that a sacrament is not a sign of more than one reality. For a sign standing for many things is an ambiguous sign, and in consequence an occasion of error. This is obvious in the case of names that are equivocal. Now all deceptive elements should be eliminated by the Christian religion, a point which is brought out in *Colossians*,² *Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit*. It seems, therefore, that a sacrament is not a sign of several realities.

2. As has been said,³ the term sacrament signifies a sacred reality inasmuch as it is a cause of human sanctification. But one thing alone is the cause of human sanctification, namely the blood of Christ, in accordance with the passage in *Hebrews*⁴ which runs, *Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate*. It seems, therefore, that a sacrament does not signify several things.

3. It has been stated⁵ that what a sacrament properly signifies is the actual end in itself for which sanctification is designed. But the end for which sanctification is designed is eternal life, as we are told in *Romans*,⁶ *You have your fruit in the form of sanctification, and the end, eternal life*. It seems, therefore, that as signs sacraments stand for only one reality, namely eternal life.

ON THE OTHER HAND, in the sacrament of the altar the reality signified is twofold, namely, as Augustine tells us,⁷ the true and the mystical Body of Christ.

REPLY: As has been stated,⁸ the term sacrament is properly applied to that which is designed to signify our sanctification. In this three factors can be taken into consideration: namely the actual cause of our sanctification, which is the Passion of Christ, the form of our sanctification, which consists in grace and the virtues, and the ultimate end which our sanctification is designed to achieve, which is eternal life.^a Now as signs the sacraments stand for all of these. Hence as a sign a sacrament has a threefold function. It is at once commemorative of that which has gone before, namely the Passion of Christ, and demonstrative of that which is brought about in us

as the efficient cause of the grace which actually informs and is contained in them (their formal cause), and which is aimed at bringing man to final beatitude (their final cause). On this see Cornelius Ernst O.P., 'Acts of Christ: Signs of Faith', *Sacraments, Papers of the Maynooth Union Summer School 1963*, D. O'Callaghan ed., Dublin (1964), pp. 56-75.