

The Eucharist and the Life of Christ in the Preaching of John Chrysostom

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WHEN JEAN DANIELLOU penned an article on the symbolism of baptismal rites in early Christianity in a rather obscure and short-lived French journal, he could not foresee how ubiquitously the opening sentence would be quoted. The content of this quotation, however, stands on its own merits as a succinct yet insightful unification of diverse aspects of the Christian faith:

The Christian faith has only one object, the mystery of Christ died and risen. But this unique mystery subsists under different modes. It is prefigured in the Old Testament; it is accomplished historically in the earthly life of Christ, it is contained in mystery in the sacraments, it is lived mystically in souls, it is accomplished socially in the Church, it is consummated eschatologically in the heavenly kingdom. Thus, the Christian has at his disposal several registers, a multi-dimensional symbolism, to express this unique reality. The whole of Christian culture consists in grasping the links that exist between Bible and liturgy, Gospel and eschatology, mysticism and liturgy. The application of this method to Scripture is called spiritual exegesis, applied to liturgy it is called mystagogy. This consists in reading in the rites the mystery of Christ, and in contemplating beneath the symbols the invisible reality.¹

¹ Jean Daniélou, “Le symbolisme des rites baptismaux,” *Dieu vivant* 1 (1945): 15–43, at 17. I have slightly modified the translation as found in quotations by others. All translations from ancient and modern languages are my own unless otherwise noted.

In speaking of a method, Daniélou brought to the fore an approach to the Church Fathers which sought to capture the diverse aspects of a given figure's theology by showing, such as how scriptural interpretation related to sacramental theology and liturgy. Daniélou himself was deeply immersed in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa and possessed a wide acquaintance with the Greek-speaking East.² Years later, Daniélou would again turn his attention to liturgical details in his introduction to John Chrysostom's homilies on the incomprehensibility of God, where he explicated Chrysostom's invocation of the liturgy to argue against the Anomeans.³ Both his programmatic and descriptive work suggests wide possibilities of demonstrating significant linkages between scriptural exegesis and sacramental theology.

Eastern authors, both ancient and modern, acknowledge the liturgy of the Church as the centerpiece of the Christian faith.⁴ The Eucharist naturally holds pride of place in that centerpiece because it establishes the existence of the Church. Without the Eucharist, the Church could not be what it is or is intended to be.⁵ Accordingly, one would expect numerous discussions of the Eucharistic mystery in the Greek Fathers, especially in the large corpora of figures like John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria.

² See, for instance, *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, selections and introduction by Jean Daniélou, ed. Herbert Musurillo (New York: Charles Scribner, 1961).

³ Jean Daniélou, introduction to French translation of *On the Incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature*, in vol. 28/2 of *Sources Chrétiennes* [SC] (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 51–61.

⁴ For an Eastern perspective, see Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1973) 8 and 121, and Archmandrite Vasileios, *Hymn of Entry* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), esp. 11, 13, and 18. Among the voluminous work of Robert Taft, S.J., special insight on liturgy may be gleaned from "The Spirit of Eastern Christian Worship," in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, 2nd enlarged revision (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 2001), 143–60.

⁵ Theologians, East and West, have emphasized this point, often independently of one another. John Zizioulas says, "the celebration of the Eucharist by the primitive Church was, above all, the gathering of the people of God ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, that is both the manifestation and the realization of the Church" and "the Eucharist constituted the Church's being" (*Being as Communion* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1985], 21). John Paul II, without any reference to Zizioulas, made this point in his *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), §1: "Ecclesia de Eucharistia vivit" and "in the Holy Eucharist, through the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord, she rejoices in this presence with unique intensity [sacra in Eucharistia propter panis vinique conversionem in Corpus ac Sanguinem Domini gaudet ipsa [ecclesia] singulari quadam vehementia de hac praesentia]."

And yet, as Jaroslav Pelikan pointed out, there was no treatise devoted to the Eucharist in the ancient Church in a manner similar to the various Trinitarian or baptismal treatises. The fact that the Eucharist was never controversial in the same way that the Trinity or the Incarnation was may account for this lacuna.⁶ It would be misguided, however, to conclude that the Greek Fathers did not have much to say about the Eucharist. John Chrysostom, for example, wrote more about the Eucharist than any other Eastern Father.⁷ While the Antiochean Father never devoted a treatise to the Eucharist as he did to the priesthood, his voluminous sermons are filled with discussions of the sacrament. He is rightly celebrated as one of the great three hierarchs in the Eastern churches, not the least because he never tired of placing the Eucharist front and center.

There has been scant Anglophone attention paid to the theology of the Eucharist in the writings of John Chrysostom over the last one hundred years.⁸ Although Chrysostom's Eucharistic doctrine has received some recent attention,⁹ many modern Western authors continue to focus on his rhetoric and biblical interpretations.¹⁰ A second possibility is the sheer

⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan rightly points out that the doctrine of the Eucharist did not become a matter of controversy until the ninth century, which would explain the absence of any treatise devoted to it in earlier centuries (*The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1 [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971], 166–67). His comments apply to the West and the rise of the Berengar controversy; there seems to have been even less controversy in the medieval East.

⁷ To date there have been only two works which give the Eucharistic texts of the Fathers with facing-page translations. For Spanish, see Jesus Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos: Edición Bilingüe de los contenidos en la Sagrada Escritura y los Santos Padres*, vol. 1. *Hasta Fines del Siglo IV* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1952), and vol. 2, *Hasta el Fin de la Epoca Patristica (s. VII–VIII)* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1954); citations of Solano are by paragraph rather than page. For Italian, see Gerardo di Nola, *Bibliotheca Patristica Eucharistica*, vol. 3, *La Dottrina Eucharistica de Giovanni Crisostomo* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997). There is no comparable work in English.

⁸ Wendy Mayer, Chrysostom's preeminent bibliographer, pointed out that the twentieth century did not serve John particularly well, but that the twenty-first has seen a veritable explosion of Chrysostom studies. See her monumental bibliography of Chrysostomica at the website of the Centre for Early Christian Studies (www.cecs.acu.edu.au/chrysostombibliography.html#).

⁹ Two recent doctoral dissertations are of particular interest in regard to Chrysostom's Eucharistic teaching: Jacky Marsaux, "La Théologie de l'Eucharistie selon Jean Chrysostome: étude du schéma sacrificiel" (PhD diss., Paris-Sorbonne University, 2008), and Pierre Molinié, "Jean Chrysostome, exégète et pasteur: les homélies sur la Deuxième épître aux Corinthiens" (PhD diss., Paris-Sorbonne University, 2017).

¹⁰ See: Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom*, ed. Carol Harrison,

difficulty of accessing his ideas because his discussions of the Eucharist are scattered throughout a wide-ranging variety of his homilies.¹¹ A third factor is more telling. Most histories of Eucharistic doctrine, at least in the West, have focused largely on the problems of the Real Presence of Christ and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharistic liturgy.¹² John of Antioch, however, rarely addressed these two issues directly. Most of his references to Christ's presence and sacrifice are made in passing while he addresses other concerns. His references to the Eucharist are usually tied to moral concerns and to a wide variety of scriptural texts. In this paper, I will follow one stream of his biblical interpretation as I expound how he ties the events in the earthly life of Christ to the Eucharist. Although here I focus on texts and events in the Gospels, John invoked Eucharistic ideas and associations on a much wider scale.¹³ In the process we will observe his ingenuity in applying Gospel texts and events to his contemporary audience.

Condescension (συγκατάβασις) in John Chrysostom

To understand John Chrysostom's Eucharistic teachings it is first necessary to take notice of the overall context of his theology. Several authors point out how central the concept of condescension is in his thought, among them Bertrand de Margerie.¹⁴ For Chrysostom, the condescension of God

Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 2000); David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Bradley Nassif, *Theoria in St. John Chrysostom's Exegesis: A Study in Biblical Hermeneutics and the Spiritual Life* (PhD diss., Fordham University, 1991). The most comprehensive biography of Chrysostom in English to date is still J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Aseptic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995). Considerable historical work was done by Allen and Mayer in the 1990s and early 2000s in an attempt to place John's homilies in their proper historical context; see Wendy Mayer, "The Biography of John Chrysostom and the Chronology of His Works" (academia.edu/6448810).

¹¹ This obstacle has been largely removed by the advent of electronic access to Chrysostom's corpus in the excellent *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/).

¹² Pierre Battifol, *L'Eucharistie: la presence réelle et la transubstantiation*, 5th ed. (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1913). For a slight departure from this pattern, see Johannes Betz, *Eucharistie in der Schrift und Patristik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1979).

¹³ A striking example is introducing the Eucharist in his *Homilies on Ephesians*, no. 3, where he aligns the Eucharistic body with the ecclesial body in an exhortation to live out the life of Christ in daily life. I return to this locus at the end of the article.

¹⁴ Bertrand de Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse les pères grecque et orientaux* (Paris : Editions du Cerf, 1980), 1:214.

can be seen in the gradual revelation of his plan of salvation (οἰκονομία). This gradual unfolding of God's plan of salvation in the old covenant prepared the world for the ultimate manifestation of himself in Christ. This assumption makes sense of John's use of typology in his expositions of Scripture. As Bradley Nassif pointed out, John Chrysostom's method of contrasting the old and new is predicated on a prior continuity between the revelation to Israel and the culmination of that revelation in the Incarnation.¹⁵ De Margerie takes this arrangement a step further by connecting history, Scripture, and liturgy: "We will catch a glimpse that Scripture is for Chrysostom a prolonging of the Incarnation. Scripture paved the way for it and also manifests it in the liturgy which is the place of the divine Word being received and effective par excellence."¹⁶

The condescension of God presupposes the inability of creatures to comprehend the Creator. The infinite distance between God and humanity forms the necessary background for understanding the love which motivated the Incarnation and the necessary condescension entailed by it. John argued vigorously against the Anomeans who claimed that human beings could attain to a direct knowledge of God. In his lectures on the incomprehensibility of God John claimed, "it is for God to appear and show himself, not as he is in himself, but such as he can be seen by those who are capable of such a vision as he proportioned his presentation of himself to the weakness of those who look for him."¹⁷ However, God in his goodness has not remained aloof and so his condescension to humanity should evoke an appropriate response: "Let us glorify the God who was made flesh for such great condescension [τὸν σαρκωθέντα Θεόν]. According to our ability, let us render him worthy honor and recompense. Now there can be no repayment to God from us other than the salvation of our souls and our care for [living a life of] virtue."¹⁸ Daniélou argued that, in

¹⁵ See Nassif, *Theoria*, 230–48, where Nassif explains typology and the unity of the Testaments. Of course, John is by no means unique in this regard. The extensive use of typology reaches back to second-century figures like Melito of Sardis in his Paschal homilies.

¹⁶ De Margerie, *Introduction*, 216.

¹⁷ John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature*, discourse 3 (as quoted in de Margerie, *Introduction*, 1:217).

¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: καὶ τὸν σαρκωθέντα Θεὸν δοξάζωμεν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοσαύτης συγκαταβάσεως, καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἡμετέραν, ἀξίαν ἀποδώμεν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν ἀμοιβήν. Θεῷ δὲ ἀμοιβὴ οὐδεμία παρ' ἡμῶν γένοιτ' ἂν, ἀλλ' ἢ μόνον ἡ σωτηρία ἡμῶν καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν, καὶ ἡ περὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐπιμέλεια (*Patrologia Graeca* [PG], 49:360).

John's theology, this condescension was not limited to the Incarnation, but must also be seen in the liturgy of the Church as well.¹⁹

The condescension of Christ displays God's method in the plan of salvation or *οικονομία*. God was not only motivated to send his Son out of his love for humanity; he also structured that plan out of the same love. One of John's clearest statements occurs in his *Homilies on Colossians* where he explains the divine *οικονομία*: "God does not do everything all at the same time but has employed condescension because of his great love of humanity."²⁰ John borrows Paul's phrase about "the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4) to explain why God waited until the right moment, the *καιρός*, to reveal the fullness of life in Christ. All this was part and parcel of his condescending love to prepare for the reception of his Son. Because love is not often recognized without proper preparation, God planned to reveal his love for humanity (*φιλανθρωπία*), only at the right moment, the right *καιρός* so that it could be understood and embraced.²¹

Chrysostom loved to use the prophet Jonah as an example of God's love for the nations. In Jonah 4:11 God asks Jonah why he should not have compassion on the Ninevites if Jonah had such great concern for the plant that had withered. John comments: "Defending himself to Jonah because of the plant [that withered], God says, 'You felt pity for the plant for which you did nothing; shall I not spare [them] for the sake of the great city of Nineveh in which live more than one hundred and twenty thousand people?' He mentioned the number for a reason, that you might learn that prayer with unanimity has great power."²² While Chrysostom is arguing for the superiority of corporate prayer (e.g., in liturgy), he notes the extent of God's love as seen in his concern for non-covenantal people. John expands on the incident of Jonah at the end of his life in his treatise

¹⁹ See Danielou, introduction to *On the Incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature*, SC 28/2 :15–63.

²⁰ Homily 4, no. 2 : 'Ο γὰρ Θεὸς οὐκ ἀθρώως πάντα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κέχρηται συγκαταβάσει διὰ τὴν πολλὴν αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν (PG 62:328). De Margerie quotes only the second half of this statement (after ἀλλὰ) but the temporal reference is crucial. He translates the second clause as: "Dieu use de condescendance en vertu de sa grande philanthropie."

²¹ Φιλανθρωπία occurs over seven hundred times in the Chrysostom corpus, hundreds of which are formulaic at the end of homilies. However, in other contexts the term carries a profound significance. Interestingly, the Greek fathers in general use *φιλανθρωπία* more than the favorite term of New Testament authors, *ἀγάπη*. It is worth further exploring whether they intend *φιλανθρωπία* as a means of explicating the meaning of *ἀγάπη*.

²² John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature*, homily 3 (SC 28/2:419–26).

On the Providence of God. In chapter 6, which treats the love of God, John again invokes Jonah. The story of Jonah tells of his complaint to God that he did not bring to pass the threat of destruction upon Nineveh which he had foretold. Jonah, however, had missed the divine intention; it was ultimately not to punish but to show mercy if Nineveh repented. So, in John's preaching God rebukes Jonah with the example of a gardener who loves his plant and adds, "he [God] wanted to show in this example his love for men in the form of a love charm?"²³ This divine love, Chrysostom says, is seen not only in God's provision, but also in the kind of love God has. "God loves [ἐρῶν] with an exceedingly irresistible love, love without human passions, a love that is very warm, very vigorous, very genuine, indestructible, and cannot be snubbed out."²⁴

Since the Incarnation with its condescension to the human race is so central to Chrysostom's preaching, his emphasis on the earthly life of Jesus as a source of inspiration and grace makes perfect sense. For John, the believer of his time is able to experience Jesus Christ in his humanity in the same way that Christ was present on earth. Responding to a desire deep within the hearts of his hearers, John assures them:

So many say, "I would like to see his form, his distinctive appearance, his clothes, his sandals." Look, you do see him, you touch him, you eat him. Yes, you desire to see his garments, but he gives you himself not only to be seen but to be touched, eaten, and taken within. Let no one approach this staggering nor dissolute. All should be enflamed, all full of zeal, all fully awake. If the Jews stood ready with their sandals and staff in hand, and ate with haste, how much more should we be sober and disciplined. They were about to enter Palestine and so they walked with a roadmap; but we are about to go on a journey to heaven.²⁵

²³ John Chrysostom, *Providence of God* 6.19; translation slightly adapted from *On the Providence of God*, trans. Monk Moses [St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood] (Platina, CA: Saint Herman Press, 2015), 58 (to my knowledge, the only English translation of this treatise).

²⁴ John Chrysostom, *Providence of God* 6.1.

²⁵ John Chrysostom, Homily 82 on the Gospel of Matthew: Πόσοι νῦν λέγουσιν, Ἐβουλόμην αὐτοῦ τὴν μορφήν ἰδεῖν, τὸν τύπον, τὰ ἱμάτια, τὰ ὑποδήματα! Ἴδού αὐτὸν ὄρας, αὐτοῦ ἅπτῃ, αὐτὸν ἐσθίεις. Καὶ σὺ μὲν ἱμάτια ἐπιθυμεῖς ἰδεῖν· αὐτὸς δὲ ἑαυτὸν σοὶ δίδωσιν, οὐκ ἰδεῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἅψασθαι, καὶ φαγεῖν, καὶ λαβεῖν ἔνδον. Μηδεὶς τοίνυν ναυτιῶν προσίτω, μηδεὶς ἐκκλελυμένος· ἅπαντες πεπυρωμένοι, ἅπαντες ζέοντες καὶ διεγερμένοι. Εἰ γὰρ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐστώτες, καὶ τὰ ὑποδήματα καὶ τὰς βακτηρίας ἔχοντες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν, ἡσθιον μετὰ σπουδῆς, πολλῶ μᾶλλον σὲ νήφειν δεῖ. Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ εἰς

The Christian in late-antique Antioch or Constantinople is no less able to encounter Jesus than those who lived contemporaneously with him. Not only does the exercise of faith allow one's eyes to behold Christ, but the Eucharist even affords an opportunity not given to those who walked on earth with Jesus. They could see, hear, and touch him, but at the mystical table of the Church the faithful can consume Christ, something infinitely better. This superiority is underscored in two ways by John. Not only does he contrast the Hebrews ready to leave Egypt with Christians ready for their journey to heaven, but he highlights the difference between those who knew Christ on earth and those who take him within (λαβεῖν ἔνδον). If believing hearts of Jesus's time could be moved by his presence, later generations can and should "be enflamed, all full of zeal, all fully awake."

The context immediately preceding the quotation above from Homily 82 explains Chrysostom's confidence in the greater position of the faithful at the table of Christ. All confidence depends upon taking the Son of God at his word when he said, "this is my body." To do so, of course, requires "spiritual eyes" to see metaphysical (νοητός) realities. Our common modern contrast between the physical and the spiritual parses into a threefold division in John's vocabulary. The real world is not physical and spiritual but physical (φυσικός), metaphysical (νοητός), and spiritual (πνευματικός). Because "Christ has delivered nothing to us that can be seen with the senses but metaphysical realities in observable things,"²⁶ then the acts of seeing, hearing, touching, and even consuming Christ entail a metaphysical reality that is in no way inferior to his earthly existence. Accordingly, one is not surprised that John Chrysostom ties the Eucharistic experience of the Church to specific events in the life of Jesus.

The Nativity of Jesus Christ

Many of John Chrysostom's topical homilies seem to treat quite disparate subjects, and often they end with a section discussing the Eucharistic mystery, the table, and the altar.²⁷ His *Homily on the Birth of Christ*²⁸ is no different, but closer reading reveals that in fact he weaves his homily around a common theme, or least that he sees connections between his themes in

Παλαιστίνην ἐμελλον ἐξίέναι, διὸ καὶ ὁδοὶ πόρων σχῆμα εἶχον· σὺ δὲ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν μέλλεις ἀποδημεῖν (PG 58:743; Solano, *Textos Eucaristicos Primitivos*, 1:799).

²⁶ John Chrysostom, Homily 82 on the Gospel of Matthew: Οὐδὲν γὰρ αἰσθητὸν παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Χριστός· ἀλλ' ἐν αἰσθητοῖς μὲν πράγμασι. Πάντα δὲ νοητά (PG 58:743; Solano, *Textos Eucaristicos Primitivos*, 1:799).

²⁷ On the other hand, John's sequential homilies on books of the Bible generally stay close to the biblical text.

²⁸ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*, in PG 49:351–62.

a manner easily missed.²⁹ John Chrysostom was nothing if not a man who loved detail in his exegesis and presentation. That meticulous nature comes out in this homily when he argues for the celebration of Christmas day. One can almost hear the objection that the nativity of Christ should not be celebrated because it cannot boast of great antiquity. We learn here that the celebration of Christmas had arrived in Constantinople (or Antioch) only recently from the West.³⁰ John, however, argues that the celebration of the Savior's birth is proper because it has been accepted by both East and West even though it originated in the West. His second argument for its appropriateness comes from the details of Scripture about the birth of Christ. It was God's own plan (*οἰκονομία*) being worked out which is celebrated. Surely, John argues, celebrating the birth of the Savior is important and valuable if God revealed so many details about his birth.

The Incarnation is his last and most important reason for celebrating Christmas, and it is here that he argues against the cultural derision hurled at God-becoming-man. John turns this criticism on its head by asking, "if it is shameful for God to dwell in a human body, how much more so is it that he would dwell in stone and wood? And all the more so since stone and wood are less honorable than a human being, unless of course our race seems to them to be cheaper than this senseless matter."³¹ God born as a man in fact shows the superior dignity of the human race and at the same times dignifies that nature even more.³² What was the ultimate purpose of the Incarnation? John says it was for God to prepare a temple so that he might bring heaven to earth residing in the human soul: "God, once he prepared a holy temple for himself, introduced into our daily life the citizenship of heaven by that means."³³ The Incarnation then is the lynchpin

²⁹ John's attention to detail may account for his reputation as a literal exegete of the Antiochian school, though Nassif and Rylaarsdam both demonstrate that the classic categories of literal (Antioch) versus allegorical (Alexandria) must yield to more subtle descriptions.

³⁰ For an exploration of the origins of Christmas, see Hans Förster, *Die Feier der Geburt Christi in der Alten Kirche* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

³¹ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: Εἰ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν, ἐν ἀνθρωπίνῳ σώματι Θεὸν οἰκῆσαι, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἐν λίθῳ καὶ ξύλῳ, καὶ τοσοῦτον, ὅσον λίθος καὶ ξύλον ἀτιμότερον ἀνθρώπου, εἰ μὴ ἄρα καὶ τῶν ἀναισθήτων τούτων ὑλῶν εὐτελέστερον τὸ γένος ἡμῶν αὐτοῖς εἶναι δοκεῖ (*PG* 49:359). John may have drawn his language from the taunts against false gods in Isa 44:9–20.

³² John gives a kind of argumentation similar to the medieval West—the argument from fittingness (*convenientia*).

³³ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: ἐκεῖνο δὲ φαμεν, ὅτι ναὸν ἅγιον ἑαυτῷ κατασκευάσας ὁ Θεὸς, δι' ἐκείνου τὴν τῶν οὐρανῶν πολιτείαν εἰς τὸν βίον εἰσήγαγε τὸν ἡμέτερον (*PG* 49:359).

which connects the event of Christ's birth to the celebration of that event in the liturgy of the Church. That connection naturally leads him to the Eucharist, but only after he again stresses the condescending love of God: "Let us glorify the God who was made flesh for such great condescension [συγκαταβάσεως]. Now there can be no repayment to God from us other than the salvation of our souls and our care for [living a life of] virtue."³⁴ How then does one glorify the God-made-flesh? By properly approaching the Eucharist: "Inasmuch as you are about to approach this awesome and divine table and sacred entrance into the mystery, do so with fear and trembling, with a clean conscience, with fasting and prayer, not causing a commotion, nor in rebellion, nor fighting your neighbor."³⁵

Chrysostom proceeds to contrast our lowly condition with the utmost dignity of the sacrament: "Even though you are dust and ashes, you partake of the blood and body of Christ"³⁶ But why is the Eucharist so worthy of these accolades? Perhaps the very union of heaven and earth in the Incarnation and its extension in the Eucharist is simultaneously enough to evoke admiration and purity of approach. Yet, John does not leave the matter there. Rather, he stresses the saving power of the sacrament: "What lies before you is the saving medicine [φάρμακον σωτήριο] for our wounds. His wealth is unfailing; he is the patron of the kingdom of heaven."³⁷ John adopts the medical metaphor in use since Ignatius of Antioch but makes it more explicit.³⁸ The "saving medicine" is emphasized in John's syntax, as he underscores both its medicinal effect ("for the wounds sustained by sin") and its character as a gift from God himself ("patron of the kingdom of heaven"). What could be more inviting and powerful than the gift of the sacrament?

Let us enfold [it] with our eyes, let our minds be warmed [with it]
that we might not come to judgment or condemnation but to a

³⁴ For the Greek see note 18.

³⁵ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: Μέλλοντες προσιέναι τῇ φρικτῇ καὶ θείᾳ ταύτῃ τραπέζῃ καὶ ἱερᾷ μυσταγωγίᾳ, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, μετὰ καθαροῦ συνειδότος, μετὰ νηστείας καὶ προσευχῆς, μὴ θορυβοῦντες, μηδὲ λακτίζοντες, μηδὲ ὠθοῦντες τοὺς πλησίον (PG 49:360.).

³⁶ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: Ἐννόησον, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, ποίας μέλλεις ἅπτεσθαι θυσίας, ποῖα προσέρχεσθαι τραπέζῃ· ἐνθυμήθητι καὶ ὅτι γῇ ὦν καὶ σποδός, αἷμα καὶ σῶμα Χριστοῦ μεταλαμβάνεις (PG 49:361). A few lines later he says "So, let us come as approaching the King of Heaven. After receiving [the sacrament], let us kiss the blameless and holy sacrifice" (PG 49:362). ὡς τῷ βασιλεῖ προσιόντες τῶν οὐρανῶν, οὕτω προσέλθωμεν· καὶ δεξάμενοι τὴν ἁμωμον καὶ ἁγίαν θυσίαν καταφιλήσωμεν,

³⁷ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem* (PG 49:361).

³⁸ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians* 20.2.

sobriety of the soul, to love, to virtue, and to reconciliation with God, to confident hope, to the practice [ὑπόθεσις] of a thousand goods. This is also for us to sanctify ourselves and to edify our neighbor.³⁹

The dignity of the sacrament derives from the liturgy as a union of heaven and earth: “When God calls you to his table, and sets before you his own Son, when the angelic powers attend with fear and trembling as the Cherubim hide their faces and the Seraphim cry out, you too cry out, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy Lord.’”⁴⁰ Chrysostom never tires of repeating the union of the heaven and earth made possible by the Eucharist. In his *Homilies on Isaiah Chapter 6* he seeks to lift the mind of his congregants by reminding them, “That altar [in the Church] is a type and icon of this altar [heavenly], that fire a type and icon of spiritual fire.” The means by which a believer can see that celestial fire on the earthly altar resides in the love of God for humanity (φιλανθρωπία): “When you fix upon your Master’s love for humanity, [then you realize that] the grace of the gifts was not reluctant to descend to our lowliness.”⁴¹

The only appropriate preparation for this awesome mystery is silence and calm: “Will you then attend this spiritual banquet in a confused state? Don’t you know that your soul must be filled with quiet [γαλήνη] at that very moment? There is a need for much peace and silence, not confusion, anger, and disturbance. These things make your soul unclean as it approaches.”⁴² Confusion, anger, and wrath will only condemn the communicant because these vices lead to an arrogance unfit for the King.⁴³

³⁹ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς περιπτυζώμεθα, διαθερμάνωμεν ἑαυτῶν τὴν διάνοιαν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα ἢ εἰς κατάκριμα συνερχώμεθα, ἀλλ’ εἰς σωφροσύνην ψυχῆς, εἰς ἀγάπην, εἰς ἀρετὴν, καὶ καταλλαγὴν τὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, εἰς εἰρήνην βεβαίαν, καὶ μυρίων ἀγαθῶν ὑπόθεσιν, ἵνα καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγιάσωμεν, καὶ τοὺς πλησίον οἰκοδομήσωμεν (PG 49:362).

⁴⁰ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: τοῦ Θεοῦ δὲ καλοῦντος ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τράπεζαν, καὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ προτιθέντος Υἱὸν, ἀγγελικῶν δυνάμεων παρισταμένων μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου, καὶ τῶν Χερουβὶμ κατακαλυπτόντων τὰ πρόσωπα, τῶν Σεραφὶμ κραζόντων τρόμῳ, Ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος Κύριος (PG 49:361).

⁴¹ Both quotations come from Homily 6 on Isaiah, nos. 6, 3 (Solano, *Textos Eucaristicos Primitivos*, 1:764).

⁴² John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: Οὐκ οἶδας, ὅτι γαλήνης δεῖ γέμειν τὴν ψυχὴν κατ’ ἐκείνον τὸν καιρὸν; Εἰρήνης πολλῆς καὶ ἡσυχίας χρεῖα, οὐχὶ θορύβου καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ ταραχῆς· ταῦτα γὰρ ἀκάθαρτον ποιεῖ τὴν προσιοῦσαν ψυχὴν (PG 49:361).

⁴³ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*: “Confusion and wrath become arrogance [ὑβρις] in the presence of the sacrifice lying before us. It is the last [and greatest] contempt for a defiled man to present himself to God” (PG 49:362).

Still, the silence and calm urged are not empty or vapid. They consist of a living humility and self-abnegation which should characterize every approach to the Eucharist: "Let us then tremble as we approach, let us give thanks, let us fall down, confessing our faults, let us weep as we mourn our own evil. Let us offer fervent prayers to God. We will thereby purify ourselves quietly and with a fitting good order. So, let us come as approaching the King of Heaven. After receiving [the sacrament], let us kiss the blameless and holy sacrifice."⁴⁴ With such exhortations one can readily understand why John would see a deep connection between the birth of Jesus and the celebration of the Eucharist.

This connection becomes even more evident in a rather unexpected place. In his *Homily on Philogonius*, an earlier bishop of Antioch, Chrysostom takes the occasion to highlight the power and value of the sacrament.⁴⁵ This homily, preached five days before the nativity of Christ, contains a variety of themes, but one that stands out at the end is how the celebration transports the Christian back to the very circumstances in which Christ was born:

Because of this I greet and love this day [of Christ's birth] and I put love front and center that I may make you sharers of this love-charm. For this reason, I beg and entreat you all to be here with all diligence and readiness for each should empty his own house that we may see our Master lying in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, that awesome and incredible spectacle. What defense can we have, what excuse when he has come down from heaven for our sake, but we don't come out of our house to him? When the Magi, those barbarians and foreigners, ran from Persia to see him lying in a crib. But you, O Christian, do not remain a little while so as to enjoy this blessed sight. For when we approach with faith we too will certainly see him lying in the manger, for this table fulfills the purpose of the manger.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem* (PG 49:361).

⁴⁵ Two fine translations of this homily exist, one by Paul W. Harkins in *The Incomprehensible Nature of God*, Fathers of the Church 72 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 164–83, and the other by Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen in *John Chrysostom*, ed. Carol Harrison, The Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 2000), 184–95. The latter dates the homily to December 20, 386 (in Antioch). There are divergences in the manuscript tradition. This homily is only tangentially about the incomprehensibility of God but is titled homily 6 in that series (see the Harkins trans., 164). My translation will differ at times from both of these otherwise excellent alternatives.

⁴⁶ John Chrysostom. *De beato philogonio*: Διὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα ἀσπάζομαι τὴν ἡμέραν

The “love-charm” (φιλτρον)⁴⁷ of which John speaks could be a potion or any other means by which the recipient is rendered unable to resist the advances of a lover. The comparison with the Magi is an argument from the greater to the lesser (*a maiore ad minorem*), because the effort of Magi was so much greater than what is required of the Christian in John’s day. The end result, however, is the same, that is, worshiping the infant Christ child. To come to the Eucharist is to place oneself at the manger and to adore Christ in his humble condition. What is striking is John’s practical equivalence of the manger with the table of the Church. The purpose of the birth is to allow the Christian to partake of Christ himself. John’s choice of vocabulary astounds. This table “fulfills [πληροῖ] the purpose or order [τάξις] of that manger.”⁴⁸ The choice of “order” suggests another favorite term of John’s—οἰκονομία, God’s plan or design. In short, the Eucharist is more than an arbitrary divine choice. The sacrament is the purpose or order of God’s saving acts because it incorporates the communicant into God’s plan. Participation in the table is the fulfillment of the Incarnation.

The grandeur of the Eucharist then also explains why John insists on a right approach to the sacrament. The presence of the same man who walked the earth implies that the Christian is in no inferior position to those who lived at the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn:

For the Master’s body shall lie here too, not wrapped in swaddling clothes as then, but wrapped on every side with the Holy Spirit. Those initiated into the mysteries know the things said. Now the Magi only worshiped, but you, if you approach with a pure

ταύτην καὶ φιλῶ, καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα εἰς μέσον προτίθημι, ἵνα κοινωνοὺς ὑμᾶς ποιήσω τοῦ φίλτρου· διὰ τοῦτο δέομαι πάντων ὑμῶν καὶ ἀντιβोलῶ μετὰ πάσης σπουδῆς καὶ προθυμίας παραγενέσθαι, τὴν οἰκίαν ἑκάστον κενώσαντα τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, ἵνα ἴδωμεν τὸν Δεσπότην ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς φάτνης κείμενον, ἐσπαργανωμένον, τὸ φρικτὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ παράδοξον θέαμα. Ποία γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀπολογία, ποία δὲ συγγνώμη, ὅταν αὐτὸς μὲν ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν δι’ ἡμᾶς καταβαίνει, ἡμεῖς δὲ μηδὲ ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐρχώμεθα; ὅταν μάγοι μὲν, ἄνθρωποι βάρβαροι καὶ ἀλλόφυλοι, ἐκ Περσίδος τρέχωσιν, ὥστε αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς φάτνης κείμενον· σὺ δὲ ὁ Χριστιανὸς μηδὲ μικρὸν διάστημα ὑπομένης, ὥστε τῆς μακαρίας ταύτης ἀπολαῦσαι θεωρίας; Καὶ γὰρ, ἂν μετὰ πίστεως παραγενώμεθα, πάντως αὐτὸν ὁψόμεθα ἐπὶ τῆς φάτνης κείμενον· ἢ γὰρ τράπεζα αὕτη τάξιν τῆς φάτνης πληροῖ (PG 48:753–56; Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos*, 1:673).

⁴⁷ Mayer and Allen translate “I put my love on show to make you share in my affection for it” (*John Chrysostom*, 191). It is not obvious that John is speaking about his own love at this point. It may be referring to God’s love. Further, I would rather retain the noun “love-charm” rather than flattening it out as they have done.

⁴⁸ Mayer and Allen translate “this table fulfills the role of the manger” (*Harrison, John Chrysostom*, 192). In my opinion, “role” is too weak for τάξις.

conscience and receive, we will be united to you and you can depart for home. Come then and bring your gifts, not like those of the Magi, but rather more solemn. They brought gold. But you, you bring discretion and virtue. They offered frankincense but you, you bring pure prayers, spiritual sacrifices. They offered myrrh, but you, you should offer humility, a humble heart and alms. If you approach with these gifts, you will enjoy this holy table with much confidence. For this reason, I want to motivate you now with these words, since I know that certainly many will approach on that day and will stumble over the spiritual sacrifice.⁴⁹

The interplay of continuity and discontinuity, so evident in Chrysostom's biblical interpretation, also guides his sacramental theology. The gifts of the Magi are no longer appropriate. They were symbolic in the sense of representing not only their own inner homage to the King, but the even more costly gifts of virtue and faith necessary for the Christian. The latter can offer the greater gifts of an interior nature as well as receiving the King in a manner that the Magi could not.⁵⁰ This affords Chrysostom the opportunity to exhort his congregants to put away strife and anger, which are the greatest obstacles to a proper communion. At the end of his homily he even urges forgiveness of offenses in the light of the fact that it is a greater evil to oneself to remain bitter than whatever the original offense was.⁵¹ In this

⁴⁹ John Chrysostom. *De beato philogonio*: Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐνταῦθα κείσεται τὸ σῶμα τὸ δεσποτικόν, οὐχὶ ἐσπαργανωμένον, καθάπερ τότε, ἀλλὰ Πνεύματι πανταχόθεν ἀγίῳ περιστελλόμενον. Ἰσασιν οἱ μεμνημένοι τὰ λεγόμενα. Οἱ μὲν οὖν μάγοι προσεκύνησαν μόνον· σὺ δὲ, ἂν μετὰ καθαροῦ προσέλθῃς συνειδότος, καὶ λαβεῖν σοι αὐτὸ συγχωρήσομεν καὶ ἀπελθεῖν οἴκαδε. Πρόσιθι τοίνυν καὶ σὺ δῶρα προσάγων, μὴ τοιαῦτα οἷα ἐκεῖνοι, ἀλλὰ πολλῶ σεμνότερα. Προσήνεγκαν ἐκεῖνοι χρυσόν· προσένεγκε σὺ σωφροσύνην καὶ ἀρετήν· προσήνεγκαν ἐκεῖνοι λιβανωτόν· προσένεγκε σὺ εὐχὰς καθαρὰς, τὰ θυμιάματα τὰ πνευματικά· προσήνεγκαν ἐκεῖνοι σμύρναν· προσένεγκε σὺ ταπεινοφροσύνην καὶ τεταπεινωμένην καρδίαν καὶ ἐλεημοσύνην. Ἄν μετὰ τούτων προσέλθῃς τῶν δώρων, μετὰ ἀδείας ἀπολαύσῃ πολλῆς τῆς θῆς τῶν δώρων, μετὰ ἀδείας ἀπολαύσῃ πολλῆς τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης τραπέζης. Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ διὰ τοῦτο τούτους κινῶ τοὺς λόγους νῦν, ἐπειδὴ οἶδα ὅτι πάντως πολλοὶ κατ' ἐκείνην προσελεύσονται τὴν ἡμέραν, καὶ ἐπιπεσοῦνται τῇ πνευματικῇ ταύτῃ θυσίᾳ (PG 48:753. Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos*, 1:674).

⁵⁰ Later in *De beato philogonio* John says: "For you're about to receive the King under your roof in communion. As the king enters your soul, you should be in much tranquility, much silence, and deep peace of thoughts [Βασιλέα γὰρ ὑποδέχεσθαι μέλλεις διὰ τῆς κοινωνίας βασιλέως δὲ ἐπιβαίνοντος τῇ ψυχῇ, πολλὴν εἶναι δεῖ τὴν γαλήνην, πολλὴν τὴν ἡσυχίαν, βαθεῖαν τῶν λογισμῶν τὴν εἰρήνην]" (PG 48:756; Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos*, 1:678).

⁵¹ See John Chrysostom, *De beato philogonio*: "Have you been greatly wronged and

manner, then, John views the Eucharist as an extension of Christ's earthly life in the world today.⁵²

The Baptism of Jesus

Baptism and Eucharist were universally considered to be the two most prominent sacraments in the ancient Church, so it is not surprising that Chrysostom would preach on the baptism of Jesus, but his method in doing so is all his own. John was always aware of the background of salvation history (οἰκονομία) when treating mysteries of the New Covenant, always ready to invoke texts and images of the Old Testament

This is the reason for baptism. All that was said beforehand was to fulfill the whole law. So, the Spirit came down in the form of a dove, for where there is reconciliation with God, there is a dove. On Noah's ark the dove was also carrying an olive branch, a symbol of God's love for humanity and of relief from winter.⁵³

The presence of the dove in both the Noahic narrative and in the baptism of Jesus evoked the theme of purity in John's mind, but the purity of the dove in the story of Noah was only a pointer, an index of a greater purity that lay in the Son of God who "is now at the right hand of the Father in a pure and undefiled body."⁵⁴ As John compares the two stories, he sees the truer ark in the Church: "That ark [of Noah] stayed on the earth even though

cannot bear to let go of your anger? What greater, more severe wrong will you do yourself? Those things which your enemy has done, however great they be, are not so bad as you do to yourself if you are not reconciled to him but rather trample on the law of God [Ἀλλὰ μέγала ἡδίκησαι. καὶ οὐ φέρεις ἀφεῖναι τὴν ὀργήν; τί τοίνυν σαυτὸν πολλῶ μείζονα ἀδικεῖς καὶ χαλεπώτερα; Οὐ γὰρ τοιαῦτά σε διαθήσεται ὁ ἐχθρὸς ὅσα περ ἂν ποιῇ, οἷα σὺ σαυτὸν μὴ καταλλαττόμενος πρὸς ἐκεῖνον]" (PG 48:756; Solano, *Textos Eucaristicos Primitivos*, 1:678).

⁵² The idea of the Church and the Eucharist as a kind of ongoing Incarnation, rather than simply juridical entities, became a prominent theme in nineteenth-century German Catholic theology, e.g., Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolism* (New York: Crossroads, 1997), and Matthias Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1951).

⁵³ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: Αὕτη ἡ αἰτία τοῦ βαπτίσματος, ἵνα δόξῃ τὸν νόμον ἅπαντα πληροῦν, καὶ αὕτη, καὶ ἡ πρὸ ταύτης εἰρημένη. Διὸ καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐν εἵδει περιστερᾶς κάτεισιν· ὅπου γὰρ καταλλαγὴ Θεοῦ, περιστερὰ. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κιβωτοῦ τῆς ἐπὶ Νῶε φέρουσα κλάδον ἐλαίας ἦλθεν ἡ περιστέρα, σύμβολον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας, καὶ τῆς τοῦ χειμῶνος ἀπαλλαγῆς (PG 49:369).

⁵⁴ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸ ἁμωμον ἐκεῖνο καὶ ἀκήρατον σῶμα (PG 49:369).

the harshness of winter was unleashed, so this ark [the Church] snatches one up to heaven.”⁵⁵ The liturgy of the Church, uniting heaven and earth, means that “Christ is present, the angels [are] standing in attendance, the awesome table prepared.” This reality induces John to warn his hearers against a casual indifference to the glories contained in the mysteries:

As your brothers (i.e., catechumens) are still being led into the mysteries, will you leave this and turn away? When you have been invited to a supper, even if you are satiated, you would not dare to leave the other guests before friends. Here Christ is enacting awe-inspiring mysteries, the sacred liturgy is still being performed, are you going to leave and depart in the middle? What sort of defense can you give? May I tell you whose work it is that those who leave before the conclusion are doing? They are not bringing the Eucharistic hymns to the purpose [τέλος] of the table?⁵⁶

John is warning his congregants against the temptation to receive communion because it is a high feast day rather than because of the state of their hearts. As he reminds them of the presence of Christ’s body, he warns against perfunctory communion: “I know that many among us are running toward this holy table because of the custom of the feast.” What then is necessary for the believing Christian? “Not to observe the feasts but to cleanse the conscience and then to touch the sacred sacrifice.”⁵⁷ Even worse would be to leave the liturgy before the consummating end of communion, an act which John likens to Judas leaving the Passover supper of Christ: “Judas shared in the last supper on that very last night while all the others were sitting at table, but he alone jumped up to leave. These here who leave before the last thanksgiving [εὐχαριστίας] are imitating him.”⁵⁸ So,

⁵⁵ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: Ἐκείνη μὲν οὖν ἡ κιβωτός, τοῦ χειμῶνος λυθέντος, ἔμεινεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· αὕτη δὲ ἡ κιβωτός, τῆς ὀργῆς λυθείσης, εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἤρπάζετο (PG 49:369).

⁵⁶ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου μυσταγωγουμένων ἔτι, αὐτὸς καταλιπὼν ἀποπηδᾷ; Καὶ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον μὲν κληθεῖς, κἂν λιπὼν ἀποπηδᾷ; Καὶ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον μὲν κληθεῖς, κἂν πρότερον ορεσθῇς, οὐ τολμᾷς τῶν ἄλλων ἀνακειμένων ἀναχωρῆσαι πρὸ τῶν φίλων αὐτός· ἐνταῦθα δὲ τῶν φρικτῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ μυστηρίων ἐπιτελουμένων, τῆς ἱερᾶς τελετῆς συνεστῶσης ἔτι, καταλιμπάνεις ἐν μέσῳ πάντα καὶ ἀναχωρεῖς; Καὶ ποῦ ταῦτα συγγνώμης ἄξια; ποίας δὲ ἀπολογίας; Βούλεσθε εἶπω τίνος ἔργον ποιοῦσιν οἱ πρὸ τῆς συμπληρώσεως ἀναχωροῦντες, καὶ τὰς εὐχαριστηρίους ᾠδὰς οὐκ ἐπιφέροντες τῷ τέλει τῆς τραπέζης (PG 49:370).

⁵⁷ Both quotations are from *De baptismo Christi* (PG 49:370).

⁵⁸ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: Ὅτε ἐκοινῶνησε τὸ ἔσχατον δεῖπνον ὁ Ἰούδας τὸ κατὰ τὴν τελευταίαν νύκτα ἐκείνην, τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ἀνακειμένων,

to be worldly-minded like Judas is to despise the glorious reality resident in the Eucharist, that “spiritual food which surpasses the whole creation, visible and invisible, being a man and of the same vile nature [as Judas], will you not remain in thanksgiving in words and deeds?”⁵⁹ In the end, treating baptism or Eucharist with contempt or even indifference results from a profound lack of understanding the effects which they can produce: “Where there are mysteries, there is tranquility. So, let us touch this sacred sacrifice and cleanse our soul with much tranquility, much good order, and with fitting piety that we may be drawn to God into greater kindness [εὐνοία] and obtain eternal goods.”⁶⁰

Baptism naturally leads to the Eucharist and the latter forms a kind of completion (τέλος) of the former, but both flow from the redemptive work of Christ. Nothing in the previous history of salvation can compare to what Christ accomplished and what he transmits to the Christian in the mysteries. This becomes evident in Chrysostom’s baptismal catecheses where he contrasts the blood on the doorposts in Egypt with the blood of Christ. The former was a type (τύπος) of the latter, and only the latter is effective in protecting the Christian from the destroyer.⁶¹ The superiority of Christ’s blood induces John to introduce what he terms “a different mystical word.”⁶² The blood and water that flowed from Jesus’s side (see John 19:34) are “symbols” but not in the modern sense of bare signification. They are signs which carry the reality of what they signify:

The first was a symbol [σύμβολον] of baptism; the second of the mysteries. For this reason it did not say, “blood and water flowed out,” but first came water and then blood, since baptism comes first and then the mysteries. So, the soldier pierced his side, he dug through the wall of the holy temple and I found the treasure and

αὐτὸς προπηδήσας ἐξέβη. Ἐκεῖνον τοῖνον μιμοῦνται καὶ οὗτοι, οἱ πρὸ τῆς ἐσχάτης ἀποπηδῶντες εὐχαριστίας (PG 49:371).

⁵⁹ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: ἀλλὰ σωματικῆς μὲν τροφῆς ἀπολαύων μετὰ τὴν τράπεζαν ἐπὶ εὐχὴν τρέπη, πνευματικῆς δὲ καὶ ὑπερβαλλούσης τὴν κτίσιν ἅπασαν τὴν ὁρατὴν καὶ τὴν ἀόρατον μετέχων, ἄνθρωπος ὢν καὶ τῆς εὐτελοῦς φύσεως, οὐ μένεις εὐχαριστῶν καὶ ῥήμασι καὶ πράγμασι; (PG 49:372).

⁶⁰ John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*: ἔνθα δὲ μυστήρια, πολλὴ σιγὴ. Μετὰ πολλῆς τοῖνον τῆς σιγῆς, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς εὐταξίας, μετὰ τῆς προσηκούσης εὐλαβείας, τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης ἀπτώμεθα θυσίας, ἵνα εἰς πλείονα τὴν εὐνοίαν τὸν Θεὸν ἐπισπασώμεθα, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκκαθάρωμεν, καὶ τῶν αἰωνίων ἐπιτύχωμεν ἀγαθῶν (PG 49:372).

⁶¹ See John Chrysostom, Catechesis III, in *Huit catéchèses baptismale inédites* [Eight Unpublished Baptismal Catecheses], trans. Antoine Wenger with notes, in SC 50 (Paris: Cerf, 1957), 158–62.

⁶² John Chrysostom, Catechesis III, no. 17.

received wealth. Thus, it was to the lamb too. The Jews sacrificed the sheep and I have found the fruit of salvation from the sacrifice.⁶³

John is commenting on the passage in John 19:31–36 which recounts the Roman soldier piercing Jesus’s side from which flowed “blood and water” (19:34). Strangely, John insists on the reverse order of “water and blood” to align with the temporal administration of the two sacraments. Scholars have puzzled over this because this is not the only place where John argues this way.⁶⁴ Scholars have suggested different solutions to this conundrum, but the general thrust of John’s point is sufficient for our purposes.⁶⁵ The flesh of Christ is a “holy temple” which housed the sacred waters of baptism and the precious blood of the Eucharist. The change from the third to the first person in the middle of the sentence of the last quotation is also significant. The soldier’s action had the effect that “I [ἐγώ] found the treasure and received wealth.” The Jews’ sacrificing the lamb also made it possible that “I [ἐγώ] have found the fruit of salvation as from the sacrifice.” The members of the new covenant Church are the beneficiaries of all salvation history, both before and during the earthly life of Christ:

“Water and blood came from (his) side.” Beloved, do not pass by the mystery. I have a different mystical word. I said that this blood and water were a symbol of baptism and of the mysteries. It was out of these two that the Church was born “through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,” through baptism and through the mysteries. The symbols of baptism and the mysteries from (his) side. So, it was from his side then that Christ created the Church as it was from Adam’s side that he formed Eve.⁶⁶

When John exhorts his hearers not to let the mystery escape them, the choice of the singular “mystery” is significant. He normally uses the plural to designate the Eucharist, as he does above toward the end of this quotation. Speaking of “mystery” in the singular probably refers to the broader idea of the birth of the Church from the side of Christ. This means that

⁶³ John Chrysostom, Catechesis III, no. 16 (see notes by Wenger on *Huit catéchèses baptismale inédites*, 160–61).

⁶⁴ In Homily 85 on the Gospel of John, Chrysostom makes the same point (*PG* 59:463B). As Wenger notes, John does give the correct order on other occasions (*Huit catéchèses baptismale inédites*, 160n1).

⁶⁵ See Wenger’s discussion of suggested solutions (*Huit catéchèses baptismale inédites*, 160n1).

⁶⁶ Catechesis III, no 17.

the Church was born not only as a result of Christ's will, but from his very inner being. As Eve was taken from Adam ontologically, so the Church as Christ's bride derives ontologically from Christ himself.⁶⁷

John's teaching on baptism, both that of Jesus and of the Christian, means that there exists a deep linkage and inner unity between all the mysteries in Jesus's earthly life. His nativity, baptism, and death are all connected. What his Eucharistic language suggests is that those mysteries of Christ's earthly life are active and efficacious in the consummating sacrament of the Church.

The Healing Ministry of Christ

John preached on many of Christ's miracles, as one would expect when preaching on the Gospels.⁶⁸ One of his more striking expositions treats the story of the woman with a hemorrhage as it appears in Matthew 9:20–22.⁶⁹ This story is embedded in the account of Jairus the synagogue official who came to plead with Jesus for his dying daughter, and so it has the flavor of an inadvertent miracle within a greater miracle story. Unlike many other such stories, the hemorrhaging woman is not healed because of some deliberate action on Jesus's part. It is she who initiates the healing by touching Jesus's garment. In this John finds something very relevant to his audience:

The woman with a hemorrhage taught us how to find wisdom. But the Evangelist showed that Jesus went up into those parts for a long time: "The men knew the place and they sent them into the surrounding region and they brought the sick to him." But the extended time not only did not destroy her faith, but rather made it stronger by preserving her who was at the prime of life.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ John proceeds to draw on and develop marital imagery in the following sections (18, 19) of Catechesis III.

⁶⁸ Chrysostom never preached a series of expository homilies on Mark or Luke as he did on Matthew and John. He may have thought it unnecessary, since he had dealt with the major themes of Christ's life in treating Matthew. Here I select only one healing story for brevity's sake.

⁶⁹ The fullest account of this miracle is actually in the shorter Mark 5:25–34.

⁷⁰ Homily 50 on Matthew: Ἡ γὰρ αἰμορροοῦσα ἅπαντας ἐδίδασκε φιλοσοφεῖν. Δεικνὺς δὲ ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς, ὅτι καὶ διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου τοῖς μέρεσιν ἐπέβη, φησὶν, ὅτι Ἐπιγνόντες οἱ ἄνδρες τοῦ τόπου ἀπέστειλαν εἰς τὴν περίχωρον, καὶ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας. Ἀλλ' ὅμως ὁ χρόνος οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐξέλυσε τὴν πίστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μείζονα εἰργάσατο, καὶ ἀκμάζουσιν διετήρησεν (PG 58:507).

This poor woman's faith becomes the centerpiece of John's reflections.⁷¹ Her wisdom lay in her perception that even a mere touch of Jesus's clothes would bring her the relief she had been seeking for twelve years. Of all the accounts in the Gospels, only Matthew uses the term "hem" or "edge" (κράσπεδον) of Jesus's garment. John finds this significant for his own audience as well. Where could a Christian in the late fourth or early fifth century find the hem of Jesus's garment to touch? John does not hesitate to introduce the Eucharist as the answer:

Dare to touch the hem of his clothes. Or rather, if we wish, we can have all of him. For Christ's body lies before us now. Not only his garment but his very body. Not only to touch but to eat and enjoy. So, let us approach with faith, each of us who is weak. For if those who touch the hem of his garment can draw out such great power, how much more can those who have him whole. And they can approach with faith not only to receive what lies here, but to touch with a pure heart, to be disposed in this way as approaching Christ himself. What then? Only when you hear his voice? But you see him lying here.⁷²

John's appeal moves from the lesser to the greater (*a minori ad maiorem*). The Christians of his day may have been tempted to think that such a great miracle could not be repeated in their own day, that the historical Jesus was not present with them as he was to the hemorrhaging woman. John, however, sees the miracle recorded in the Gospel not as the greater but as the lesser of two realities: the historical and the Eucharistic. The Eucharistic presence of Christ allows for more than touching the hem of Jesus's clothes. It provides not only a visual reality ("Christ's body lies before us

⁷¹ Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna preached four sermons on this story in which he also emphasized the reality of this woman's faith. See Kenneth J. Howell, "The Eucharist as a Hermeneutical Lens in the Preaching of Peter Chrysologus," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 35, no. 2 (2019): 199–207.

⁷² Homily 50 on Matthew: Ἀψώμεθα τοίνυν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ· μᾶλλον δὲ, ἐὰν θέλωμεν, ὅλον αὐτὸν ἔχομεν. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ πρόκειται νῦν ἡμῖν· οὐ τὸ ἱμάτιον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σῶμα· οὐχ ὥστε ἄψασθαι μόνον, ἀλλ' ὥστε καὶ φαγεῖν καὶ ἐμφορηθῆναι. Προσερχώμεθα τοίνυν μετὰ πίστεως, ἕκαστος ἀσθένειαν ἔχων. Εἰ γὰρ οἱ τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ἀψάμενοι τοσαύτην εἴλκυσαν δύναμιν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον οἱ ὅλον αὐτὸν κατέχοντες; Τὸ δὲ προσελθεῖν μετὰ πίστεως οὐ τὸ λαβεῖν ἐστὶ μόνον τὸ προκείμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ μετὰ καθαρᾶς καρδίας ἄψασθαι, τὸ οὕτω διακεῖσθαι, ὡς αὐτῷ προσιόντας τῷ ἄψασθαι, τὸ οὕτω διακεῖσθαι, ὡς αὐτῷ προσιόντας τῷ Χριστῷ. Τί γὰρ, εἰ μὴ φωνῆς ἀκούεις; Ἀλλ' ὁρᾷς αὐτὸν κείμενον (PG 58:507; Solano, *Textos Eucaristicos Primitivos*, 1:783).

now”), but the mystery of consuming his very body (“not only to touch but to eat and enjoy”). In this way, the Christian consuming the Eucharist is in a superior position to the suffering woman. Yet, like the bleeding woman, every person too is weakened by sin (“each of us who is weak”). The only remedy is the same as the woman manifested: faith. Approaching with faith allows one to eat the same body of Christ that healed the woman. The touch which Christians can have is more than the woman’s. It is an inner, spiritual touch (“to touch with a pure heart”) that reaches not the hem of Jesus’s garment but into his very heart.

The Passion and Death of Jesus

Of all the figures of Jesus’s Passion contained in the biblical narratives, few captured Chrysostom’s imagination as completely as that of Judas. John never ceases to marvel at the depths of treacherous depravity of which Judas is the archetype; and he uses Judas as an opportunity to exhort his congregants to a holy and faithful life. We possess two homilies bearing the name of Judas, both of which contain one of Chrysostom’s favorite moral subjects—the forgiveness and love of one’s enemies. The first of these homilies, however, also contains material on the Eucharist in some surprising ways.⁷³ Nothing of what John says here about the Eucharist makes any sense apart from his thoughts on the Savior and Judas. The contrast could not be starker:

He who was betrayed saved the inhabited world.
He who betrayed him lost his own soul.
He who was betrayed sits on the Father’s right hand in the heavens.
He who betrayed him is now in Hell awaiting inevitable punishment.⁷⁴

Yet John draws very surprising inferences from his negative judgment of Judas. He exhorts his hearers to lament, not the Master’s fate but Judas’s, “Weep and groan for him; grieve for him since the Master shed tears for him.”⁷⁵ Chrysostom sees Jesus’s attitudes toward Judas as based on his love of humanity (φιλανθρωπία):

⁷³ John Chrysostom, *De prodizione Judae*, in *PG* 49:373–92.

⁷⁴ John Chrysostom, *De prodizione Judae*: ‘Ο μὲν γὰρ παραδοθεὶς τὴν οἰκουμένην ἔσωσεν, ὁ δὲ προδοὺς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἀπώλεσε· καὶ ὁ μὲν προδοθεὶς ἐν δεξιᾷ κάθεται τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ὁ δὲ παραδοὺς ἐν ᾄδου νῦν ἐστι, τὴν ἀπαραίτητον ἀναμένων κόλασιν (*PG* 49:373).

⁷⁵ John Chrysostom, *De prodizione Judae* (*PG* 49:373).

O how great is the Master's kind heart! The One betrayed suffers pain for the betrayer. When He saw him, He was troubled and said, "one of you will betray me." For whom was he despondent? At once showing His own love, he taught us that it is right to sing a dirge not for the one who suffers evil but for the one who does evil. What is worse than this? Suffering evil is not evil but doing evil is. Suffering evil procures the kingdom of heaven, whereas doing evil becomes the cause of Gehenna and punishment. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:10).⁷⁶

On the basis of Jesus's example Chrysostom urges his people to show mercy, kindness, and forgiveness for their enemies. If Jesus could love Judas even amidst "the unspeakable madness," how much more should his followers forgive lesser sins. Such divine love overcomes the treachery of others. These thoughts lead John to the shedding of Christ's blood, which in turn leads him to the Eucharist:

O Christ's love for humanity! O the madness of Judas! O the lunacy! Judas sold him for thirty pieces of silver; Christ after this did not refuse his blood to be sold to give the forgiveness of sins for him who sold him. . . . Yes, Judas was present and he shared in the holy table. As Christ washed his feet along with the other disciples, so he partook of the holy table that Judas might have no excuse if he continued in evil.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae*: "Ὡ πόση εὐσπλαγχνία τοῦ Δεσπότου! ὁ προδοθεὶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ προδότος ἀλγεί. Ἰδὼν γὰρ αὐτὸν, ἐταράχθη, φησὶ, καὶ εἶπεν· Εἷς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με. Τίνος ἕνεκεν ἠθύμησεν; Ὁμοῦ καὶ τὴν φιλοστοργίαν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιδεικνύμενος, καὶ διδάσκων ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐ τὸν πάσχοντα κακῶς, ἀλλὰ τὸν ποιοῦντα κακῶς, τοῦτον θρηνεῖν πανταχοῦ δίκαιον τοῦτον θρηνεῖν πανταχοῦ δίκαιον. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκείνου χειρόν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐκείνο μὲν οὐ κακὸν, τὸ κακῶς παθεῖν, κακὸν δὲ τὸ ποιῆσαι κακῶς. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ κακῶς παθεῖν, τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν προξενεῖ, τὸ δὲ κακῶς ποιῆσαι αἷτιον ἡμῖν τῆς γεέννης καὶ τῆς κολάσεως γίνεται. Μακάριοι γὰρ, φησὶν, οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (PG 49:373).

⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae*: "Ὡ τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ φιλάνθρωπίας! ὦ τῆς τοῦ Ἰούδα παραπληξίας! ὦ τῆς μανίας! ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐπώλησεν αὐτὸν τριάκοντα δηναρίων· ὁ Χριστὸς δὲ καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο οὐ παρητήσατο αὐτὸ τὸ αἷμα τὸ πραθὲν δοῦναι εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν τῷ πεπρακότι, εἴ γε ἠθέλησε. Καὶ γὰρ παρῆν Ἰούδας, καὶ μετείχε τῆς ἱερᾶς τραπέζης. Ὡς περ γὰρ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνίψε μαθητῶν, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἱερᾶς μετέσχε τραπέζης, ἵνα μηδεμίαν ἀπολογίαν ἔχη πρόφασιν, ἐὰν ἐπιμείνῃ τῇ πονηρίᾳ (PG 49:380).

Judas's partaking of the first Eucharist was an opportunity for repentance or for making his betrayal more egregious if he did not repent. His madness, his lunacy, lay in his obstinate refusal to turn back from his crime. This in turn leads John to exhort his congregants to proper preparation for receiving from the holy table. Judas provides the example of one who was poisoned with evil intent; his actions are to be avoided at all costs. "Let them not carry one thing in their mouth and another in their heart."⁷⁸

The Christian at the sacred table is in precisely the same position as Judas: "Christ is present and he who once arranged that table and now also arranges this one. For it is not a man who makes the gifts become the body and blood of Christ."⁷⁹ John sees the holy table, the sacred altar, as identical with that historic table of the Last Supper, but even more, he sees Christ as the principal actor:

It is Christ who was crucified on our behalf. The priest stands fulfilling the form [σχῆμα] by uttering those words, but the power and the grace are from God. He says, "This is my body." This utterance transforms the gifts.⁸⁰

Here we have a somewhat rare but clear affirmation in John's homilies of what seems to have been the universal belief of the ancient Church, East and West. The East has generally emphasized the Epiclesis, or the calling down of the Holy Spirit, as the active agent in the transformation of the natural gifts, while the West has emphasized the power of the consecratory words.⁸¹ Here, however, John also emphasizes the power of the words

⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae* (PG 49:380).

⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae* (PG 49:380).

⁸⁰ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae*: αὐτὸς ὁ σταυρωθεὶς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν Χριστός. Σχῆμα πληρῶν ἔστηκεν ὁ ἱερεὺς, τὰ ῥήματα φθεγγόμενος ἐκεῖνα· ἡ δὲ δύναμις καὶ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ. Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα, φησί. Τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα μεταρρύθμιζει τὰ προκείμενα (PG 49:380). Battifol comments, "Chrysostom makes his point more precisely, namely, that the conversion or sanctification of the gifts is produced by the same word of Christ pronounced by the bishop" (*L'Eucharistie*, 415).

⁸¹ In the Western church, Ambrose speaks of the transforming power of Christ's consecratory words: "But if a human blessing could accomplish something so great, what can we say of the divine consecration itself where the very words of the Lord and Savior are at work? For that sacrament which you receive is made [*conficitur*] by the word of Christ. If Elijah's word accomplished so much, will not Christ's word be powerful enough to change the nature [*species*] of the elements? You read about the entirety of the works in the universe, "Because he said it and it happened; he commanded and they were created." So, the word of Christ, which was able to make from nothing [*ex nihilo*] what did not exist, can it not change

spoken by Christ. While the priest plays an indispensable human role, it is Christ who is the supernatural agent behind the words. The expression “this utterance transforms the gifts” (τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα μεταρρυθμίζει τὰ προκείμενα) suggests something similar to what is more commonly expressed in the West. John’s choice of the verb μεταρρυθμίζει is an unusual one.⁸² While the verb generally means “transform” or “change the form of something,” we have few clues as to the deeper meaning that John may have seen in the word. The clearest explanation is John’s own and follows immediately upon this sentence:

It is like the word that said, “Grow and increase, and fill the earth” (Gen 1:28). It was said once, but through all time it works to enable our nature to bring forth children. In the same way, this word once spoken effects the perfected sacrifice on each table in the churches from that time until now, even until his coming.⁸³

As does Ambrose, John likens the consecratory words to the original creation and the power of divine speech. This analogy underscores the sacred character of the moment of holy communion. Like Judas, the Christian comes face to face, as it were, with the reality of who Jesus is. And so John points back to Judas’s shameless betrayal as a warning:

So then let no one be deceitful, let no one be full of evil with any poison in his mind so that his reception may not lead to condemnation. And then, after receiving the offering, the Devil rushed into Judas without any thought of the Lord’s body that was there. He looked only at the shamelessness of Judas. This happened to

what does exist into something else? For it is not anything less to bring about new things than it is to change their natures” (*De mysteriis* 9.52).

⁸² The word does not occur in the New Testament. In Lampe’s listing it is used in a Eucharistic context only in Chrysostom (G. W. H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961], 860). There are twenty instances in the Chrysostom corpus. The meaning is glossed by μεταπλάττειν (“remold, reshape”) in his homilies on Hebrews where, speaking in God’s voice, he says: “Thus, I am able to remold and transform them [διὸ καὶ μεταπλάττειν καὶ μεταρρυθμίζειν αὐτὰ δύναμαι].”

⁸³ John Chrysostom, *De prodizione Judae*: καὶ καθάπερ ἡ φωνὴ ἐκείνη ἡ λέγουσα· Αὐξάνεσθε, καὶ πληθύνεσθε, καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν, ἐρρέθη μὲν ἅπαξ, διὰ παντὸς δὲ τοῦ χρόνου γίνεται ἔργῳ ἐνδυναμοῦσα τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἡμετέραν πρὸς παιδοποιαν· οὕτω καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὕτη ἅπαξ λεχθεῖσα καθ’ ἐκάστην τράπεζαν ἐν ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις ἐξ ἐκείνου μέχρι σήμερον καὶ μέχρι τῆς αὐτοῦ παρουσίας, τὴν θυσίαν ἀπηρτισμένην ἐργάζεται (*PG* 49:380).

teach you that to those who partake of the divine mysteries in an unworthy manner, it is these that the Devil rushes into and enters continuously as was the case with Judas at that time.⁸⁴

One can hardly imagine a stronger deterrent for the Christian approaching holy communion than to avoid the sin of Judas, but John takes his exhortation beyond the moment of communion. He equates Judas's betrayal with a Christian's refusal to forgive his enemies by asking, "How can this be and by what means can it happen?" His answer is one that reverberates through his homilies: "If anyone has something against an enemy, expel the anger, heal the wound, banish the enmity that you may receive healing from the table. You are coming to an awesome and holy sacrifice."⁸⁵ The very nature of the sacrifice itself, coming as it does from Christ's transformative words, calls the Christian to the same love of humanity (φιλανθρωπία) that Jesus had for Judas.

In many ways the death of Jesus takes the most prominent position in John's preaching. Like other Eastern Fathers, he sees the Cross as a triumph over evil and the devil. For him, as for them, death destroyed death. Christ turned the instruments of deception against the deceiver and overcame him who had overcome the weakness of the first human pair. John is supremely happy to focus on the Cross. Nowhere is this more evident than in his *Homily on the Cemetery and the Cross*.⁸⁶ Although it is difficult to know when and where many of Chrysostom's homilies were preached, J. N. D. Kelly places this one in the cemetery outside Antioch on a Good Friday.⁸⁷ As John explains, it was the custom of their Antiochene predecessors to journey out to the cemetery north of the city on that occasion, but John is ever after a deeper explanation, which he happily finds in Hebrews 13:12–13: "Therefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the

⁸⁴ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae*: Μηδεὶς τοίνυν ὑπουργὸς ἔστω, μηδεὶς πονηρίας γέμων, μηδεὶς ἰὸν ἔχων ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ, ἵνα μὴ εἰς γέμων, μηδεὶς ἰὸν ἔχων ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κατάκριμα μεταλαμβάνῃ. Καὶ γὰρ τότε, μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν προσφορὰν, ἐπεπλήθησε τῷ Ἰούδᾳ ὁ διάβολος, οὐ τοῦ σώματος καταφρονήσας τοῦ Δεσποτικοῦ, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀναισχυντίαν καταφρονῶν τοῦ Ἰούδα, ἵνα μάθῃς, ὅτι τοῖς ἀναξίως μετέχουσι τῶν θείων μυστηρίων, τούτοις μάλιστα ἐπιπηδᾷ καὶ ἐπιβαίνει συνεχῶς ὁ διάβολος, ὥσπερ καὶ τῷ Ἰούδᾳ τότε (PG 49:380).

⁸⁵ John Chrysostom, *De proditiōe Judae*: Ἐὰν ἔχῃς τι κατὰ τοῦ ἐχθροῦ, ἔξελε τὴν ὀργὴν, θεράπευσον τὴν πληγὴν, λύσον τὴν ἐχθρὰν, ἵνα λάβῃς θεραπείαν τὴν πληγὴν, λύσον τὴν ἐχθρὰν, ἵνα λάβῃς θεραπείαν ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης· θυσία γὰρ προσέρχῃ φρικτῇ καὶ ἁγίᾳ (PG 49:381).

⁸⁶ John Chrysostom, *De cemeterio et cruce*, in PG 49:393–98.

⁸⁷ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 88.

people through his own blood, suffered outside the gate. So then, let us go outside the camp to him bearing his reproach.”⁸⁸ But then there were many memorials of martyrs (μαρτύριον) within the city. Why come to this particular place of martyrdom? John reminds them of what their own language readily provided: “cemetery” (κοιμητήριον) meant a place to sleep. From this he draws the all-important lesson that Christ changed death to sleep for all who belong to him. Christ’s victory over death then becomes the occasion of exultant joy.

Although *The Cemetery and the Cross* is somewhat shorter than most of John’s homilies, it is full of powerful, gripping language.⁸⁹ Thinking of Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:54 (quoting Isaiah) about death being swallowed up in victory, Chrysostom hails the Cross as a war memorial:

The Cross is
 the war memorial against the demons,
 the sword against sin,
 the blade that Christ used to prick the serpent. </EXT1>

The Cross is
 is the will of the Father,
 the glory of the Only Begotten Son,
 the Spirit’s transport of joy,
 the world [κόσμος] of angels,
 the safety of your Church,
 the boast of Paul,
 the wall of the Saints,
 the light of the whole earth.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ John attributes all his quotations from Hebrews to Paul. Although modern scholars doubt that Paul wrote Hebrews, John follows the unanimous tradition in the East.

⁸⁹ The Greek text has 2,356 words. Most of John’s homilies ranged between four thousand and five thousand words.

⁹⁰ John Chrysostom, *De cemetery et cruce*: σταυρὸς τὸ κατὰ τῶν δαιμόνων τρόπαιον, ἡ κατὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας μάχαιρα, τὸ ξίφος, ὃ τὸν ὄφιν ἐκέντησεν ὁ Χριστός· σταυρὸς τὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς θέλημα, ἡ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς δόξα, τὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀγαλλίαμα, ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων κόσμος, σῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡ ἀσφάλεια, τὸ καύχημα Παύλου, τὸ τῶν ἁγίων τεῖχος, τὸ φῶς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπάσης (PG 49:396–97). I have arranged this section in a semi-poetic form justified on the basis of its contents. No printed version has it thus. Chrysostom also preached two homilies treating the thief on the cross who found forgiveness from Christ (see Luke 23:39–43). Although neither has any references to the Eucharist, they contain similar encomia of the Cross.

The “war memorial” (τρόπαιον) is not used in the New Testament, but the word was all too familiar from John’s military culture and hallowed by previous Christian writers.⁹¹ Although Chrysostom’s favorite Saint Paul did not use the word, the latter’s words in Colossians 2: 14–15 certainly justify the term for John. The war memorial captured John’s imagination as a means of exulting in the triumph of the Cross.

Mind what is poured out. It is the blood that wiped away the written condemnation of our sins. This is the blood that cleansed your soul, that washed away the stain, that triumphed over the evil rulers and authorities. For he stripped the rulers and authorities and displayed them openly by triumphantly parading them on the Cross (Col 2:15). The war memorial has many symbols of victory, he says. The spoils of war hang on high on the Cross above. A noble king, once he wins the most difficult battle, places the armor, the shield, and the weapons of the tyrant and of the defeated soldiers up high on the memorial. So also Christ, once he won the war against the devil, hung high upon the Cross all his weapons: death and the curse, as if it were a war memorial that all may see the memorial, the powers above in heaven, and men below on earth, as well as the evil demons that had been destroyed.⁹²

The mention of the blood poured out is a reference not only to the historic crucifixion, but to the Eucharistic celebration presently taking place. When John says “mind” or “take note” (ἐννόησον), it is the second in a pair, the first of which refers to Christ’s body on the altar:

⁹¹ See Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. τρόπαιον for earlier Christian writers.

⁹² John Chrysostom, *De cemeterio et cruce*: Ἐννόησον τί ποτέ ἐστι τὸ κεχυμένον· αἷμά ἐστιν, αἷμα ὃ τὸ χειρόγραφον τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπήλειπεν· αἷμα ὃ τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἐκάθηρεν, ὃ τὴν κηλῖδα ἀπέπλυνεν, ὃ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἐθρίαμβευσεν. Ἀπεκδυσάμενος γὰρ, φησὶ, τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ θριαμβεύσας ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ. Πολλὰ, φησὶ, τὸ τρόπαιον ἔχει τῆς νίκης τὰ σύμβολα· τὰ λάφυρα κρέμαται ἄνω ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ. Καθάπερ γὰρ βασιλεὺς γενναῖος πόλεμον νικήσας χαλεπώτατον, τὸν θώρακα καὶ τὴν ἀσπίδα καὶ τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ τυράννου καὶ τῶν στρατιωτῶν τῶν ἡττηθέντων ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ τοῦ τροπαίου τίθησιν· οὕτω καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὸν πόλεμον νικήσας τὸν πρὸς τὸν διάβολον, τὰ ὅπλα αὐτοῦ πάντα, τὸν θάνατον, τὴν κατάραν ἐκρέμασεν ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ τοῦ σταυροῦ, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τροπαίου τινὸς, ἵνα πάντες τὸ τρόπαιον βλέπωσιν, αἱ ἄνω δυνάμεις, αἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, οἱ κάτω ἄνθρωποι, οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, αὐτοὶ οἱ πονηροὶ δαίμονες οἱ ἡττηθέντες (PG 49:398).

BODY:

Mind the offering and from what cause it came. He was slain for your sake and you are abandoning him who was sacrificed when you see him. He said, "Where the carcass is, there the eagles gather" [Matt 34:28] We approach not as eagles, but as dogs. How great is our shamelessness!⁹³

BLOOD:

Mind what is poured out. It is the blood that wiped away the written condemnation of our sins. This is the blood that cleansed your soul, that washed away the stain, that triumphed over the evil rulers and authorities.⁹⁴

The Eucharistic connection is strengthened when we hear John saying that the altar of the cemetery is as if one were with Jesus: "We are about to stand, not next to an empty tomb, but next to the table itself that has the Lamb."⁹⁵ One can easily imagine John standing before a tomb used as an altar while he preaches this encomium of the Cross. He seems keenly aware of being both an instrument of God and simultaneously only a human one whose role is to invoke the presence of the Spirit who will actually bring the Christ of the Cross to the altar in the cemetery:

When the priest stands in front of the table stretching out his hands to heaven, calling on the Holy Spirit to come down and touch the offerings, there should be much silence, much quietness whenever the Spirit gives the grace, whenever He comes down and touches the offerings. When you see the Lamb slaughtered and prepared, will you also introduce disturbance and confusion, then rivalry and ridicule? How can you enjoy this sacrifice while approaching this table with so much confusion?⁹⁶

⁹³ John Chrysostom, *De cemetery et cruce*: 'Εννόησον τί ποτέ ἐστι τὸ προκειμένον, καὶ πόθεν ἔλαβε τὴν αἰτίαν· ἐσφάγη διὰ σέ, καὶ σὺ ἐγκαταλιμπάνεις αὐτὸν ἐσφαγιασμένον ὁρῶν. Ὅπου τὸ πτώμα, φησὶν, ἐκεῖ καὶ οἱ ἀετοί. Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐχ ὡς ἀετοί, ἀλλ' ὡς κύνες προσερχόμεθα· τοσαύτη ημῶν ἡ ἀναισχυντία (PG 49:398).

⁹⁴ See the Greek in note 92.

⁹⁵ John Chrysostom, *De cemetery et cruce* (PG 49: 397).

⁹⁶ John Chrysostom, *De cemetery et cruce*: ὅταν ἐστήκη πρὸ τῆς τραπέζης ὁ ἱερεὺς, τὰς χεῖρας ἀνατείνων εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, καλῶν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, τοῦ παραγενέσθαι καὶ ἄψασθαι τῶν προκειμένων, πολλὴ ἡσυχία, πολλὴ σιγή· ὅταν διδῶ τὴν χάριν τὸ Πνεῦμα, ὅταν κατέλθῃ, ὅταν ἄψῃται τῶν προκειμένων, ὅταν ἴδῃς τὸ πρόβατον ἐσφαγιασμένον καὶ ἀπηρτισμένον, τότε θόρυβον, τότε ταραχὴν, τότε φιλονεικίαν, τότε λοιδορίαν

John's call to sobriety and silence seems to arise from his realization of all that the Cross of Christ accomplished. The Eucharist itself is a kind of war memorial, in a manner of speaking, for it too brings the reality of death's defeat to the present. As Christ is present on the table, so too are the hosts of heaven, for "where Christ is, there too is heaven"⁹⁷ Nothing could more succinctly capture the triumph of the Cross than the fact that Christ himself came to set free those in prison:

A virgin, and wood—these are the symbols of our defeat. The virgin was Eve, for she had not yet known a man. The wood was a tree. And death was Adam's price. But look! Again there is a virgin, wood, and death. These symbols of our defeat are now the symbols of victory. Instead of Eve there is Mary. Instead of the wood of the knowledge of good and evil, there is the wood of the Cross; Instead of Adam's death, the death of Christ. You see, the very things by which he [the devil] conquered, by these he was defeated.⁹⁸

So the defeat of the devil, evil, and death results from the presence of Christ. Christ took heaven even down to Hades to destroy the last enemy. Now through the Eucharist that same victory belongs to the Christian. No wonder John never tires of exhorting his congregation to silence, sobriety, calmness, and tranquility.

The Resurrection of Christ

For Christians of most ages the resurrection of Christ has been an occasion of great joy, and it was certainly considered the high point of the liturgical year in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. This was so not only because of the inherent reality of new life in Christ but also perhaps because the season of Pascha followed upon the long and arduous fasting of Lent. So,

ἐπεισάγει; καὶ πῶς δυνήσῃ τῆς θυσίας ἀπολαῦσαι ταύτης, μετὰ τοσαύτης ταραχῆς τῇ τραπέζῃ προσίων ταύτη (PG 49:398).

⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, *De cemeterio et cruce*: ὅπου γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς, ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός (PG 49:395). This is a pithy but potent expression of John's faith in the real presence of Christ on the altar.

⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, *De cemeterio et cruce*: Παρθένος καὶ ξύλον, καὶ θάνατος τῆς ἡττῆς ἡμῶν ἦν τὰ σύμβολα. Παρθένος ἦν ἡ Εὐα· οὕτω γὰρ ἄνδρα ἐγίνωσκε· ξύλον ἦν τὸ δένδρον, καὶ θάνατος ἦν τὸ ἐπιτίμιον τοῦ Ἀδάμ. Ἀλλ' ἰδοὺ, πάλιν παρθένος καὶ ξύλον καὶ θάνατος, τὰ τῆς ἡττῆς σύμβολα ταῦτα, καὶ τῆς νίκης ἐγένετο σύμβολα. Ἀντὶ γὰρ τῆς Εὐας ἡ Μαριάμ· ἀντὶ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ εἰδέναι τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ πονηρὸν, τὸ ξύλον τοῦ σταυροῦ· ἀντὶ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ Ἀδάμ ὁ θάνατος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Εἶδες, δι' ὧν ἐνίκησε, διὰ τούτων αὐτὸν ἡττώμενον (PG 49:396).

an occasion of spiritual joy could easily degenerate into a distorted form of celebration. In fact, John was so concerned about sinful behavior of his fellow Christians that he devoted an entire homily on the resurrection to correcting the drunken behavior of some.⁹⁹ The celebration of Easter and the resurrected Christ apparently occasioned inebriation and riotous behavior for Christians. Perhaps after the rigors of Lenten fasting, the Christians of Antioch and/or Constantinople entered the Pascha season with an immoderate attitude. Chrysostom picks up on Paul's warning against drunkenness in Ephesians 5:18 ("Do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess") and explains two salient points. First, he contrasts inebriation by means of ordinary wine with a spiritual inebriation that leads, not to dissolution, but to sobriety and joy:

Let us get drunk with this [kind of] drunkenness. Let us abstain from that other kind that we may not disgrace the present feast. For the present feast is not only of the earth but of heaven as well. Today there is joy on earth; there is joy in heaven. If there is joy in heaven when one sinner turns back, how much more is there joy in heaven when the whole world was snatched from the hands of the devil. Now the angels are skipping, now the archangels rejoice, now the Cherubim and the Seraphim celebrate the present feast. They are not ashamed of their fellow servants but rejoice with our good things. Even if our grace comes from the Master, yet our happiness [ἡδονή] is common to all. And what do I say of these fellow servants? Their Master and ours is himself not ashamed to feast with us.¹⁰⁰

It is this spiritual drunkenness that Chrysostom wants for his people—to be filled with a higher joy that makes all other joys superfluous. But in his

⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, *Adversus ebriosos et de resurrectione domini nostri Jesu Christi*, in *PG* 50:433–42.

¹⁰⁰ John Chrysostom, *Adversus ebriosos et de resurrectione domini nostri Jesu Christi*: Ταύτην μεθύωμεν τὴν μέθην· ἐκείνης δὲ ἀπεχώμεθα, ἵνα μὴ καταισχύνημεν τὴν παρούσαν ἑορτήν· ἑορτὴ γὰρ ἡ παρούσα οὐχὶ τῆς γῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Σήμερον ἐν γῇ χαρὰ, σήμερον ἐν οὐρανῷ χαρὰ· εἰ γὰρ ἐνὸς ἁμαρτωλοῦ ἐπιστρέφοντος, χαρὰ ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ οὐρανοῦ, πολλῷ μᾶλλον τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπάσης ἐξαρπασθείσης τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ διαβόλου χαρὰ ἔσται ἐν οὐρανῷ. Νῦν σκιρτῶσιν ἄγγελοι, νῦν χαίρουσιν ἀρχάγγελοι, νῦν τὰ Χερουβὶμ καὶ τὰ Σεραφίμ μεθ' ἡμῶν ἑορτάζει τὴν παρούσαν ἑορτήν· οὐκ ἐπαισχύνονται τοὺς συνδούλους, ἀλλὰ συγχαίρουσι τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἀγαθοῖς. Εἰ γὰρ ἡμετέρα ἡ χάρις ἡ παρὰ τοῦ Δεσπότη, ἀλλὰ κοινὴ καὶ ἐκείνων ἡ ἡδονή. Καὶ τί λέγω τοὺς συνδούλους; Αὐτὸς ὁ Δεσπότης αὐτῶν τε καὶ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται συνεορτάζειν (*PG* 50:436).

allusion to the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 (“If there is joy in heaven when one sinner turns back”) John raises a second point that brings him back to a favorite theme, the neglect of those in need. John makes a link between drunkenness and the misuse of resources such that the poor are deprived. In explaining what drunkenness leads to, he says, “we call the young dissolute who receive their father's inheritance and taking everything together, they do not think about who might need it and then give. Rather, taking clothes, gold, and silver, they divide their paternal inheritance among prostitutes and lechers. Such is drunkenness.”¹⁰¹

Drunkenness turns the sinner in on himself and causes him to forget the very purpose of having worldly goods. But the mystical table is a reminder of the inherent solidarity which in fact all people have and which should impel the Christian to charity:

There is only one table for the rich and the poor. Even if someone is rich, he cannot add anything to the table. And if he is poor, he is served at table no less of communion because of his poverty. For grace is divine. And why are you amazed if there are rich and poor here? One and the same table is set for the King who has a crown, and a purple robe, and who exerts power. Yes, it is for that King and for the poor man who sits begging for alms. Such things are the Lord's gifts. He does not distribute to those who are worthy but to those who come of their own freewill and with understanding.¹⁰²

The resurrection of Christ stands as a beacon to call all Christians to the sobriety of new life, but that new life is never lived in isolation. It is a call away from self-indulgence and to service of others. In the Pascha celebration John is begging his people to turn away from the cultural customs of the season to a deeper faith. He hopes that the superior joy of being inebriated with Christ through communion will instill the same attitudes and actions that Jesus himself demonstrated. Love for the salvation of others

¹⁰¹ John Chrysostom, *Adversus ebriosos et de resurrectione domini nostri Jesu Christi* (PG 50:434).

¹⁰² John Chrysostom, *Adversus ebriosos et de resurrectione domini nostri Jesu Christi*: μία τράπεζα καὶ τῷ πλουσίῳ καὶ τῷ πένητι, καὶ πλούσιός τις ἢ, οὐδὲν τῇ τραπέζῃ προσθεῖναι δύναται· καὶ πένης, οὐδὲν ἔλαττον παρὰ τῆς πενίας τὰ τῆς κοινωνίας διακείσεται· θεία γάρ ἐστιν ἡ χάρις· καὶ τί θαυμάζεις εἰ πλουσίῳ καὶ πένητι; Αὐτῷ γὰρ τῷ βασιλεῖ τῷ τὸ διάδημα περικειμένῳ, τῷ τὴν ἀλουργίδα ἔχοντι, τῷ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἐγκεχειρισμένῳ τῆς γῆς, ἐκεῖνῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ, καὶ τῷ πτωχῷ τῷ πρὸς τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην καθεζομένῳ μία τράπεζα πρόκειται. Τοιαῦτα τὰ δῶρα τὰ Δεσποτικά· οὐ τοῖς ἀξιώμασι διαιρεῖ τὴν κοινωνίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ προαιρέσει καὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ (PG 50:437).

and their temporal welfare are natural extensions of the resurrection life in Christ. The Eucharist is a call to live that life of Christ in service to others.

Golden-Mouth Genius

The eponymic fame of John as the “Golden Mouth” (Chrysostom) seems well deserved, but the reasons for this praise are more diverse and subtle than his mere rhetorical skill. Although John’s interpretative approach to Scripture has been characterized as literal and historical, we have seen that his lens on Gospel texts operates at a much wider scope than the modern connotations of “literal” and “historical” suggest. John was preeminently concerned about the moral character of his hearers’ lives, but he always gauged that character by the theological framework of Scripture, especially as expounded by the Apostle Paul. Margaret Mitchell, for example, has amply demonstrated how dear Paul was to the golden-mouthed preacher.¹⁰³ John’s homilies on Ephesians demonstrate how important he thinks the Eucharist is for the Church:

But since the subject is the Lord’s body, let us also recall him who was crucified, nailed, sacrificed. If you are the body of Christ, bear the Cross, for he himself bore it too. Bear the spitting, bear the slaps, bear the nails. Such was his body. That body was without sin, for it says, “he did not commit sin nor was guile found in his mouth” (Isa 53:9). His hands were only for benefitting others. They would do anything for those who asked. Nothing inappropriate came out of his mouth. “You have a demon,” he heard, and he answered nothing back. Now since the subject has to do with the body for us, as many of us as share the body, we taste this blood; ponder that in communion we share in him who makes himself no different nor divides himself because we taste of him as he sits above, [who] is worshiped by angels, as we are close to the power of the Undeiled One.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Margaret Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

¹⁰⁴ John Chrysostom, Homily 3 on Ephesians: Ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ περὶ σώματος Κυριακοῦ ὁ λόγος, φέρε, καὶ περὶ ἐκείνου μνημονεύσωμεν, τοῦ σταυρωθέντος, τοῦ προσηλωθέντος, τοῦ θυομένου. Εἰ σῶμα εἶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, φέρε τὸν σταυρόν· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἤνεγκε· φέρε ἐμπτύσματα, φέρε ῥαπίσματα, φέρε ἥλους. Τοιοῦτον ἐκεῖνο τὸ σῶμα ἦν. Τὸ σῶμα ἐκεῖνο ἀναμάρτητον ἦν· Ἀμαρτίαν γὰρ, φησὶν, οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδὲ δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ εὐρέθη· αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ πρὸς εὐεργεσίαν ἅπαντα ἔπραττον τῶν δεομένων· οὐδὲν τὸ στόμα ἐξέβαλε τῶν οὐ προσηκόντων· Δαιμόνιον ἔχεις, ἤκουσε, καὶ οὐδὲν ἀντίπευ· Ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ σώματος ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, ὅσοι μετέχομεν τοῦ σώματος, ὅσοι τοῦ αἵματος ἀπογευόμεθα τούτου, ἐννοεῖτε ὅτι τοῦ μηδὲν ἐκείνου διαφέροντος οὐδὲ διεστῶτος

As John discusses the Pauline notion of the Church as the body of Christ, he is drawn to consider the historic, physical body of Christ which is also present in the Eucharist. The body that the faithful partake of in communion is identified with the body that hung on the Cross and which is manifested in the life of the Church. This suggests that in his mind a fundamental unity exists between the events of salvation history and the ongoing life of the Church as Christ's body. We observed above that for John there is a fundamental unity between the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist in his appeal to John 19:34. The water and the blood that flowed from Jesus's side are both a sign of the reality of his death and the source of sacramental grace for the Church. So, too, in speaking of the relation of the Eucharist to the historic death of Christ, John affirms that Christ is the one "who makes himself no different nor divides himself." This means that there is a fundamental unity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the sacraments.

Although the section from the *Homily on Ephesians* (no. 3) above seems vivid enough, John outdoes himself by taking the voice of Christ in a graphic description of his suffering demonstrating his pursuant love. The scourging and maltreatment Christ received in his earthly life are matched by Christ's willingness to be chewed and consumed by the faithful:

He raised us up and seated us at the right hand of the Father (Eph 2). The cherubim and the seraphim worship you. All the angelic powers, rulers, authorities, thrones, lordships through the first fruit. Do not accuse the body which enjoys such a great honor, before which the bodiless powers tremble! But what can I say? I will display this love-charm not only with these but also with the things I suffered. I was spit on. I was beaten with a cudgel. I emptied myself of glory. I left my Father and came to you who hated me and turned away and who cannot bear to hear my name. I pursued and ran after you that I might take hold of you. I united and joined you together with myself.¹⁰⁵

μετέχομεν πρὸς μετοχὴν, ὅτι ἐκείνου τοῦ ἄνω καθημένου, τοῦ προσκυνουμένου παρὰ ἀγγέλων, τοῦ τῆς ἀκηράτου δυνάμεως ἐγγύς, τούτου ἀπογευόμεθα (Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos*, 1:912).

¹⁰⁵ Homily 15 on 1 Timothy (PG 62, 586). For analysis, see Ashish J. Naidu, *Transformed in Christ: Christology and the Christian Life in John Chrysostom*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 188 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 143–44. I thank the anonymous reviewer of the journal for this invaluable suggestion.

Even when preaching on a Pauline text, John's mind will not stray very far from the reality of Christ's earthly life that is communicated through the Eucharist. The deep unity between the Eucharist and the earthly life of Christ was captured well by Daniélou when he pointed to the Eucharist as a *kairos*, an extraordinary event, a unique moment. This is not, however, a separate and different *kairos* from that of the Cross: "It is the same *kairos* because it is the presence of the unique *kairos* of the cross in mystery"¹⁰⁶ In both the New Testament and in Chrysostom, the *kairos* is a moment in time, a special moment when God acts in a unique and utterly divine manner. The greatest *kairos* was in the earthly life of Christ, when the plan of redemption was brought to its fulfillment and the work of salvation was definitively accomplished. However, every Eucharistic celebration is no less a *kairos*, because it embodies all the saving events of Christ's life. As the prayers of the Latin rite say, "for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated the work of our redemption is accomplished."¹⁰⁷ N.V

¹⁰⁶ Jean Daniélou, introduction to *On the Incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature* (SC 28/2:56).

¹⁰⁷ Prayer over the Gifts for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. The great antiquity of this prayer is evidenced in the fact that Thomas Aquinas quotes it in *Summa theologiae* III, q. 83, a. 1.