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ministers of communion, musicians, and greeters can benefit from learning about how their liturgical roles serve as avenues and ways for divine grace to penetrate into the depths of the soul. Translating self psychological theories about ritual experience into accessible language, designed for those who wish to enrich their liturgical and spiritual life with psychological insight, is the next step.

Self psychology retrieves psychoanalysis for fruitful and challenging insights into religious ritual experience. For the dialogue between psychoanalysts and ritualists to continue, self psychologists must be willing to don ritual masks in many religious rites in order to see and hear the world empathically as the worshipers in different traditions do. The self psychologist must be willing to join the ritual dance, knowing that one's partners in the dance become at deep levels extensions of one's self, even the self of the psychologist, as the dance unfolds in celebratory story.

Martin F. Connell

Heresy and Heortology in the Early Church: Arianism and the Emergence of the Triduum

The *Triduum*, the three-day liturgy of Easter — from Holy Thursday evening through Easter Sunday — has been so common an experience of the Christian liturgical year that it is difficult to imagine a time when the Triduum was not. But for at least the first three centuries of Christian worship, this annual celebration of Easter was only one rite, a single grand annual assembly of confessors, and soon-to-be confessors, embracing the life of God incarnate in Jesus Christ and in the members of the community. The theology of this unitive rite took in all aspects of the redemption wrought in the human life of the Son of God, from his conception to his death and resurrection. The whole incarnate life of

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Jesus of Nazareth was celebrated and entwined in the one liturgy embracing the entire paschal mystery.

Though historians have for some time recognized the emergence of the Triduum in the fourth century as a *historical* phenomenon, the theological and christological contexts of this major liturgical shift of antiquity have never been directly addressed. What *theological* need, one might ask, prompted the emergence of the Triduum? What void did the paschal mystery fill in its newly extended three-day annual celebration that had been absent in the unitive paschal rite at the earliest stratum of Christian worship?

The influence of Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor (306–337), and his mother, Helena, who journeyed to Palestine in the early fourth century, on the emergence of the Triduum is indeed significant. The emperor's regard for the birthplace of the Christian faith, in this view, led to an interest in the Palestinian sites and chronology of the Savior's life and death. This interest initiated the fourth-century excavation of Jerusalem and other places in the Holy Land, and concomitant close readings of the gospels led to the mapping out of the life of Jesus of Nazareth in time and place.¹ Combing through the New Testament and marking the chronology of Jesus's last days — his Last Supper with the disciples, the betrayal, the agony at Gethsemane, the crucifixion — by the then emerging liturgies of Easter seems to have emerged from the fourth-century interest in the quotidian life of

¹One begins to sense the need in our historical and liturgical studies to highlight the distinction between the time of the writings of the various books of the New Testament and the time when these writings were drawn together into a *canon*, a body of texts which present the standard of Christian belief and Christian life.

Decades of historical-critical investigation of the Bible have impressed upon us on a popular level the chronological gap between the historical events described and the time of the writing about those events. Less secure in Christian thought, however, is the gap between the writing of the books and the aggregation of the texts into a canon which would be promulgated as normative for faith. Having grasped the first chronological gap between events and writing about the events, we can perhaps begin to consider the consequences for worship of the gap between the writing and the collection of the writings into what would be the Christian Bible. The latter gap, for some books of the canon, was in fact centuries long, and thus closer to the age of Constantine than to the time of their composition. See Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997).

the human Savior.² So if the Savior ate his last supper with his disciples on Thursday, was killed on Friday and rose on Sunday morning — as three of the four canonical gospels record the span — believers would have liturgies marking these events on the same three days of the Triduum.

Yet surely this liturgical and chronological shift from the unitive celebration to the Three Days must have been preceded, accompanied or succeeded by shifts in Christology and theology. The present investigation, then, will shed light on the relationship of worship and theology, and from it we will consider again the verity of the oft-quoted dictum of Prosper of Aquitaine, “the rule of praying establishes the rule for belief,” *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, and also consider its opposite, “the rule of believing establishes the rule of praying,” *legem orandi lex statuat credendi*, if you will. We will see in this arena that the changes in the liturgy were related temporally to changes in belief, but we are left to consider if their simultaneity was a coincidence or an intrinsic result of the relationship of worship and faith.

At the heart of this presentation will be the struggle between the orthodox (Catholic) party and the Arian party, adherents to the major heresy of the period and, according to some in the fourth century and even today, the greatest threat to the theological unanimity of Christianity since the Council of Nicea, which took place in 325 C.E.³ The site at the heart of this investigation is Northern Italy in the late fourth century, for here the struggles between the orthodox party and the Arian party were long-standing and

²The present distinction between the life of the Savior and the narratives of the New Testament was not operative in the fourth century.

³For the sake of simplicity I will use the phrase “orthodox party” throughout the essay to refer to the Catholic side of the debate, as has been fairly common in scholarship of late, and “Arians” and “Arianism” to refer to the opponents of Ambrose and their doctrine, respectively. The inquiring reader, however, might know that the opponents of Nicene consubstantiality in the second half of the fourth century are in contemporary scholarship called “Homoians” and their doctrine “Homoianism.” This name is derived from the Greek word for “similar,” and it recognizes that these Christians claimed that the Son was “similar to” or “like” the Father. For a compelling assessment of the Homoian Arians, see R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God (The Arian Controversy 318–381)* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1988); on the Northern Italian context of the theological strife, see pages 557–79, 667–823.

intense. The cardinal figure of the orthodox party is Ambrose, the eminent bishop of Milan from 374 to 397. His Arian opponents were many, according to his letters and sermons, but the two on whom his attention was supremely focused were Palladius of Ratiaria and Secundianus of Singidunum (Belgrade).

In the following essay we start with an exposition of the changes in the celebration of Easter in the first half of Ambrose's episcopate. Part I, therefore, will lay out the changing theology of Easter in Milan during the course of Ambrose's battles with his Arian opponents, from 374 to 386, as well as in the writings of some of Ambrose's episcopal peers: Chromatius of Aquileia, Gaudentius of Brescia, and Maximus of Turin.

Part II explores the main tenets of fourth-century Arian theology as it reacted in large measure to the orthodox theology of the Council of Nicea. The key term of this theology qualified the relationship between the Father and the Son, describing it by the Greek term *homoousios*, a non-scriptural neologism which described the Father and the Son as sharing the same (*homo-*) substance (*-ousios*). Part II will also highlight recent research which demonstrates the way in which Arianism has been presented for centuries, which will show how the mischaracterization has been an impediment to understanding the connections between changes of theology and changes in the liturgy.

Part III maps out the orthodox party's victorious theological indictment of the Arians by looking at two documents: first, Ambrose's *On the Faith*, written to counter Arian theology at the behest of the emperor Gratian in the autumn of 379; and second, the acts of the Council of Aquileia, convened by the emperor at the end of the summer of 381. This council — though presided over by Valerian, bishop of the church of Aquileia, the city in which it met — was led by Ambrose, who in the end condemned the two bishops suspected of Arianism.

Part IV examines the situation and struggles between the Arians and the orthodox party in Milan during Ambrose's episcopate in order to reveal the ferocity of the bishop's condemnation and its relevance for social and political life in the city. Having considered the theological background, we will see in Part V a connection between the liturgy and the theology of the time — demonstrating, in particular, the synchronicity of the appearance of the

Triduum and Ambrose's fiery condemnation of the Arians in Northern Italy.

Finally, and most importantly, in Part VI we will show how this struggle of over a millennium and a half ago still has an influence on the celebration of Easter, still the acme of the liturgical year, and on believers' connection with the incarnation of Christ.

CHANGES IN THE THEOLOGY AND CELEBRATION OF EASTER

During the same period in which the orthodox church of Milan was contesting Arian theology, the theology and liturgy of Easter shifted significantly. At this time in Northern Italy there were two different theologies of the annual feast — one with roots antedating the Arian-orthodox strife, the other post-dating it — and they were as opposed to one another as the orthodox and Arian understandings of the relationship of the Father and the Son.

Pascha-Passio. The first and more ancient conception of Easter draws from a typology of the paschal lamb as described in the Book of Exodus, chapter 12.⁴ This conception emphasized the *passion* of Christ, the new lamb, and explained its allegiance etymologically by claiming that the word *pascha* was drawn from the Greek infinitive *paschein*, meaning "to suffer," which is translated into Latin as *passio* and into English as "passion."⁵ Because of this theology, the Easter vigil centered on the death of Christ rather than the resurrection.

Two of Ambrose's episcopal contemporaries, Chromatius of Aquileia and Gaudentius of Brescia, explained their paschal theologies clearly in this first camp. Chromatius has three extant sermons from the paschal vigil,⁶ and from them one can see his

⁴See Christine Mohrmann, "Pascha, passio, transitus," *Ephemerides liturgicae* 66 (1952) 37–52; Bernard Botte, "Pascha," *L'orient syrien* 8 (1963) 213–26; and Vincenzo Loi, "La tipologia dell'agnello pasquale e l'attesa escatologica in età patristica," *Fons vivus* (Zurich and Rome: PAS 1971) 125–42.

⁵See Bernard Botte, "La question pasquale: Pâque du vendredi ou Pâque du dimanche?" *La Maison-dieu* 41 (1955) 84–95; Thomas Talley, "History and Eschatology in the Primitive Pascha," *Worship* 47 (1973) 212–21; Robert Taft, "Historicism Revisited," *Beyond East and West* (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press 1984) 15–30.

⁶Sermons 16, 17, and 17a in the body of his work. See *Chromatii Aquileiensis Opera*, ed. R. Étaix and J. Lemarié (Turnholt: Brepols 1974) 67–81. All of the

allegiance to the more ancient paschal theology: "For indeed the word *pascha* comes from the passion of Christ, and from this word did the feast receive its name. The apostle's words manifest this clearly when he says: *For Christ our pascha has been sacrificed*" (Sermon 17a.1).

In the same period we also find Gaudentius of Brescia's allegiance to this first conception with its focus on the paschal lamb of Exodus 12: "With the help of God, we begin to explain the meaning of the spiritual forces prefigured in the very history of the exodus where the celebration of Passover is narrated: . . . the meaning of the evening sacrifice of an unblemished, one-year-old male lamb" (Tractatus 2.8).

Pascha-Transitus. The second paschal conception was radically different from this, focusing on the resurrection and drawing its etymological interpretation of *pascha* from the Hebrew word *pesach*, which became *diabateria* in Greek, *transitus* in Latin, and finally "passage" in English. Rather than drawing from the image of the slaughtered lamb (Exodus 12) as had the first conception, this drew from the narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea, Exodus 13–14. This sea-crossing image was (and continues to be) compatibly juxtaposed to the passage of Christ from death to life and to the newly baptized's passage from vice to virtue, or from death to new life with their Lord.

In Northern Italy the second conception is most evident in bishop Maximus of Turin. Explicitly explaining the meaning of Easter to the Torines worshipers, Maximus preached: "In the resurrection of Christ, therefore, all members of his body surely rise with him. When he passes from the depths to the heights, he makes us pass from death to life. For in Latin the Hebrew word *pascha* means "passage" or "movement," because in this mystery we pass from worse to better. A good passage, therefore, moves us from sins to righteousness, from vices to virtue, from old age to infancy" (*Sermo* 54.1).

By the time of Maximus the new theology of the Triduum has been introduced without much trace of the centuries-old typology of the lamb. The old theological conception of Easter — a theo-

translations in this paper are done by the author, except for those in notes 29 and 30.

logically unitive vigil, focused on the death and the cross, and translating *pascha* as suffering — has been displaced by the second conception — three days long, climaxing in the resurrection, and translating *pascha* as passage.

Easter in Ambrose's Writings. In the sermons of Ambrose we discover *both* paschal theologies, one succeeding the other. In 377, near the beginning of his episcopate, we find in his *On Cain and Abel* a reflection on the meaning of Easter. The central image is the immolation of the lamb: "The *pascha* of the Lord is the passage from the passions to the exercise of virtue. And for this reason is it called the '*pascha* of the Lord': for in that symbol of the lamb, the reality of the Lord's suffering was announced and its grace is now celebrated" (1.31).

Yet here, too, we discover a nascent trace of the new paschal theology, with the use of the word "passage," *transitus*. Just three years after his election, Ambrose has begun to move the theology away from the *passion* of the Lord toward the *passage* of the Lord from death to life.

By the time the battle with the Arians has ended, the first paschal typology, that of the lamb, had disappeared; we find clear advocacy for the second typology — that of the crossing of the sea. And so, in Ambrose's *On the Sacraments*, of 391: "To speak of baptism for a while: What was remarkable in the Jewish people's passage (*transitus*) through the Red Sea? Even though the Jews passed through (*transierunt*), they all died in the desert. But the person who passes (*transit*) through this font, from the earthly to the heavenly — for there is a passage (*transitus*) here, thus the pascha, that is, "his passage" (*'transitus eius'*), the passage (*transitus*) from sin to life, from fault to grace, from defilement to sanctification. He who passes (*transit*) through this font does not die but rises" (1.12).

The repeated use of the word *transitus*, or its verb form, enables us to see that the new typology and theology have been introduced. The first Latin church leader to introduce this new meaning and new chronology to Latin Christianity, Ambrose employed heavy rhetorical skill to have it sink into the imaginations and traditions of the Milanese Catholic faithful. But let us now turn to the theological struggles in Milan before we return to these changes in the celebration of Easter.

FOURTH-CENTURY THEOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY

For centuries understandings of Arianism in the fourth century were wholly dependent upon characterizations of its doctrine by those who vanquished Arianism and condemned its adherents. The theological opponents of Arianism supported the orthodox doctrine of the Council of Nicea, which described the relationship between the Father and the Son as "consubstantial,"⁷ one in which they equally share the same substance.

As in most battles, whatever the arena of the contest, the story is usually related by the winners. What we know of Arian thought, therefore, was handed on by the orthodox party, the enthusiasts of Nicene consubstantiality, particularly Athanasius of Alexandria (in the Greek East) and Ambrose of Milan (in the Latin West).⁸ We have until recently known the Arians only as they were characterized by their enemies, the pro-Nicene bishops.

Such a retrospection of Arianism is problematic primarily because it measures the Arian doctrine only by how threatening it was to the orthodox, pro-Nicene bishops of the time. For this reason, therefore, Arianism has traditionally been seen as having been a threat primarily to the Nicene doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. A theology of God was the main issue for the opponents of the Arians, particularly regarding the equality of the Father and the Son and their sharing the same substance.⁹

Yet the Arian polemic was not primarily about a theology of God, not about the substance of God as such, but about a *soteriology*, about how humanity was and continued to be saved by the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Unlike the orthodox party's

⁷The doctrine of *homoousios* is from the Council of Nicea, which met in the East and therefore promulgated its decisions in Greek. The term *consubstantia* is the Latin translation of the Greek *homoousios*: *homo-* and *con-* are equivalent Greek and Latin prefixes meaning "same," while *-ousios* and *-substantia* are the equivalents for the word which is variously translated as "being," "substance," and "essence."

⁸On the relationship of theology and politics in the fourth century, see T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1993), and Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press 1993).

⁹See, for example, J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: Harper-Collins 1978) 223-31.

concentration on the link between the Father and the Son, the Arians were primarily advocating a clear link between the Son and humanity, between Jesus Christ the Savior and the rest who sought salvation in him and in the church. The Catholic bishops who examined and condemned the Arians pushed them into tight theological binds by forcing them to take sides on issues that were not at the heart of their concerns.¹⁰

Because it survived for centuries only in the characterizations of its enemies, Arianism has been known as the heresy which promulgated that, to use the slogans of its adversaries, "there was a time when the Son was not," that "the Son was a creature," and that "the Son is not equal to the Father." These slogans do not, in the end, attend to the issues that were dearest to the Arians. They summarize, rather, how the Arians threatened issues that were central to the theology of orthodox leaders.

This point of view has made it appear as if the main goal of the Arians was to threaten and destroy the central tenets of orthodox Christian faith. Twentieth-century scholars of the Arian tradition, however, have recovered corrupted texts and margin notes of the Arians which reveal them to have been Christians whose ultimate goal was identical to that of the orthodox party: to preserve the central tenets of the Christian faith.¹¹ Yet what these tenets were for the orthodox and Arian parties was very different.

Problems with Nicene Theology. After the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. the promulgation and interpretation of its creed was neither enthusiastic nor even until decades later.¹² In spite of the way in

¹⁰The revival of interest in fourth-century Arianism is due in large measure to close readings of the Arian cause by Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh. An appreciation of their contribution can be gained from the following works: "The Centrality of Soteriology in Early Arianism," *Anglican Theological Review* 59 (1977) 260-78; *Early Arianism — A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1981); R. C. Gregg (ed.), *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments* (Cambridge, Mass.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation 1985); Dennis E. Groh, "New Directions in Arian Research," *Anglican Theological Review* 68 (1986) 347-55; and Dennis E. Groh, "The Arian Controversy: How It Divided Early Christianity," *Bible Review* 10 (1994) 20-32.

¹¹See *Scolies Ariennes sur le Concile d'Aquilée, Sources Chrétiennes* 267, intro., trans., ed. Roger Gryson (Paris: Cerf 1980). Notes hereafter as *Scolies*.

¹²See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Part I: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1971) esp. 191-10.

which history has often described the universality and immediacy of the acceptance of this first ecumenical council, the novel tenet in the Nicene Creed of the Son as "one in being with the Father" was neither well received nor uniformly interpreted. Acknowledgment of this tenet did not actually manifest itself in Latin Christianity until decades later, in the 350s. Even Athanasius, seen in retrospect as the ultimate defender and promulgator of the Nicene doctrine of consubstantiality, showed no inclination to use the non-biblical term *homoousios* until twenty years after Nicea. The primary difficulty with the Nicene theology for the Arians was that it so identified the Father and the Son that it precluded the link between the Son and the rest of humanity.

AMBROSE'S THEOLOGICAL CASE AGAINST THE ARIANS
The two most revelatory remnants of Ambrose's theological case against his Arian nemeses are his theological treatise *On the Faith* and the transcript of the Council of Aquileia. Though the genres of the remnants are very different, the theological emphases of Ambrose are similar in content and furor.

There are two basic theological issues of the period which are relevant to making a connection between the theology of the paschal mystery in fourth-century Milan and the changes in the celebration of Easter during the same period. The first concerns the relationship of the Father and the Son, and the second is the Arian view of the Son as a creature with a beginning in time.

The Relationship of the Two Natures of the Son. In order to explain how the Son could be both consubstantial with the Father and the instrument of salvation for humanity, the church proposed the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, his humanity and his divinity, in one person. Yet in Ambrose's time the orthodox party was so overly eager to distinguish these two natures that the divine nature — which the orthodox claimed was immutable — could not be conceived to have been sullied by the changes of the incarnate Son's humanity: his emotions, his "growth in wisdom and understanding" (Luke 2:40), and, most important in relation to the paschal mystery of Easter, his suffering and death.

The Arians opposed this separation, knowing that it established too wide a chasm between the human and divine natures of the Son, which would effectively exclude all of humanity from salva-

tion, from redemption, indeed, from the very life of God incarnate in the world.¹³ The advent of the Son for human salvation, the Arians knew, would be negated by the separation of the natures of the Son as the orthodox party configured it.

The Arians recognized the centrality of the Son's humanity for human salvation; their concern echoed the Christology of Irenaeus two centuries earlier: "What was not assumed by the Savior is not redeemed," and "the glory of God is the human being fully alive." The philosophical division, which Ambrose and the orthodox party promulgated, solved some of the threats to orthodoxy, but it also threatened to splinter the one person of Jesus Christ of early Christian doctrine.

Ambrose stridently opposed the Arian concern over the salvation wrought in the humanity of the Son in *On the Faith*, begun in 379 at the emperor Gratian's request.¹⁴ In this work Ambrose stressed over and over the clear separation of the two natures: "A devout mind distinguishes between what is said about the flesh and what is said about God. An unholy mind attributes to the dishonor of God all that is said about the littleness of the flesh" (5.115). "The immortality of the Son's nature is one thing, while ours is another. Things perishable should not be compared to things divine" (3.19).

Outside of the immediate polemical context of fourth-century Milan, this is a problematic Christology, a kind of personal divi-

¹³In the Arian margin notes after the Council of Aquileia, we find Palladius' response to Ambrose on this very point: "It is written that *Christ died for our sins* (1 Cor 15:3). And you argue that this is said about the human nature alone. Yet when it was asked of you, as an objection, if you believed that the title of 'Christ' was a title for the human nature, after hesitating for a moment, you finally responded: 'It refers to both the human nature and the divine nature.' Then you were told: 'You must then believe that it was not only the human nature that suffered, but the divine and the human, both the Son of God and the Son of Man'; in other words, that the two natures participated in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory." (Gryson, *Scolies*, 340v.26-40)

¹⁴The relationship between Gratian and Ambrose has always been characterized as close and friendly. More recent scholarship, however, highlights that all of the evidence for this tight bond comes from Ambrose's deferential correspondence and from his own musings in theological treatises. In *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: U.C. Press 1994), Neil McLynn devotes nearly 80 pages to their relationship and argues there that the emperor steadfastly avoided taking partisan positions in religious disputes (80).

sion in the Son of God which would thereby separate human beings from their incarnated Savior and effectively cut them off from God. Seeking to correct this configuration, the Arians persisted in wedding the two natures. Yet Ambrose indicts the Arians, who, he argues, "like Jewish vintners, mix water with the wine, confounding the divine generation with the human, and ascribing to the majesty of God what is properly said only of the lowliness of the flesh" (3.65).

One of Ambrose's main contentions with the Arian theology is that it too closely related the humanity and divinity of Christ and effectively denied the divinity of Christ. Ambrose's theology seems to rest on an either/or proposition: Either the divinity of the Son is wholly united to the Father and thus equal to the Father, or the Son is not divine. The Arians, however, did not think of it as an all-or-nothing proposition.

In a margin note commenting on this very point, Ambrose's Arian opponent Palladius tells the Milanese prelate: "You must believe, therefore, that it was not only his flesh that suffered, but as both God and man the Son of God suffered on the cross as the Lord of glory."¹⁵

For the Arians, therefore, the Son could not be divided as the Christology of the orthodox party made him out to be. In order to be one with the life of God and one with humanity, the Son could not, they argued, be consubstantially equal to the Father. Such thought, however, was literally anathema to Ambrose and his orthodox colleagues. The more strongly the Arians held to their confession of wedding the two natures, the more strongly Ambrose emphasized the necessity of separating the human and divine natures in Christ.

The Son as Creature and with a Beginning in Time. Fearing that a concentration on the Son sharing the Father's substance would diminish the necessity of the Son's humanity in the paschal mystery, the Arians emphasized what the Son shared with humanity: that he was a creature and that he had a beginning in time.

If the Son indeed had a beginning in time, this meant, in the orthodox interpretation, that God the Father would have been dif-

¹⁵ Gryson, *Scolies*, 292: "Ergo crede non solum carnem esse passam, sed d(eu)m et hominem, et Filium D(e)i et Filium hominis," *id est utroque statu socio D(omi)n(u)m gloriae crucifixum, sicuti etiam ipsa appellatio Filii indicat passionem diuinam.*

ferent after the Son's creation than before.¹⁶ The key issue here is the doctrine of the immutability of the Father, which the orthodox party ardently confessed. The Council of Aquileia was convened by the orthodox party to dispel these theological notions to which it was opposed.

Because controversies in the church today rarely, if ever, touch on issues of Christology,¹⁷ we are perhaps unable to imagine how heated and contentious the above arguments became in the Northern Italian church and society. The theological nuances detailed above might lead one to think that the battles were only in the minds of the orthodox party and its opponents in Northern Italy, but, in reality, theological battles had serious political, social and ecclesial weight at this time. In this light one recalls the comment of an Eastern contemporary of Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa: "Even the baker does not cease from discussing this, for if you ask the price of bread he will tell you that the Father is greater and the Son is subject to him."¹⁸ (It is quite surprising, moreover, that bishop Gregory shopped for bread in the bakery of an Arian!)

The very election of Ambrose to the episcopate of Milan in 374 was part of the battle between the orthodox and the Arians.¹⁹ Unbaptized at the time of his election to the episcopate and, from his former job with the government, knowledgeable about law and settling disputes, Ambrose was chosen to unite the divided church.²⁰ His predecessor in Milan had been an Arian bishop, Auxentius, who ascended to the episcopate there in 355. Most

¹⁶ See *De fide* 1.36; 1.73; 1.85; 1.120.

¹⁷ More often today debates in the church are on moral and social issues: birth control, abortion, and inclusive and exclusive language in the liturgy. Bishops and teachers in the church today do not so often speak about theological or christological issues, from which the moral and social issues are drawn.

¹⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti*, PG 46:557; as cited by Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad 1992) 3.

¹⁹ On the influence of Ambrose's anti-Arianism in the larger political and ecclesial sphere, see Manlio Simonetti, "La politica antiariana di Ambrogio," *Ambrosius Episcopus I*, ed. Giuseppe Lazzati (Milan: Università Cattolica di Sacro Cuore 1976) 266-85.

²⁰ For a contemporary witness to the election of Ambrose, see Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.11 (PL 21:521). For a recent study, see Chapter 4, "Ambrose's Election and Early Years in Milan," of Daniel H. Williams, as above: 104-27.

accounts of Ambrose's election paint the scene as one of the triumph of pro-Nicene theology, but it is unlikely that the unbaptized Ambrose had considered the issues and opposed the Arians openly as early as 374. It is more likely that the new bishop grew into his role as the champion of orthodoxy as he began to understand the theological contentions in his midst.

After Ambrose's election in 374 the number of Arians in Northern Italy increased as northern barbarians descended from Germanic and Balkan provinces and much of their populations fled down the Italian peninsula. Many of those catechized in Arian theology found a home in Milan. Among the emigrants were the child emperor of the Balkan lands, Valentinian II (Gratian's son by his second wife); his entire court; and his mother, Justina, an intelligent Sicilian woman whom bishop Gaudentius of Brescia would call the "patroness of and associate with the faithless Arians" and the "queen Jezebel of our time."²¹ Regarding the situation in Milan, the emperor Gratian was torn between the orthodox party and the ever-increasing number of Arians in Northern Italy, among whom was his own son and his second wife, Justina. For this reason, then, did Gratian ask Ambrose for a theological treatise and convene the Council of Aquileia.

The Council of Aquileia. It is clear that from the start of the Council of Aquileia Ambrose sought to condemn Palladius and Secundianus based on the writings of Arius alone.²² The nuances of theology and Christology do not seem to have been grasped by Ambrose, and it appears that he tried to lump the two bishops together with Arius simply to avoid the complex theological issues that would inevitably arise if the bishops began to defend themselves.

²¹ See W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1984) 619. Gaudentius on the empress Justina in Praefatio 5: *Nostri namque temporis regina Iesabel, and Arrianae perfidae patrona simul ac socia* (CSEL 68: page 3).

²² An *apologia* written by one of the Arians in attendance at the Council, likely to have been Palladius himself, puts forth explicitly this question of Ambrose's theological dependence on the letter of Arius. Clearly Ambrose's refuter thought the theological and christological issues of the Council were not remnants of the past but relevant to the very moment of their meeting. The author of the refutation addresses Ambrose: "You have sent in advance . . . an unknown letter of Arius, who has been dead for a long time, . . . in order to make it impossible for you to be at a disadvantage in this debate." Gryson, *Scolies*, 337v.25-30, 45-50.

But the bishops dissociated themselves from Arius: "I have neither seen Arius nor know who he is," said Palladius; "I know neither who Arius was nor what he said," said Secundianus.²³ Failing to have them assent to the slogans of purported Arian theology, Ambrose had to delve into their theology, which, one discovers against the witness of Ambrose's hagiographers, was not his forte.²⁴

Palladius and Secundianus clearly expected and longed for a theological discussion based on sacred scripture. During the Council itself, they appealed again and again to the witness of scripture about the relationship of the Father and the Son, and about the Son as a creature. Over and over Ambrose thwarted their efforts to engage in such a discussion. Even in his margin notes, Palladius asks Ambrose for another meeting, this time for a reasoned discussion based on the authority of sacred scripture in the presence of the senate of the city, that is, a neutral body of judges which would include pagans and Jews.²⁵

The eventual condemnation of the bishops happened more as a result of Ambrose's impatience with the theological discussion than because he elicits erroneous doctrines from their lips. Their refusal to participate according to Ambrose's rules was as disastrous as if they had pronounced erroneous theology. Perhaps frustrated by Ambrose's coercive tactics, the two bishops tried to leave, but they were "physically restrained and were intimidated with expressions of open hostility."²⁶

From our vantage point many centuries after the struggle, we might imagine that the condemnations of the Council of Aquileia would have been the end of the battle — *Aquileia locuta causa finita*. But, even after the Council, the Arian cause continued to gain favor, both among believers and with the imperial powers. The number of Christians fleeing the Balkans continued to

²³ *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis* 14: *Arium nec vidi, nec scio quis sit* (Palladius); *Gesta* 66: *Quis fuerit Arius, ignoro: quid dixerit nescio* (Secundianus).

²⁴ Studies of Ambrose's theology are often also very positive; see, for example, Raniero Cantalamessa, "Sant'Ambrogio di fronte ai grandi dibattiti teologici del suo secolo," *Ambrosius Episcopus* I, ed. Giuseppe Lazzotti (Milan: Università Cattolica di Sacro Cuore 1976) 483–539.

²⁵ See Gryson, *Scolies*, 348r.40 — 348v.36

²⁶ See Gryson, *Scolies*, 339r.5–38.

increase as the Germanic tribes to the north further conquered territories and drove out the natives.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND LITURGICAL ECHOES
OF THE THEOLOGICAL DEBATE

Between the Council (381) and Easter of 386 Gratian had died and a new emperor, more inclined toward religious diversity, sought to legislate tolerance of various faiths. The new emperor, Valentinian, was willing to provide the Arians with a basilica for their own Easter liturgies.

The Easter Crisis of 386. We know — from a letter that Ambrose wrote to his sister, Marcellina, and later from corroborating witnesses — that two days before Palm Sunday in 386, a delegation from the emperor approached Ambrose asking that one of Milan's basilicas be handed over to the Arian worshipers.²⁷ Ambrose refused to give over the church: "A temple of God cannot be handed over by a priest," he claimed. He invited support from his own congregation, which responded in song against the request of the emperor's contingent.

Two days later, however, further word arrived that a contingent of Arian supporters had indeed arrived at the basilica to decorate the worship space with imperial hangings in anticipation of a visit of the emperor to the basilica occupied by the Arians. A group from Ambrose's congregation headed out to forestall the Arian initiative, but, encountering an Arian priest along their route, they seized him. Ambrose immediately dispatched some deacons and priests to rescue the priest, Castulus by name. Continuing an already interrupted liturgy, Ambrose "wept bitter tears" and prayed that if any blood be spilled, it be only his own.

The government, wanting to quell the stir, fined Castulus' attackers two hundred pounds of gold and imprisoned a few of the Catholics until delivery of the recompense. Though the fine was paid and the Catholic prisoners released, another delegation from the government approached Ambrose on Tuesday of Holy Week and again demanded the surrender of the basilica. Ambrose refused. The government responded by dispatching military troops to the basilica.

²⁷ For a detailed and accessible presentation of the basilica conflict, see Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*, esp. 174–80.

Likening his powerlessness, as he assessed it, to the trials of Job (which had been the reading of the day), Ambrose remonstrated that, as Job's wife had tried by temptation to break his conviction in the providence of God, so was the empress (and Arian sympathizer) Justina trying to weaken his own commitment and faith.²⁸ The impasse between Ambrose and the occupying soldiers was sustained for a few days, during which time the bishop taught the assembly hymns dispelling Arian theology.²⁹ Finally, on Holy Thursday the emperor ordered that the troops abandon their blockade of the basilica and that the government repay the fine earlier given for the release of Ambrose's supporters from prison.

Ambrose's stand-off in the battle over the basilica was a close call. In the end he and his supporters won back the basilica from the Arians and their military might, but the victory was surely not a *fait accompli* when the struggle began. Far more than Ambrose's condemnations at the Council of Aquileia five years earlier, the basilica crisis gained a foothold for the orthodox party which would perdure.

Trophies of Theological Victory: The Relics of Gervasius and Protasius. The Catholic victory in Milan over the Arian party was confirmed, religiously and politically, by Ambrose's discovery of the bones of saints Gervasius and Protasius. As he narrates in

²⁸ See Samuel Edward Torvend, "The typology of the basilica conflict between Ambrose of Milan and the imperial court: A study in the use of biblical *exempla* in Ambrosian sermons preached between 385-386," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University 1990.

²⁹ It is quite interesting to discover that Augustine and his mother, Monica, were living in Milan at this time, perhaps warming Augustine up for the strategies he would later use against the heretics in North Africa, his own episcopal sphere. In his *Confessions* (9.7) Augustine documents for us that his mother was a leader in Ambrose's assembly during this strife with the Arians. Addressing God, Augustine wrote that "[i]n those days your faithful people used to keep watch in the church, ready to die with their bishop, your servant [Ambrose]. My mother, your handmaid, was there with them, taking a leading part in that anxious time of vigilance and living a life of constant prayer. Although I was not yet fired by the warmth of your Spirit, these were stirring times for me as well, for the city was in a state of alarm and excitement. It was then that the practice of singing hymns and psalms was introduced, in keeping with the usage of the Eastern churches, to revive the flagging spirits of the people during their long and cheerless watch"; as in Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin Books 1961) 191.

another letter to his sister, Ambrose, seeing signs, took a group out, one of whom “was seized and thrown prostrate at the holy place of burial. We found two men of marvellous stature, such as those of ancient days. All the bones were perfect, and there was much blood” (Letter 22.1).

The bones of Gervasius and Protasius were clearly appropriated as trophies awarded to Ambrose and the Catholic church of Milan for their victory over the Arian enemies.³⁰

Arianism and Other Later Heresies. The operative realization from the historical recounting is that the Triduum emerged in Milan in the context of this anti-Arian battle in Northern Italy. The Christology of the bishop who introduced the Triduum separated the two natures of Christ so that humanity and divinity be distinct. It is important to recognize that in 379 Ambrose confesses in a letter to a fellow bishop that he does little else but attend to contentions with the Arians.³¹ Yet between the time of that letter and the Easter basilica crisis of 386, the furor of the contentions with the Arians surely increased. Because of the simultaneity of these spans, it is difficult to see how such significant changes in the liturgies of Easter would have emerged unless they were themselves part of his program to combat the Arian threat.

³⁰This invention is similarly confirmed in the *Confessions* of Augustine (9.7). Again addressing God, Augustine wrote that “you revealed to your bishop Ambrose in a vision the place where the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius were hidden. All these years you had preserved them incorrupt in your secret treasury, so that when the time came you could bring them to light to thwart the fury of a woman [Justina] — a mere woman, but one who ruled an empire. For after the bodies had been discovered and dug up, they were carried to Ambrose’s basilica with the honour that was due to them. On the way several persons who were tormented by evil spirits were cured, for even the devils acknowledged the holy relics. But this was not all. There was also a man who had been blind for many years, a well-known figure in the city. He asked why the crowd was running wild with joy, and when they told him the reason, he leaped to his feet and begged his guide to lead him where the bodies lay. When he reached the place, he asked to be allowed to touch the bier with his handkerchief, for it was the bier of your saints, *whose death is dear in your sight*. No sooner had he done this and put the handkerchief to his eyes than his sight was restored. The news spread”; as in previous note: 191–92.

³¹See Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995) 152.

In the history of doctrine one can find correctives to the tendency of Ambrose's Christology when, a century after the Milanese struggle, Nestorianism and Monophysitism prompt the orthodox party to consider alternatives to its theological reaction to the Arian challenges. Reacting to the Arian unity of the Son's two natures, Ambrose and his cohorts advocated a clear separation of the humanity and divinity of the Son. Yet in Nestorianism, the church would find those who, on the maternity of Mary, teach that there must be not two natures in the one person of the Son, but two persons — one human, one divine.

In Monophysitism was a christological extremity in Ambrose's direction: The divinity of the Son so overshadowed the humanity that the humanity disappeared. The Son, according to the Monophysites, is of one (*mono-*) nature (*physis*) alone, an exclusively divine nature. Monophysitism, in a way, was a natural theological consequence of the anti-Arian fervor. Ambrose's teaching never erased the Son's humanity, but his suffering was removed from the paschal mystery because of the bishop's unwillingness to consider that suffering could have had any part in the life of God in Christ. Ambrose accorded Christ's divinity the primary place; the Monophysites accorded it the only place.

In the Arians the church found opponents who too closely wedded the humanity and the divinity of the Son. A century later, however, the church would find in the Nestorians those who so widely separated the natures that they taught that there were two persons in the Son. Orthodox Christology since the fifth century has maintained a position between these extremes, *virtus in medio stat*.

Ambrose's Christology and the Emergence of the Triduum. The Nestorian and Monophysite heresies showed the consequences of too widely separating the humanity and divinity of Christ and of too highly appreciating the divinity over the humanity of Christ. The Nestorian separation of Christ's humanity and divinity is at the christological pole opposite to the Arians, who were indicted by Ambrose for not separating the humanity and divinity of Christ. Orthodox Christology after the fifth century would stay between these two extremes, but the corrective against separation was not operative in the fourth-century Milanese church of Ambrose, and so the Christology from which the Triduum emerged was one in

which the natures of Christ were widely separated. Moving the suffering and death of Christ temporally away from the paschal vigil enabled Ambrose to dissociate from the Father any of the human aspects of the life of Jesus. Ambrose's Christology emphasizes again and again that it is the divine nature of Christ alone which was consubstantial with the Father. If such a Christology was incarnated into the Easter liturgy, as it seems to have been, it too would have distanced humanity from the life of God.

Ambrose could advocate the wide separation of the humanity and divinity of Christ with impunity because Arianism was the only enemy needing a christological corrective, and he vigorously played devil's advocate against the Arians. But with these christological exigencies of fourth-century Milan in mind, we can begin to consider the consequences of the relationship of the emergence of the Triduum, with its second paschal conception, to the Arian crisis.

In the readings of the Easter vigil, in paschal Christology, and in popular imagination the theology of *passage* from death to resurrection, introduced by Ambrose to the Latin West sixteen centuries ago, tended (and tends) to be seen as a progress from an ugly past of suffering to a welcome future of glory, from a regretted suffering of the Savior to his triumph at the resurrection. In this theology the passion is not united with the resurrection, but the resurrection supersedes the passion. Such a paschal theology would betray the unity of the person of Christ which is at the heart of the paschal mystery.

PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

Recognizing that the Triduum emerged in Northern Italy, among other reasons, as a tool of anti-Arianism in the fourth century leads us to examine celebrations of Easter a millennium and a half later, asking whether any traces of the anti-Arian fervor adversely influence the liturgies or the theologies of Easter today.

The Humanity and Divinity of Christ, of the Paschal Mystery. Introducing the liturgy of Good Friday to the church of Milan, Ambrose invented a new liturgical time in which could be narrated the human, mutable elements of the paschal mystery — the Son's emotions, his suffering, and his death, indeed, all aspects we share with him — placing them in a liturgy apart from what had

been the key liturgical celebration of the first three centuries of Christianity. As his *On the Faith* demonstrates, Ambrose clearly thought that the humanity of the Son sullied and weighed down his divinity, and it would, by association, do the same to the Father with whom the Son's divinity was "of one being." Introducing a liturgy on the Friday before Easter marking the Son's death, Ambrose could relegate all of the readings and prayers of the Son's suffering and death to a celebration that was no longer so cardinal to the crowning, triumphal paschal moment, the end-point of the *transitus*, the passage.

With the passion narrative excised from it, the new Easter celebration was about the resurrection, about the arrival to new life. The liturgy no longer raised questions about the Father's participation in the passion of his Son, for only the humanity of the Son — which, according to Ambrose, had nothing to do with the Father — would suffer and die. The divinity was left unscathed.

The new Easter liturgy could support, indeed celebrate, the Nicene doctrine of the equal and consubstantial relationship of the Father and the divine nature of the Son, a nature unsullied by his humanity and its expiration on the cross. But in retrospect we can consider whether this anti-Arian solution has been fruitful since the elimination of the Arian crisis of the early church.

While there are surely other reasons for the decline in the Lenten initiation process leading up to baptisms at Easter, we can now ask whether the excision of the humanity of the Savior could have been a contributing theological factor. For, once the humanity of the Savior seemed no longer a part of the paschal mystery, would not the humanity of humanity also have become less important?

RCIA: A Return of Human Nature to the Easter Vigil. The implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in the Roman Catholic church — and its counterparts in other Christian churches — is a sign of a recognition of the loss to the church when paschal baptisms were no longer celebrated. In a sense the baptisms, coupled with the celebration of the life of Christ, had been the core of the rite, from which the theology and the Christology of the feast emerged in the first four centuries of the church. Later the theology of Easter remained, even as the *experience* of Easter, its initiatory rites, virtually disappeared.

The initiations of the Easter vigil restore to theology and Christology the human nature of Christ which was sidelined by the contentious theology occasioned by the Arian crisis. The link between the human nature of Christ and the human nature of humanity is thereby restored. The Liturgy of the Word of the Easter Vigil moves the community, in remembrance of past events, through the high points of the narratives of the Hebrew Bible, through the life of Jesus of Nazareth, humanity *and* divinity, in the New Testament. The forward temporal movement of the readings anticipates the progress of the life of God in the world and in the church today, leading the community to be prepared for the life of God in the confession of faith and initiation of the elect to full membership in the church. The narratives of the past lead up to the present moment and thereby anticipate the presence of God with humanity in the future.

Legem orandi lex statuat credendi. Romantic views of the early church tend to see the liturgy as the source of theology, often capitalizing on the fifth-century maxim of Prosper of Aquitaine *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, "the rule of praying establishes the rule for believing." At various times this is surely an accurate accounting of the evolution. But the foregoing inquiry would cast doubt on such naiveté about the early church.

In the context of late fourth-century Milan, the theological notion was established first and succeeded by a substantial liturgical change to support it; thus *legem orandi lex statuat credendi*, "the rule of believing establishes the rule of praying." For better or worse, Ambrose's teaching in *On the Faith* that the human nature and divine nature of the Son had no overlap was concretized in the liturgy by relegating the mutable nature of the Son to Good Friday and keeping the immutable divine nature in one being, consubstantial, with the Father.

In the extant writings of the Northern Italian bishops of the fourth and fifth centuries, one finds indications that their liturgies were quite different from one another. Many feasts of the then nascent liturgical year — Christmas, Epiphany, the Forty Days of Lent, the Fifty Days of Easter — were celebrated and narrated quite differently in the Verona of Zeno, the Aquileia of Chromatius, the Milan of Ambrose, the Turin of Maximus, and the Ravenna of Peter Chrysologus. But just as often the theologies

and Christologies of these bishops were similarly Nicene and anti-Arian. The assumption that liturgies and theologies are parallel cannot be supported by the extant evidence, even in as circumscribed an arena of the early church as Northern Italy in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Preaching the Triduum. Finally, let us attend to two key theological and liturgical notions which will ameliorate any vestige of the Arian-orthodox contention in the Triduum: 1) the Three Days are one liturgical celebration; and 2) effective catechesis at Easter keeps the humanity and divinity of the Son wedded to one another.

Three Days, One Liturgy. The Roman Catholic instruction on *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar* makes it clear that the celebration of Easter is the span of the Three Days: "The Easter Triduum of the passion and resurrection of Christ is the culmination of the entire liturgical year" (18).

The Triduum is a whole celebration: The Three Days begin with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and end with the celebration of Vespers on the evening of Easter Sunday. The span of the one rite over three days is emphasized by the soft endings and beginnings of the rites themselves: "This conclusion [of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper] is noteworthy. Blessings and dismissals normally conclude our liturgies. But here the presumption is that the assembly continues — and on [Good] Friday there will be no call to worship of any kind, and again no dismissal. . . . [T]he rubrics are showing us the wholeness of these days."³²

The indefinite endings and beginnings of the liturgies of the Triduum suggest that rather than being discrete liturgical rites, these comprise one rite extended over three days. Liturgy planners can strengthen the unity of the Triduum in parishes if the music and environment were similarly unified. Such a liturgical manifestation of unity would emphasize a full Christology, for the humanity and the divinity of the Son would be wedded in the one three-day liturgy. The liturgy would not find the Son's human suffering and death to be impediments to his glorification or to Christian salvation; they would instead be instruments of faith, one in the paschal mystery with the resurrection.

³² Gabe Huck, *The Three Days* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1992) 27.

Preaching and Catechesis. Preaching during the Triduum, then, would not suggest that the suffering of the Son was all loss. The proclamation of the passion of the Gospel of John works well within the Triduum because of its high Christology, with the exaltation of Christ in the passion itself. The preaching should similarly catechize about suffering in Christian life as part of the life of Christ and the life of the church.

The suffering and glorified Christ, the suffering and glorified assembly are one and the same. The death of Jesus was the sacrifice that was and is fully one with the glory of the resurrection, his and ours. Neither in the life of Jesus of Nazareth nor in the life of the baptized can passion and resurrection, suffering and triumph be so neatly dissected from one another, in theology or in experience.

The *Exsultet* opening the vigil makes this unity clear:

This is the night
when Jesus Christ, having broken the chains of death,
rose victorious from hell . . .
O night most truly blessed,
on which heaven is wedded to earth,
and divinity becomes one with humanity!³³

In preaching the humanity and divinity of Christ cannot be taught as if they were mutually exclusive natures, nor temporally sequential manifestations in the one person. Preachers must over and over present the two natures of Christ, which were wedded in the one person, Jesus of Nazareth, as they, since the death of Christ and by means of the sacraments of initiation celebrated at Easter, are wedded in the local church born at the font and reborn at the table: the body of Christ as the sacrament of the presence of God in the world.

³³ *Haec nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit. O vere beata nox, in qua terrenis caelestia, humanis divina iunguntur!* Latin text from the *Missale Romanum, Editio typica* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1970) 270-73.



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