



# Worship as thanksgiving: The offering of life

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It is an honour to present a paper at a conference in memory of Thomas Torrance. When I moved to Britain some thirteen years ago to do a masters degree I became acquainted with his work through my supervisor, Tom Noble, who had studied with both Thomas and James Torrance many years ago in one of the last honours Dogmatics classes they taught. Coming from a free church tradition, it was not until my undergraduate years, and particularly during a course I took on Christian worship, that my mind was opened up to a horizon broader than my own. And the writings of the Torrance brothers further fostered this new passion for me.

If he were still with us, Colin Gunton would most certainly have been part of this conference. The last writing he prepared for press before his untimely death was a collection of essays including one on Thomas Torrance's doctrine of God. In it, he writes:

As always, there are resources in Torrance's work which are waiting to be developed. One of his papers which has long continued to work in my mind is that on 'The Mind of Christ in Worship. The Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy'.<sup>1</sup>

I want to reflect on the underlying concerns Torrance raises in this essay and explore his emphasis on Christ's mediatorial role, with reference to two other Scottish theologians – William Milligan and John McLeod Campbell. Here I will develop the idea of worship as thanksgiving, the offering of life. Such a theme is fitting, I believe, for the occasion of giving thanks for one who gave his life in service to the church and to the academy.



## I. Torrance's desire for praise that reflects Christ's mediatorial role

### a) *Changes in the doxologies of corporate worship*

The Westminster Catechism teaches that humanity's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever. In the early church, the trinitarian nature of this praise was expressed in a doxology that reflected the mediatorial role of Christ: 'Glory to the Father *through* the Son and in the Spirit'. In his influential work, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*,<sup>2</sup> Josef Jungmann showed how, due to doctrinal controversy, the mediatorial expression of the church's worship faded into the background. To make a rather long and complex story short, the mediatorial structure of the church's prayer, expressed by the word 'through', gave way to prayer simply 'to' the Father, Son and Spirit.<sup>3</sup> This was expressed in the so-called co-ordinated doxology: 'Glory to the Father *with* the Son, together *with* the Holy Spirit'.<sup>4</sup>

In the wake of Arianism, the church sought to uphold the full divinity of Christ. Jungmann charted this development via the doxologies used in corporate worship. Just as the Arians used the same scriptures as their opponents, they also used the same doxology in worship. For the Arians, however, 'through Christ' was interpreted according to their understanding of Christ as a third thing, a *tertium quid*, between humanity and God. In reaction, Athanasius and others argued for the unity of God's action, affirming that there is one divine activity in which all three persons share. Those who did not believe in such unity could not affirm the consistency in the use of both the mediatorial and co-ordinated doxologies. For those who did not affirm the unity of God's action, the co-ordinated doxology affirmed something the mediatorial doxology did not. In using the mediatorial doxology, they implicitly argued *against* the unity of God's action.

St Basil the Great unashamedly used both doxologies, and in so doing was accused of confusion (indeed of heresy!). The burden of Basil's argument in *On the Holy Spirit* is to show why his use of both doxologies is not a result of confusion. Unfortunately, the bold approach of Basil in the face of heresy eventually gave way to the complete shadowing of the mediatorial doxology lest it be misunderstood. The move away from the mediatorial to the co-ordinated doxology

was made in order to correct the misunderstanding of mediation. But correction came with a cost. The emphasis on Christ's divinity would soon lead to the recession of his humanity into the background. Graham Redding summarises well the unforeseen consequence. He writes (quoting Jungmann at the end):

[...] as the mediatorship and humanity of Christ faded into the background and Christ was thrust up into the majesty and grandeur of the Godhead, a gap emerged and came to yawn large in Christian thinking between the eternal God and sinful humanity. The worshipper was confronted immediately with the overwhelming majesty of the triune God. 'Stress was now placed not on what unites us to God (Christ as one of us in his human nature, Christ as our brother), but on what separates us from God (God's infinite majesty).'<sup>5</sup>

**b) *Re-emphasizing Christ's humanity***

In his essay "The Mind of Christ", Torrance seeks to add to Jungmann's analysis. He states:

Prayer through the mediation of Jesus Christ the High Priest in the full sense, gives place to prayer on the basis of the high-priestly work of Christ [...]. The reason for this, however, is to be found not only, as Jungmann implies, in the Cappadocian reaction to Arianism, but in a comparatively undeveloped understanding of the vicarious role of the incarnate Son along the line that runs from Athanasius to Cyril [...]<sup>6</sup>

Torrance engages with Nicholas Cabasilas, arguing that although he affirms in his *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* the mediating, priestly work of Christ on our behalf '[...] he consistently assimilates the priestly and mediating activity of Christ to his divine activity, and does not show evidence of Athanasius' or Cyril [of Alexandria]'s point that as the incarnate Son come to us *as man*, it is *as man* that he fulfils his office as Mediator.'<sup>7</sup> Cabasilas does affirm Christ's *continuing* role. It is apparent that he also affirms a continuing *humanity*. So what is the basis for concern? According to Cabasilas, Christ is offerer and

offering because he offers himself, indeed himself a human. But how far does this offering of himself still include us? It only includes us once our offering (whether it be the bread and wine or our prayers) is *received* by him. Then, he appropriates it to himself and, once appropriated, it becomes part of his offering of himself.

If this is a correct interpretation of Cabasilas, then the concern becomes clearer. What Torrance wants is a continuing priesthood that sees Christ alongside us, a fellow worshipper, even now in the midst of the congregation praying alongside us. This qualifies the notion of Christ offering prayer on our behalf. It cannot be an offering based on a prior receiving (in the manner of ‘we give’ and ‘he takes’). We might want to quibble – if Christ offers our gifts and prayers and does so as a human, is there really a problem with the idea that he does so through receiving and appropriation? The problem for Torrance is simply that it is not incarnational, in which Christ takes what we are too blind to see and incapable of giving. The problem is that in this picture, Christ does the receiving and appropriation according to his divinity. As Torrance states:

Christ himself has been thrust up into the majesty of the Godhead in such a way that he is regarded as too exalted to be associated with the prayers of the liturgy which are ‘couched in language befitting servants’.<sup>8</sup>

We hear an echo of the concerns summarised earlier by Redding.

### **c) *Re-emphasizing Christ’s continuing mediation***

Torrance argues that our worship is a participation in heavenly worship.<sup>9</sup> By the Spirit, we are joined to Christ who, as the writer of Hebrews insists, continues to be our *Leitourgos* – the leader of our worship. In his desire to emphasize the *continuing* nature of Christ’s priesthood, Torrance takes issue with the language of the liturgy. This brings us back to the contrasting mediatorial and co-ordinated doxologies and, specifically, to Torrance’s critique of Basil the Great found in the essay under discussion.

Once again, Torrance is wary of an expression of praise that does not understand Christ to be a fellow worshipper, one in our midst. He

argues that the mediatorial language of ‘through’ does not emphasize Christ’s *continuing* mediatorial role. Specifically, Torrance is wary of a mediatorial doxology that only includes a mediatorial ‘through’ and not also a mediatorial ‘with’.<sup>10</sup> So far, we have only seen the word ‘with’ in the context of the co-ordinated doxology. ‘With’, in this context, affirms the full divinity of Christ. What, then, is meant by a mediatorial ‘with’? According to Torrance, to use only the word ‘through’ affirms Christ’s *past* role but it does not necessarily affirm his *continuing* role. To use also the word ‘with’ ensures that he is believed still to be amidst the congregation, offering up prayer with his brothers and sisters.

Here, those who are familiar with the work of Thomas’s brother, James, will recall James’s critique of what he calls the ‘experiential’ model of worship – one in which Christians may indeed ground their action in what Christ *has* done, but this mediation is relegated to the past. In such a view, the ascended Christ is glorified along with the Father and Spirit, but there is no real sense in which that praise is made possible by the *continuing* action of Christ and the Spirit. So, for Thomas Torrance, the inclusion of ‘with’ is an antidote, if you will, to an experiential model of worship. Torrance’s critique of Basil, then, is that although Basil defends his use of a mediatorial ‘through’, “[...] he does not seem to be aware of a mediatorial ‘with’ in the liturgy.”<sup>11</sup>

How might a mediatorial ‘with’ be understood outside the context of the liturgy; that is, how might it be expressed in the everyday life of the *ekklesia*? In developing Torrance’s concern, I want to explore the gift of participating in Christ’s offering of himself through the concept of worship as thanksgiving, and in so doing turn what has been a primarily systematic discussion into something more practical.



## II. Worship as thanksgiving: the pattern of our lives

The doxologies used in corporate worship affirm the Chronicler’s exhortation to give thanks to the Lord and glory in his name.<sup>12</sup> This is a duty and a joy to be interwoven into the pattern of our everyday lives. One of the Christmas letters we received last year began with the following two quotations:

Thankfulness is a secret passage into a room you can't find *any other way*. It is the wardrobe into Narnia. It allows us to discover the rest of God – those dimensions of God's world, God's presence, God's character that are hidden, *always*, from the thankless. Ingratitude is an eye disease every bit as much as a heart disease. It sees only flaws, scars, scarcity.<sup>13</sup>

Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.<sup>14</sup>

These two quotations stuck in my mind and also caused me to recall one of my mother's disciplines. During one of the more difficult times in her life, she kept a specific discipline of prayer. Upon waking each morning and before rising, she would force herself to name at least one thing she was thankful for. In the midst of trial, this was indeed a discipline.

Asked to identify the 'sacred' rituals in one's life, one might include going to church and speak about the things one did there. Things like daily devotions, quiet time, prayer and reflection, or grace before a meal might be added to the list. Yet in a very real sense, the pattern of our lives is reflected in a tapestry made up of *many* interwoven rituals – from our 'how are you?' – 'fine' exchanges, to brushing our teeth before we go to bed. In some sense, it is appropriate to distinguish between the sacred and secular rituals that weave together to form this pattern. But I wonder if the distinction we make is sometimes too rigid, partly due to the tendency to define sacred ritual in prescribed ways.

The Orthodox don't make such a rigid distinction. They have what one could call a 'sacramental' view of the world. Alexander Schmemmann, from whom came the second quotation above, talks about the false dichotomy between 'spiritual' and 'material' or 'sacred' and 'profane'. He makes the point with reference to eating, something that makes up a significant part of our daily grind. In response to Feuerbach's reductionist assertion that 'man is what he eats', Schmemmann says:

[...] the Bible [...] begins with man as a hungry being, with the man who is that which he eats. The perspective, however, is wholly different, for nowhere in the Bible do we find the dichotomies which for us are the self-evident framework of all approaches to religion. In the Bible the food that man eats, the world of which he must partake in order to live, is given to him by God, and it is given as *communion with God*. The world as man's food is not something "material" and limited to material functions, thus different from, and opposed to, the specifically "spiritual" functions by which man is related to God. All that exists is God's gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man's life communion with God.

[...] The whole creation depends on food. But the unique position of man in the universe is that he alone is to *bless* God for the food and the life he receives from Him. He alone is to respond to God's blessing with his blessing.<sup>15</sup>

Schmemmann goes on to speak about the task given to humanity of naming the animals. He says:

To name a thing is to manifest the meaning and value God gave it, to know it as coming from God and to know its place and function within the cosmos created by God.

To name a thing, in others words, is to bless God for it and in it. And in the Bible to bless God is not a "religious" or a "cultic" act, but the very *way of life*. God blessed the world [...] and this means that He filled all that exists with His love and goodness. [...] So the only *natural* (and not "supernatural") reaction of man, to whom God gave this blessed and sanctified world, is to bless God in return, to thank Him, to *see* the world as God sees it and – in this act of gratitude and adoration – to know, name and possess the world.<sup>16</sup>

*To see the world as God sees it.* This is a vision for everyday life. It blurs the distinction we sometimes make between sacred and secular because it sees the whole world as a gift from God in and through which

we commune with him. And is not worship really an engagement or communion with God? Worship defined *solely* in terms of offering something to God is inadequate because it not only fails to take account of God's initiation, it also fails to understand this dialogue in terms of the participatory dance of revelation and response. In order to see the world as God sees it, we must be Godlike. And such a gift is possible only as we are in communion with him. The gift cannot be abstracted from the Giver.

I am not here attempting to dissolve completely the distinction between sacred and secular. I think these are appropriate categories. But in light of what Schmemmann is saying, I do want us to think how we might open up or widen the category of the sacred as it relates to our daily life so that first, we might not be so restrictive when we list the sacred rituals that weave into it and that second, we might begin to see those things we might have initially labelled secular, in sacred terms.

Prayer is perhaps a good example. Prayer as a specific activity, something we stop or – more likely – pause to do, is certainly a form of prayer. The prayer of thankfulness my mother uttered each morning was, indeed, such a *form* of prayer. But such a 'set' or 'formed' ritual, if you will, was part of her general pattern of life. On occasions when I would bemoan my own frustrations over prayer, my mother often said to me, 'Sandra, I think I pray all the time.' She certainly didn't mean that she sat in the corner all day in quiet contemplation. Rather, in her own way, I think she was capturing the sentiment underlying Schmemmann's argument against the dichotomies we often set up.

In uttering a prayer of thanksgiving first thing each morning, my mother was on her way to becoming a good Jew, for her ritual was in line with the Jewish Berakhot, or prayers of blessing of which there are 100, the first being uttered upon waking. Can you imagine? 100 things. Such a practise might seem the luxury for those who have chosen the life of monastic discipline. On reflection, however, I'd like to think there is something profoundly practical underlying the number 100, a number to be reached by everyone, not just those of monastic persuasion. If we are going to reach 100 and actually get on with the daily grind, those prayers will have to be interwoven into our

day, into an attitude of thanksgiving, into a way of life of which we, too, may say, 'I think I pray all the time.' In this way, and in this vision of worship as thanksgiving, we are truly making an offering of life.



### III. The offering of life

#### a) *Priests of creation*

To make such an offering of life is to opt in to the transformative power of God's grace, in Christ. It is to say 'yes' to the Spirit who woos us and entices us with the vocation of being priests of creation. Schmemmann states:

The first, the basic definition of man is that he is *the priest*. He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God – and by filling the world with this eucharist, he transforms his life, the one that he receives from the world, into life in God, into communion with Him.<sup>17</sup>

Sin prevents us fulfilling this vocation and instead sends us into slavery. Unsurprisingly, Schmemmann refers to slavery in the context of his discussion of food. The fruit of the forbidden tree was forbidden because it was not offered as a gift to humanity. He says:

Not given, not blessed by God, it was food whose eating was condemned to be communion with itself alone, and not with God. It is the image of the world loved for itself, and eating it is the image of life understood as an end in itself.

[...] The world is a fallen world because it has fallen away from the awareness that God is all in all.

[...] The natural dependence of man upon the world was intended to be transformed constantly into communion with God in whom is all life. Man was to be the priest of a eucharist, offering the world to God, and in this offering he was to receive the gift of life. But in the fallen world man does not have the priestly power to do this. His dependence on the world becomes

a closed circuit, and his love is deviated from its true direction. He still loves, he is still hungry. He knows he is dependent on that which is beyond him. But his love and his dependence refer only to the world in itself.

[...] For “the wages of sin is death.” The life man chose was only the appearance of life. God showed him that he himself had decided to eat bread in a way that would simply return him to the ground from which both he and the bread had been taken. [...] Man lost the eucharistic life, he lost the life of life itself, the power to transform it into Life. He ceased to be the priest of the world and became its slave.<sup>18</sup>

### **b) *The big picture leading to a two-sided approach***

The duty and joy of ‘giv[ing] thanks to the Lord’ did not come into being after the Fall. This vocation was humanity’s calling from the outset of creation. To be a priest of creation was to be a priest in the order of Melchizedek. When thinking of priesthood in the Old Testament, the contingent priesthood of sacrifice, the priesthood of Aaron, is undoubtedly the priesthood that readily comes to mind. When humans ceased to be priests of creation and became slaves instead, God, through his chosen people, gave humanity the way back through a priesthood of reconciliation. How are we to understand the relationship between these two forms of priesthood? And how do they relate to worship as thanksgiving and the offering of life?

### **(i) *The retrospective and prospective aspects of atonement***

In his theory of atonement, John McLeod Campbell articulates a distinction between the retrospective and prospective aspects of atonement, a distinction that, I believe, can help us here. Simply put, ‘retrospective’ refers to the atonement’s dealing with sin, or what humanity is saved *from*, and ‘prospective’ refers to the gift of sonship, what humanity is saved *for*.<sup>19</sup>

The distinction relates to Campbell’s conviction that the atonement serves the purposes of the incarnation, not vice versa. The prospective aspect (that which we are saved for) pertains to the primary category of ontology – the gift of sonship, which is the goal of the incarnation. The retrospective aspect pertains to the particular *shape* this takes or

the way it unfolds in the context of fallen humanity.<sup>20</sup> In other words, for Campbell, like Irenaeus, the incarnation would have taken place even if creation had not fallen, for God's primary purpose in sending his Son was to share with humanity the Father-Son relationship. That creation *did* fall, means that God's economy would take a particular shape, the shape of a cross.

The framework I am considering suggests that we understand the atonement, and the offerings associated with the contingent Aaronic priesthood, within the context of a larger picture involving the offering of life associated with the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. For it is within this framework that we can best understand the priesthood of Christ and the nature of his offering. Scripture's immediate concern is, admittedly, '[...] with the narrower, contingent business of atonement for sin'.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, without awareness and understanding of the bigger picture we are, I believe, unable to understand this 'business' adequately.

(ii) *The essence of the offering and the context in which it is given*

The nineteenth-century Scottish theologian William Milligan, in writing about the ascension and the session of Christ, spoke about the two forms of priesthood and the nature of Christ's offering. He argues that the purpose of the incarnation was not solely to prepare the Lord as a victim for sacrifice: '[...] it was only a step towards the attainment of a still higher end – an end contemplated from the beginning [...]. That end was to bring us into a state of perfect union with the Father of our spirits'.<sup>22</sup> And that end involves the resurrection and ascension.

Milligan emphasizes the 'supereminent importance' of the priestly office.<sup>23</sup> He argues that Christ's priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, not Aaron.<sup>24</sup> As a whole, the characteristics of the priesthood of Melchizedek point to one central thing – life. Life, Milligan argues, is the essence of the offering that Christ presents to the Father. Although Milligan does not shy away from the idea that the cross is the wages of sin,<sup>25</sup> death is not the true idea of offering. Furthermore, he says, 'It is a mistake to imagine that in the act of offering there is always and necessarily involved the death of what is offered.'<sup>26</sup> Milligan also argues that even if there were no Fall, it would still have been humankind's duty to offer itself to God.<sup>27</sup> He quotes

Westcott who states that sacrifice '[...] is essentially the response of love to love, of the Son to the Father, the rendering to God in grateful use of that which has been received from Him.'<sup>28</sup>

The person and work of Christ remains constant, for in essence what he is and does is always the same. The essence of the work does not change, only the context in which it is wrought. This resonates well with Campbell's theory of the atonement. If the atonement is considered in its own light, Campbell argues, it becomes clear that it serves the incarnation, and the bigger picture that we are led to see becomes the lens we use for adequate interpretation. *What* we see is the same, but *how* we see it changes. Having considered a theological framework in which the atonement serves the purposes of the incarnation, I want to suggest how this framework holds promise.



#### **IV. A tree that bears fruit**

The amount of fruit a theological model bears is not *necessarily* an indication of its soundness. Nevertheless, a sound model should bear much fruit.

##### **a) *The relationship of humiliation and exaltation***

First, the framework in which the atonement serves the purposes of the incarnation contributes to the debate as to whether or not we should understand Christ's life as two separate stages – one of humiliation and one of exaltation. Karl Barth, for one, rejected the two-stage framework, arguing that in his person, Christ was at once the humiliated and exalted one. Barth's influence on Torrance is clear here, for this theme runs as an undercurrent in Torrance's writings. Exaltation encloses humiliation. Those without eyes to see, see in the cross only tragedy. Those *with* eyes to see, understand the cross to be intrinsic to Christ's glorification.

Not unlike Barth, then, who argues that exaltation encloses humiliation, Milligan offers an understanding of Christ's offering in which the offering of life encloses the offering of death. The offering of life is the bigger picture or context into which the offering of death fits.

### **b) *A cross with two sides***

Second, the framework in which the atonement serves the purposes of the incarnation enables us to deal with the paradoxical nature of the cross – its two-sidedness. When Christ’s work on the cross is exclusively heralded as something Christ did in our place, something we are saved *from*, we tend to miss or we fail to deal adequately with Christ’s exhortation to take up his cross and follow him.

Here we gain a glimpse of the mystery of the cross. We are forced to look from a variety of angles. No one statement, model or idea can contain all the truth that is there for us to grasp. Try as we might, a penal element cannot be avoided – careful as we must be in articulating it. But though the cross saves us from sin, it does not save us *from* a life of obedient, sacrificial love – the kind of life that got Jesus killed. Rather, it saves us *to* such a life. The cross may have been the wages of humanity’s sin, which Christ vicariously took upon himself for our sake. But it was also the fullest expression of his obedience – the fullest expression of his life given up for others, a life we are called to imitate. The offering was given in an act that can be articulated as the consequence of sin. But the offering *itself* is good. In one sense the offering, viewed as consequence, is something we are saved from. But through the resurrection and ascension, we are also drawn into the offering as *life-giving*.

### **c) *A continual offering***

Third, lest we are happy to stop half way through the creed, we ought always to preach the cross as the particular shape of God’s plan in a fallen world, enabling us to follow the path of Christ that leads beyond the cross all the way to the right hand of the Father. New life made possible because of Christ’s life lived, given up on the cross, and risen from the dead, is completed in the ascension to the right hand of God where Christ lives not only for himself but also *for us*.

In the creed we speak of Christ interceding for us. In light of the two-sidedness of the cross, we must also look at intercession in (at least) a twofold way. First, sin does not mark the way of those who walk in the light. The author of 1 John says: ‘My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.’ But he continues: ‘[...] if anyone does sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ the righteous'.<sup>29</sup> Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father as our eternal advocate. The offering that was given is continued as it is, '[...] forever held up before God on our behalf.'<sup>30</sup>

Because, however, the offering *itself* is good and is recognized as such in the resurrection and ascension, the eternal offering is not simply to be understood as the eternal efficacy of Christ's death in terms of the wages of sin. It is also to be understood as the continual offering of the obedient life lived. That is, Christ's *whole* life of obedience is the offering that is brought into the inner sanctuary. And because we are saved not from but *to* such an obedient life, Christ's continuing intercession at the Father's right hand is concerned with drawing us in to share what is offered. This means that our worship is really a joining in Christ's worship. The image – or should we say sound – is that of a mighty Eucharistic chorus: the many, in their particularity, gathered to the one.



## V. The relationship between offering and thanksgiving

In his discussion of the Reformers, Douglas Farrow notes that what ultimately mattered for them was Christ's offering, not the church's.<sup>31</sup> Given the context and their opposition to certain aspects of the Roman Mass, this is perhaps understandable. Calvin was adamant that the Eucharist was not a sacrifice because this took away from the idea of the once-for-all efficacy of Christ's death. This was made more acute in the context of a doctrine of transubstantiation, which involved a *literal* re-sacrifice of Christ's body each time the Eucharist was performed.<sup>32</sup> This undoubtedly influenced his belief that the believers' role in the sacraments is passive. The interesting point for *us* is that he articulates this by saying their share in the offering is limited to *thanksgiving*.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the very title of my paper assumes that thanksgiving is an offering, here a disjunction is made between the two.

If we see Christ's offering from the *prospective* perspective, that is, in terms of what we are saved to, then there is room to widen our understanding of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving becomes an active participation in the offering itself, the offering conceived as life. For, as I suggested earlier, thanksgiving is a way of life. As Schmemmann says, 'to bless God', 'to thank him', 'to *see* the world as God sees it' is

‘the very *way of life*’. Worship, the gift of being lifted up by the Spirit into the relationship that the Son has with the Father, is really the gift of having eyes to see. Eyes to see that God is at work, something a friend of mine once articulated as ‘being awakened by grace’. It is about seeing the world in a transformed way and, indeed, participating in its transformation. For us, like Christ, that path will undoubtedly be cross-shaped. But in taking this path, our eyes will see that in this path is not despair but glory.

The Eucharist, far from being simply an opportunity to give thanks for something we have been saved from, is about being transformed into people who see the world the way God sees it. We take the stuff of our daily grind – bread and wine – and we, in and with Christ, offer it up to be transformed, a transformation that recognises that everyday life is the place of communion with God. We hold up empty hands to receive the elements back again, transformed, knowing that bread and wine are not to be consumed in the way that would simply return us to the ground. There has been too little focus on the relationship between the transformation of the elements and the transformation of the faithful. In and with Christ we offer the mundane realities of life and receive them back again and in doing so our lives are changed. We are then able once again to be priests of creation, living life for the sake of the world. In offering empty hands we, in tune with Torrance’s vision of worship, are given the worship of our hearts and minds; we are lifted up out of ourselves, out of the futility of self-sufficiency. In his own words, a fitting way to end:

This is worship in which the life of Christ informs the movement of our worship of the Father through him by assimilating it to itself in his own self-presentation to the Father on our behalf. This is prayer which is trained away from its own cry and taken up into the cry to the Father that ascends from the incarnate Son, in whom the Father is well pleased. While we do not know how to pray or what to pray as we ought, the ascended High Priest sends us his own Spirit who helps us in our weakness by making the prayers and intercessions of Christ inaudibly to echo in our stammering in such a way that our prayers and intercessions become a participation in his before the throne of

the Father in heaven:

*Through him, with him and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is thine, Almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen.*<sup>34</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Colin E. Gunton, “Eastern and Western Trinities: Being and Person. T. F. Torrance’s Doctrine of God,” in *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 54.
- <sup>2</sup> Josef A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (trans. A. Peeler; 2<sup>nd</sup> English ed.; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989).
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 171–238.
- <sup>4</sup> Or ‘Glory to the Father *and* the Son *and* the Holy Spirit’. Catherine Mowry LaCugna provides a helpful summary of Jungmann’s analysis: ‘The liturgical development might be charted in this way. Initially praise was given to God through Christ; Then, as the Arian controversies took hold, praise was directed to God (or Father) through Christ in the Holy Spirit (with the church); to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit; to the Father and the Son together with the Holy Spirit; to the Father, through Christ and in Christ, in the Holy Spirit; to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.’ See *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 127. It should be noted that her summary primarily reflects the development in the East. See Jungmann, *Place*, 191–200. The mediatorial pattern was retained much longer in the West, although here too it would eventually become overshadowed by an interpretation of ‘who lives and reigns’ that focussed on Christ’s divinity. See 209–11; 221–4.
- <sup>5</sup> Graham Redding, *Prayer and the Priesthood of Christ in the Reformed Tradition* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 20. See Jungmann’s helpful summary: *Place*, 251.

- <sup>6</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, “The Mind of Christ in Worship: The Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy,” in *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), 189 f. Torrance is dependent on Jungmann’s work, though he argues that a subtle Apollinarianism is also at the root of the loss of the mediatorial aspect in the liturgy.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 194.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 195.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 139 f.
- <sup>10</sup> He looks at ways in which the mediatorial and co-ordinated formulae were brought together. (To avoid confusion, it should be noted that where I have followed others in distinguishing between ‘mediatorial’ and ‘co-ordinated’, applying them both as adjectives to ‘doxology’, Torrance simply contrasts ‘mediatorial’ with ‘doxological’. Thus what I have called ‘co-ordinated’ he calls ‘doxological’.) He states: “Athanasius’ conclusion to the *De incarnatione* was typical of the underlying theological structure: ‘... Jesus Christ our Lord, *through* whom and *with* whom, to the Father *with* the Son himself in the Holy Spirit [...], be honour and power and glory for ever and ever. Amen.’ Variations upon this combination of the mediatorial and doxological formulae in which care is taken to retain a *mediatorial* ‘*with*’ alongside of a *mediatorial* ‘*through*’ and a *doxological* ‘*with*’ are found throughout all the works of Cyril [of Alexandria]. Sometimes they are given a more extended form, and sometimes they are found in a more reduced or succinct form in which the ‘*with whom*’ is clearly intended to be both mediatorial and doxological. It is usually in a succinct form that the mediatorial and doxological ‘*with*’, together with a mediatorial ‘*through*’, is found in the liturgies, especially those of old Alexandrian and old Roman provenance. On the other hand, the elision of the mediatorial ‘*with*’ with the doxological ‘*with*’ tended to have the effect of weakening the mediatorial ‘*through*’, especially when the whole concept of praying and worshipping *with* Jesus Christ dropped out of sight. Thus the retention in a liturgy of an unambiguous mediatorial ‘*with whom*’ along with a

mediatorial ‘*through whom*’ may well be taken as an indication that the old classical understanding of Christian worship, at least in its Athanasian-Cyrrillian form, remains intact. That is surely the abiding significance of the oblatory formula of the old *Ordo Romanus*: ‘Through him and with him and in him is to thee God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory’”. Ibid., 187 f. To place this within the development charted above (see note 4), see Jungmann, *Place*, 192 f. See also 28–30.

<sup>11</sup> Torrance, “Mind,” 190.

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Chr 16: 8–10.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Buchanan (Baptist pastor and writer from Duncan, BC, Canada) quoted in Matt Francis’s Christmas 2007 letter.

<sup>14</sup> From Fr. Alexander Schmemmann’s last sermon, quoted in Matt Francis’s Christmas 2007 letter.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1973), 14 f.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>17</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 16 f.

<sup>19</sup> John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1996), 37. I am intentional about using inclusive language. Therefore, my choice to use ‘sonship’ here is not an oversight. Despite its counter-intuitiveness, ‘Father’ does not indicate maleness, and the primary relationship that is gifted to humanity (the Father-Son relationship) is not a gendered relationship. Using ‘sonship/daughtership’ would, in fact, project gender where there is none. This is compatible with the essential fact that the incarnate Son takes on gender and that the relationship between humans and God will always be one between particular males and females, and God. The gift of ‘sonship’ is given to males (sons of God) and females (daughters of God) alike.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 19

<sup>21</sup> Douglas Farrow, “Ascension and Atonement”, in *The Theology of Reconciliation* (ed. Colin Gunton; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 88. See also 86.

- <sup>22</sup> William Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of Our Lord* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 29–30. See also 40.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.
- <sup>24</sup> The thrust of his argument is that the Aaronic priesthood is but a shadow of a more perfect priesthood. With reference to Hebrews, Milligan shows that by contrast, the priest after the order of Melchizedek was a priest-king whose priesthood was universal, without genealogy (therefore transcending time), spiritual (about blessing not sacrifice), one (instead of many), unchangeable, continual, royal, about the person (that is, not by succession), and heavenly. Above all, it possessed the power of an endless life. *Ibid.*, 86–112.
- <sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*, 114 f.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 116 f. Furthermore, even when death is required (because of sin), death does not exhaust the meaning of the offering, as the sacrifice is the liberation of the blood that symbolises life. See 119, 131–3, 139. For commentary on the idea of slaying a victim for its life-blood see, for example, Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16 (The Anchor Bible vol. 3; New York; London: Doubleday, 1991)*, 46–9. See also 1002 f.
- <sup>27</sup> Milligan, *The Ascension*, 117.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 117, note 1.
- <sup>29</sup> 1 John 2:1 (NRSV).
- <sup>30</sup> Paul van Buren, *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 89. According to Calvin, the initial offering and its continuation at the right hand of the Father comprise the two parts of Christ's priesthood (90).
- <sup>31</sup> Farrow, *Ascension*, 172.
- <sup>32</sup> See Calvin's "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper" in John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*, vol. 2 (trans. H. Beveridge; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958). Sections 35–88 (183–5) deal with the 'first error' – the supper as a sacrifice; sections 39–43 (185–88) deal with the 'second error' – transubstantiation.

- <sup>33</sup> See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. J. T. McNeill; trans. F. L. Battles; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), IV.14.26, IV.18.10–13.
- <sup>34</sup> Torrance, “Mind,” 213 f.