

FOCUSING OUR EYES ON THE SACRAMENTS: AN INTERACTION WITH DAVID POWER

MARIANNE SERVAAS

An Epistemological Twist

At the heart of this article lies the conviction that an epistemological twist has occurred in the history of Christian thinking that created a warped dualism in relationship to faith. We have come to accept, and even encourage, reason to be the partner of faith, or, more often, as the ultimate judge of faith. The result has tended to be what John Coulson has pointed so clearly towards in his book *Religion and Imagination: In Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. Coulson asserts that the order in which we come to accept beliefs is crucial for the strength and solidity of faith. If we start with a rational ‘defence’ of beliefs, or search for “the wrong kind of proof – that of simple and clear demonstration” – we will end up fruitlessly searching for God or postpone true commitment and engagement with life. Referring to the character of Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, Coulson says: “We shall first require a satisfactory theory of life before giving ourselves to life, by requiring objects of faith to be rationally verified before they may be affirmed.”ⁱ In other words, first insisting on explanation leads to indecision and fatigue, not to trust, life and joy.

By focusing mainly on the question of the analogy of being, David Power indicates that he is profoundly influenced by this twist in the understanding of knowledge. His reflections on the sacraments start with the conceptual. Whereas this does lead to some stimulating theoretical thought, is it enough to so affect our faith that we grow in active love of God, in heart, mind and soul and in true commitment to our neighbour? Or have we become so ‘reasonable’ that we can no longer experience the concrete workings of grace through the sacraments?

In this article we argue that for faith to be seen clearly and to affect us in reality, it cannot have reason as its one-and-only lord and master. The ‘other’ of reason, we suggest, is not faith, but *affection*. To use a metaphor given to us in the mystical tradition: love and reason are the two eyes needed to see faith clearly.ⁱⁱ It is in the interaction between these two that we are most likely to be pushed into the type of reality needed for faith – the kind of faith that leads to action, on the practical, spiritual and intellectual level. As the twelfth century mystic William of St. Thierry wrote: “Reason has the greater sobriety, love the greater happiness. Nevertheless, as I have said, when they help one another – when reason teaches love and love enlightens reason, and reason emerges into the *affectus* of love and love lets itself be confined within the limits of reason – then they can do great things.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Using the term ‘love’, however, has its limitations. It tends to connote sentimentality or subjective feelings. It is also frequently understood as embracing only those aspects of life that are good and positive. That is why a choice has been made to replace the word ‘love’ with ‘affection’.

Affection in the sense of that which ‘affects’ us, both positively and negatively, in our emotions, body and even, as this article endeavours to make clear, intellect.

This essence of this article, then, lies in the search for a restoration of balance in the question of the relationship between faith and reason by exploring, first, how affection can be a source of knowledge and, second, how this approach to knowledge relates to the sacraments. We do this in interaction with the fundamental pre-suppositions of David Power in his book *Sacrament, the Language of God’s Giving*.^{iv}

The Demise of Onto-theology

David Power’s approach to the sacraments is based on a critique of what has become known as onto-theology. Power seeks to undo onto-theology by creating a thought pattern based on the concept of gift and icon. In his response to Power, David Kirchhoffer has suggested that Power does not fully succeed.^v The suggestion of gift cannot be separated from the notion of a Giver. As a result, and before we know it, we are back at an equation of God with that of the highest cause. Over against the concept of the gift, Kirchhoffer places that of promise, basically arguing that this gives room for the possibility of faith in the existence of God, and his acting through the sacraments, within the realities of a suffering world.

In the argumentation of both Power and Kirchhoffer, the concept, dangers and realities of onto-theology are taken for granted. But what exactly *is* onto-theology? Can we so easily assume the consensus on which Power and Kirchhoffer appear to rely?

“Onto-theology,” writes John Betz, “ – that magical formula – is now considered a sufficient summary of, and cause to dismiss, two millennia of thought.”^{vi} For Betz, the matter is clear. Under the mesmerising spell of Heidegger and Barth, careful thought has been replaced by the power of rhetoric. The beauty of the analogy of being, as well as the importance of metaphysics for the Christian faith has all but been destroyed by a careless application of the term ‘onto-theology.’ Modern as well as post-modern theologians have rooted their search for a non-metaphysical theology in “an aesthetic prejudice for the sublime *against* the beautiful.”^{vii} As a result, post-modern thought, Betz argues, has lost all sense of proportion: the proportion between the infinite and the finite, the indeterminate and the determinate, necessity and freedom.^{viii} What Betz here indicates is that the over-emphasis on the infinite and indeterminate in post-modern theology does not hold to the classical, particularly catholic, tradition to think reality in carefully balanced polar tension.

Theology has the task to restore this sense of proportion “between the similar and the dissimilar, between what we comprehend and what we cannot - a proportion that witnesses ultimately to the proportion of revelation: between what John meant by the tangible clarity of the Word made flesh (John 1:1) and what Paul meant by the ‘inscrutable depths of God.’ (Rom. 11:33).” For Betz there is no problem in continuing to speak of God in terms of an analogy of being. On the contrary, there is

rich theological understanding in the analogy of being. What we need to rediscover and maintain is simply the right balance between immanence and transcendence.

It is precisely here, in the area of balance, that I would suggest we find tension in the work of Power. Power seeks to listen to post-modern critique in his reflection on the sacraments, and appears to take the suggested hermeneutics of suspicion seriously and ‘for granted’. On the other hand, his *habitus* to think from a traditional Christian theological understanding of God prevents him from breaking more radically with the analogy of being. Hence he is comfortable with the concept of gift, even though it hints at the presence of a Giver.^{ix} The friction noticeable in the work of Power leads us back to the basic issue of whether it is at all possible for Christian thought to come away from the analogy of being. If we follow Betz, the question becomes whether the strong resistance in contemporary philosophy and theology towards the analogy of being can actually be justified from a Christian theological point of view.

Whatever the answer may be, the most serious problem in terms of what we have named onto-theology seems to lie in the arrogance of human reason that, divorced from affection, has forgotten the proportion Betz speaks of. Put differently, modernity, with which onto-theology has become so strongly associated, has over-trained the eye of reason and so lost clear focus on faith. Reason, especially in being accompanied by a process of reduction to the purely abstract and rational, has become derailed. The suggestion in this article is that this derailment is in fact reflected in the intuitive, overwhelmingly negative response to what we now so glibly call onto-theology. Post-modern theology becomes, then, a reaction against reductionist rationality. Merold Westphal put it this way. “Theology only becomes onto-theology when philosophers or theologians sell their soul to philosophy’s project of rendering the whole of reality intelligible to human understanding by using God to do so.” In other words, the Christian faith becomes a “triumphant totality system” instead of “authentic Christian living.” A system that has abstracted “the cognitive dimension of the religious life and gives it essential primacy.” Onto-theology is a display of arrogance that “consists of the pride that refuses to accept the limits of human knowledge.”^x One could say that it is one of the many ways in which humanity has sought to tame God: the place where we commit idolatry.

If onto-theology is defined as an idolatrous practice of worshipping reason, theology has the responsibility to find ways to overcome it. Traditionally, it has attempted to do this, with more or less success, through an engagement with philosophy. Yet, this is limited for philosophy as a discipline consistently focuses on the conceptual. It is, in a sense, disembodied. That is its right and duty, but equally its limitation. In this theology is at an advantage for it has the luxury, possibility, and tradition, also to develop the neglected eye of affection and so bring faith into more clear sight. The sacraments are an excellent locus to do so.

The Intelligence of Feeling

Just as the two eyes of our bodies are interdependent, affection and reason are profoundly related. They are both rooted in knowledge, but have a different starting point. Reason is focused on the articulation, clarification and critique of concepts. Affection begins with the concrete, the bodily. This is not to say that affection is ‘unreasonable’ – but it is to insist that it has its own epistemology, its own way of ‘knowing’. Where reason articulates, affection moves. Affection tends to push us into action, reason tends to slow us down. Affective knowledge is actually *prior to* reason. At the same time, it is not complete until it has passed through the intellect into articulation.

To illustrate more clearly what is meant by this affective knowing, we will borrow a concept from the area of literary critique. Glenn Arbery in his book *Why Literature Matters: Permanence and the Politics of Reputation*,^{xi} speaks of the ‘intelligence of feeling’. This refers to the experience of being grasped emotionally or intuitively by what in literary critique is called ‘a whole’. We are ‘wholly’ affected, for example, by a ‘whole’ piece of art or literature, in our body, our emotions and our intellect. This state of affection moves from a feeling of being held or touched by something exterior to us, through a bodily response (an inward sensing), towards articulation. Once lifted to the level of the intellect and articulated, the emotion becomes a source “through which reality is grasped.”^{xii} Affection, in other words, becomes knowledge when it passes through the body, is married to the intellect and gives birth, through articulation, to reality. Affective knowledge can therefore never be separated from the concrete.^{xiii} Yet, for it to become real, and therefore once again concrete, it needs to be made explicit through the intellect.

The sacraments are, we would suggest, both expressions of, and opportunities for, this other way of knowing and for a beautiful interaction between reason and affection.

Sacramental celebration rose out of the experience by a people of their God. It is in this sense that Power links his notion of the sacraments with the concept of an *economy* in sacramental giving. An exchange happens ‘between the divine and the human that originates in the Word made flesh and is celebrated in the sacrament, to the benefit of humanity.’^{xiv} Put differently, without the self-giving of God, the Gift, there can be no sacramental celebration. The origins of this exchange are, therefore, rooted in the Christian understanding of God as self-giving Creator.

Power cautions us in his use of the term ‘gift’ for what seem to be two general reasons grounded in a similar orientation of post-modern suspicion. The first is conceptual, or philosophical, and is epitomized by the deconstructionist approach of Derrida. Post-modern thinkers have indicated that we cannot assume that gift-giving is simply gratuitous. They also stress the importance of keeping distance between giver and receiver, linking this to the importance of avoiding the temptation to ‘objectify the other person.’^{xv}

The second ground for Power’s prudence lies in the actual life experience of people who have found sacramental celebration to be ineffective or, worse, positively oppressive instead of freeing.

Here, Power refers, for example, to the contribution of feminists like Cixous, who feels that gift-giving needs to be freed from the ‘male’ problem of turning gifts into ‘barter and loading them with expectations in a peculiarly male way.’^{xvi}

Post-modern deconstructionists and feminists fundamentally seek to question the possibility of a self-giving God. Both, however, seek answers on the level of the conceptual.

Is there a way of approaching the sacraments as gift that can deal with these possible objections, and that does not begin with concept?

Affection, the Iconic and the Promise

One answer lies, we would suggest, in training the eye of affection towards an iconic *and* promissory (or eschatological) approach first to the whole of life, and from this towards sacramental celebration. This begins with a fundamental ‘yes’ saying to the gift that life is in all its concreteness and limitations. It implies a commitment to the task of living life to the full, including suffering and misery. It involves a free choice to accept all of creation as revealing meaning to us in and through the particular lives that we live. From that choice we open ourselves towards the possibility of experiencing life as a gift that, indeed, may very well come from a Giver.

Theologically, there is no problem. The Christian doctrine of creation and incarnation strongly emphasise not only the self-giving of God, but also that meaning can be found in the very limitations of the concrete human life. The proportion John Betz spoke of is immediately with us. On the one hand is God, infinite and free, on the other we have ourselves, finite and dependent. The connection between the two is indeed one of proportion – but within that proportion, meaning is found.

In creation God freely gave “shape to his image,” Paul Mommaers writes, so much so that human beings “appear as the actual and perceptible representations of the Unseen, in the pregnant sense of the divine Being essentially present in the human.”^{xvii} This does not mean that humanity and divinity coincide, as Power also indicates by speaking of the impossibility of fusion between the Giver (God) and the receiver (humanity). No, there “is an indelible difference between the Artist and his work, a distance that remains forever.” However, “this transcendence of the LORD does not alter his special immanence in the human, so much so that ‘if God is anthropomorphic, man is theomorphic’.”^{xviii} Humanity is ontologically related to God. In other words, we were made, in the Christian understanding, for relationship with him in our very finiteness – and here lies the meaning of creation. The doctrine of incarnation, writes John Thiel, “consummates the doctrine of creation in the belief that creaturely reality is so good and redeemable that the divine nature could embrace it in the humanity of the Savior, and in the saving participation of that humanity in the resurrection of Jesus.”^{xix} Sacramental celebration always affirms both these doctrines: that creation is good and incarnation real.

Yet, in these theological reflections we must be careful. By stressing the doctrine of creation and incarnation as our starting point, we are on the level of concept. We are not answering

deconstructionism nor do we provide a valuable partner to a hermeneutic of suspicion that prevents it from tipping into unbelief. We do not ask the question where these convictions and doctrines come from. Doctrine focuses on *what* we believe, not on the *why* or *how*. It is precisely the latter that the intelligence of feeling helps bring into clarity and that the eye of affection keeps in focus.

To be able to listen to this other way of knowing, we need to train the eye of affection by covering, at least for a short while, the eye of reason and allowing ourselves to be taken up into the ‘whole’, but a whole that is rooted in the concrete, not the conceptual. It has everything to do with an impression made on us, indeed, *into* our very bodies and senses.

Christian faith is in essence deeply concrete for the simple reason that it is rooted in the experience by and in the Church of Jesus Christ. This can in its turn never be separated from the sacraments. All sacraments are directly related to the imprint He made, and continues to make, on his followers. The Church lives by the concrete rhythm and pattern of His life, death and resurrection. When we participate in the sacraments, we always share in the drama of the life of Christ.

William Lynch spoke of prayer (and liturgical time in general) as not being something that happens in rest, but in motion. “True reality,” he claims, “is contained within the dramatic temporal life of the body.” Leading the Christian life of prayer and sacramental celebration is therefore “a coursing, with all the powers of the mind and will and body, through the mysteries – that is the stages – of the life of Christ. It is no idle phrase that the Church repeats when she says again and again: *per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso*, through Him and with Him and in Him.”^{xx}

The sacraments train us into focusing our minds, wills and bodies onto the concrete and the real because they are directly related to the person of Christ who more than anybody else embraced the particular reality of earthly life. He never sought to escape from his creatureliness. In this way Christ exemplified the knowledge that comes from descending into the real and ascending into “insights that would have been inaccessible to pure concepts.”^{xxi} It is Christ who teaches us that “all that exists is God’s gift to man, to make man’s life communion with God. It is divine love, made food, made life for man. God blesses everything he creates.”^{xxii} He does this not through concepts, but through the concreteness of time and matter.

Participation in the sacraments reminds us of who we truly are: limited creatures before God, taken up into the drama of the story of Christ. This brings us to ever deepening and *relational* knowledge – a knowledge that flows, because of its concreteness and participatory nature, *from* Christ and is not in the first place about Him.

At the heart of the intelligence of feeling, expressed in the Church through the encounter with the person of Jesus Christ, lies a particular attitude to life. Affectionate knowing has to be accompanied by a fundamental ‘yes’ saying to life – a willingness to be ‘affected’.

It includes the choice to be open to the Gift of life, to be willing to see life itself as bestowed on us in love by our Creator. It involves the risk of being captured by life, and, therefore, at the very least by the possibility of God.

The Fear of the Presence of God

How do we do this? It seems to me that first of all we have to unlearn the fear of both the *presence* and of the *absence* of God. Here too a search for proportion is necessary.

In terms of the fear of the presence of God, we bump into one of the major problems for contemporary westerners. We have been so trained to recite the mantra of individual autonomy that we fear being loved. For love is not tame. While it can be resisted it cannot be controlled. It ‘affects’ us by breaking open the shell of our selves. It mingles our inner being with an Other. Love interrupts our complacency. This we do not like, for we fear losing control, and this may very well be why we began to worship reason in the first place, and why we have reduced it to rationality. It may explain why we have been taught to distrust all that cannot be rationally explained – as if rational reasons guarantee our autonomy and freedom.

The choice for openness to the gift of life and its Giver demands that we discipline ourselves to approach reality differently: from the perspective of being affected by love. We learn, in other words, to look at concrete, finite reality in such a way that it enables us to taste and see how good God is. It begins, not with suspicion, but with trust. For, belief in God, writes Eamon Duffy ‘is now what it always has been, a matter of trust and reliance in the hopefulness and goodness of reality, and our place in it.’^{xxiii} Put differently, we learn to trust that God bends down to kiss us, that real encounter with him is possible, and that this can be articulated.

Another way of saying the same is that we approach life not as a puzzle to be solved, but as a mystery to be rejoiced in. It is an iconographical way of life, in the sense that we are forming ourselves to become profoundly aware of ‘being gazed upon rather than gazing.’^{xxiv} A way of life that is alert to the fact that God is the initiative taker, the One we respond to, the One who is free.^{xxv}

Such an approach is a choice that leads us towards grounding all of life in doxology. “Doxology receives reality as a gift,” writes Paul Avis, “sanctifies it through prayer and offers it back as a sacrifice.”^{xxvi}

Sacramental celebration becomes in this sense an exercise in the intelligence of feeling. From our basic choice for openness to let ourselves be ‘affected’ we trust in the possibility of encounter with God. Through Christ and in Christ and with Christ, we receive God’s presence as the gift that comes to us gracefully in the sacraments. To this, we respond by surrendering ourselves to his love. We learn to see the sacraments as ways in which God bends down to kiss us, and so delights our hearts, minds and bodies. In this way, sacramental celebration can be the place where we begin to know ourselves to be intimately and totally loved, and where we seek to respond in words and deeds. It is where we discover not only the profound joy of being *homo adorans*, of doxology, but also the silliness of trying to “signify God and his work by resorting to abstract expressions, talking about minds and ideas in a vacuum.”^{xxvii} In other words, we develop a truly iconic approach to the sacraments, one that reminds

us of who we are as creatures before God. This trains us towards and in an iconographical approach to life.

To use more theologically precise language, we experience through bodily participation in the sacraments 'kairos' moments of the 'transcendent God's invisible presence in immanence.'^{xxviii} It is where we realize that 'God is not the One we see, nor the One we do not see, but the One who sees us.'^{xxix} This awareness of the invisible presence of God is the result of our basic yes-saying to life and of the concrete imprint Christ made on the Church. It 'orients us in a certain way, and what must follow is a discipline to ensure we do not lose sight of it.'^{xxx}

Sacramental celebration approached from a fundamental choice of saying yes to life includes that we do not look to the sacraments as means in and of themselves, but that we learn to experience them as windows to God through which we catch a glimpse of his beauty. In this way we realize that the sacraments 'emphasise how God is discoverable in the here and now' but also 'leads us to yearn for the fullness of our experience of God in eternity.'^{xxxi}

The Experience of the Absence of God

We must, however, not get carried away. For we are also aware and afraid of the absence of God. The experience of being loved stands over against the experience of being abandoned. How can the eye of affection be trained here?

First, we want to stress once more that openness to the gift of life, and the concrete participation in the drama of Christ, involves *all* of life – the beautiful and the ugly. It is an embracing of our finiteness and limitations and of being part of creation where suffering has an active place.

Second, we need to be aware of the subtle nature of idolatry. "Idolatry," writes Thiel, "is an ever-present concern in theological representation, to say nothing of the Christian life, because it moves in the same trajectory as authentic sacramentality, appealing to the same finitude of being as a communication to the divine to be given and circumscribable. Idolatry is reductive sacramentality, a constriction that ironically becomes a transgression of the proper terms of relationship between the divine and the creaturely.'^{xxxii}

In other words, idolatry situates itself in the very area where meaning in life can be found most powerfully: in the proportion of the relationship between God and humanity.

One of the ways in which we commit idolatry is by replacing our doxological understanding of the Giver of life, and our participation in the life of Christ, with the worship of our individual, subjective and positive emotional experiences. Un-articulated experience, purely based on feeling, is to be distinguished from the term 'affection'. Emotional experience, as used in this instance, cannot be equated with affective knowing as it tends to remain implicit, vague, and, therefore 'unreal'. It cannot truly 'affect' people into sustained spiritual, cognitive and practical action because it has not made the movement from the concrete to the articulated via the body and the intellect.

If the worship of God has idolatrously been usurped by a pre-occupation with our individual, subjective experience (or non-experience) of God, participation in the sacraments as a genuine discipline of openness to the unexpectedness of encounter with God is weakened, if not destroyed. As a result, we may fall into the error of assuming that God, if He loves us, if He is self-giving, must do our bidding. We make our ‘affection’ – reduced to emotional experience – towards and of God conditional, as if the infinite Giver of life is answerable to us. Conditionality in relationship to God is actually a ‘no’ saying to the whole of life and to the reality of Christ. The result will be profound loss of meaning, joy and happiness.

If, however, we have sufficiently trained the eye of affection, even suffering the absence of God will become a source of knowledge that infuses life and sacramental celebration with meaning. It is precisely here that we taste our creaturely limitation, our inability to tame God, and the reality of living in time. It is where we realize the ‘not-yet’ aspect of our faith. We learn that there are limitations of time and space, of body and soul, that keep us from becoming overconfident. In other words, the gift of life is also, and always will remain, a promise – the concept Kirchhoffer explores in his article. Theologically, this is accurate as promise is related to the ‘here and the not-yet’ tension of the coming of the kingdom of God.

Promise does not only make us face the finiteness of our humanity, it also feeds our desire for God. As the saying goes, absence makes the heart grow fonder. It is this aspect of desire that Richard Kearney has explored in the light of eschatology. Eschatological desire for God, he writes, “alludes, to an alterity that already summons me yet is not yet, that is already present, yet always absent, a *deus adventurus* who seeks me yet is still to come, unpredictably and unexpectedly, ‘in the twinkling of an eye’.”^{xxxiii}

To be able to transform the experience of the absence of God into a positive eschatological desire presupposes that we have learned to use the eye of affection. We have disciplined ourselves into an iconographical way of life, one that does not deny or ignore suffering or injustice, but transforms it into the reality that love is more fundamental than pain. It therefore lays a foundation in us that forms us so that we respond more and more to all negativity, sin and evil from the knowledge of being loved. It allows us, in other words, to be positively ‘affected’ by the absence of God.

By Way of Conclusion: Another Way of Knowing and the Sacraments

Life does not begin with a concept, but it comes to us as gift and promise, both of which indicate a Giver. If we say ‘yes’ to the whole of life, in and through and with Christ, we are able to discern meaning in the concrete finite reality of our existence. This means that we are positively affected by both the experience of the absence and of the presence of God. We have found proportion.

The sacraments are ‘eye-openers’ in the sense that it is in sacramental celebration that we can first be ‘affected’ by life as gift and promise offered us in the self-giving of God because of their concrete

roots in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The sacraments could, in a sense, be called the romantic dinners of our faith. It is where we fall into the life-giving affection that forms us into the kind of knowledge that flows *from* God. We are then at a place where onto-theology as the idolatrous worship of reason becomes undone. Reason can now take its proper place. It is there to clarify, support, and question the prior, affective form of knowing, thereby helping the process towards a life-giving articulation of faith that is theologically responsible and so provides a delightful doxological basis for celebrating the sacraments.

ⁱ John Coulson, *Religion and Imagination: In Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) 145-146.

ⁱⁱ I am thinking in particular of the work of William of St. Thierry, "Exposition on the Song of Songs," in *The Works of William of St. Thierry*, Vol. II, transl. Columba Hart, Cistercian Publications 6 (Spencer MA: Cistercian Publications, 1970).

ⁱⁱⁱ William of St. Thierry, "Exposition on the Song of Songs," 77-78.

^{iv} David Power, *Sacrament, the Language of God's Giving* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1999)

^v David Kirchhoffer, "Sacrament and Being", article for publication p 8.

^{vi} John R. Betz, "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (part one)", *Modern Theology* 21 (July 2005) 367.

^{vii} Betz, "Beyond the Sublime", 370.

^{viii} See Betz, "Beyond the Sublime", 373.

^{ix} It is precisely this tension David Kirchhoffer intuits and critiques.

^x See Merald Westphal, "Onto-Theology" in John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon (eds.), *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, (Bloomington Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 13.

^{xi} Glenn C. Arbery, *Why Literature Matters: Permanence and the Politics of Reputation* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2001).

^{xii} Arbery, *Why Literature Matters*, 145.

^{xiii} This idea of the intelligence of feeling can also be linked to the mystical tradition that wholeheartedly, even joyfully, affirms a way of knowing that does not begin conceptually. Mystical knowing involves the conviction that while God cannot be grasped intellectually, He can be known intimately and, more, that he gives an abundance of knowledge. But, it is knowledge that begins *from* and is not first *about* God. In the words of Gregory the Great: *amor ipse notita est* – love (or, in our case, affection) is its own source of knowledge. See, for example, the works of 12th Century mystics Richard of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry.

^{xiv} Power, *Sacrament*, 276.

^{xv} Power, *Sacrament*, 279.

^{xvi} Power, *Sacrament*, 278.

^{xvii} Paul Mommaers, *The Riddle of Christian Mystical Experience: The Role of the Humanity of Jesus*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs, 29 (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), 10.

^{xviii} Mommaers, *The Riddle of Christian Mystical Experience*, 10 – 11.

^{xix} John Thiel, "For What We May Hope For: Thoughts on the Eschatological Imagination," in *Theological Studies* 67 (2006), 526.

^{xx} William Lynch, *Christ and Apollo: The Dimensions of the Literary Imagination* (Wilmington Delaware: ISI Books, 2004. Originally published New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960) 73.

^{xxi} Lynch, *Christ and Apollo*, 37.

^{xxii} Peter Scorer, "Alexander Schmemmann: Obituary," in *Sobornost* 6 (1984), 64.

^{xxiii} Eamon Duffy, *Faith of our Fathers: Reflections on Catholic Tradition* (London: Continuum, 2004) 1.

^{xxiv} Power, *Sacrament*, 284.

^{xxv} As Power points out: 'God, imaged as the ineffable and invisible One, enters human reality by free choice,' it is his 'divine initiative' to forge a covenantal relationship with us. See *Ibid.*, 289.

^{xxvi} Paul Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination: Metaphor, Symbol and Myth in Religion and Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999) 25.

^{xxvii} Rowan Williams, "The Nature of the Sacraments" in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001) 200.

^{xxviii} Stijn Van Den Bossche, "A Possible Present for Theology? Theological Implications of Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenology of Givenness," in *Bijdragen* 65 (2004), 62.

^{xxix} Van Den Bossche, *A Possible Present*, 77.

^{xxx} Rowan Williams, "Sacraments of the New Society" in *On Christian Theology*, 211.

^{xxxi} Cardinal Gottfried Danneels, "A Sacramental World – Sacramentology as the Primary Language for Sacraments," in *Worship* 76, 203.

^{xxxii} John Thiel, "Hope and Eschatological Imagination," in *Theological Studies* 67 (2006) 526.

^{xxxiii} Richard Kearney, "Desire of God" in John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon (eds.), *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon (eds.), *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, 114. Reference to 1 Cor. 15:52.