

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapse's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapse's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of John 6: 53-63

Ver. 53.—*The Jews therefore . . . strove*, Greek, *ἐμαχόντο*, i.e., *fought*, contended in words, quarrelled among themselves, some accusing Christ, others defending Him.

How: when the question enters in, how a thing is done, unbelief enters in at the same time, says S. Chrysostom. "For when it behoved them," says Cyril, "who by a miracle had perceived the Divine virtue of the Saviour, and the power of His miracles, readily to receive His words, and if any seemed too hard to seek for their solution, they did altogether the opposite. *How can this man*, &c. S. Chrysostom says, "if thou inquirest this, why didst thou not say the same in the miracle of the loaves, as to how He so greatly increased them? For from that it ought to have caused this more easily to be believed. The expression *how*, therefore, is a Judaic word, and the question of unbelievers." Let the heretics hear this, who say, "How can so great a Christ be whole in so small a host?" Rather let them say, "How can an angel be wholly in a point?" "How is God everywhere?" "How is the soul whole in the whole body, and whole in all its parts?" And if they can neither understand, nor express these things, how can

therefore humbly to have asked Christ to unfold to them the manner of doing this. If they would have done this, they would have heard it, and might have received it, and not thought the saying *hard*. As Cyril says, "They thought that they were called to the savage manners of wild beasts, and were urged to eat raw human flesh, and drink blood, things too horrible to hear of. Such were their thoughts as to how the flesh of this man would bestow eternal life, and bring them to immortality."

Ver. 62.—*Jesus knowing in Himself*, Greek, *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, Syriac, *in His soul*, i.e., through His omniscience, without any one to tell, or reveal it. "For this was a proof of His Divinity, that He revealed secrets," says Chrysostom. *That His disciples murmured at this*, He saith unto them, *Doth this scandalize you?* As though he said, "I do so many and wonderful things because I am sent by the Father for this purpose, as I have proved to you by My miracles; ye ought not therefore to be scandalized and offended at My words and deeds, but ye ought rather to ask God who sent Me for light and grace, that ye may be able to receive them."

Ver. 63.—*If therefore ye shall see*, &c. "He is speaking," says Euthymius, "concerning His future assumption into heaven." For some of them, such as the Apostles, beheld this. And others, who did not believe, although they saw it not, might have heard, and certainly learnt from those who did see.

Where He was before, as regards His Divinity, says Euthymius. For He ascended into heaven, as regards His humanity. *What will ye say*, must be understood, as Euthymius observes. "Will ye be still scandalized? I trust not. Certainly I know ye will not rightly be so. For by My ascension into heaven by My own power ye will be able to know that I came down from heaven, and that I return whither I was before, and therefore that I am not only true and a prophet, but that I am also God, and the Son of God, to whom all things are possible, yea easy, and therefore that I am able to give My Flesh for food, and by It to raise the dead. From the miracle of His ascension into heaven Christ rightly proves His Divinity and omnipotence, and from them the mystery of the Eucharist. For to the Deity nothing is impossible, nothing strange, nothing paradoxical. Yea, it is becoming to Deity to do things strange (*nova*) and paradoxical, which are above nature and human reason. As S. Cyril says, "By another wonderful thing He urges them to faith," and that appositely. For the ascension of Christ into heaven signified that He came down from heaven (for He went back from whence He came), and therefore that He was the Living Bread which came down from heaven, which was what He here wished to persuade the Capharnaites.

Maldonatus explains otherwise, thus, "When ye shall hear that I have ascended into heaven, what will ye say? Surely ye will be still more scandalized; ye will still less believe Me; ye will say that I am a sorcerer, who by the aid of the devils have pretended to fly into heaven."

being ever present with him who eateth, continually breathes into him His own life. Hear S. Ambrose (*Serm. 18 in Ps. cxviii.*), “How shall he die whose food is Life?” And presently, describing its wonderful effects, “Draw nigh unto Him, and be filled, for He is Bread. Draw nigh unto Him, and drink, for He is a Fountain. Draw nigh unto Him, and be enlightened, for He is Light. Draw nigh unto Him, and be free, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Draw nigh unto Him, and be absolved; for He is remission of sins.” And S. Bernard (*Serm. de Cæna. Dom.*) says, “Two things that Sacrament worketh in you: it diminishes the sense (of sin) in the least matters, and in graver sins it wholly takes away consent.” And again he says, “If any of you feel neither so frequently nor so severely the motions of anger, envy, lust, and such like passions, give thanks to the Body and Blood of the Lord, forasmuch as the virtue of the Sacrament worketh in you.” And S. Chrysostom on Ps. xxii. 5 (Vulg.), saith upon the words, “Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that trouble me,” “Let those who have trouble of the flesh come to the table of the Mighty One, and tribulation shall be turned into consolation.” Lastly, S. Cyril says, “The body of Christ quickens, and by our participation of it restores us to incorruption. For it is the body of none other than of the Life itself. It retains the virtue of the Word Incarnate, and is full of the power of Him by whom all things live and have their being.”

Ver. 60.—*This spake He*, &c. Christ taught these things, not in secret, not in a corner, but publicly in the synagogue in the presence of the Scribes, the Priests, and the whole people who had flocked together. For the synagogue was a sort of church.

In Capharnaum, “where,” says S. Chrysostom, “He had done so many miracles, and where He had the best right to be heard. Because the things which Christ spake concerning eating His flesh, and His being about to raise us up from death unto life eternal, seemed paradoxical and incredible to the Jews, He wished to proclaim them from that place, where by His many miracles He had gained faith and authority for Himself and His doctrine.”

Ver. 61.—*Many therefore went back. Hard*, i.e., *austere, rigid, oppressive, unmerciful*. The Arabic has *difficult*. Euthymius, *can scarcely be admitted. And who can hear it*. “Who can,” we do not say, ‘do such a thing, but even bear to bear it?’ What Jesus said concerning His Flesh, and especially the command to eat It (ver. 54), *except ye eat*, &c., seems too difficult to be believed, and too horrible to be done. For what butcher will slay Christ? Who can bear to eat human flesh, or drink human blood? These are the feasts of cannibals, such as the heathen who did not understand the mystery of the Flesh of Christ in the Eucharist in after times reproached Christians with, and so were imitators of those Capharnaïtes, as Tertullian and other Fathers testify.

This saying was not hard in itself, but hard to the stupid Jews, who imagined that the Flesh of Christ was to be cut by a butcher, and mangled by the teeth like the flesh of an ox. But they greatly erred, for Christ neither said this, nor meant it. But He wished us to eat His Flesh sacramentally, i.e., hidden in the Sacrament under the species of bread and wine, a thing which is not dreadful, but which we who daily offer and communicate find by experience to be most easy and sweet. The Jews ought

they understand the mystery of the Eucharist? Let them believe Almighty God giving assurance of the fact, although they do not understand the mode. God can do more than man can understand,” says S. Augustine. “It behoves us therefore,” says Theophylact, “when we hear, *Unless ye eat the Flesh of the Son, ye shall not have life*, to maintain undoubting faith in the reception of the Divine Mysteries, and not to ask, By what means?” In like manner Cyril, “But let us depart far away from the sins of others, having firm faith in the Mysteries. In such sublime things let us never either think, or say, ‘how?’ For this is a Judaic word, and a cause of extreme punishment.” Therefore he wisely concludes, “When God works, let us not ask ‘how?’ but let us ascribe to Him alone both the way and the knowledge of His own work.”

Ver. 54.—*Jesus therefore said*, &c. Hear S. Chrysostom, “They indeed judged this to be impossible, but He showed it to be altogether possible; and not only so, but necessary.” “The manner indeed in which it was possible,” says Cyril, “He did not unfold, but exhorted them to ask in faith: but they before they believed asked querulously.” Similarly Augustine, “How indeed It is given, and the manner of eating that Bread ye know not, *but unless ye shall eat*, &c.”

Unless ye shall eat: this is Christ’s precept concerning taking the Eucharist. Therefore from the very form of the words it is clear that it pertains only to adults: although indeed some of the ancients have extended it to little ones and infants, to whom they actually gave the Eucharist. This appears from S. Augustine (*Epist. 23 ad Bonifac.*) and S. Cyprian (*Tract. de Laps*). Indeed at Constantinople and elsewhere it was the custom to give the remains of the Eucharist to pure and innocent boys whom they called out of school into the church for the purpose. This appears from the case of the Jewish boy which I will speak of presently. But the Church subsequently defined that young children not yet come to the use of reason, are not the subject of the precept, and but little capable of fulfilling it reverently. Wherefore the Council of Trent says (*Sess. 21, Can. 4*), “If any one shall say that the communion of the Eucharist is necessary for young children before they come to years of discretion, *anathema sit*.” It is otherwise concerning the precept of baptism: *Unless any one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. For there it is plain from the form of words that Baptism is not only commanded, but also that it is ordained as a necessity for salvation, and therefore that infants cannot be saved without baptism as a means, although they are not bound by the precept of it, indeed cannot be bound. Others have extended this command of eating the Eucharist to little children in a non-literal but figurative sense, namely, that the little ones ought to eat the flesh of Christ, i.e., ought to be partakers of the mystical body of Christ which is the Church, that is, they ought to be baptized, that by the faith, hope and charity infused into them at their baptism, they may be incorporated with Christ and the Church. So think and explain S. Cyprian (*lib. 3, ad Quirin*).

c. 53.), Pope Innocent 1. (*Epist. 93, ad Patres Concil. Milev.*), &c. But this meaning is far fetched and symbolical, not literal and natural.

You will say, infants ought to be united to Christ and the Church: and this union is the effect and fruit of the Eucharist, as the Council of Florence teaches: therefore they ought to receive It, that they may obtain this union. I reply, that infants are united and incorporated into Christ and the Church by baptism, but that the perfecting of the union takes place in the Eucharist, and is Its proper and peculiar effect. But this perfection is not required of infants, nor is it necessary for their salvation. So Suarez.

And drink His Blood. From hence the Hussites, Luther, Calvin and others contend that the Eucharistic chalice ought to be given to the laity also, that they may communicate in both kinds. But the practice and definition of the Church is otherwise, and this is the best interpreter of Holy Scripture.

I reply therefore (1.) that as regards the thing (*rem*) contained in the Sacrament, the laity do also drink the Blood of Christ when they receive His Body under the species of bread. Because under that species (*sub ea*) by virtue of consecration, there is there (*ponitur*) the Body of Christ, but by concomitance there is under the same the Blood of Christ, for the Body of Christ is not bloodless, nor can the Blood of Christ be separated from His glorified Body. As therefore he who takes the Eucharist under the species of wine by virtue of the words of consecration, takes directly and primarily the Blood of Christ, and yet by concomitance takes the Body of Christ, because the Blood of Christ cannot be without His Flesh; so in turn, he who takes the Flesh of Christ, under the species of bread, takes directly the Flesh of Christ, but by concomitance takes also his Blood. For in spiritual and sacramental and divine things food and drink are the same: consequently to eat and to drink means the same thing. Wherefore he who receives in one kind only receives as much profit and grace as he who takes in both kinds. Indeed as in material things, the same milk is both food and drink, the same bread dipped in wine both feeds and affords drink. It is at once eaten and drunk. It satisfies at once hunger and thirst. Still, as regards the sacramental species, he is properly said to eat the Flesh of Christ who eats It under the species of bread, and he is said to drink His Blood who drinks It under the species of wine.

You will say, then the laity ought to do both, for Christ Jesus commands it. I reply that the expression, *and drink*, both here and elsewhere is frequently put by a hebraism for *or drink*. For it suffices to receive one species, because under either is contained whole and perfect Christ. Thus it is said (Ex. xxi. 13), “Whoso striketh father and (*i.e.*, or) mother, let him die the death.” For he who strikes either one or the other is guilty of death. The conjunction *and* here, although it disjoins the members of the subject, *viz.* father and mother, nevertheless conjoins them in the predicate, that is to say, the penalty of death. Thus also, “silver and (*i.e.*, or) gold have I none” (Acts iii. 6). Similar constructions are found in Ex. xxii. 10; Ezek. xliv. 22, and elsewhere. So here too it may be taken thus, from what Christ says (Ver. 51, 58), concerning bread alone. And thus Paul explains Christ’s saying, “Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. xi. 27). See the Council of Trent (*Sess. 21, Can. 1*), Bellarmine, Suarez, Maldonatus and

life.” Christ here signifies that the life which is originally in the Father is communicated to us through the Son and the Eucharist, as by an organic means. So Leontius, Jansen, and others. But above the rest, S. Cyril, whom hear, “As I am made man by the will of the Father, who came forth from essential life, and as being man I live, and have filled My body with Life, no otherwise shall he who eateth My flesh live by Me. For I assumed mortal flesh; but because I exist as life essentially, dwelling in the flesh, I have made it wholly like unto My own life. For I indeed am not conquered by the death of the flesh, but as God I have overcome all death and destruction.” And shortly afterwards, “As the Father hath sent Me, so that I am become man, yet I live by the Father, that is, I perfectly preserve the Father’s nature: so he who shall receive Me by eating My flesh shall surely live, being made wholly like unto Me, who am able to give him life, because I am of the living Father.” He adds a simile taken from red-hot iron. For as the fire communicates its heat to the red-hot iron, so does the living Christ impart His life unto us in the Eucharist. In admiration of this S. Augustine exclaims (*lib.7, Confess. c. 10*), “O eternal Truth, and true Charity, and sweet Eternity, I tremble with love and dread, as though I heard Thy voice from on high saying, ‘I am the Bread of the strong: grow as thou shalt eat Me.’”

Observe here the gradation, by which life gradually descends to us from God as it were by stairs. The first step is, the Father communicating His own Divine Essence to the Son. The second, when the Son communicates the same life to the Humanity which He assumed by the participation of attributes. Third, when He inspires the life of grace and glory which He shares with It. The fourth, when He infuses not equal but like life into us in the Eucharist.

Lastly, Christ here signifies what I have spoken of in the preceding verse, that His Godhead which always abides in us, after the reception of the Eucharist, even after the species have been consumed, continually causes the life of grace to flow into us, and will after death raise us up again unto immortal life. This is what He means when He saith, *I live by the Father*, &c. He means, Because I receive Godhead, which is pure life from the Father, therefore *he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me*. For My Godhead abiding in him, will continually breathe into his soul the breath of life. And his body shall after death be raised up by It to the beatific life. It is as the seminal virtue which lies hid in the heart of a grain of wheat, that seems dead through the winter, but in spring by the heat of the sun opening out its force, it, as it were, raises the grain of wheat itself from death, and causes it to germinate, and produce thirty and sixty fold.

Ver. 59.—*This is the bread*, &c. He intimates the same thing which I have said at the end of the foregoing verse. For Christ came down from heaven not as man, but as God. Wherefore he who eateth Him in the Eucharist shall live for ever, because in truth he eateth God and the Godhead, which

And I live because of (propter) the Father, i.e., through the Father, of the Father. For the Father in begetting Me communicates to Me His own Divinity, which is the essence of life. For God hath begotten God, the Living One hath begotten the Living One. “The Son therefore,” saith Cyril, “is as Light of Light, and as Life of Life. And as the Father gives light through the Son to the things which need light, and through Him does wisely, so through the Son as through His life which proceeds from Him, He quickens those things which have need of life.” And again, “I live by (*propter*) the Father: for since My Father is Life by nature, and because I am by nature His Son, I naturally possess this property of His nature, that is life.”

Here Christ gives the reason by which He is living and quickening Bread in the Eucharist, who will raise us from death at the judgment-day. And He opens out the very origin and fountain of life and resurrection. For God the Father is that Fount of life, according to the words, “With Thee is the Fountain of life” (Ps. xxxv. 10). And He communicates together with His Essence this life to His Son, whereby it comes to pass that the Son Himself is a Fountain of Life. Wherefore as the Father always abides in the Son, always imparts this source of life to the Son, so also the Son, being sent by the Father in the flesh, and abiding in it, continually infuses this Divine life into the flesh and the Humanity which He has assumed, and continually abiding in us, inspires the like life into us who receive His Flesh in the Eucharist. He therefore *shall live by Me*, that as the Father communicates His own life to the Son, so Christ communicates His life to the Christian who rightly receives Him. Wherefore S. Dionysius the Areopagite (*de Eccles. Hierarch. c. 1*) teaches that the Priest passes into fellowship with the Godhead, and (*c. 2*) that communion deifies, and (*c. 3*) that those who worthily communicate are by the similitude of a pure and divine life grafted into Christ. Moreover, the Eucharist does the same thing for the pure and the penitent. Whence S. Augustine (*Serm. 1, de Temp.*) says, “Let him change his life, who wishes to receive Life. For if he change not his life, he will receive Life unto condemnation, and will rather be destroyed than healed by It: rather slain than quickened.” For the impure and the impenitent receive not life, but death of body and soul, both now and eternally, from the Eucharist. Thus S. Cyprian (*Serm. 5, de Laps.*), speaking of a woman who communicated unworthily, says, “She received not bread, but a sword, and as it were taking some deadly poison she was shaken, trembled, and fell. She who had deceived man, felt the vengeance of God.” He relates several cases of a similar kind. Durandus also (*Ration. Divin. Off. lib. 6, c. 10*) relates that the pestilence which ravaged Rome, from the time of Pope Pelagius until Gregory the Great, and caused many thousand deaths, was sent by God in punishment of those, who, after the Lenten fast and the Easter communion, returned to their former wickedness. For they were to be visited with death who profaned the Eucharist, which is true life.

The meaning then is, “As the Father, who liveth by Himself, and is the Essence itself of life, hath sent Me into this world, and I have life from Him who begat Me, life, I say, both human, from a human soul, and of greater importance, Divine life, through partaking of the Godhead, with which My humanity is hypostatically united, and will be united for ever, so in like manner he who eateth the living Me, also from Me, ever abiding in Him as regards My Godhead, shall receive a perpetual life of grace and glory; and as regards his body, I will in due time raise it up into a blessed and eternal

others.

We may add that also by a hebraism, the word *unless* ought to be repeated, thus, *Unless ye eat, &c., and unless ye drink, &c.* That means, *If ye neither eat nor drink, &c.* This clearly appears from the Greek, which for *unless* has *ἐὰν μὴ*, *i.e., if ye do not eat, and if ye do not drink*, that is, if ye do neither the one nor the other. The reason *à priori* is because Christ is here answering the Jews striving among themselves, and saying concerning the Flesh alone of Christ, *How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?* To whom He replies, *Amen, Amen, i.e., most truly and certainly, except ye shall eat the Flesh of the Son of man, &c.* But He adds, *and drink His Blood*, that He may strengthen the expression, *unless ye shall eat His Flesh*. For that is not true and living flesh which has no blood. He would also show His liberality, charity, and the greatness of the benefit, by which He affords to the faithful in the Eucharist, the complete sustenance which consists of food and drink. These words have respect therefore rather to the blessing than to the precept.

Lastly, there is a canon for the interpretation of Holy Scripture delivered by S. Augustine (*de Doct. Christ. lib. 3, c. 17*). There are many precepts in Scripture which are given to the whole Church, which yet are to be fulfilled by some, not by all. Such is, “Increase and multiply” (Gen. i.) This bids some to take wives, and propagate the human race, but not that all and each should do so. So here, *Unless ye shall eat, &c., i.e., unless there are some, viz. priests, who take the Sacrament of the Eucharist under both species, ye shall not have life in you.* For if there be none such, then there will be none to consecrate the Eucharist, none to administer it, and so the whole fruit of the most Blessed Sacrament would be lost, as Bellarmine observes. For it is the office of priests to consecrate and receive in both kinds, that there may be not only a perfect Sacrament, but also that they may offer the sacrifice. This requires both kinds, both to signify perfect nourishment (for the sacrifice is, as it were, the food of God): and this nourishment consists of food and drink: as also that there may be a perfect representation of the passion and death of Christ. In them the Blood was separated from the Body of Christ, as by the force of the words of consecration, the Body is consecrated separately under the species of bread, and the Blood under the species of wine. Formerly indeed the laity at times, not always, communicated in both kinds in the primitive Church. This is plain from S. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 28), and S. Dionysius (*Celest. Hierarch. cap. 3, part 3*), and S. Cyprian (*Serm. de Laps.*). But as the number of believers increased, the Church rightly abrogated this custom, because of the peril of irreverence, and various abuses which had been often experienced.

Ye shall not have, &c. That it is possible to have spiritual life, by which the believing soul lives in the faith and love of God without the Eucharist is plain from the case of the newly baptised. Here however it is said that there cannot be life without It, because life cannot be long retained,

nourished and fed without this food, especially since the precept of communicating, both by the natural and Divine law, as well as human law (for the Church has ordained that every one shall communicate once a year, at Easter), urges and obliges us to take it. Whence Rupertus says, A man is not considered to have not eaten, unless he be unwilling to eat, or has been careless and neglectful. And we commonly say that a man cannot live without food, meaning for long. Hence S. Basil says (*lib. 1, de Bapt.*), "He who has been regenerated by Baptism, ought afterwards to be nourished by the participation of the Divine Mysteries." Similarly Dionysius Carthusianus, "As the body cannot be sustained without corporeal food, nor continue in natural life, so without this life-giving food the soul cannot persist in the spiritual life of grace." So too Lyra, "As in bodily life food is necessary to preserve life, so is this Sacrament necessary to the spiritual life, because it is preservative of the spiritual life: for as Baptism is a certain spiritual generation, so is the Eucharist spiritual nutriment."

From what has been said it is clear that the fruit and effect of the Eucharist may be gathered from the analogy of the benefits of bread and food. What bread and food do for the body the Eucharist does for the soul, and occasionally even for the body, in that it nourishes and quickens the body, yea, sometimes heals diseases, and drives away peril of death. Wherefore formerly some persons when going on board ship were wont to carry the Eucharist with them, that they might take it in case of danger; yea, to ward off peril. Thus, Gregory, the father of S. Gregory Nazianzen, being worn out by a protracted burning fever, and being nigh unto death was delivered from it, and restored to life and health by means of the Eucharist, received on Easter Day. Nazianzen relates this in his discourse on the death of his father. The same saint relates that his mother was restored to health from a severe and dangerous sickness through receiving spiritual nourishment from bread which he himself had consecrated for the holy sacrifice. He also testifies in a sermon on the death of his sister Gorgonia that she was healed of paralysis of all her limbs, and excruciating pains, by partaking of the Eucharist. S. Ambrose in a discourse on the death of his brother Satyrus, relates that he being shipwrecked escaped certain peril of death and swam to shore, in consequence of the Eucharist being appended to his neck. S. Gregory relates a similar escape by means of the Eucharist of Maximianus, Bishop of Syracuse (*lib. 3, Dial. c. 36*). In the time of the Emperor Justinian at Constantinople, the son of a certain Jew received after the custom of that age, together with several Christian children, the remains of the Eucharist. For this he was thrown by his father, a glass-blower, into a burning furnace of glass. There by the virtue of the Eucharist he was preserved alive and unhurt. This happened A.D. 552. (*See Evagrius, lib. 4, c. 24, Gregory of Tours, lib. 1, Mirac. c. 10.*) Finally listen to Cyril summing up the fruits and effects of the Eucharist: "It drives away not only death, but all diseases. For it calms down, while Christ abides in us, the raging law of our members: It strengthens godliness: It extinguishes the perturbations of the mind: nor does It make question of our sins: but It heals the sick, It restores the bruised, and like the good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep, It raises us from every fall."

Ver. 55.—*He that cometh &c. Eateth, i.e.*, says Rupertus, worthily, with due preparation and purification, with a previous act of contrition and sacramental confession, if a man have any mortal sin upon his conscience. For if, after examination, a man be not

food, after it has been digested, leaves its power to nourish in the chile which remains, so the *species* of the Eucharist after they have been digested, leave in a manner their power of nourishing unto eternal life in the Divinity of Christ which with grace remains, For His Humanity by His own ordinances has been tied to the species of bread and wine, that so long as they remain, It also should remain, and when they are consumed that It should cease to be present, as S. Thomas and the rest of the Theologians teach. In like manner after a good work there remains in us not only habitual grace, but also the Divinity Itself, and the Whole Most Holy Trinity, which makes us to be partakers of the Divine nature, and sons of God.

Here observe by the way a threefold distinction between the Eucharist and common food.

(1.) The first is that common food does not remain in us, but is converted into chile, and then into blood, and then into the flesh and substance of our several members. But in the Eucharist the Flesh of Christ is not converted into the substance of him who eateth, but remains uncorrupt and unchanged in Itself, forasmuch as It is immortal and glorious. This is what Christ said to a certain Saint, "Thou shalt not change Me into thyself, but thou shalt be changed into Me."

(2.) The second is, that common food is of itself without life, but is animated, and receives life from him that eateth it. But the Flesh of Christ in the Eucharist is both living and life-giving, giving life to him that eateth It.

(3.) Bread and food leave behind no part of themselves, because they are wholly converted into chile, and transfuse into it their power of nourishing. But the Flesh of Christ in the Eucharist, after the species being consumed, the bread has vanished, leaves after It, Its own *hypostasis*, that is to say, the Person of the Word, and His Divinity, on account of which Christ is here said to remain in him that eateth, and to raise him up, and he that eateth to remain in Christ. So Cyril and the Fathers cited above. Also S. Ambrose (*lib. 6, de Sacrament, c. 1*), whom hear. "How then did the Bread, even the Living Bread come down from heaven? Because the same our Lord Jesus Christ is a partaker both of Deity and of a body; and thou who receivest His Flesh, art partaker through that Food of His Divine Substance." So too, S. Hilary (*lib. 8, de Trin.*) "He Himself is in us through His Flesh, whilst we are with Him in This which is in God."

Ver. 58.—*As the living Father, &c. . . hath sent Me*, in the Flesh into the world, through the Incarnation, for the salvation of men. *The living Father*, who is Himself Divine Life, uncreated Substance, and therefore in begetting Me hath communicated to Me the same Substance, that I might communicate the same to the Humanity, which He sent Me to assume, that I might communicate similar spiritual, holy, blessed and eternal life to the faithful who eat of Me.

into a man by the reception of the Eucharist, even after the Eucharistic species have been consumed in the stomach, really dwells in the man, not only as in His temple by charity, but also as food in his stomach by way of nutriment. For as digested food nourishes and feeds the stomach, and through it all the limbs and members to which the stomach transmits the food, so in like manner the Divinity of Christ with His Flesh taken in the Eucharist, as it were the Food of soul and body, because it cannot be digested and consumed by man, abides continually in, as it were, the stomach of the soul, and nourishes and feeds it, and by it all the faculties and powers of the soul. And this is what Christ here saith, *He that eateth My Flesh abideth in Me, and I in him*. For the Deity of Christ as it were food abides always in the soul, feeding it; and the soul in her turn abides in the Deity of Christ, as an immortal and life-giving Food. For she abides as it were in Life itself, which feeds us continually with the influx of habitual grace, and at stated periods by the infusion of fresh actual grace, as by fresh holy illuminations, fresh inspirations, new pious affections and impulses sent into the soul, that we may become the same that Christ is, says S. Gregory Nyssen. And thus we are made spiritual, holy and divine, and that daily more and more, and have always in the stomach both of our body and our soul the very Divinity of Christ, as it were the tree of life, so that It in Its own time, in the day of judgment and the general resurrection, will communicate to us Its own immortal, blessed and Divine life. Thus sometimes medicine, a long time after it has been taken and digested, through the virtue which it leaves after it, works and heals, even though it at first makes those who take it more sick, because it attacks the depraved humours (of the body), and fights with them until it purges and expels them; and when they are expelled, it restores the body to its pristine purity and health.

The following is the order of things in the communion of the Eucharist. (1.) Through the receiving of the Eucharist, the Flesh and Blood of Christ, yea whole Christ, *i.e.*, His Humanity and Divinity, as it were food, enters into us, and abides in us. (2.) The *species* of the Eucharist being digested by the stomach, and converted into our flesh (for the matter of the bread and wine which had been annihilated in consecration, comes back by the power of God), the Flesh and Humanity of Christ cease to be in us: but the Divinity of Christ, as it were immortal Food, remains in us. And This (3.) communicates Its own eternal life to the soul, nourishes and augments it by continually feeding in the way of which I have spoken. (4.) The Same will raise our bodies from death at the resurrection, and unite them to our souls, and so bestow the life of eternal glory upon the whole man, inasmuch as we have the Eucharist, at least as regards the Divinity of Christ which it contains, as it were the food and medicine of immortality always in our body and our soul. And by means of It Christ abides in us, as He Himself here asserts, inasmuch as He is very God. But God will be the physical cause of our resurrection as the Flesh of Christ will be the moral cause of the same. And although our flesh must first die, even as the Flesh of Christ died, yet this food of the Eucharist, that is, Christ as God always abiding in a man, will raise him up from death unto life eternal. This is what Christ saith, *And I will raise him up at the last day. I am the living Bread who came down from heaven. If any man shall eat this Bread he shall live for ever*. For Christ as God, not as man, came down from heaven. *He that eateth, &c.*—because as food It always sustains and nourishes him into eternal life. Nor indeed can these words be otherwise explained. As therefore

conscious of any mortal sin, even though he may really be in some mortal sin unknown to himself, the communion of the Eucharist will blot out that sin, and restore the communicant to the grace and love of God. This is the teaching of Suarez, and Theologians, *passim*. Moreover, the sixth General Council (*Act 8*) understands this verse of the Eucharist, and asserts that in it the Flesh of Christ is called *life-giving*, because It is the proper Flesh of the Word, and hypostatically united to the Word.

Hath eternal life: because by the Eucharist he receives grace to preserve him, and bring him unto life eternal. As Dion Carthusianus says, “He hath eternal life, because he hath Me: and he hath the life of grace which is continued by this Sacrament, until he arrive at the life of everlasting glory.” S. Cyril gives the reason—“Because the Flesh of Christ is the Flesh of God, which is united to the Word of God, who is, by His nature, Life, and thus is made life-giving. The Eucharist therefore quickens the soul, because It preserves, feeds, augments grace. Also It blots out venial sins, and even mortal sins, if a man has forgotten them. And It will raise up the body from death. Wherefore it follows, *And I will raise him up*. Moreover, S. Bernard thus explains these words of Christ tropologically (*Tract. de Diligend Deo*). *He that eateth, &c.*, “That is, he who recalls to mind My death, and after My example mortifies his members which are upon the earth, hath eternal life.”

And I will raise him up at the last day, in which the passion of Christ and the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, will gain their ultimate and perfect fruit and reward in the saints. I, who am really contained and eaten in the Eucharist, *will raise up* him that eateth Me, that as I give its own glory to the soul, so I may bestow upon the body its glory. For the glorified soul requires a glorious body that the whole man may be beatified. Harken to S. Cyril, “I, He said, that is, My Body which shall be eaten, *will raise him up*. For Christ is no other than His Flesh. I do not say so because It is not different by nature, but because since the Incarnation He can by no means be divided into two Sons. I, therefore, He says, who am made man, will raise up those who eat Me by means of My Flesh at the last day. Assuredly it is altogether impossible that death and destruction should not be overcome by Him who by nature is Life.”

I will raise up, to immortal glory. “Lest they should suppose,” says S. Augustine, “that by that food and drink life eternal was promised in such a manner, that those who receive it should not die in the body, He condescended to meet such a thought by immediately adding, *and I will raise him up at the last day*, that meanwhile he should live according to the spirit, in the rest which the spirits of the saints enjoy: and as concerns the body, not even his flesh should be defrauded of life eternal, but should possess it at the resurrection of the dead at the last day.”

Wherefore the Council of Nice calls the Eucharist “the symbol of the

resurrection.” And S. Ignatius (*Epist. ad Ephes.*) calls It the “medicine of immortality.” S. Cyril in this verse calls It “food nourishing for immortality and eternal life.” Hence S. Chrysostom (*lib. 6, de Sacerdot.*) asserts that the souls of those who receive this Sacrament at the end of life are by reason of having received It carried direct by the angels into heaven; and that their bodies, the angels like attendants surrounding them, are guarded for eternal life. Nyssen indeed adds (*Orat. Catechet. c. 37*), “that our bodies cannot win immortality, unless they have been united to this immortal Body of Christ.” S. Cyprian has a similar remark (*Serm. de Cæna Dom.*), also Tertullian (*de Resurrer. Carn.*) Yea, S. Irenæus (*lib. 4, c. 34*), from the truth that we communicate of the Flesh and Blood of an immortal Christ proves the resurrection, that is to say, that we shall rise to life immortal. Understand all these sayings, not that by the Eucharist there is confined in the body any physical quality, as a cause of its resurrection, nor any supernatural gift, which in the way of grace and glory is not due to the holy soul, but because the resurrection due to grace is given also to the saints by another title, which peculiarly and specially belongs to the Eucharist, that is to say, on account of that special union with the glorified Body which takes place in the Eucharist because of the institution and promise of Christ. So Suarez. Let me add that the Eucharist preserves, nourishes, and augments grace, which is the seed of glory. The Eucharist therefore is the instrumental cause of the resurrection (a moral, that is, not a physical cause), because of which Christ will cause us to rise again. Wherefore He saith not, “the Eucharist shall raise him again,” but, “I will raise him again.”

Ver. 56.—*For My Flesh, &c., truly, i.e.,* not parabolically nor figuratively, as Euthymius says from S. Chrysostom, but really and properly, according to the plain meaning of the words. Hence S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 61. ad Pop.*) teaches that we in the Eucharist are united and commingled with the Flesh of Christ, not only by love and consent of will, but also really and substantially. “Wherefore,” saith he, “He hath commingled Himself with us, and united His Body to ours, that we should be made one whole, even as a body is connected with its head. This is the desire of ardent lovers. It is this which Job hinted at, saying to his servants, to whom he was beyond measure desirable, because they showed their desire, saying, ‘Who will give us to be filled with his flesh?’” (Job xxxi.) “Not only does Christ afford Himself to be seen by those who desire Him, but even to be handled and eaten, to have our teeth fastened in His Flesh, and to fulfil every desire. As lions therefore breathe out fire, so let us depart from that Table, made terrible to the devil, and contemplating our Head in our minds, and the charity which He has manifested towards us.”

Ver. 57.—*He that eateth, &c.* Observe (1.) S. John delights in the word *abide*. By it he sometimes signifies delay, and duration of time (as i. 33), *upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding*. Sometimes, however, by the expression *abides* he expresses, moreover, *indwelling* and *intimate union*, as here and in his 1st Epistle (iii. 9), “His seed,” *i.e.,* of the grace of God, “abides in him.” And iv. 16, “He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him.”

Observe (2.) the abiding and union of the soul with Christ in the Eucharist not only takes place by the Eucharist Itself, but by the Eucharist in such manner that Christ being therein hidden, really and corporeally enters into our body, and so Christ with

us, and we with the flesh of Christ, and by consequence with His Person, Divinity and omnipotence are really united and commingled, even as food is really united and commingled with our flesh. So S. Chrysostom observes, “He saith, *abideth in Me*, that He may show we are commingled with Himself.” And Euthymius, “*He abideth in Me*; he is united to Me by the reception and communication of My Flesh and My Blood, and is made one body with Me.” Theophylact, “In this place we are taught the Sacrament of communion. For he who eats and drinks the Flesh and Blood of the Lord, abides in the Lord Himself, and the Lord in Him. For there is a new sort of commingling, and one beyond understanding, that God is in us, and we in God.” S. Cyril in this verse brings forward the apt similitude of wax. “It is as if when any one should pour wax into liquefied wax; it must be that the one should commingle with the other throughout. So if any one receive the Flesh and Blood of the Lord, he is so conjoined with Him, that Christ is found in him, and he in Christ.” And shortly afterwards, “As a little leaven, as Paul says, leaveneth the whole lump, so a little benediction draws the whole man into Himself (Christ), and fills him with His grace: and thus Christ abides in us, and we in Him. For truly the whole leaven passes into the whole lump. And this is the meaning of the passage.” The same Cyril also declares (*lib. 10, c. 13*) that Christ is in us, “not only through the indwelling, which is meant by love, but also by a participation of nature.”

S. Hilary teaches the same (*lib. 8, de Trin.*), and S. Irenæus (*lib. 4, c. 34*). Hence S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. 4. Mystag.*) declares, that in Holy Communion we become Christ-bearers, yea conporate and united by consanguinity with Christ. Moreover Christ really abides with us so long as the sacramental species of bread and wine remain in us. But when they are digested and consumed by the stomach, Christ ceases indeed to live in us as Man substantially; but still through that previous union which He has contracted with us, the spiritual life of our souls is by His grace fed, strengthened and preserved for eternity. For (His Flesh) is grafted into our body as it were a seed of immortality. Which seed, as I have said, is not physical, but moral, like the merit of good works. For as a good work leaves after it merit, as it were a seed of glory, as it were a sort of title to eternal life, so does the communion of the Holy Eucharist leave a similar new title (*jus*), one peculiar to Itself, after It, unto the same life, as it were a seed of glory in us. For Christ grants this title to communicants through contact with, and partaking of His life-giving Body. For it is fitting and becoming that Christ should impart His own glorious life to those to whom He imparts Himself. “For it surely behoved,” says Cyril, “that not only the soul should rise to the blessed life by the Holy Ghost, but also that this worthless and earthly body should, by the taste of that which is akin to it, by contact and by food, be brought back to immortality.” The Flesh of Christ, therefore, in the Eucharist is the moral instrument of the Resurrection. Would you learn the physical cause of the same? It is this. The Deity of Christ in the Eucharist is the physical cause of the resurrection. To understand this from the foundation, observe that Christ as God, by the grace given and infused