

**CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTER OF GOD
IN THE HOLY QURBONO**

A Paradigm for Restoring Relationships in Today's World

Submitted By

Ebin Thomas Panicker

Roll No.: 13629

Under the Guidance of

Dr. Thomas Varghese Tharakanvedu OIC

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Bachelor's Degree in Theology**

February 2016

Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth (BVP)

Extension Centre of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth (JDV)

Pune – 411 014, INDIA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The process of writing this paper has been a rewarding experience. Somehow, I myself was able to engage in conversational encounters with many persons who helped me in preparing this work. I am grateful to them all.

While heading towards the end of this academic journey, primarily, I thank our Gracious and abundantly Merciful God for the grace bestowed on me. I am indebted to my guide, Rev. Dr. Thomas Varghese Tharakanveedu OIC (Fr. Vijayanand OIC), for his enlightening guidance and corrections since the inception of the writing of the paper till its completion. Especially I thank him for the patience he showed at the time when I was not writing up to the standard and within the time-frame he had expected from me. His positive guidance is the only reason why this paper was possible. What he wanted of the paper can be summarized in the words of Joseph Pulitzer: “Put it before them briefly so they will read it; clearly so they will appreciate it; picturesquely so they will remember it; and above all accurately so they will be guided by its light.”

Thanks are also due to the Director of BVP, Rev. Dr. Philip Vysanethu OIC, for his magnanimity and help and also to Rev. Dr. Cyril Anand OIC, my Rector, who reminded me that the work should not only be informative and formative but also transformative. I am very grateful to the whole Bethanian community here – the Fathers, Brothers, Ms Joanne and the other staff – for their constant encouragement and support. Special mention and thanks go to my batch mates for their genuine care and inspiration while I did my work. Many thanks go to all those who diligently prayed for me – especially my parents and other loved ones – and helped me in my encounter with Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
---------------------------	---

CHAPTER 1

SACRAMENTS AS THE ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

1.1 Introduction.....	4
1.2 Towards an Understanding of Sacraments	4
1.2.1 Sacraments and their Particular Framework	5
1.2.1.1 Religion.....	5
1.2.1.2 Worship.....	6
1.2.1.3 Symbol	6
1.2.1.4 Ritual.....	7
1.2.2 Defining the word ‘Sacrament’	8
1.2.2.1 Mysterion	8
1.2.2.2 Sacramentum.....	9
1.2.3 Jesus Christ, the Primordial Sacrament	9
1.2.4 The Church, Sacrament of Jesus Christ	10
1.3 Sacraments as Encounter with God	10
1.3.1 Various Models of Sacraments	11
1.3.1.1 Symbolic Model.....	11
1.3.1.2 Celebrational Model.....	12
1.3.2 Interpersonal-Encounter Model	12
1.4 Encountering Christ in the Holy Qurbano	13
1.5 Conclusion	16

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTER

2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 The Notion of Conversation.....	17
2.2.1 Language.....	18
2.2.2 Conversation as the sharing of “being”	18
2.3 Conversational Encounter.....	19
2.3.1 Conversational encounter in the Liturgy.....	20
2.3.2 Sacrament as a Conversational Encounter with God.....	21
2.4 Holy Qurbono as a Conversational Encounter.....	21
2.4.1 Elements used in the Conversational Encounter in the Holy Qurbono	23
2.4.2 Analysis of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Holy Qurbono Liturgy.....	23
2.5 Conclusion	25

CHAPTER 3

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTER IN THE HOLY QURBONO

3.1 Introduction.....	26
3.2 Relationships in Today’s World	27
3.2.1 Lack of Deep Loving Relationships	27
3.2.2 Rise of Individualisation of Social Life	28
3.3 Different Paradigms of Restoration of Relationships	29
3.4 Conversational Encounter in the Holy Qurbono as a Paradigm	30
3.4.1 Sacraments and Life.....	30
3.4.2 Sacraments as the path back to Christ.....	31

3.4.3 The Holy Qurbano Paradigm of Restoring Relationships	32
3.5 Conclusion	33
GENERAL CONCLUSION	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of the perennial questions that has haunted humans is about the meaning of life itself. It seems that the majority of the world finds it difficult to make sense out of the different experiences that it has and eventually try to be part of some system which enables to have a reflection of the life, at least, that has been so gratuitously given by God. Everyone experiences moments that prompt them to question what life is really about. However, the truth, it seems, lies in the way in which one looks at things. Experiences are varied and affect people in various ways. Some experiences are troubling, painful and disappointing whereas some are edifying, wonderful and happy. But to make meaning out of this plethora of experiences is the point when humans slowly tread on the path of fulfilment or wholeness, which in turn can be seen as the ultimate goal of life. One of those systems which helps humankind in this journey-of-sorts is religion. Religion with its world view guides its followers through his/her meaning-making journey helping him/her to be in harmony with the divine, one's own self, the other and the cosmos. On this journey again humans come across many symbols, some of them that he/she perceives in history and some of them that he/she makes use of to convey and communicate in the reality of life. Hence, human life involves, along with the countless other things, symbols and symbolic actions. In the end, these symbols and symbolic actions serve as the platform for the experience and expression of one's innermost realities.

The Christian mystery is the culmination of these dealings of God with humans in Christ. In him God has entered into an inter-subjective relationship with humankind in the deepest manner.¹ Since theology is concerned with questions raised by this personal conversation of God and humans in Christ the liturgical life of the Church and especially the sacraments are privileged instances of this conversational encounter. Hence, there arises a special significance for sacramental theology in the Church's reflection on her experience of Christ and also the urgent need for a conversational encounter approach to understanding the sacraments. The sacraments when understood as symbolic actions which seal the personal communion of God and humans helps to adopt personal relations in the practical world.

¹ William A. Van Roo, *The Christian Sacrament* (Rome: E.P.U.G, 1992), 143.

The history of Sacramental Theology has unveiled in different ways without different understandings of the sacraments itself. The various understandings ranged from ‘channels of grace,’ ‘symbolic actions,’ ‘celebrations,’ ‘mysteries,’ ‘gifts,’ to ‘encounters.’ While all the other understandings dealt from a historical or liturgical or symbolic or sociological perspective the understanding of sacraments as encounters brought the discussion to a personal level – a level of personal experience of the reality of Christ. This viewpoint has been doing the rounds for some time and hence the study of this would surely benefit the reader and believers in general to have a better experience of the divine and also thereby respond personally to the invitation to be deified. Moreover, such an understanding would help common believers to relish more of God’s revelation in his/her own life situation which is very complex in the world today. The world today is witnessing a huge number of relational dysfunctions and breakups. The stability of relationships is degrading owing to the impact of consumerism, globalisation and relativism. In such a situation, one can be saved by getting a method to restore relationships and revive one’s commitment to the relationship. This is where the role of the sacraments comes, especially the sacrament of the Holy Qurbano. This has propelled the author to attempt a research into the conversational encountering of God especially in the Holy Qurbano which could serve as a paradigm for restoring relationships in today’s world.

The paper is divided into three chapters. The methodology employed by the author is a mixture of textual, analytical and critical types. The limitation of the paper is that it is not a comprehensive and deep-down analysis of the theme since such an analysis is beyond the scope of the confines of the level of B.Th. However, the author believes that the paper can be considered as a positive step in the research on the topic of sacramental theology. Hence, the scope of the paper in raising the interest of theological students is expected.

The first chapter tries to understand the sacraments as the encounter with God. The notion of the sacrament is studied in this regard by trying to place it in its context, defining it and viewing Christ and the Church as sacraments. The various models of sacraments are then introduced with special attention given to the interpersonal-encounter model which helps us to perceive the Holy Qurbano as an encounter with Christ.

The second chapter deals with the notion of conversational encounter for which we first analyse the notions of language and conversation. This analysis leads to the ideas of the

liturgy and the sacraments as conversational encounters. Then, the various elements used in the conversational encounter in the Holy Qurbano of the Malankara Syrian Catholic tradition is analysed.

The final chapter is a bird's eye analysis of the problems in relationships in today's world. This analysis leads us to see how the conversational encounter in the Holy Qurbano serves in practically restoring the relationships and thereby validate itself as a paradigm for the restoration of relationships, starting from the spiritual level to the actual worldly level.

CHAPTER 1

SACRAMENTS AS THE ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

1.1 Introduction

The Christian experience is the personal encounter of God with humans through Christ.² It is an unforeseeable intrusion of God in human's life. Despite the infinite distance which separates humans from God, despite human's sinfulness and unworthiness, God chooses humans as partners in a personal relationship, calling for a personal encounter. God is the source of the reality of all things as their support of reality and being.³ Confrontation with God within ourselves and with the God who publicly reveals himself in salvation history evokes in turn a continued return-response process with God, constantly drawing us close to a union with him in the future Kingdom. This is possible through the symbolic actions and the symbols themselves, which in the Christian context distils down to the sacraments. These sacraments become the intelligible events which opens more succinctly the encounter of humans with God, especially Jesus Christ who is the fullness of divine revelation and "the sacrament of encounter with God."⁴ We specially try to delve into the human-divine encounter that takes place in the sacrament of the Holy Qurbano⁵ which has been celebrated by the Church as the "sacrament of sacraments."

1.2 Towards an Understanding of Sacraments

Jesus Christ is the love incarnated in the New Testament and the salvation fulfilled as promised in the Old Testament. This salvific love, manifested in the paschal mysteries of Christ, continues until the end of the world as he wills in the Church and which is expressed in the proclamation of his words and continuation of his deeds.⁶ This proclamation of words and deeds required a medium that is how the notion of sacrament arose. The idea of sacraments developed gradually in the Church. Today it is considered as the actions of the Church through which the words are proclaimed and celebrated and his salvific action continued, addressing each person in the Church.

² Jacques Dupuis, *The Sacrament: Personal Encounter of Christ and Men in the Church* (Kurseong: St. Mary's College, 1967), 5.

³ John P. Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1983), 10.

⁴ I would like to borrow and use this phrase in quotes from the seminal idea of Edward Schillebeeckx from his work *Christ, the Sacrament of Encounter with God* so that the reader would get a better view of Christ although it would seem a bit early to use here.

⁵ I would prefer to use this term over the term Eucharist considering that it encases a deeper meaning than the latter and also more specifically because this term is appropriate to the West Syrian Tradition.

⁶ Thomas Poovathanikunnel, *Sacraments: What and Why* (Mumbai: St. Paul's Publications, 2014), 28.

1.2.1 Sacraments and their Particular Framework

It is impossible to speak meaningfully of sacraments without first locating the term in its proper context. The interconnection of these above mentioned terms help us to view the sacraments in its particular framework. For this analysis I take the work of John P. Schanz *Introduction to the Sacraments* to analyse the foundational framework of the sacraments which includes the understanding of religion, worship, symbol and ritual.

1.2.1.1 Religion

It must be obvious by now that sacraments include some kind of symbolic actions by which one relates to God which are religious in nature. Hence, the general context of the sacraments is religion. Religion can be understood as the human aspiration for wholeness.⁷ Religion tries to give humankind the platform to make sense out of the whole reality he/she is experiencing. It is a social reality which reflects the relationship of human beings with the divine helping them to understand the purpose of life and spells out ways to attain the perfection or fullness as the communion with the Creator or the Ultimate.⁸ Religion has attached to it a worldview, a sense of devotion to a deity, the acceptance and following of a code of conduct and the performance of rituals both in daily life and on special occasions.

First and foremost, there is the effort of God to reach or communicate to humankind and Nature. God is the source of the reality of all things, as their support of reality and being. He is the attractive impulse that unifies the whole of creation, orders them and draws them to the future. He draws our minds and wills to him in love, without compelling us.⁹ Thus, it is God who first reaches out to us; summons us to an awareness of his presence both within us and in the universe surrounding us. For the Christian, it is God's self-communication to every creature that first calls us to know him, to respond to him, and to be able to reach him in worship.¹⁰ Hence, religion helps us to understand the self-willed communication of God and also to respond to this divine Revelation.

⁷ Poovathanikunnel, *Sacraments*, 15.

⁸ Errol D' Lima & Thomas Paul Urumpackal, *Sacraments in General* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2005), 3.

⁹ Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments*, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

1.2.1.2 *Worship*

When we talk about human response to the revelation of God we raise ourselves to the discussion of worship. Human's religious impulse instils the potential of attempting to respond to the divine revelation. This response can be called as worship. The word "worship" is derived from the term *weorthscipe* which can be translated as an acknowledgement of the supreme worth of the ultimate explanation of the universe.¹¹ Worship is then, the attempt of a religious person to continually respond in vitality and availability to revelation of God experienced in moments of awareness.¹² One of the qualities of worship is that it stays as a source for many sustaining religious traditions since many of the expressions of religious worship is seen in ritual celebrations. These ritualistic interventions were continued from generation to generation by oral and written tradition. Thus, worship contributed greatly to the formation of various religious traditions. Often these worshipful celebrations involve conversations with the divine prayer as the basic form which is transcended later as symbolic acts of worship. This leads us to think about the efficacy of the symbol in worship and to understand its role in the encounter of the Creator and creatures.

1.2.1.3 *Symbol*

Religions are symbolic representations of God.¹³ They make use of symbols to represent God, to respond to and to communicate with God, and to receive blessings from God. A symbol can be understood as a communication medium. No one can communicate without symbols. Symbols arise where words end. The word 'symbol' means to 'throw together,' 'bring together or unite.'¹⁴ This suggests that symbols act as bridges that connect between the outer reality and the inner meaning. Religious symbols bring together humans and God. In this context one may have to differentiate between a sign and a symbol. Louis-Marie Chauvet explains the difference between a sign and a symbol by pointing out that the symbol implies a communication between two objects:

The sign is situated on the side of "saying something about something," that is, on the side of the transmission of information of knowledge; the symbol is situated on the side of

¹¹ Webster's New International Unabridged Dictionary (Springfield, Mass: G. & C. Merriam, 1976), 2637.

¹² Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments*, 7.

¹³ Poovathanikunnel, *Sacraments*, 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

“saying to someone,” that is, on the side of communication with a subject recognized as a subject and situated in its place as a subject.¹⁵

Hence, in worship, the symbol helps to transcend the meaning which is well in the level of human experience and rise to the level of the divine itself enabling an encounter which springs out a feeling of wholeness, which is the real of meaning of life as well. One may say that religion is in the level of the spirit and there is not much a place for the corporeal. But, it is in the corporeal that the spiritual is experienced and expressed.¹⁶ Karl Rahner would add to this by saying that the whole of creation itself is necessarily symbolic.¹⁷ All beings expresses itself in its act of “being” and hence brings it to reality, that is, they make present what they symbolize. In this viewpoint, the Church and the sacraments become for us the concrete symbolic reality that contain and make present the salvific action of God on humans.

1.2.1.4 Ritual

From symbols arise symbolic thinking or acting.¹⁸ Every religion has a set of symbolic actions with which they communicate and relate with God. They are actions which arise from the faith of the believers and hence are symbolic of their faith. When considering the sacraments, rituals can be seen as symbolic actions that enable Christians to celebrate the revelation of God and their response to it in and through the community.¹⁹ By and large, rituals are the stylised actions and words or ceremonies which have a special meaning given to them by the community in which they are found and practised.²⁰ In this regard, sacraments can be considered as rituals owing to the fact that they use symbolic actions and words to make accessible a tradition present in the Church. In Christianity, hence, sacraments possess a commemorative role of recalling the salvific act of God through Christ and making present this salvific experience aimed at the fulfilment of the history of the whole of creation.²¹ This makes our study based on our understanding of the sacraments in the framework of rituals significant because just as rituals accomplish and continue the solidarity of the community in a common faith and helps the community to celebrate the meaning of human existence sacraments can be viewed as the efficient way for an encounter with God.

¹⁵ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments, The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2002), 76.

¹⁶ D’ Lima & Urumpackal, *Sacraments in General*, 14.

¹⁷ Karl Rahner, “The Theology of Symbol,” in *Theological Investigations* 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966), 226.

¹⁸ Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments*, 17.

¹⁹ D’ Lima & Urumpackal, *Sacraments in General*, 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

1.2.2 Defining the word ‘Sacrament’

The sacraments of the Church have much in common with religious rituals but there is a meaning which goes beyond according to the teaching of the Church. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions” (CCC 1131). There was no ritual called ‘sacrament’ during the apostolic or sub-apostolic period. There were ecclesial rituals as well as faith realities named as mysteries. We find that the term *mysterion* of Greek origin has been gradually translated into the Latin *sacramentum*.²²

1.2.2.1 Mysterion

Sacraments are considered as mysteries in the Oriental Tradition. The term ‘mystery’ etymologically comes from the Greek ‘*mysterion*.’ The Syriac term for it is ‘*Raza*’ and it has the implication of secrecy or mysticality. *Mysterion*, “mystery,” captures the hidden power of Christ in the sacraments working through the Holy Spirit. St. Paul refers to the Church as “the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints” (Col 1:26). According to the Oriental fathers, mystery is something real and makes present in its celebration what it symbolizes and what is celebrated. The participants of the celebration of a mystery come into contact with its inner reality, which is symbolised by it. Such mysteries are revealed rather than instituted, existing in the great mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ.²³ The eastern churches prefer the term ‘Mystery’ to ‘Sacrament’ to denote the sacramental realities in the Church. It may not be as definitive in meaning as ‘sacrament’ but richer in its content and implied nuances. Jesus Christ is the great Mystery; the Church as the historical continuation of the Risen Lord is a universal Mystery visibly present in the world. Christ continues to be present and to act in his Church. In the course of time the Church realized that her celebrations were according to the will and command of Christ. Therefore, they were revealing the plan of God for the salvation of humankind in Jesus Christ. In such celebrations the active participants experienced an assurance of salvation, that is, they received the grace of Christ. Hence, they called them as ‘Mysteries.’²⁴ Through the

²² Poovathanikunnel, *Sacraments*, 29.

²³ D’ Lima & Urumpackal, *Sacraments in General*, 60.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

celebration of the sacraments or ‘mysteries’ the participants gradually and progressively enter the process of deification.

1.2.2.2 Sacramentum

The term *sacramentum* comes from two terms *sacrare* and *mentum*. *Sacrare* means ‘to sanctify’ and *mentum* is a postfix which means ‘means to attain a determined goal.’ Hence, the word suggests a meaning that it is the means with which something is consecrated. In the Roman system *sacramentum* was a legal term referring to claims of ownership and obligation. It was also a military oath of allegiance sworn on confirmation by the Roman recruit. It was Tertullian who used the term to qualify Baptism as a sacrament. He spoke of Christians as soldiers ‘called to the living service of God’ by a sacramental oath to which they must be true.²⁵

However, we can conclude here that the terms, mystery and sacrament, are valid and complementary in constituting sacramental action. ‘Sacrament’ underlines the manifestation of the action of God in symbols and the free response that a person gives to the divine gift in the sacrament whereas the ‘Mystery’ concept stresses the glorious action of God in the world. Such a conclusion will also give inner meaning content to sacraments which would otherwise could be considered to be just as an external sign.

1.2.3 Jesus Christ, the Primordial Sacrament

Jesus Christ was both human and divine. The dogmatic definition of Chalcedon stressed that Christ was “one person in two natures.” Even in his humanity Christ was the Son of God. Therefore, Christ is God in human form and human in divine form²⁶ and he fulfilled the sacramental concept in an absolute and unique manner by being the sign and instrument of God’s presence in the world. Christ is at once sign and instrument of God's bestowal of grace upon mankind, and the expression and occasion of mankind's supreme worship of God. He is, in the first way, the sacrament of divine love for man; in the second way, the sacrament of human love for God.²⁷ The very being and the least action of Christ render possible a personal encounter with God but all of this reaches its culmination in his passion and death. In short, by the model of Christ, the sacraments lead us into the Paschal Mystery where, like

²⁵ Poovathanikunnel, *Sacraments*, 36.

²⁶ E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ, the Sacrament of Encounter with God* (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1963), 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

the Risen Christ, we live for God alone. The sacrament is also the locus where the Father's love is celebrated in the lives of people and where the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is freely accepted.²⁸

1.2.4 The Church, Sacrament of Jesus Christ

In *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II affirmed that the Church “is in the nature of a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity with all men.” The Church is the continuation of the sacramental action of Christ. The spirit of Christ abides in the Church and makes visible the love of God. The Church's origin is not from humans but from the divine will of God to save humankind in Jesus Christ by sending the Spirit to persons in the world. If the Church is to continue this mission of being the visible presence of the salvific love of Jesus then, its sacraments must be visible, concrete proclamations of good news to the suffering and the poor. Church is universal and involves everyone, all the ‘People of God.’ God's communication to humankind takes place in Jesus Christ – the Symbol of the Father and the Church symbolizes that communication in its Scriptures, Magisterium and particularly in the sacraments. The sacraments are celebrated in the Church as a community which is a sign that the Church is united to God when the members of the community are united with each other.

1.3 Sacraments as Encounter with God

Catholic theology underwent more change in the four decades from 1960 to 2000 than it did in the four centuries from the Council of Trent to Vatican II. In the middle of the twentieth century, Catholic theologians found themselves faced with the task of rethinking the meaning of Christianity in the contemporary world, and during the Second Vatican Council the Catholic hierarchy implicitly acknowledged the need to do so. The first stage in this theological enterprise was to recover the past. The second stage has been to redefine the religious significance of Christian doctrines for Catholics today. It is a process which is still going on, and it is affecting all the areas of Catholic theology, not just the sacraments.²⁹ Today the Church is taking another look at its own nature, the meaning of the Trinitarian doctrines, the role of scripture and tradition, and the norms of Christian morality.

²⁸ D' Lima & Urumpackal, *Sacraments in General*, 97.

²⁹ Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred* (Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2014), 120.

In taking this step toward redefining the religious significance of the sacraments, Catholic theologians have been insisting that the sacraments have to be treated in a wider context. At the same time, though, in their desire to remain faithful to the Catholic tradition, they have been asking what the traditional doctrines meant, why the sacraments were said to cause grace, why Christ was said to have instituted the sacraments, and so on. In a sense, theologians today have been trying to get behind the traditional words used to explain the sacraments and to recapture the experiences that gave rise to those explanations. They have been trying to get beneath the verbal meaning of the sacraments to their experiential meaning and then trying to put that meaning into new words. It is in this light that we try to understand the sacraments as the encounter with God.

1.3.1 Various Models of Sacraments

There is no simple answer to that question about the nature of the sacraments according to contemporary theology. We find the sacraments talked about as signs of grace, as acts of Christ, as expressions of the nature of the Church, as symbolic actions, as encounters with God, as celebrations of life and as participations in Jesus' worship of the Father.³⁰ The list seems to be endless and diverse.

John P. Schanz explains the models of the sacrament basing himself on the work of Avery Dulles who tried to explain the Church using several models. He used two kinds of models – explanatory and exploratory.³¹ The former were those models that explained the already present nature of the Church and the latter were those models that went beyond the typical understandings and opened the door for exploring new meanings and dimensions of the understanding of the Church. In a similar way, there can be several models of sacraments. Here we discuss a few models and focusing our thoughts on the theme of the encounter-model proposed by Edward Schillebeeckx.

1.3.1.1 Symbolic Model

Catholic theology had always spoken of the sacraments as signs or symbols of grace. The fathers and the medieval had also spoken of sacraments as sacred signs, and contemporary writers have tended to emphasize this idea, speaking of the sacraments as signs of grace, signs of Christ, signs of God's love, signs of life, signs of faith, signs of the church, and signs

³⁰ Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 120.

³¹ Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments*, 130.

of spiritual transformation. Regarding the sacraments as signs has enabled Catholic theologians to clarify the idea behind the phrase *ex opere operato*: that as a sign of what was happening, a sacramental ritual was independent of the holiness of the minister. This clarification also helped Catholics begin to overcome the notion that sacraments mechanically or magically cause something in the soul of the recipient.³² The Church, thus, started to regard the sacraments as signs of metaphysical occurrences where there is no encounter or personal experience. Thus, baptism was a sign that a person was washed clean of original sin, penance was a sign that God forgave the sins confessed and the marriage ceremony was a sign of an unbreakable spiritual bond between the husband and wife. Hence, the personal experience is lacking.

1.3.1.2 Celebrational Model

The celebrational model is a recent model which stresses on considering the sacramental actions as “celebrations.” In this light, the Qurbano is celebrated rather than “said” or “administered” or “offered.” The term celebration not only involves the sacramental actions that has a solemnity and formality but also the internalisation of the experience, symbolic expressions and communality of the experience.³³ This however, brings the danger of considering the sacraments as “events” where there is always an accompaniment of external expressions. The internalisation of the experience is limited to the point of the celebration and one will find it difficult to carry on the experience.

1.3.2 Interpersonal-Encounter Model

Edward Schillebeeckx, a Dutch theologian who wrote extensively on the sacraments during the 1950s and 1960s was instrumental in showing that Catholicism could develop a theology of the sacraments that was both faithful to the insights of Thomas Aquinas and free of the minimalistic tendency of late scholasticism.³⁴ Like Aquinas he attempted to recapture the religious experience within the sacramental ritual and then to speak about that experience in philosophical terms, but the basic terms he chose came not from Aristotelian philosophy but from contemporary existentialism.

³² Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 121.

³³ Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments*, 156.

³⁴ Schillebeeckx, *Christ, the Sacrament*, 190.

Schillebeeckx suggests that the closest equivalent to what happens in a sacramental experience is an existential encounter between persons. When two persons deeply encounter each other—in contrast to simply meeting each other—they discover something of the mystery that the other person is. For Schillebeeckx the sacraments are outward signs that reveal a transcendent, divine reality. When they are occasions for spiritual encounters with Christ, the sacraments communicate God’s grace and change people’s lives. Yet even if they are not fruitful they are still valid as signs of Christ, just as the signs that can reveal the mystery of a person in fact do not when others are not open to encountering and responding to that mystery.

All deeply interpersonal encounters change a person inwardly and call for an outward response, and in the same way some sacramental encounters have a permanent effect on those who fully participate in the Church’s rituals.³⁵ Schillebeeckx must also be credited with an important contribution to liturgical as well as theological reform. For according to his model the essence of any sacrament is the encounter with Christ, made available to Catholics through ecclesial rites that admittedly had changed through the centuries.

In other words, the Church is the sacrament of the risen Lord where his loving presence is historically and concretely made present. Christ offers himself to each Christian in the sacramental events of the Church. But the offer always demands a freely given response of faith, commitment, obedience, and love. The efficacy of the sacrament, then, depends on the actual outreach of Christ to us, and the especially on the personal involvement of the recipient. Hence, this model overcomes a purely passive interpretation of sacramental activity and grace appears as a participated relationship in God’s life, that is, a qualitative relational event that requires personal activity from our part. Sacraments appear as a free and loving exchange of selves between God and the human person.³⁶

1.4 Encountering Christ in the Holy Qurbano

Among the seven sacraments of the Church, the Holy Qurbano has the highest place. It has been rightly given a unique place by being called as the “sacrament of sacraments” (CCC 1211) because of its significance as the source and summit of Christian life.³⁷ In tune with the

³⁵ Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, 124.

³⁶ Schanz, *Introduction to the Sacraments*, 146.

³⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11.

encounter model of understanding the sacraments, when we consider the sacraments as the face of redemption turned visible towards us for the encounter with Christ, nothing else but the Holy Qurbono seems to be the most efficacious sacrament wherein we visibly experience the heavenly saving activity of God. In the Holy Qurbono we specially encounter Christ through the participation in the personal act of the Lord in earthly visibility and open availability.³⁸

To celebrate the Holy Qurbono is to encounter the presence of a living person, Jesus Christ, sharing himself with his sisters and brothers. Such an intimate sharing in human friendship between the Lord, who has ascended bodily to the right hand of his heavenly Father, and earthly people comes through the divine power of the Spirit working through the ritual's human words and symbols that is used in the liturgy of the Qurbono. Christ relates to the earthly members of his body precisely in our bodily means of mutual presence and receptivity, that is, sacramentally, in the liturgy, touching senses and memory, intellect and emotion, to form us as his members.³⁹ Just as the flourishing of human friendship requires multiple modes of symbolic communication, one person to the other, so the risen Lord's sacramental presence to the faithful comes through a number of distinct yet inter-related modes of encounter. Thus, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy teaches that Christ "accomplishes so great a work" by being present in the assembled people as they pray and sing, in the person of the presiding minister, in the proclamation of the word, and in the sacraments, "especially in the Eucharistic species."⁴⁰ This places the Qurbono as the ground for the ultimate visible encounter of humankind with God. We see that the Holy Qurbono is the pinnacle of the mutual encounter between God and human.

This mutual encounter of Christ and us—members of his body as church, branches on him, the vine (Jn 15:5)—is what the Spirit initiates at baptism and nourishes at the one table of the word and Eucharist. This is what is meant by the sacramentality of our Christian lives and, thus, why the Qurbono is needed as the ultimate locus of encounter of that abiding presence of the Word of God, of Christ, in the stories of our lives.⁴¹ Participation in the liturgy of the Qurbono empowers us to interpret our human story, as individuals and corporately, according

³⁸ Schillebeeckx, *Christ, the Sacrament*, 44.

³⁹ Bruce T. Morrill, "Christ's Sacramental Presence in the Eucharist: A Biblical-Pneumatological Approach to the Mystery of Faith," *American Theological Inquiry* 4, no. 2 (2011): 8.

⁴⁰ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 7.

⁴¹ Morrill, "Christ's Sacramental Presence," 9.

to the meaning disclosed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Through the tangible bonds of communion with Christ at the Eucharistic table—both in the sacrament of his very body and blood and the sacramental solidarity as members of his body—we are nourished for the journey, the mission we take up as the privilege of sharing in God’s practical love for the world. The living out of the paschal mystery in our lives is impossible if we bypass the encounter at the altar table, that is, if we think we can hear the word and then go directly into the world to “make it happen.” In this case, rather than “a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45) working in and through us, Christ functions as an external exemplar of the moral life to be imitated. This model shown reflects in our life through the faithful participation in the Qurbono which heightens our encounter with Christ.

Christ offers himself in the Qurbono. He takes hold of the bread and the wine (the meal) and makes use of their bodiliness to offer himself. The bread and wine are not merely tokens or signs of Christ, pointing to him and reminding us of him. Rather, with a sovereignty and freedom that now belongs to his glorified body he identifies himself with the bread and wine. He uses them to embody and express his eternal giving of himself to the Father and to us. Christ will always “have his heart in it.”⁴² In this personal encounter, while remaining unchanged on the physical level, the bread and wine undergo a substantial change, a change by which they are no longer simply bread and wine but is Jesus Christ offering to unite us to himself in his sacrifice and thus to unite us with the Father and with each other in the Holy Spirit. The change in the bread and wine is then a real, substantial change—no less real than if it had taken place on the merely physical level. In fact, this change is more real, more substantial, than a merely physical change. The bodily presence of Christ in the bread and wine is also real—but no more real than the mutual presence of Christ and his faithful in the life of grace. In fact, it is this mutual, personal presence, this encounter between Christ and his faithful and their encounter with each other in Christ that the bodily presence of Christ in the species embodies, expresses, and intensifies. This personal encounter of the faithful with Christ, and through Christ with the Father and with each other in the Holy Spirit, is the sacrament of God’s love. This personal, and therefore reciprocal or mutual encounter is the core of the Holy Qurbono.⁴³

⁴² John H. McKenna, “Eucharistic Presence: An Invitation to Dialogue,” *Theological Studies*, no. 60 (1999): 311.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 313.

1.5 Conclusion

At the start of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes: “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not for him or her”⁴⁴ (EG 3). Pope Francis’ words seem to contain an urgency of inviting the whole Church to the encounter of Christ through the sacraments. Through this chapter we tried to understand the sacraments as the encounter with God which helps us to participate in the Trinitarian life with more commitment. God’s revelation is seeking a response and it is nothing but a personal response through the encounter in the Holy Qurbono that can so efficiently complete our response to his invitation. The meeting between God and human unfolds in Christ in its visible fullness through the sacraments and our duty is to encounter him fully through a faithful, renewed and continuous mutual dialogue through the Holy Qurbono.

⁴⁴ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed 21 February 2016).

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTER

2.1 Introduction

From our analysis of the Sacraments in the previous chapter we have seen that a number of 20th-century Catholic theologians like Karl Rahner, S.J. and Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P. have helped us to recover the idea that in a fundamental way Christ is the sacrament of God and that the Church is the primordial sacrament of Christ in the world. It is on this basis that we can understand the seven sacraments of the Church as genuine encounters with Christ through his Church. Each of the individual sacraments helps us to encounter the Incarnate Lord Jesus and to enter into the effects of his saving passion, death, and resurrection in a different way. It has been said, and quite correctly I think, that we better understand the sacraments as verbs than as nouns. In other words, they are the actions of the Risen Christ transforming us more and more into His Body. Since the sacraments are encounters with God the question then arises how is this individual encounter possible. Our sojourn in this life has the aim of living a life in mutual encounter and communion. There is no other medium of encounter and communion better than the medium of conversation or dialogue. This medium itself can be found in a variety of forms – as words, actions, thoughts, etc. Encounters get their life when they become conversations. This chapter aims at analysing the sacraments as conversational encounters and thereby understand them as a way of “being” which can be practically experienced in the Holy Qurbano.

2.2 The Notion of Conversation

Now we shift our concern to find out how the encounter between God and human through the sacraments takes place. As mentioned above we try to see how conversation becomes an apt medium of the sacramental encounter of Christ. Conversation involves language which in turn can be understood as symbolic. Thus, language may include symbols which may be words or deeds. Since the publication of J. L. Austin’s *How to do things with words*,⁴⁵ the field of language-act theory has enjoyed wide cross-disciplinary utilization. Areas as diverse as philosophy of language, literary criticism, and computer science have employed Austin’s incisive observation that humans do more with their words than simply convey propositional content.

⁴⁵ J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962).

2.2.1 Language

The most elaborate and important human creation in the field of signs and symbols is language itself. Each human language is a marvel of complexity and brilliance, the heritage of many generations of human ingenuity.⁴⁶ Language coordinates and enables all human endeavours. Sacrament and liturgy are activities embedded in language and dependent on it for their performance. There are non-linguistic signs and symbols involved in sacramental rites but they are introduced and accompanied by linguistic utterances. Given that speech provides the context and much of the content of sacramental celebration, an investigation into how speech does things is a good place to start a study of how sacraments do what they do.⁴⁷

In the first place, “language” is to be understood structurally as “medium,” a mediation of mutual relations, the communication act that establishes a personal encounter between the persons involved in the process of communication.⁴⁸ As the form of appearance of the encounter between persons, language includes various components in conversation, more than just the spoken word. There is an entire gamut of extra-verbal conversation in an encounter: the place with all its visual elements, the silence, the surroundings, the physical expressions in bearing and movement etc. Hence, in an encounter conversation does not stick to the normal understanding of spoken language but also includes the whole range of non-spoken but communicative and conversational language, that is, the actions as well. When understood in this way a sea of meanings opens before us while we engage in a conversation. The encounter therefore, becomes a mutual entering into the life of the other.⁴⁹ David N. Power calls this aspect as “the living exchange in a dialogical situation.”⁵⁰

2.2.2 Conversation as the sharing of “being”

The use of language is governed by intent. Intent is not to be understood as a clearly formulated intention rather it has to be understood as a human drive to search for a sense of being for meanings by which to live. It is the drive to look into reality and humanity’s place within the complex of things. In using language, therefore, there is the intent to express

⁴⁶ Mervyn Duffy, *How Language, Ritual and Sacraments Work: According to John Austin, Jürgen Habermas and Louis-Marie Chauvet* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2005), 19.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Lambert F. Leijssen, *With the Silent Glimmer of God’s Spirit: A Postmodern Look at the Sacraments*, trans. Marie Baird (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 30.

⁴⁹ David N. Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God’s Giving* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 52.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 60.

meaning, the intent to explore the meaning of things and of life, and the intent to communicate or converse and to share meaning, so as to share life. Such a use of language when persons encounter each other in their natural instances involving both verbal and non-verbal communication and a sharing of their “being” can be called as the underline and essence of conversation.⁵¹ Conversation expresses not merely the human, but also allows things to show forth in their own being, as well as displaying how they are brought into human situation.

In conversation, one is preceded by the things that are “given” to one, that is, their individualities along with their characteristics. These are the facts that face the other when one involves in a conversation. Then, to converse is to be able to live in the midst of things and in the repetition of the past in such a way to be authentic, free in choosing potentiality and action, by conscious activity and not simply by compulsion from without. In a conversation, what is heard communicates about being and about what is beyond being. What is heard is a message, a challenge to what is the given of one’s world and understanding, the possibility from another world to live through and share the possibilities that it offers.⁵² Simply put, conversation enables one to not just enter but also share and participate into the world and being of the other which in its ultimate and critical would result in the transcending of the boundaries of self-consciousness and dissolving into the other along with one’s own individualities.

2.3 Conversational Encounter

Using language is a way of being. The use of language shows how understanding and existence, perspective on life and living, go hand in hand. It reveals how people are, what they are and what they think or feel belong together. Conversations are often seen as paradigmatic of language usage because it clearly engages us with others and with life itself. This engagement can be termed as encounter and it is present in not only written but also in bodily expression of feeling in ritual. The best kind of relation in the world is when there is this encounter between persons involved in the conversation. Hence, we can define conversational encounter as a relation between persons where the medium of their relation is the conversation of their “beings” and a sharing of their realities.

⁵¹ Power, *Sacrament*, 62.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 63.

We all like to be in conversation with the other. Conversation succinctly opens us to give to the other and also to receive from the other. When conversation becomes intense it raises its level beyond verbal or non-verbal symbols into the realm of silence which brings a calm so sweet that one wishes to continue his/her encountering with the other. More than a dialogue where there is the presence of only to and fro movement of realities conversational encounter involves the whole environment – the persons, the surroundings, the words, the actions, the sounds, the smells, etc. – resulting in feeling of entering into a new world, a transcended world, in the here and now of our existence. Meanings become shared meanings, passions become shared passions, joys become shared joys and the being unites and participates with that of the other in that particular moment. Such is the nature of the conversational encounter. Conversational encounter opens a world of greater possibility into which the persons can move without having to deny the world in which they are from. In such a situation, language becomes the medium to express things that constitute human beings' environment creating a relation that seems to be perpetuating, but however is highly dependent on the openness of the persons.

2.3.1 Conversational encounter in the Liturgy

In liturgy and the sacraments, the relationship that takes place between God and humans is the conversational encounter. Every prayer or work of worship by the Church is understood as an encounter of God where there is a sharing between the Church and Christ. There is both verbal and a gamut of extra-verbal communication in liturgical celebrations as well: the sacred place with all its paraphernalia, the moments of silent prayer and meditation, the music, the physical expression found in the liturgical acts and symbols, the prayerful atmosphere, etc.

The liturgy of the sacraments is a language-action, an occurrence that realizes something. By means of language and the mutual relations that are created in this way, the original meaning of the sacrament is generated anew – a renewed encounter of invisible grace of God. Liturgical language is performative, that is, it makes real what is being spoken. Liturgical language is metaphorical, that is, it binds the visible reality to the deeper, spiritual reality that is indeed invisible to our eyes. Liturgical language is a tool whereby the invisible reality converses with the human being and also the medium through which humankind converses

with God. The liturgy points to deeper insights about God's Kingdom and thereby enhances the encounter between God and humans.⁵³

2.3.2 Sacrament as a Conversational Encounter with God

The first chapter of this paper was to understand the sacrament as an encounter with Christ, the incarnate God. We have also seen above that the notion of conversation is the cementing factor that binds relations with their inimitability. As shown by Christ, it is evident for us that God's gift is the most intense and perfect wherein he gives his whole being to the world out of his love. Incarnation, in this sense can be considered as the greatest conversation of love that God has ever made with the whole of the human race. God encountered the human race through the being of his only Son who through his divine conversation in the human language of words and deeds – all symbolic of this loving encounter – perfected it through his whole life, passion, death and resurrection. Our duty, then, is to respond to this by engaging ourselves in the encounter to which God invites and gives his whole self totally in the Sacraments. The Sacrament thus becomes a conversational encounter in itself, where through the verbal and non-verbal symbols the whole Church recognizes the gift of Christ and responds to it in love by engaging in the conversation of love. The Church's aim is then to participate in the sacraments with utmost care and involvement and engage in a conversational encounter with Christ. In the sacraments one sees God's initiative for the conversational encounter. Christ again and again becomes a visible and tangible thing in order to encounter our being with such a thirst as if his being would not be full without our involvement. Our conscientious partaking in the sacrament is the response to this invitation.

2.4 Holy Qurbono as a Conversational Encounter

We have seen above the understanding of language and its importance in the encountering event in the sacramental action. Now we proceed to see how the Holy Qurbono, the sacrament of sacraments, is a conversational encounter. For this purpose, I use William Alston's presentation of speech-act theory from his book *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning*.⁵⁴

⁵³ Leijssen, *With the Silent Glimmer of God's Spirit*, 32.

⁵⁴ William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (London: Cornell University Press, 2000).

Alston divides speech-acts into three kinds: 1) locutionary acts, which are the sounds and sentences uttered, 2) illocutionary acts, which are the content-carrying actions that give sentences meaning, and 3) perlocutionary acts, which are the responses of hearers to the utterances made.⁵⁵ Alston divides illocutionary acts into 5 types: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and exercitives. Alston notes that by the same locutionary act (utterance, sentence) speakers can perform various illocutionary acts. Thus, to use an example from Austin, when the priest says to the bride, “Do you take, etc...” and the bride responds with “I do,” that “I do” can function has both an assertive (simply stating that she finds herself in the state of affairs inquired of by the priest) and an exercitive (whereby she cooperates in bringing about the marriage).⁵⁶

This, then, is the linguistic infrastructure with which I analyse the Eucharistic speech acts. In similarity to the previous example, we interpret the liturgical utterance “This is my body” as being two illocutionary acts. Read as a certain illocutionary act, that locution serves as a simple assertive, making some kind of claim about the object in the celebrant’s hand. However, that locution can also be interpreted as a directive on the order of an invitation to participate in the linguistic community of the Church. Those members of the linguistic community will know how to respond properly, and those wishing to become members will learn from those in that linguistic community, that is, by performing a responsive illocutionary act or “Amen!” or by consuming the consecrated elements. Here, as seen above, non-verbal actions – gestures, nods, other bodily actions, etc. also serve as illocutionary acts and in enhancing the efficacy of the encounter with Christ.

This analysis of participation in the conversational encounter with Christ in the Church comes down to how one practically engages with the utterance of the priest with respect to the consecrated elements. If the would-be recipient responds to the words of the priest with the Eucharistic bread in his hands – “this is my Body” – with the requisite “Amen!” and also with the act of reception, he/she has responded appropriately and shown him/herself to be involved in the sacramental encounter. If the would-be recipient does not respond appropriately either through verbal affirmation or consumption then that person is not a member of the Church. We can understand the Church to be a linguistic community. This community has certain ways of speaking and certain ways of appropriately responding to

⁵⁵ Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning*, 24.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

utterances made by other members of the community. If, then, the Eucharist makes the Church, those members of the ecclesial linguistic community will speak and respond appropriately during the Holy Qurbono.

2.4.1 Elements used in the Conversational Encounter in the Holy Qurbono

Power had conducted a detailed analysis of the sacraments and identified the different elements of the sacrament that are used in perfecting the encounter through the language action. Some of the elements that he identifies are: 1. The blessing prayers 2. The narratives 3. The scriptural readings 4. The intercessions 5. The doxologies 6. The artwork and design of the church. We see that these elements serve as the medium in the language acts or conversations to enrich and materialise the encounter with God.

2.4.2 Analysis of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Holy Qurbono Liturgy

There are several instances and places in the liturgy of the Holy Qurbono of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church that we see the conversational encounter language is applied. The Malankara Holy Qurbono shows a unique model of encounter Sacramentology that serves as a big topic to study. Here we take a few texts from the Holy Qurbono and conduct a brief analysis.⁵⁷

The first comment that we should make is that the whole of the Malankara Qurbono applies the conversational methodology to help the celebrants, that is, the whole community along with the main celebrant – the priest, to come to the encounter with God. From the first public request “Pray for me, beloved brethren ...” to the concluding private prayers of the priest “Remain in peace, Holy Altar of the Lord...” employ this method so that the celebrants can engage in the encounter with their Lord with ease.

The Malankara Qurbono identifies the sacrament as a conversational encounter with Christ in a prayer said privately during the second service of the preparatory service of the Qurbono.

“O Lord, who, in your grace have called me to your spiritual service and in your mercy have encouraged me to enter this Holy of Holies and in your compassion have strengthened me that I may stand before your Holy Table and speak to you with confidence, bestow on me the grace of your Holy Spirit and enlighten the inner eyes of my mind and remove from my soul the heavy burden of guilt and sin, so that I may serve honourably and without stain

⁵⁷ All the texts used in the paper are taken from the *Order of the Holy Qurbono of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church* prepared by the Synodal Commission for Liturgy in 2012.

and praise you with your Only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit, now and always and forever. Amen.”⁵⁸

The prayer is said by the priest while he kneels before the altar after having put on all his vestments. The priest has put on all the symbols granted by the tradition of the Church and he is now ready to converse with Christ on behalf of the worshipping community. This prayer, more than being an invitation to participate in the grace and mercy of God is a prayer of gratitude for strengthening the celebrant to converse and encounter God with confidence.

The prayer ends with a petition to enlighten the inner eyes of the worshippers and remove the burden of guilt and sin to enable them to praise God with perfect disposition.

The analysis of the final dismissal of the faithful shows how the priest acts as a servant at the altar of the Lord who enables the conversation of the faithful with God.

“May I, his weak and sinful servant, obtain mercy and help by your prayers...”⁵⁹

The conversational encounter in the Qurbano takes a communitarian dimension. This community is not only of the priest and Christ but also includes the priest, the worshipping faithful – living and the dead, the whole environment which includes even the Altar of the Lord. The prayer before the Kiss of Peace shows how the whole community is involved and supports each other in their salvific encounter with the Lord.

“O God and Lord of all, account these, our unworthy selves, to be worthy of salvation, that free from malice and united by the bond of love, we may greet one another with the holy and divine kiss of peace.”⁶⁰

Also in the private prayer said during the concluding service the way in which the symbol of the altar is encountered by the priest as a means to encounter Christ is noteworthy.

“Remain in peace, Holy Altar of the Lord, for I do not know whether I shall return to you or not. May the Lord make me worthy of the vision of you in the assembly of the first-born, in heaven.”⁶¹

One may note how the conversational encounter model is used by the Church Fathers while composing the prayers of the Holy Qurbano. We cannot miss to note the way in which the altar is personified. One is forced out of love and filled by God’s grace to view every being in a state equal or even higher than ours. This is the significance of the conversational encounter

⁵⁸ *Order of the Holy Qurbano*, 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

model of understanding the sacrament wherein every person, place and object is considered as a subject to be encountered. Our prayer then will be adorned by the beauty of love and praise in such an approach.

2.5 Conclusion

To celebrate the sacraments is to enter into a dialogue with the self-giving God.⁶² In other words, the encounter of Christ is in its fullest sense experienced and responded to by conversational involvement of each person of the Church. The Church invites us all the faithful to engage in this conversational encounter with Christ through the sacraments. It is when the whole community together translates this encountering daily in their life that the Church really becomes the face of Christ in the world, the sacrament of God in the world. This is the challenge that is put forward by us to ourselves out of our love for the self-gift of Christ. Christ's initial encounter with us compels and impels us to engage in the conversational encounter with him celebrated communally in the Church through the sacraments. Now, we are set to move to the next chapter to see how this encounter must unfold in the real circumstances challenges of our life and also to see how the sacramental life becomes a model for us.

⁶² Leijssen, *With the Silent Glimmer of God's Spirit*, 35.

CHAPTER 3

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTER IN THE HOLY QURBONO

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we had tried to define conversational encounters as the relation between persons where the medium of their relation is the conversation of their “beings” and a sharing of their realities. When we understand the sacraments as conversational encounters we realize that it is our aim and responsibility as members of the Church to engage in it through the verbal and non-verbal symbols used in the Church and respond to it in love by engaging in this conversation of love, especially during the participation in the Holy Qurbono. Our life is a web of relationships. These relationships are very crucial in understanding our place in the world and to make sense of human life as relational beings.⁶³ The Second Vatican Council evinced deep concern about the gap between religion and life and eagerly searched for a synthesis. Use of the vernacular, adaptation of rites to the diverse contemporary cultures, a firm insistence on the centrality of the Paschal mystery – all tended to restore the desired unity between everyday life and the sacramental and liturgical celebration. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC no. 2), exclaimed that it is through the liturgy, especially the divine Eucharistic Sacrifice, that the work of our redemption is exercised. The liturgy is the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the true nature of the Church.⁶⁴ The sacramental encounter must reflect in our daily life encounters with whom we are related. Any gaps in understanding or encountering the other in real life must be corrected by taking the model of the encountering that occurs in the sacraments, especially the Holy Qurbono. It is with this aim that we proceed to this chapter. In this chapter we try to analyse relationships in the world in the context of broken marriages, rising divorces, irresponsible parenting, live-in relationships and propose the paradigmatic conversational encounter of God in the Holy Qurbono as a response to these issues at least in the realm of the Catholic church.

⁶³ Kuruvila Pandikaattu, *Philosophy of the Human Person* – Class Notes (Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 2016), 13.

⁶⁴ Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Dogmatic Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (accessed 26 February 2016).

3.2 Relationships in Today's World

We live in a world of fast food and 'instant' things. There are photos in seconds, money in two minutes, world at the tip of one's fingers, online shopping, etc., that have made people impatient to wait for the mercy of God. They are not inclined to wait but go in for quick solutions like cloning, surrogacy, divorce, artificial reproductive methods etc. Modern humans, who is quick and fast-moving by aircraft, supersonics and air-conditioned vehicles, would not want to march for forty years through the wilderness to reach the Promised Land under God's protection.⁶⁵

3.2.1 Lack of Deep Loving Relationships

It is love that binds us to other humans. The relationships are the foundations of our emotional and mental stability. No one can remain in isolation from other human beings and it is these various relations that help us survive and enjoy the life that we have been blessed with. A relationship is a deep emotional bond with another individual. The tendency to form a deep emotional bond to another individual is a universal feature of human life. Modern relationships are very different from those in older times. Attributes such as purity, virginity, and celibacy were requirements for an unmarried woman. It would be quite difficult to find an adult female today who possesses these traits — at least in metropolitans. However, an advantage to this freedom ensures that a man and woman today need not enter into marriage just for the sex. It seems to hold true also, that a relationship which suffers is just about a breakup – not a divorce. Gone are the days where relationships were very deep and were given the highest place.⁶⁶

These days' relationships have an all-new meaning. They are short-lived, meaningless, at times only physical, and lately 'use and throw' relationships seem to be the raging trend. Short-term relationships such as flings, one-night stands have become so common that the true essence of love seems to be lost somewhere. There is nothing wrong with having a no strings attached relation, but the emotional consequences that one has to bear are not justified. For today's youth love is blended with lust and in this process they give up their morals, ethics and consciousness. We need to be careful about whom you have repeated intimate contact with — we are likely to form an attachment to that person. Once an attachment is

⁶⁵ Poovathanikunnel, *Sacraments: What and Why*, 154.

⁶⁶ Divya Gupta, *The Status of Relationships in Modern India [and the world]*, 02 Sep, 2010, <http://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2010/09/the-status-of-relationships-in-modern-india-and-the-world> (accessed 26 February, 2016).

formed, it can be very difficult to break. Without realizing this, individuals today are gallivanting around without giving their actions today a single thought. We are very selfish and sometimes our expectations take a toll on our relationships making them baseless.

It seems today that (women especially) are always trying to find the ‘perfect’ man ‘for them’. But the fact remains that nobody is perfect. Yet we all are so ready to just give up, drop everything and quit when things take a bad turn. We don’t work on relationships any more. If someone finds some difficulty, we deem them ‘not right’ for us, and we move on. Insecurities in modern relationships create fertile ground for infidelity and relationship “jumping”.⁶⁷

3.2.2 Rise of Individualisation of Social Life

From a sociological perspective changes in family and personal relationships are a consequence of post-industrialisation, which has led to the de-traditionalisation and individualisation of social life.⁶⁸ Social commentators differ in their account of the implications of these changes, with some adopting the pessimistic view that the breakdown of traditional ties leads to the disintegration of moral frameworks, while others focus on the positive potential that such changes offer, suggesting that greater diversity and plurality of lifestyles leads to a democratisation of personal relationships. The nature of personal relationships has changed. Many theorists argue that increased self reflexivity leads to a ‘democratisation of personhood’ that has an impact on wider political and ethical frameworks.⁶⁹

Being oneself while being related to others requires an intricate balancing act that often breaks down under the weight of competing demands. Trends towards cohabitation, separation and re-partnership are interpreted as a consequence of a shift in family relations from a ‘community of need’ defined by ascribed ties and obligations, to ‘elective affinities’.⁷⁰ In this context contemporary family relationships are conditional, characterised by risk and fragility as opposed to rules and rituals. Individuals are thus caught in something of a

⁶⁷ Alastair Roberts, “Relationships and Intimacy in the Modern World,” 17 December 2011, <https://alastairadversaria.wordpress.com/2011/12/17/relationships-and-intimacy-in-the-modern-world>, (accessed 26 February 2016).

⁶⁸ Val Gillies, *Family and Intimate Relationships: A Review of the Sociological Research* (London: South Bank University, 2003), 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷⁰ Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, “On the way to a post-familial family: from a community of need to elective affinities”, *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 15, nos. 3-4, 57.

paradox, with love and intimacy becoming simultaneously ever more central as an ideal, and yet ever more difficult to secure and maintain

Our relationships today are headed for a doomsday scenario if the present status continues. We have stopped valuing them and caring about them, forgetting in the process that relations are very delicate. They need to be handled with love and care and be nurtured with affection combined with warmth and fondness. Now we look into the different paradigms of how these wounded relationships can be restored.

3.3 Different Paradigms of Restoration of Relationships

We live in a world where our relationships are not perfect. Many times, they are damaged, broken and seem beyond repair. We desire greatly to have relationships that are healthy and wholesome. We desire to see relationships that have been damaged or destroyed restored to be all they should be. At the very least, we hope to not have the same destructive patterns become part of new relationships. To this end, we seek restoration in relationships. Still, some of our relationships remain broken. We find old patterns repeating themselves in new situations. We try to resolve old issues with people we have hurt or who have hurt us, only to find our efforts blocked or misunderstood. Even when old issues are resolved, we often discover that other issues are uncovered or remain unresolved. As we focus more on relationships, we become aware of problems even in relationships we thought were good.

Healthy relationships, like most other things in life, do not develop overnight. Relationship building and relationship restoration is a process – a process of growth, development and healing that takes time and effort. A builder who is restoring an old house may need to tear off some wallpaper, redo some wiring, tear up some floors, and maybe even pull down some walls. At this point in the process, the house will appear damaged. However, the builder will not stop, saying that it is hopeless. Instead, he will clean up the rubble and start rebuilding. He will put up new walls, put down new floors, fix the wiring and repaint the house. He will not look on the house as a lost cause if he has not yet finished the job. Rather, he will count each step made towards the completed project as an accomplishment.

The fact is that restoration and recovery takes time and effort. However, when we think of recovery in relationships, we tend to focus only on the hoped for “finished product” or “complete restoration”. When the process seems to take too long, or when the results of our

efforts do not bring the perfect relationships we desire, we despair. We need to remember that each step towards better relationships is valuable. Each small amount of healing that occurs is worthwhile. Every improvement that is made in a relationship can be counted as a success, even if some brokenness still remains. Most of all, we need to understand that God works in the restoration of relationships. God is a God of reconciliation. He knows intimately the meaning of relational rift, for human beings have been separated from Him since the Fall. God know what it takes to fully restore such a deep rift, and He made the ultimate sacrifice to make such a restoration possible. In the person of Jesus Christ, God came to us Himself. He gave Himself when He died on the cross, so that we could be restored to relationship with Him. It is the power of redemption that is at work in the restoring of relationships. It is God alone who has such power. He will walk with us through each step of relationship building, if we will let Him. He will understand when things become difficult and will help us respond to brokenness in our relationships in an appropriate manner. Even when a relationship remains broken, He will grieve with us, because He has been there Himself. And God will do the work of healing in our lives and in our relationships that we are unable to do ourselves.

3.4 Conversational Encounter in the Holy Qurbono as a Paradigm

Rootless replantation of the Christian faith and its symbolic representation in the present situation make them get dried up or lose their relevance and sometimes disappear from daily life. In the West the sacrament of Reconciliation has almost disappeared. The sacrament of Matrimony is on the brink of sinking into the ocean of human consumerist, hedonistic, and licentious living and thinking. The Eucharistic celebration in many areas has become a mere social ritual, losing its divine and mysterious-tremendous nature. In many areas in the West, it has become very popular to have “Mass without Priest.”⁷¹ The Anointing of the Sick is again taking the role of Extreme Unction instead of anointing the sick. The relevance of this sacrament is being questioned by new mass-healing ministries and preaching conducted in many charismatic retreat centres.

3.4.1 Sacraments and Life

The Sacraments are envisioned as a personal encounter – a conversational encounter, or as relation with the personal presence of Christ with the message of joy and of life.⁷² Since the sacraments are personal and personalizing encounters, great openness and constant vigilance

⁷¹ Ibid., 153.

⁷² Bernard Haring, *The Sacraments and Your Everyday Life* (Missouri: Ligouri Publications, 1976), 7.

are essential in pastoral theology if sacramental celebrations are to awaken all the responsive energies of the person. They are creative events that generate yearning in the participants, the will to grow in the love of Christ, and through Christ in the love of the Father and of the brethren who are related to them.⁷³

The sacraments have a practical, visible and communal effect on the life of persons and hence sacramental action has a major role to play in the process of restoration. Absence of restoration of relationships can block sacramental exchange and sacramental communion.⁷⁴ The fundamental point in the restoration of relationships is the readiness to let oneself be invited into the world of the sacrament, to hear the word, to enter into prayer and ritual, and to let oneself and one's world to be called into question. This readiness to be vulnerable is not a simple thing since people have to appropriate the sacramental action into their life and reaffirm the experience of grace.⁷⁵

Restoring relationships involves an affective commitment. The affective is that which enables a person to connect with others in mutuality, to develop a sense of belonging, to pledge one's heart and soul to other persons, values and spheres of action.⁷⁶ The affective is closely tied in with the symbolic. The primary impact of the symbol is to engage the person and the society affectively. This is where the role of the symbolic differs from that of indicative signs, which are simply intended to communicate knowledge or to remind. Restoration, in this sense, becomes a part of the sacramental action. Just as loving God means the loving of neighbours restoring the relationship with God means the restoration of the relationship with neighbours. From this point of view, the Christian symbol and sacrament serve to engage persons and communities wholeheartedly in restorative process, made known in the primary restorative act of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Spirit who dwells within us as a dynamic force of healing and restoration.⁷⁷

3.4.2 Sacraments as the path back to Christ

Sacraments are rituals that bring Christ into the lives of our communities by helping us recognize ourselves as Christ. We may go through our daily lives knowing that Christ is in

⁷³ Haring, *The Sacraments and Your Everyday Life*, 9.

⁷⁴ Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, 264.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 270.

everyone we meet, but the sacraments offer us privileged ways to experience that presence. The sacraments must be our path back to Jesus because they are the only path wide enough for us to walk as a community. There are certainly other wonderful and indispensable ways to cultivate and restore a relationship with Jesus and others. The seven sacraments are always communal celebrations. Our faith is catholic, not simply because it is offered to each and every human being, but because it is offered to us as a community and must be accepted as a community. Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* teaches us that God does not save us as individuals but as a body of faithful believers. Through the sacraments, Jesus comes to us as a community. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them" (Mt 18:20). Our personal relationship with Jesus is never truly personal if others are not part of that relationship. It takes a community to gather around Christ. The sacraments are where we continually grow as the Body of Christ. Living a virtuous, Christian life is hard enough as an individual. When we realize that as a community we are called to be Christ to the world, then the task of living a virtuous life becomes all the more daunting.

The communal nature of the sacraments confronts us with the responsibility we have for others. As a member of Christ's Body, our actions are always the actions of that Body. What and how our relationships are, will affect the Body of Christ. Likewise, the more we participate in Christ's Body by celebrating the sacraments, the more our actions are formed by Christ. Every time we celebrate a sacrament, Christ offers Himself so that we might turn to Him and better follow Him. In every sacramental liturgy, we gather to hear the Word of God, so that we can hear our family story and learn who we truly are. Through the prayers and actions that make up our sacramental liturgies, we bring our past to life and let it form us into Christ. It is through the sacraments that we are able to become Jesus, because through the sacraments Jesus comes into the centre of our lives. Hence, true restoration of relationships is a result of a true participation and encounter of Christ in the sacraments.

3.4.3 The Holy Qurbano Paradigm of Restoring Relationships

We have seen in the previous chapter how there is the conversational encounter in the Holy Qurbano. In the Qurbano we are engaged in an encounter with Christ. This is not an encounter without any dialogue or conversation but an encounter fully charged with conversation using symbols, language, words and actions. We involve ourselves into the life of Christ through our words and deeds. This encounter is a continuous process and not a once-and-for-all matter. In a similar fashion, our relationships have to be continuous process

of conversational encountering. We have to always encounter the other through our words and deeds. Love and affection have to be reaffirmed and rejuvenated through symbols. Every word and every action should reflect the love and concern for the other. One should become the sacrament of their love for the other. Fights and misunderstandings must be seen as a part of maturing of relationships. Just as every experience of Qurbono is unique, every moment of the encountering in relationships must be seen as unique and new. We understand and know better through every conversational encounter. Our relationships may seem to be on the rocks during the hard time of breakups, struggles and clashes. All of these can be overcome if we take the path of conversation encounter. We just have to engage in conversation, speak out things through and understand the being of the other and share in the feeling of the other rather than isolating ourselves and others from our feelings and indulging in our own world of personal losses and complaints. Christ is the ultimate sacrament of God's love and we are also called to be the sacrament of Christ's love before those to whom we are related. The Qurbono is the platform for us to experience and respond to the act of encountering. Similarly every moment of our relationship with others is a time to experience and respond to the act of encountering that the other offers to us. It is this encountering that cements our relationships and makes them bonds till eternity and gives no chances for a crisis in our relationships.

3.5 Conclusion

It is said that the liturgical-sacramental life is the extension of the mystery of the Incarnation, the extension of the open arms of Christ.⁷⁸ What is visible in our Redeemer has now passed into the sacraments. In the same way, what is visible in the sacraments should pass onto the life of the believer. As we analyse the crisis in the relationships of modern humans we reach the conclusion that people are searching for meaning and mystery in their life and the world around them and often are not satisfied. This dissatisfaction breaks relationships and hence there is the need for restoring them. The rediscovery of the role of sacraments in Christian life would give meaningful insights into restoring these relationships. The Holy Qurbono, in particular, through its example of being a platform of conversational encounter with God provides us with the paradigm for restoring relationships in the modern world. What modern relationships need is more conversation, more encounter and thereby more conversational encounters.

⁷⁸ Peter E. Fink, *Worship: Praying the Sacraments* (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1991), 198.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

At the end of every sacramental liturgy the, the community is sent forth with a mission to witness to the Christ whom we have experienced or encountered. Perhaps it is with a similar intention that the author wishes to conclude the paper, that is, to invite the readers to engage in a mission to respond to the call of Christ by engaging in a conversational encounter with Christ. All deep interpersonal encounters change a person inwardly and call for an outward response, and in the same way some sacramental encounters have a permanent effect on those who fully participate in the Church's rituals.

There is no other better and more efficient instance for this encounter than the Holy Qurbono. Common doubts as to the need for going for the Holy Qurbono will be eradicated once we try to encounter and converse with Christ. There is no language barrier for this as the encounter happens in the core of our lives. An immediate effect that perceives after this encounter is the ability to retrace one's fallen steps in one's relation with Christ and one's neighbour. Further, there is the invitation to follow the paradigm of the conversational encounter in our daily lives. What hinders the continuity of the love in our relationships is the lack of a conversational encounter with the other with whom we are related. One has to encounter the other face to face, no matter whatever be the situation, rather than turning towards oneself or running away from the scene. One has to engage in conversation – that is why our elders used to say that there are no problems that cannot be solved through conversations. The reality of the persons in a relation comes to the forefront when they converse with each other. Hence, the path to restoring relationships is the path of conversational encounter. This is the clarion call that the author wishes to give to the reader.

In the first chapter, the understanding of the sacraments as encounters with Christ impels us to look forward for a chance to engage in such a sacrament with the right disposition. The Holy Qurbono, in this light is the locus for a close encounter with Christ. The second chapter was an attempt to show how this encounter takes place in the sacrament in its conversational language of symbols and actions. The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church's liturgy of the Holy Qurbono contains ample examples of the invitation for a conversational encounter and gives us an opportunity to converse with Christ in a personal fashion in the spiritual realm. The third chapter analysed the situation of broken and troubled relationships in the world and

pointed out the attitude of individualism and consumerism as the main reasons for the distress in relations. The various restoration techniques have provided ways for persons to improve their relationships. The conversational encounter in the Holy Qurbano is cited as the example for persons in distress to restore their relationships to a better state. Christ's language of love materialised in his giving of his body and blood to us in the Holy Qurbano. Similarly, just as Christ gives and shares himself totally and enters into a conversation with us we are called to engage with others and converse with them in the language of love, that is, by sharing our 'beings'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alston, William P. *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning*. London: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Austin, J. L. *How to do Things with Words*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth. "On the way to a Post-familial Family: From a Community of need to Elective Affinities." *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 15, nos. 3-4, 53 – 70.
- Chauvet, Louis-Marie. *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*. Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2002.
- D'Lima, Errol & Urumpackal, Thomas Paul. *Sacraments in General*. Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2005.
- Divya Gupta, "The Status of Relationships in Modern India [and the world]." <http://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2010/09/the-status-of-relationships-in-modern-india-and-the-world> (accessed 26 February 2016).
- Duffy, Mervyn. *How Language, Ritual and Sacraments Work: According to John Austin, Jürgen Habermas and Louis-Marie Chauvet*. Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2005.
- Dupuis, Jacques. *The Sacrament: Personal Encounter of Christ and Men in the Church*. Kurseong: St. Mary's College, 1967.
- Fink, Peter E. *Worship: Praying the Sacraments*. Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1991.
- Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium*. Apostolic Exhortation, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed 21 February 2016).
- Gillies, Val. *Family and Intimate Relationships: A Review of the Sociological Research*. London: South Bank University, 2003.

- Haring, Bernard. *The Sacraments and Your Everyday Life*. Missouri: Ligouri Publications, 1976.
- Kaitholil, George. *Church, The Sacrament of Christ: Patristic Vision and Modern Theology*. Mumbai: St. Pauls, 1997.
- Leijssen, Lambert F. *With the Silent Glimmer of God's Spirit: A Postmodern Look at the Sacraments*. Trans. Marie Baird, New York: Paulist Press, 2006.
- Martos, Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred*. Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2014.
- McKenna, John H. "Eucharistic Presence: An Invitation to Dialogue." *Theological Studies*, no. 60 (1999): 294 – 317.
- Morrill, Bruce T. "Christ's Sacramental Presence in the Eucharist: A Biblical-Pneumatological Approach to the Mystery of Faith." *American Theological Inquiry*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (2011): 3 – 26.
- Order of the Holy Qurbano of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church*. Thiruvananthapuram: Synodal Commission for Liturgy, 2012.
- Osborne, Kenan B. *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*. New York: Paulist Press, 1999.
- Pandikaattu, Kuruvila. *Philosophy of the Human Person*. Class Notes, Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 2016.
- Paul VI. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Dogmatic Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (accessed 26 February 2016).
- Poovathanikunnel, Thomas. *Sacraments: What and Why*. Mumbai: St. Paul's Publications, 2014.
- Power, David N. *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999.
- Rahner, Karl. "The Theology of Symbol." *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth, Baltimore: Helicon, 1966, 221 – 252.

- Roberts, Alastair. "Relationships and Intimacy in the Modern World."
<https://alastairadversaria.wordpress.com/2011/12/17/relationships-and-intimacy-in-the-modern-world> (accessed 26 February 2016).
- Schanz, John P. *Introduction to the Sacraments*. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1983.
- Schillebeeckx, Edward. *Christ, the Sacrament of Encounter with God*. London: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1963.
- Van Roo, William A. *The Christian Sacrament*. Rome: E.P.U.G, 1992.
- Vorgrimler, Herbert. *Sacramental Theology*. Trans. Linda M. Maloney, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992.
- Webster's New International Unabridged Dictionary*. Springfield, Mass: G. & C. Merriam, 1976.