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(3a. 60-5)

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The Summa Theologiae ranks among the greatest documents of the Christian Church, and is a landmark of medieval western thought. It provides the framework for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy, and is regularly consulted by scholars of all faiths and none, across a range of academic disciplines. This paperback reissue of the classic Latin/English edition first published by the English Dominicans in the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, has been undertaken in response to regular requests from readers and librarians around the world for the entire series of 61 volumes to be made available again. The original text is unchanged, except for the correction of a small number of typographical errors.

The original aim of this edition was not narrowly ecclesiastical. It sought to make this treasure of the Christian intellectual heritage available to theologians and philosophers of all backgrounds, including those who, without claiming to be believers themselves, appreciate a religious integrity which embodies hardbitten rationalism and who recognise in Thomas Aquinas a master of that perennial philosophy which forms the bedrock of European civilisation. Because of this the editors worked under specific instructions to bear in mind not only the professional theologian, but also the general reader with an interest in the 'reason' in Christianity. The parallel English and Latin texts can be used successfully by anybody with a basic knowledge of Latin, while the presence of the Latin text has allowed the translators a degree of freedom in adapting their English version for modern readers. Each volume contains a glossary of technical terms and is designed to be complete in itself to serve for private study or as a course text.

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SUMMA

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Latin text and English translation,
Introductions, Notes, Appendices
and Glossaries



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IN AN AUDIENCE, 13 December 1963, to a group representing the Dominican Editors and the combined Publishers of the New English *Summa*, His Holiness Pope Paul VI warmly welcomed and encouraged their undertaking. A letter from His Eminence Cardinal Cicognani, Cardinal Secretary of State, 6 February 1968, expressed the continued interest of the Holy Father in the progress of the work, which does honour to the Dominican Order, and the Publishers, and is to be considered without doubt as greatly contributing to the growth and spread of a genuinely Catholic culture, and communicated his particular Apostolic Blessing. The assurance was repeated in a letter, 5 February 1973, from the present Secretary of State, His Eminence Cardinal Villot.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

EXCEPT FOR one instance (3a. 60, 8 ad 3), there is no disagreement of sense between the Piana and Leonine texts of this treatise. The Leonine has been adopted in the main; variations of any importance are indicated. A translation literally close to the original has been preferred to a free rendering.

FOOTNOTES

Those signified by a superior number are usually the references given by St Thomas and tracked down by the Leonine Commission, with the exception of no. 1 to each article which refers to parallel texts in his writings. Those signified alphabetically are editorial references and explanatory remarks.

REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate; Patristic references to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). When the English titles are well known, references to the works of St Thomas and Aristotle are in English. Titles of St Thomas's works are abbreviated as follows:

Summa Theologiae, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 70, 1 ad. 2. 2a2æ. 25, 4.

Summa Contra Gentiles, CG. Book, chapter; e.g. CG 11, 14.

Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, Sent. Book, distinction, question, article, solution, or *quaestiuncula*, reply; e.g. 11 Sent. 15, 1, 1, ii ad 3.

Compendium Theologiae, *Compend. theol.*

Scriptural commentaries (*lecturæ, expositiones, reportata*): Job, *In Job*; Psalms, *In Psal.*; Isaiah, *In Isa.*; Jeremiah, *In Jerem.*; St Matthew, *In Matt.*; St John, *In Joann.*; Epistles of St. Paul, e.g. *In 1 Cor.* Chapter, verse, *lectio* as required.

Philosophical commentaries: Aristotle, *Peri Hermeneias*, *In Periherm.*; Posterior Analytics, *In Post. Anal.*; Physics, *In Phys.*; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In de Cæl.*; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *In de Gen. et Corr.*;

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De Anima, *In de Anima*; Metaphysics, *In Meta.*; Nichomachean Ethics, *In Ethic.*; Politics, *In Pol.* Book, chapter, *lectio* as required, also for references to Dionysius, *De divinis Nominibus*, *In de Div. Nom.* References to Aristotle include the Bekker numbering.

Quæstiones quodlibetales, *Quodl.*

Complete titles are given for other works.

Denz refers to Denzinger-Schönmetzer, Freiburg, 1963.

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THE SCRIPTURAL background to St Thomas's treatise on the sacraments clearly begins with the Old Testament. Evidently for him there were real sacraments under the Old Law, and when he defines the sacraments as 'signs of a sacred reality inasmuch as it sanctifies man' he seems deliberately to be broadening and simplifying his definition by comparison with his predecessors so that it can apply to the sacraments of the Old Law as well, though only in a limited sense.

To appreciate the significance of this we must begin by recognizing that the sacraments of the Church are foreshadowed in the Old Testament in two quite different ways. First certain *events*, such as the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea (*Exodus* 14, 29), the manna given to them in the desert (*Exodus* 16, 4-5, 14-20), or the water from the rock (*Numbers* 20, 10-11), are taken by New Testament writers as types of Christ's redemptive work and also of what is achieved in and through the Christian sacraments. Second, certain of the Old Testament *institutions* are regarded as corresponding to and foreshadowing the Christian sacraments, both in their nature and in their function. In general it can be said that through them the community of Israel was dedicated to, and visibly set apart for, the worship of their one God. The worship itself was expressed in certain prescribed rituals, chiefly of sacrifice, purification, and consecration. The rituals were performed by priests chosen and consecrated by God himself. Their purpose was to initiate the covenant relationship and the divine life-force flowing from it, or to restore it when it had been diminished or broken. They fall, therefore, into four main categories: first, rites of initiation, especially circumcision; second, consecration rites, notably the robing and anointing of priests; third, rites for renewing and intensifying the life that flows from God into the community through the covenant bond and consisting chiefly in the various forms of sacrifice; fourth, rites of purification designed to restore the covenant relationship and the life emanating from it when it has been weakened or broken by sin. These latter consist in various washings and changes of clothing as well as in the other rites of purgation prescribed in the Old Law.

Clearly, then, we are not forcing the evidence when we say that the Christian sacramental system is in essentials foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The underlying purpose of these rituals is to initiate, preserve, intensify, or restore the covenant life-force of Israel as the holy and priestly people of God, just as it is the function of the Church's sacraments to initiate, preserve, intensify, or restore the life of grace in her members. They incorporate the Christian into the new community which

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is the mystical body of Christ, confer upon him the Spirit promised by Jesus before his death, and liberate him from sin. Taken as a whole the sacramental system provides for a worshipping community constituted, preserved, nourished, and restored by a limited number of prescribed rites, all of which derive their efficacy from the fact that they are in some way a re-enactment of the redeeming death of Jesus as the sole source of grace and salvation. Through her official and consecrated priesthood the Church is the minister of these rites, deriving her commission to perform them from Jesus himself even though this is not explicitly recorded in the New Testament for each individual sacrament. The question of institution can most suitably be discussed in the treatments of the sacraments in particular. In general, however, it can be said that salvation and eternal life are bestowed through the medium of earthly gifts given by Christ (*John* 6, 53 ff.), or by the conjunction of a physical element such as water with a word (*Ephesians* 5, 26). In these and similar rites a mystery is enacted: the mystery of a spiritual re-birth (cf *Titus* 3, 5; *1 Peter* 1, 23; 2, 2; *John* 3, 3 ff.), a sanctification (cf *Hebrews* 12, 9 ff.), or, especially in the case of the Eucharist, an enduring union with Christ (*John* 6, 56 f.; *1 Corinthians* 10, 14–22; 11, 26–9).

The concept of a sacred sign having these effects emerged in the New Testament chiefly from the references to baptism and the Eucharist, but it was also extended to other human acts regarded as mediating salvation, notably the forgiveness of sins by the word of Christ himself or of his authorized ministers (*John* 15, 3 and 20, 22 ff.).

One passage in particular which is of crucial importance for the development of St Thomas's thought on the sacraments is the following one from St Paul:

'Do you not know that all of us that were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried with him, therefore, by baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become engrafted by the likeness of his death, so also shall we be of his resurrection.' (*Romans* 6, 3–5). It was his determination to do full justice to St Paul's teaching in this and similar passages that St Thomas brought his own thought to its full maturity and, by his insistence that the sacraments are fully and truly efficient instrumental causes of grace and character, advanced Catholic teaching on the sacraments in general far beyond anything that had hitherto been achieved.

But to appreciate this we must begin by indicating in the briefest outline the main stages in the development of sacramental theology up to St Thomas's own time. In general it can be said that prior to St Augustine the concept of an effective sign remained fairly fluid. It was applied pri-

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marily to baptism and the Eucharist. These are usually envisaged by the Fathers as consisting of two parts: one external and visible, the part which the Greeks call *mysterion* and the Latins *signum*, *figura*, or *sacramentum*, and the other invisible, consisting in the power of the Holy Spirit and producing the grace of baptismal regeneration or the body and blood of Christ. The recipients of these sacraments received supernatural gifts of salvation, healing, or purification, and the sacraments themselves were consecrated and conferred by means of predetermined prayers and formulæ. Although the power to symbolize and produce spiritual effects is attributed, in various degrees and ways, to marriage, penance, order, confirmation, and extreme unction, the forms in which these were conferred were in general far less precisely defined than in the case of baptism or the Eucharist.

Already in St Justin (c. 100–65) we find the idea that the eucharistic bread and wine is transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ by being blessed by the prayer of the word received from Christ, and so nourishing the flesh and blood of the believer. The actual term ‘sacrament’ was introduced into Christian language by Tertullian (c. 160–220), but he applied it to a whole range of factors in Christian salvation and revelation, as well as to the sacraments of baptism, the Eucharist, and confirmation. Already even at this stage he attributes some kind of causality to the sacred sign, as can be seen from the following passage: ‘The flesh is washed that the soul may be cleansed of stain. The flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated. The flesh is marked with a sign that the soul may be armed against evil. The flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of hands that the soul likewise may be illumined by the Spirit. The flesh is nourished with the body and blood of Christ that the soul likewise may be filled with God.’¹

However the first serious theological exploration of the concept of sacrament as such was undertaken by St Augustine (354–430). For him a sign is essentially an object that, over and above its own distinctive and characteristic form which it imprints upon the senses, evokes some further reality beyond itself in the mind of the beholder. Probably Augustine is here drawing upon a philosophy of signs developed by Origen and the Alexandrians. Applying it to the idea of a sacrament he concludes that a sacrament is a *sacred* sign which evokes the idea of a *religious* reality of which it is the image. Thus in any sacrament there are two essential constituents: the material element, an object such as the water in baptism or the bread and wine in the Eucharist, and the prescribed verbal formula by which this is consecrated and raised to the status of a sacrament when it is pronounced by a qualified minister in the name of the Church. The

¹*De Resurrectione carnis* 8. PL 2, 806

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sacred sign is now essentially linked to the spiritual reality bestowed in and through it and designed for man's sanctification. The material element is such as, of its very nature, to resemble the spiritual reality it stands for. In other words it is a natural rather than a conventional sign. And the words of the sacramental formula have the effect of raising it from being a mere sign into that special kind of sacred sign which contains sacramental power to effect what it signifies. Once the words have been pronounced this power remains latent in the sign. 'Take away the word and what else is water except water? The word is conjoined to the element and the sacrament is constituted, it itself becoming, in its turn, as it were, a visible word . . . For in that very word, whereas the actual sound is transitory, the power remains.'²

The power inherent in the sacrament, then, brings to bear upon the recipient—provided he is suitably disposed—the sanctifying work of Christ or the Holy Spirit. In baptism, for instance, he explains, while the water constitutes an outward manifestation of the sacrament of grace, it is the Spirit who produces the beneficial effects of grace interiorly, both together causing man, drawn as he is from the single stock of Adam, to be re-born in the single stock of Christ. The rôle of the qualified minister, therefore, is wholly subordinate. It is Christ or the Holy Spirit who is acting through him. Here we have the first adumbration of the important doctrine of instrumental causality subsequently developed by Thomas. And again in Augustine we can perceive incipiently but nonetheless clearly, the no less important doctrine that the sacraments work *ex opere operato*; since they have their origin in Christ and since the spiritual reality which they signify is Christ himself, they possess an objective intrinsic value and sanctity of their own which cannot be affected or diminished by the personal unworthiness of their human minister.

A final key point in Augustine's teaching on the sacraments is his insistence upon the fact that Christ is their author and institutor. And he further insists upon the rôle of the Church in the conferring of them. Thus the word which raises the material element to the status of a sacrament is not any word but the word of faith of the Church herself pronounced by the minister as her representative. The direct supernatural reality (*res*), the likeness of which is constituted by the sacramental sign, is in itself not precisely the grace which is conferred, but the whole Christ, head and members together – Christ himself in all dimensions of his saving work, constituting the source of the sacramental grace. This is why the sacraments have this objective intrinsic value of their own, why they work *ex opere operato*, independently of the worthiness or unworthiness of the

²*In Joannis Evangelium* LXXX, 3 PL 35, 1840

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minister, and why the minister himself plays a wholly subordinate rôle by comparison with Christ and the Holy Spirit working in and through the Church.

Both Augustine, and perhaps even more clearly Isidore of Seville (560–636), think of the sanctifying power of the sacrament as residing in the material element itself rather than in its application to the recipient. Thus Isidore explains that in baptism ‘when God is invoked, the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and, having healed the waters, sanctifies them of his own power. Then they receive the power to purify so that both the flesh (of the recipient) and his soul, stained as it is with sin, are cleansed.’³

A development destined to have a profound influence upon St Thomas’s thought was the teaching on sacramental character of Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite (c. 500). Character, this author explains,⁴ is the final seal which admits the recipient to a place in the spiritual hierarchy, gives him a new mode of existence, and enables him to participate in the sacred actions of the Church. These actions consist principally in receiving and administering the sacraments, but also include the entire range of the Church’s work by which creatures are led back to union with their creator.

Probably the next important advance in sacramental theology is to be found in the works of Hugh of St Victor (1096–1141), who produced the following comprehensive definition: ‘A sacrament is a physical or material element admitted to the perception of the external senses, representing a reality beyond itself in virtue of the similitude it bears to it, actually pointing to that reality in virtue of having been instituted as a sign of it and containing within itself some invisible and spiritual grace in virtue of having been consecrated.’⁵ Thus Hugh’s definition contains three essential elements: (a) the capacity of a physical thing to signify a spiritual one in virtue of an underlying resemblance to it, (b) the fact that that thing has actually been instituted as a sign of grace by Christ, (c) the consecration of the sign in virtue of which it actually contains the spiritual reality of grace which it signifies.

The inadequacy of this definition consists in its insistence upon a physical element such as water or bread and wine as an essential constituent of a sacrament. In fact Hugh defines baptism as water sanctified by the word of God. Now for the anonymous author or authors of the *Summa Sententiarum* this is unsatisfactory. Baptism, rather, is a sign made up of the actual washing with water and the invocation of the Trinity. The water and the washing are the *sacramentum* of baptism while the invocation

³*Etymologiae* VI, 8. PL 82, 256

⁴*De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* 5. PG 3, 512

⁵*De Sacramentis* I, IX, 2. PL 176, 317

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of the Trinity is its form.⁶ The essential difference between a sacrament and any other kind of sign is that a sacrament effects what it signifies. Thus the sacrament is to be defined as ‘the visible form of the invisible grace conferred in it . . . For it is not merely the sign of a sacred reality, but efficacious as well.’⁷

Peter Lombard too (c. 1100–60) is concerned to distinguish a sacrament from any other kind of sign. ‘A sacrament brings about the likeness of that reality of which it is a sign. For a sacrament properly so called is that which is a sign of God’s grace and the invisible form of grace in such a way that it evokes the likeness of that grace and constitutes its cause.’⁸ So insistent is Peter Lombard on this point that he refuses to allow the term sacrament to be applied to the observances of the Old Law, which precisely did not cause grace. And again he recognizes clearly that the sign is constituted not by the material element but by the combination of both matter and form. Peter Lombard too seems to have realized that the minister’s personal qualities and dispositions made no difference to the effectiveness of sacraments conferred by him. But he does point out the necessity of a right intention on the part of the minister, and it is in his works that the famous formula emerges, ‘the intention of doing what the Church does’.

Now let us turn to St Thomas himself. Where others see the sacraments primarily, or in many cases exclusively, as remedies for sin, disposing man for the reception of grace by the extension of Christ’s merits to him, he—at least in his mature works—finds a meaning for sacraments which is far more positive. A sacrament is the sign of the incarnate Word, his Passion and Resurrection, as sanctifying man, a sign which actually causes what it signifies by an efficient causality flowing from God through the humanity of Christ and present intrinsically in the sign itself, the essential structure of which corresponds to that of the Word made flesh. For here too words are conjoined to physical things or physical acts to constitute a single entity present in the midst of human activities as the incarnate Word was present in the midst of men.

Yet this is no static entity. For earlier writers, especially Hugh of St Victor, the sacrament had contained grace as a vessel contains a liquid. For St Thomas it is essentially dynamic. The grace which it causes flows from Christ into the recipient through the sign itself in the moment of its application. Its effects are not *merely* negative, a healing of the harmful effects of sin, for it produces new life, the life of Christ, extending this into the members of his mystical Body. This life of Christ, especially as con-

⁶*Summa Sententiarum* v, 1, 3, 4. PL 176, 127–30

⁷op cit 1

⁸*Sententiarum libri quatuor* iv, 1, 2

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summed in his Passion and Death, is itself an act of worship and of priesthood. The sacraments are designed to consecrate the members of his mystical body to this worship, to make them participators in this priesthood. They are designed to initiate, to develop, to restore and repair, to maintain and intensify this life of worship, and to consecrate and depute the members of the mystical body permanently and irrevocably to sacrifice and priesthood. As a life it has all the diverse needs of natural life and the sacraments are designed to meet these needs. As a priesthood it necessarily involves a consecration, a configuration to Christ himself, and three of the sacraments, those of baptism, confirmation, and order, have this special consecrating effect, for they produce a character in the soul.

But the sacraments have a further significance. The act of receiving or conferring them itself involves an exercise of faith, hope, and charity on man's part, an act of the virtue of religion. Indeed in the treatise on this virtue, and specifically in the prologue to Question 89 of the *Secunda Secundae*, St Thomas declares that the treatise on the external acts of adoration should naturally lead on to a study of those specific acts of religion in which men put something divine to use, whether it be a sacrament or the divine name itself. Thus while deciding to treat the sacraments primarily as extensions of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ and so allotting them their existing place in the *Tertia Pars*, he nevertheless finds this aspect of them hardly less important. By his use of the sacraments man protests his faith in their hidden grace. He commits himself to hoping in its redemptive power. He expresses his own act of self-giving to God by receiving or conferring the sacraments.

Throughout his treatise on the sacraments St Thomas firmly maintains the balance between these two aspects of the complex sacramental reality, the anthropocentric aspect, as it might be called, of the efficaciousness of the sacraments and their power to save on the one hand, and the theocentric aspect on the other of their meaning and significance as acts of worship. The sacrament is truly a sign. But that which it signifies is the sacredness of the salvation wrought in Christ's humanity precisely as sanctifying men (60, 2). Again sacraments belong to the divine worship offered by men to God but at the same time they are the means instituted by God himself alone, by which he sanctifies men. This is why it is for God alone to choose the particular physical realities which he is to use as signs and to institute as sacraments (60, 5). Again the reason that words too are needed to complement the physical realities is because they derive from the Word made flesh and their structure must correspond to this. But at the same time it is because man himself who receives the sacraments is composed of soul and body, a spiritual and a physical element, and because it is connatural to him to recognize the meaning of a sign most fully when it

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is made precise by the addition of words. Again the sacraments are divine mysteries of salvation which nevertheless constitute a merciful adaptation of the means of salvation to man's own pitiful condition and fallen state. In the state of innocence before the Fall there was no need of the sacraments either as remedies for sin or as visible signs of grace, because then man was able to receive grace invisibly and spiritually. After the Fall, however, the sacraments became necessary as figures of the Christ who was to come, and at the same time as the sensible signs by which man could protest his faith in the future Christ. The nearer man came to the coming of Christ, the more he became immersed in sin, the more necessary it became for him to have such sensible signs by which to protest his faith, at least implicitly, in his future Redeemer, and to offer his worship to God.

From this brief summary it will be clear that if there is one key idea that lies at the very roots of St Thomas's treatise as a whole it is the idea that the new life of the redemption wrought by God in the incarnate Word is communicated to man through created media, physical things, or acts combined with words. Since as Creator God is immediate to the very being of his own creatures, his use of created things in conveying grace to man does not in any sense make his spiritual contact with man through the sacraments any less immediate or direct. But it does mean that the whole creative process is engaged in the active work of the redemption in and through these representative physical realities which are used in the sacraments. The sacraments are instrumental causes. Only as such can they truly be natural (as distinct from conventional) signs, for this kind of cause is also, in its very causality, simultaneously an effect of the principal cause, and its power to signify consists essentially in the similitude which it bears as effect to that principal cause, in this case the crucified and risen Christ. Thus there is a discernible parallelism between the way in which a sign functions and the way in which an instrumental cause functions. In the case of a sign the thing signified determines the form which the sign takes. This in turn confronts the cognitive power of the knower as an object standing in place of the thing signified, and in the moment of its confrontation its signifying power makes its impact upon his cognitive power. In other words it renders present to that cognitive power the further reality, beyond itself, which it itself stands for. The way in which an instrument functions follows this process point for point. The principal cause moves the instrumental cause. This in turn, acting in accordance with its own special nature, is brought to bear on some external matter and thereby achieves its own instrumental effect. In other words it imprints upon that matter the form intended by the principal agent. From the point of view of sinful man himself, the term of this process, the function of the sign is to make its own impact upon his cognitive powers

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and so to lead him beyond itself to knowledge of another being less well known to him. This other being is the incarnate Word in its redemptive act, and the sacraments, by their very structure—a spiritual element conjoined to a physical one—as well as by the nature of the materials used, are made to conform to and resemble this other being.

The instrument-sign, then, has this much in common with the creative word of God: that it *effects what it signifies*. The very act of producing meaning and the act of causing are one and the same. Such an act could only proceed from God. But God's action in the sacraments differs from his action in the creation in that here he does not produce new being out of nothing, but rather produces radical changes in pre-existent being, namely fallen man, and uses pre-existent being as the visible sign and instrument through which he acts. In the instrument-sign the form which he intends to produce, the grace which is the outcome of the sacrament, is contained in a transient and incomplete mode. It is in process of realization. It is in this sense that the sacrament contains grace, not as a vessel but as a channel. But at the same time it operates in the way that is con-natural to it as that particular kind of physical reality, and so its own distinctive causality is subsumed and made subordinate to that of the principal agent and becomes inseparably one and continuous with it.

The rôle of the human minister is also examined in this treatise, and the concept of *opus operatum*, which had previously been applied in the contexts of Christology and the theology of merit, is applied here too to explain that the personal worthiness, aims, or dispositions of the minister do not affect the validity of the sacraments he confers. The only requirement for such validity is that he shall, as a free agent, voluntarily submit his own intention to that of Christ in intending to do what his Church does in the administration of the sacraments, recognizing at least that they are held sacred by that Church. Provided this condition is fulfilled he too becomes an instrumental cause, although this time a human one, working in and through his powers of intellect and will, and the act of the principal agent is channelled through him to produce its effect on the recipient of the sacrament he confers.

In his *Commentary on the Sentences* St Thomas had worked out his theology of salvation almost wholly in terms of the *merits* achieved by Christ in the sight of his Father, the *satisfaction* he had made in his Passion and death for the sins of the world, and the price of the *redemption* which he had paid on behalf of all men. The rôle of the sacraments as he sees it here is to act as remedies for sin, removing the obstacles which prevent these fruits of Christ's Passion from being applied to the individual soul. Yet even in this early work it is apparent that he goes far beyond other theologians in his insistence on man's own incorporation into Christ.

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Only by becoming one body, one person with Christ before God can mankind participate in these fruits.

But now, in the *Summa*, he goes beyond even this early position. St Paul had said that in baptism we were ‘... baptized into Christ Jesus . . . into his death . . . buried with him, therefore, by baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become engrafted by the likeness of his death, so also shall we be of his Resurrection.’ (*Romans* 6, 3–11). St Thomas interprets this with a literalness that is bold and unprecedented. By baptism the Christian becomes a *participator* in the passion of Christ, and the sacraments as a whole are designed to instill, sustain, intensify, or disseminate the ‘newness of life’ achieved by Christ in his Resurrection, and to restore it when it has been diminished or weakened in the individual’s soul. Thereby mankind is bound together in a visible union of which Christ is the head, and consecrated in him to the Church’s life of worship, again expressed in visible and sacramental forms. The Incarnation, death, and Resurrection of Christ become one and continuous with the visible prolongations of these in the life of the Church’s members.

To explain how this is achieved St Thomas invokes a long-established theory that the symbol participates in the reality that it represents. Through the sacramental representation of Christ’s death and resurrection the recipient of baptism is actually inserted into the historical event itself. But how is this achieved?

It is in the full maturing of St Thomas’s thought in the present treatise that this becomes clear. The explanation of soteriology solely in terms of redemption, merit, and satisfaction has seemed too weak to do justice to the strong assertion of Scripture. This seems to state that through his Passion Christ has, in his humanity, effectively achieved salvation once and for all by producing a radical and intrinsic transformation in the saved themselves. The main difficulty that this raised for St Thomas was that it seemed to attribute to a created reality, namely Christ’s humanity, what only God could effect. His answer, characteristically based on the Aristotelian theory of instrumental causality which had become so central to his thought, was to explain that the humanity of Christ was the *instrument through which* God wrought our salvation in Christ. And in the sacramental theology of the *Summa* he presses this new solution still further. Whereas the humanity of Christ is an instrument conjoined to his divinity, the sacraments are separated instruments—separated, that is to say, in space and time, but nevertheless still truly instruments through which the radical transformation of the sinner can be achieved, and he can become, in a real though mysterious sense, a participator not merely in

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the fruits of the Passion but in the death, Resurrection, and ‘newness of life’ of Christ himself.

Thus in and through the sacramental life of the Church and her members the work of the redemption continues. The message of Scripture is that in Christ the eschatological promises of God have been definitively fulfilled. The eschaton has arrived. The whole work of salvation has been achieved once and for all. And yet this is an *inaugurated* eschatology, still in process of being worked out in a hidden manner in history. The kingdom of heaven has come but it is still the leaven hidden in the meal. The mystery of salvation as St Thomas presents it corresponds to this. In Christ’s death and Resurrection salvation in its fulness was achieved once and for all. Yet the process by which successive generations and individuals are incorporated into, and radically transformed by, this unique event in history continues in and through the sacramental life of the Church. The meaning of that event is reasserted in the combination of gesture and word that makes up the sacrament in the moment of its application to man. And because it is a divine meaning, proceeding from the mind and will of God and working in and through the created being to which he is immediately present, it effects the redemptive work it signifies. The sacrament is a sign of the sacred mystery wrought in Christ inasmuch as it sanctifies man. And so the sacraments are not merely designed as remedies for sin, a means of removing the obstacles that impede the deed of salvation wrought upon man. Also, and far more than this, they are means of transforming man, perfecting him, so that he can take part in the worship of the Christian religion, incorporating him into the priestly people that continues to offer to the Father the glory of Christ himself in and through the sacramental gestures that converge upon the sacrifice of the Mass.