

THIRD PART, QUESTION 81

Of the Use Which Christ Made of This Sacrament at Its Institution (In Four Articles)

We have now to consider the use which Christ made of this sacrament at its institution; under which heading there are four points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether Christ received His own body and blood?
- (2) Whether He gave it to Judas?
- (3) What kind of body did He receive or give, namely, was it passible or impassible?
- (4) What would have been the condition of Christ's body under this sacrament, if it had been reserved or consecrated during the three days He lay dead?

Whether Christ received His own body and blood?

IIIa q. 81 a. 1

Objection 1. It seems that Christ did not receive His own body and blood, because nothing ought to be asserted of either Christ's doings or sayings, which is not handed down by the authority of Sacred Scripture. But it is not narrated in the gospels that He ate His own body or drank His own blood. Therefore we must not assert this as a fact.

Objection 2. Further, nothing can be within itself except perchance by reason of its parts, for instance. as one part is in another, as is stated in Phys. iv. But what is eaten and drunk is in the eater and drinker. Therefore, since the entire Christ is under each species of the sacrament, it seems impossible for Him to have received this sacrament.

Objection 3. Further, the receiving of this sacrament is twofold, namely, spiritual and sacramental. But the spiritual was unsuitable for Christ, as He derived no benefit from the sacrament. and in consequence so was the sacramental, since it is imperfect without the spiritual, as was observed above (q. 80, a. 1). Consequently, in no way did Christ partake of this sacrament.

On the contrary, Jerome says (Ad Hedib., Ep. xxx), "The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself the guest and banquet, is both the partaker and what is eaten."

I answer that, Some have said that Christ during the supper gave His body and blood to His disciples, but did not partake of it Himself. But this seems improbable. Because Christ Himself was the first to fulfill what He required others to observe: hence He willed first to be baptized when imposing Baptism upon others: as we read in Acts 1:1: "Jesus began to do and to teach." Hence He first of all took His own body and blood, and afterwards gave it to be taken by the disciples. And hence the gloss upon Ruth 3:7, "When he had eaten and drunk, says: Christ ate and drank at the supper, when He gave to the disciples the sacrament of His body and blood. Hence, 'because the children partook* of His flesh and blood, He also hath been partaker in the same.'"

Reply to Objection 1. We read in the Gospels how

Christ "took the bread. . . and the chalice"; but it is not to be understood that He took them merely into His hands, as some say. but that He took them in the same way as He gave them to others to take. Hence when He said to the disciples, "Take ye and eat," and again, "Take ye and drink," it is to be understood that He Himself, in taking it, both ate and drank. Hence some have composed this rhyme:

"The King at supper sits,
The twelve as guests He greets,
Clasping Himself in His hands,
The food Himself now eats."

Reply to Objection 2. As was said above (q. 76, a. 5), Christ as contained under this sacrament stands in relation to place, not according to His own dimensions, but according to the dimensions of the sacramental species; so that Christ is Himself in every place where those species are. And because the species were able to be both in the hands and the mouth of Christ, the entire Christ could be in both His hands and mouth. Now this could not come to pass were His relation to place to be according to His proper dimensions.

Reply to Objection 3. As was stated above (q. 79, a. 1, ad 2), the effect of this sacrament is not merely an increase of habitual grace, but furthermore a certain actual delectation of spiritual sweetness. But although grace was not increased in Christ through His receiving this sacrament, yet He had a certain spiritual delectation from the new institution of this sacrament. Hence He Himself said (Lk. 22:15): "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you," which words Eusebius explains of the new mystery of the New Testament, which He gave to the disciples. And therefore He ate it both spiritually and sacramentally, inasmuch as He received His own body under the sacrament which sacrament of His own body He both understood and prepared; yet differently from others who partake of it both sacramentally and spiritually, for these receive an increase of grace, and they have need of the sacramental signs for perceiving its truth.

* Vulg.: 'are partakers' (Heb. 2:14)

Objection 1. It seems that Christ did not give His body to Judas. Because, as we read (Mat. 26:29), our Lord, after giving His body and blood to the disciples, said to them: “I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of My Father.” From this it appears that those to whom He had given His body and blood were to drink of it again with Him. But Judas did not drink of it afterwards with Him. Therefore he did not receive Christ’s body and blood with the other disciples.

Objection 2. Further, what the Lord commanded, He Himself fulfilled, as is said in Acts 1:1: “Jesus began to do and to teach.” But He gave the command (Mat. 7:6): “Give not that which is holy to dogs.” Therefore, knowing Judas to be a sinner, seemingly He did not give him His body and blood.

Objection 3. Further, it is distinctly related (Jn. 13:26) that Christ gave dipped bread to Judas. Consequently, if He gave His body to him, it appears that He gave it him in the morsel, especially since we read (Jn. 13:26) that “after the morsel, Satan entered into him.” And on this passage Augustine says (Tract. lxii in Joan.): “From this we learn how we should beware of receiving a good thing in an evil way... For if he be ‘chastised’ who does ‘not discern,’ i.e. distinguish, the body of the Lord from other meats, how must he be ‘condemned’ who, feigning himself a friend, comes to His table a foe?” But (Judas) did not receive our Lord’s body with the dipped morsel; thus Augustine commenting on Jn. 13:26, “When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon the Iscariot [Vulg.: ‘to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon],” says (Tract. lxii in Joan.): “Judas did not receive Christ’s body then, as some think who read carelessly.” Therefore it seems that Judas did not receive the body of Christ.

On the contrary, Chrysostom says (Hom. lxxxii in Matth.): “Judas was not converted while partaking of the sacred mysteries: hence on both sides his crime becomes the more heinous, both because imbued with such a purpose he approached the mysteries, and because he became none the better for approaching, neither from fear, nor from the benefit received, nor from the honor conferred on him.”

I answer that, Hilary, in commenting on Mat. 26:17, held that Christ did not give His body and blood

to Judas. And this would have been quite proper, if the malice of Judas be considered. But since Christ was to serve us as a pattern of justice, it was not in keeping with His teaching authority to sever Judas, a hidden sinner, from Communion with the others without an accuser and evident proof. lest the Church’s prelates might have an example for doing the like, and lest Judas himself being exasperated might take occasion of sinning. Therefore, it remains to be said that Judas received our Lord’s body and blood with the other disciples, as Dionysius says (Eccl. Hier. iii), and Augustine (Tract. lxii in Joan.).

Reply to Objection 1. This is Hilary’s argument, to show that Judas did not receive Christ’s body. But it is not cogent; because Christ is speaking to the disciples, from whose company Judas separated himself: and it was not Christ that excluded him. Therefore Christ for His part drinks the wine even with Judas in the kingdom of God; but Judas himself repudiated this banquet.

Reply to Objection 2. The wickedness of Judas was known to Christ as God; but it was unknown to Him, after the manner in which men know it. Consequently, Christ did not repel Judas from Communion; so as to furnish an example that such secret sinners are not to be repelled by other priests.

Reply to Objection 3. Without any doubt Judas did not receive Christ’s body in the dipped bread; he received mere bread. Yet as Augustine observes (Tract. lxii in Joan.), “perchance the feigning of Judas is denoted by the dipping of the bread; just as some things are dipped to be dyed. If, however, the dipping signifies here anything good” (for instance, the sweetness of the Divine goodness, since bread is rendered more savory by being dipped), “then, not undeservedly, did condemnation follow his ingratitude for that same good.” And owing to that ingratitude, “what is good became evil to him, as happens to them who receive Christ’s body unworthily.”

And as Augustine says (Tract. lxii in Joan.), “it must be understood that our Lord had already distributed the sacrament of His body and blood to all His disciples, among whom was Judas also, as Luke narrates: and after that, we came to this, where, according to the relation of John, our Lord, by dipping and handing the morsel, does most openly declare His betrayer.”

Objection 1. It seems that Christ both received and gave to the disciples His impassible body. Because on Mat. 17:2, “He was transfigured before them,” the gloss says: “He gave to the disciples at the supper that body which He had through nature, but neither mortal nor passible.” And again, on Lev. 2:5, “if thy oblation be

from the frying-pan,” the gloss says: “The Cross mightier than all things made Christ’s flesh fit for being eaten, which before the Passion did not seem so suited.” But Christ gave His body as suited for eating. Therefore He gave it just as it was after the Passion, that is, impassible and immortal.

Objection 2. Further, every passible body suffers by contact and by being eaten. Consequently, if Christ's body was passible, it would have suffered both from contact and from being eaten by the disciples.

Objection 3. Further, the sacramental words now spoken by the priest in the person of Christ are not more powerful than when uttered by Christ Himself. But now by virtue of the sacramental words it is Christ's impassible and immortal body which is consecrated upon the altar. Therefore, much more so was it then.

On the contrary, As Innocent III says (De Sacr. Alt. Myst. iv), "He bestowed on the disciples His body such as it was." But then He had a passible and a mortal body. Therefore, He gave a passible and mortal body to the disciples.

I answer that, Hugh of Saint Victor (Innocent III, De Sacr. Alt. Myst. iv), maintained, that before the Passion, Christ assumed at various times the four properties of a glorified body —namely, subtlety in His birth, when He came forth from the closed womb of the Virgin; agility, when He walked dryshod upon the sea; clarity, in the Transfiguration; and impassibility at the Last Supper, when He gave His body to the disciples to be eaten. And according to this He gave His body in an impassible and immortal condition to His disciples.

But whatever may be the case touching the other qualities, concerning which we have already stated what should be held (q. 28, a. 2, ad 3; q. 45, a. 2), nevertheless the above opinion regarding impassibility is inadmissible. For it is manifest that the same body of Christ which was then seen by the disciples in its own species, was received by them under the sacramental species.

But as seen in its own species it was not impassible; nay more, it was ready for the Passion. Therefore, neither was Christ's body impassible when given under the sacramental species.

Yet there was present in the sacrament, in an impassible manner, that which was passible of itself; just as that was there invisibly which of itself was visible. For as sight requires that the body seen be in contact with the adjacent medium of sight, so does passion require contact of the suffering body with the active agents. But Christ's body, according as it is under the sacrament, as stated above (a. 1, ad 2; q. 76, a. 5), is not compared with its surroundings through the intermediary of its own dimensions, whereby bodies touch each other, but through the dimensions of the bread and wine; consequently, it is those species which are acted upon and are seen, but not Christ's own body.

Reply to Objection 1. Christ is said not to have given His mortal and passible body at the supper, because He did not give it in mortal and passible fashion. But the Cross made His flesh adapted for eating, inasmuch as this sacrament represents Christ's Passion.

Reply to Objection 2. This argument would hold, if Christ's body, as it was passible, were also present in a passible manner in this sacrament.

Reply to Objection 3. As stated above (q. 76, a. 4), the accidents of Christ's body are in this sacrament by real concomitance, but not by the power of the sacrament, whereby the substance of Christ's body comes to be there. And therefore the power of the sacramental words extends to this, that the body, i.e. Christ's, is under this sacrament, whatever accidents really exist in it.

Whether, if this sacrament had been reserved in a pyx, or consecrated at the moment of Christ's death by one of the apostles, Christ Himself would have died there?

IIIa q. 81 a. 4

Objection 1. It seems that if this sacrament had been reserved in a pyx at the moment of Christ's death, or had then been consecrated by one of the apostles, that Christ would not have died there. For Christ's death happened through His Passion. But even then He was in this sacrament in an impassible manner. Therefore, He could not die in this sacrament.

Objection 2. Further, on the death of Christ, His blood was separated from the body. But His flesh and blood are together in this sacrament. Therefore He could not die in this sacrament.

Objection 3. Further, death ensues from the separation of the soul from the body. But both the body and the soul of Christ are contained in this sacrament. Therefore Christ could not die in this sacrament.

On the contrary, The same Christ Who was upon the cross would have been in this sacrament. But He died upon the cross. Therefore, if this sacrament had been reserved, He would have died therein.

I answer that, Christ's body is substantially the same in this sacrament, as in its proper species, but not

after the same fashion; because in its proper species it comes in contact with surrounding bodies by its own dimensions: but it does not do so as it is in this sacrament, as stated above (a. 3). And therefore, all that belongs to Christ, as He is in Himself, can be attributed to Him both in His proper species, and as He exists in the sacrament; such as to live, to die, to grieve, to be animate or inanimate, and the like; while all that belongs to Him in relation to outward bodies, can be attributed to Him as He exists in His proper species, but not as He is in this sacrament; such as to be mocked, to be spat upon, to be crucified, to be scourged, and the rest. Hence some have composed this verse:

"Our Lord can grieve beneath the sacramental veils
But cannot feel the piercing of the thorns and nails."

Reply to Objection 1. As was stated above, suffering belongs to a body that suffers in respect of some extrinsic body. And therefore Christ, as in this sacrament, cannot suffer; yet He can die.

Reply to Objection 2. As was said above (q. 76, a. 2), in virtue of the consecration, the body of Christ is

under the species of bread, while His blood is under the species of wine. But now that His blood is not really separated from His body; by real concomitance, both His blood is present with the body under the species of the bread, and His body together with the blood under the species of the wine. But at the time when Christ suffered, when His blood was really separated from His body, if this sacrament had been consecrated, then the body only would have been present under the species of the bread, and the blood only under the species of the wine.

Reply to Objection 3. As was observed above (q. 76, a. 1, ad 1), Christ's soul is in this sacrament by real concomitance; because it is not without the body: but it is not there in virtue of the consecration. And therefore, if this sacrament had been consecrated then, or reserved, when His soul was really separated from His body, Christ's soul would not have been under this sacrament, not from any defect in the form of the words, but owing to the different dispositions of the thing contained.