

***Per manus sancti Angeli tui. On the Identity and Import of the Mediating Angel in the  
Supplices te rogamus***

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## **1. Introduction**

Of the many unique features contained within the Roman Canon, one of the more intriguing ones is found in the section that houses the *Supplices te rogamus*. Here, the priest bows profoundly before the altar and prays that an unnamed Angel carry the sacrifice from the earthly altar to the heavenly one.<sup>2</sup> There are several interesting details found in this formula that have led to a variety of scholarly questions. The first is the precise form and function of the text. Placed after the consecration, the location of the *Supplices* connotes the genre of a communion-epiclesis, whose function is to indicate the transformation that will occur in those who will receive the sacrificial offering, that is, that they may be “filled with every grace and heavenly blessing” (*omni benedictione caelesti et gratia repleamur*). Naturally, the lack of reference to the Holy Spirit, not only in this post-consecratory epiclesis, but also in the Roman Canon’s presumed pre-consecratory epiclesis—which, despite the liturgical settlement in the traditional form of the Mass associating it with the *Hanc igitur*, is more readily identified with its current placement in the present form of the Mass, the *Quam oblationem*<sup>3</sup>—has provided additional points of debate.<sup>4</sup> Another perspective regarding the function of the *Supplices* highlights the reference to the heavenly altar as indicative of

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<sup>1</sup> Lecture delivered at the 14th CIEL Colloquium, Rome, 30 January 2025.

<sup>2</sup> *Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Œcumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum, iuxta typicam tertiam*, Midwest Theological Forum, Chicago 2007, 502 (*Ordo Missae* §94): “*Supplices te rogámus, omnipotens Deus: iube hæc perférri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublimè altáre tuum, in conspéctu divínæ maiestátis tuæ; ut, quotquot ex hac altáris participatióne sacrosánctum Fílii tui Corpus et Sáanguinem sumpsérimus, omni benedictióne cælésti et grátia repleámur.*”

<sup>3</sup> Cf. William Lallou, *The “Quam Oblationem” of the Roman Canon: A Study of a Significant Prayer of the Mass* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1943) 41. Here Lallou quotes Cardinal Idelfonso Schuster, in the first volume of his work entitled *The Sacramentary*, who states that “The intention of the prayer *Quam oblationem* is to beg for the sacramental grace of the transubstantiation of the eucharistic species. It is found in all liturgies, having among the Greeks the special name of *epiclesis*. The natural and traditional place for these *epicleses* is before the accounts of the Last Supper, as it is actually found in Rome, in Egypt, and formerly also in Antioch. Afterward (in the East) the pre-consecratory invocation became post-consecratory. The immediate effect of this transposition was to postpone the mystery of transubstantiation until after the anamnesis” (Idelfonso Schuster, *The Sacramentary*, vol. 1 [London: Burns, Oates, & Washburne, 1924] 283).

<sup>4</sup> Additionally, one can likewise interject a third option for the epiclesis highlighted by the author of the ninth-century commentary on the Mass entitled *Dominus vobiscum*, who connects it with the *Unde et memores* section of the Canon: “[...] *hostiam sanctam, quia tu sanctificasti corpus tuum quando hominem in Deum assumpsisti; et nunc sanctifica hunc panem ut corpus tuum fiat...Tu sanctifica hanc hostiam ut nobis corpus tuum et sanguis tuus fiat.*” Here the author, commenting on the line “*hóstiam puram, hóstiam sanctam, hóstiam immaculátam*” of the *Unde et memores*, sees the sanctified Body of Christ sanctifying the bodies of those to receive Holy Communion. Cf. Gerbert, *Monumenta veteris liturgiae alemannicae*, Tome 2 (Saint-Blaise, 1779), 280, quoted in Bernard Botte, “L’ange du sacrifice et l’épiclèse de la Messe romaine au Moyen-Âge,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 1 (1929) 285-308, esp. 287.

the unity found between the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood confection on the earthly altar and Christ's glorified Body in heaven.<sup>5</sup>

The second principal question this section proposes relates to the identity of the mysterious angel who serves as the mediator between the earthly and heavenly altars. There are three main approaches taken in response to this question. The first interprets the "angel" as representative of the entire angelic order already operative in the liturgy. This perspective, which can be seen as the majority opinion amongst such learned modern scholars as Bernard Botte, Mario Righetti,<sup>6</sup> Joseph Jungmann, Adrian Fortescue,<sup>7</sup> and Enrico Mazza,<sup>8</sup> is primarily rooted in evidence found in one of the earliest exemplars of the Canon —St. Ambrose's *De Sacramentis* IV, 27— which speaks of the oblation being taken up not by a single angel, but by multiple angels.<sup>9</sup> The antiquity of this detail is also observed in the fourth-century Eastern Anaphora of St. Mark/St. Cyril, which places the mediation in the hands of the collective *ministerium archangelicum*, as well as the *Euchologium Serapionis*, which speaks of "angels being sent" to minister to the faithful preparing to receive the Lord's Body and Blood.<sup>10</sup> The second approach to the identity of the Angel, proffered by the likes

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Solemnia)*, vol. 2, tr. Francis A. Brunner (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics/Ave Maria Press, 1951) 232. Here, Jungmann identifies Remigius of Auxerre and Isaac of Stella as medieval commentators who note this perspective and Paschasius Radbertus and Odo of Cambria as those who see this transference as a real activity by which the sacrifice is completed. NB: in the footnote associated with Remigius of Auxerre, Jungmann cites Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, volume 101, pages 1262 and following. However, this reference is actually to the ninth part of Alcuin's *Opuscula Dogmatica*, treating the Divine Offices. Cf. B. Flacci Albani (Alcuini), *Opera Omnia*, Tome 2, ed. J. -P. Migne (Paris, 1863) 1262ff. In this section Alcuin comments on the *Supplices*, noting the thoughts of St. Gregory the Great and St. Augustine who likewise see a direct connection between the earthly and heavenly liturgy.

<sup>6</sup> Mario Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica*, Vol. 3 "L'Eucharestia: Sacrificio (Messa) e Sacramento" (Milan: Editrice Ancora, 1949) 335-338.

<sup>7</sup> Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1953) 350-354.

<sup>8</sup> Enrico Mazza, *Le odierne preghiere eucaristiche* (Bologna: Centro editorial dehoniano, 2014) 70-74.

<sup>9</sup> Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, IV, 27: "Et sacerdos dicit : ERGO MEMORES GLORIOSISSIMAE EIVS PASSIONIS ET AB INFERIS RESURRECTIONIS ET IN CAELVM ASCENSIONIS, OFFERIMVS TIBI HANC IMMACVLATAM HOSTIAM, RATIONABILEM HOSTIAM, INCRVENTAM HOSTIAM, HVNC PANEM SANCTVM ET CALICEM VITAE AETERNAE, ET PETIMVS ET PRECAMVR VTI HANC OBLATIONEM SVSCIPIAS IN SVBLIME ALTARE TVVM PER MANVS ANGELORVM TVORVM, SICVT SVSCIPIERE DIGNATVS ES MVNERA PVERI TVI IVUSTI ABEL ET SACRIFICIVM PATRIARCHAE NOSTRI ABRAHAE ET QVOD TIBI OBTVLIT SVMMVS SACERDOS MELCHISEDECH." The orthography appears as given in *Des Sacrements, Des Mystères: Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée de l'Explication du Symbole*, ed. Bernard Botte, *Sources Chrétiennes* 25bis (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961) 116. Underline added.

<sup>10</sup> Anton Hänggi and Irmgard Pahl, *Prex Eucharistica: Textus e variis liturgiis antiquioribus selecti* (St-Paul Fribourg: Éditions universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1968) 109 and 133. The pertinent text in the Anaphora of St. Mark/St. Cyril reads, "Eorum qui sacrificia et oblationes offerunt, gratiarum agendarum munera, suscipe, Deus, in sanctum et caeleste et intellectual altare tuum, in magnitudines caelorum, per archangelicum ministerium tuum" (109). The text from the Euchologion of Serapion reads, "Te enim increatum invocavimus per Unigenitum in sancto Spiritu : misericordiam consequatur hic populus, profectu dignus fiat, mittantur angeli, adesse populo in destructionem mali et in confirmationem Ecclesiae" (133). Underlines added.

of Ludwig Augustin Hoppe<sup>11</sup> and Paul Cagin,<sup>12</sup> sees the angel of mediation as the Holy Spirit. The third approach, which has great antiquity to it, especially in patristic sources, conceives the “Angel” in the Canon as being none other than Christ Himself, the only One with the requisite authority to mediate the Sacrifice between the two altars. Of those who subscribe to this position, St. Bonaventure,<sup>13</sup> Prosper Guéranger,<sup>14</sup> Maurice de la Taille,<sup>15</sup> and Joseph Barbel,<sup>16</sup> are noteworthy.

The aim of this paper is to revisit the scholarly debate that has arisen regarding the identity of the Angel in the *Supplices*. With the multivalent ways in which theologians have approached this topic and the nuances that each of these approaches have added to our overall understanding of this section of the Canon, a more profound reflection on the Angel’s identity can help establish greater clarity about the role of mediation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, as well as our participation here on earth in these anamnetic, mimetic, and eschatological realities. To accomplish our task, we will first examine the related question about the *Supplices*’ presumed epicletical function in the Canon to better understand why the Angel is referenced in the text in the first place. This will then give us the requisite background to evaluate the three principal approaches to the identity of the Angel. Special emphasis will be given to the “Angel as Christ” argument due, in part, to its link with early christological approaches to the Second Person of the Trinity and the misunderstandings that have arisen from it. In broaching the topic of “Christ as Angel,” the intricacies of the theological concerns raised with “Angel-Christology” will be addressed. However, we will limit ourselves to summarizing only the principal concerns with this hermeneutical lens so as to engage in a fuller reflection of the orthodox positions that make clear the distinctions between Christ, the eternally-begotten Son of the Father, and the created order of angels.

## 2. The Role & Function of the *Supplices* in the Canon

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<sup>11</sup> Ludwig Augustin Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis der griechischen und orientalischen Liturgien und der römische Konsekrationskanon* (Schaffhausen, 1864) 121ff.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Cagin, *Te Deum ou illatio? : Contribution à l’histoire de l’Euchologie Latine à propos des origins du Te Deum* (Solesmes, 1906) 215-238.

<sup>13</sup> Bonaventure, *Sententiarum*, lib. IV, distinctio XI, pars 1, dubium 4, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5, ed. A.C. Peltier (Paris, 1866) 478.

<sup>14</sup> Prosper Guéranger, *On the Holy Mass*, tr. Laurence Shepherd (Farnborough: Saint Michael’s Abbey Press, 2006) 95-98.

<sup>15</sup> Maurice de la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion: Contrasted and Defined*, tr. J.B. Schimpf (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934) 59-70.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Barbel, *Christos Angelos: Die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christlichen Altertums. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ursprungs und der Fortdauer des Arianismus* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1941) 279-284.

The question of clearly identifying the epiclesis in the Roman Rite has always been one fraught with difficulty. Fernand Cabrol highlights five possible resolutions: 1) that there is no epiclesis in the Canon; 2) that it is found in the *Quam oblationem*; 3) that it is contained within the *Supplices*; 4) that there are multiple epicleses; or 5) that it is merely accomplished as a kind of silent epiclesis through the imposition of hands at the *Hanc igitur*.<sup>17</sup> Keeping to the topic of this paper, Cabrol relates that the one thing favoring the identification of the *Supplices* with the epiclesis is its correspondence—especially regarding its location in the Canon and its content—with other Latin formularies in the Mozarabic and Gallican Rites, as well as with other Eastern formularies.<sup>18</sup> The other two post-consecratory sections of the Canon that precede the *Supplices*—the *Unde et memores* and the *Supra quae*—have clear anamnestic purposes that make them distinct from the *Supplices*, which utilizes stronger epicletical language.<sup>19</sup> Expanding on this, Jungmann states that what we find in the *Supplices* is a kind of reverse epiclesis where “there is a plea that the power of God might touch our sacrificial gift, but in reverse order, not by the descent of the Spirit, but by the ascent of the gift.”<sup>20</sup>

The location of the *Supplices* in the Canon also lends credence to its identity as a type of epiclesis. Cabrol provides the logic that seems to underline the reason why most liturgical families place this formula after the consecration: having addressed the prayer of the anaphora to God the Father, the priest then presents the Sacrifice offered by God the Son, through the intervention of God the Spirit, whose role is to complete the work of sanctification.<sup>21</sup> Thus, for Cabrol, “the logical,

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<sup>17</sup> Fernand Cabrol, “Épiclèse,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, Vol. 5, Part 1 “Encaustique—Feux” (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ané, 1922) 162: “La question de l’épiclèse romaine nous place tout de suite en face de sérieuses difficultés. Elle est si obscure que cinq systèmes différents ont été imaginés et sont encore soutenus aujourd’hui ; 1° pas d’épiclèse romaine ; 2° épiclèse *Quam oblationem* ; 3° épiclèse *Supplices te* ; 4° deux ou plusieurs épiclèses romaines ; 5° épiclèse par l’imposition des mains.” Regarding the final option, Cabrol cites de Waal’s hypothesis, noting that “L’imposition des mains sur les oblations qui précède la consécration, avec la prière *Hanc igitur oblationem*, serait un souvenir de l’ancienne épiclèse, en quelque sorte une épiclèse muette.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 165: “Une des raisons qui militent en faveur de ce système, c’est que la place naturelle de l’épiclèse...est ici, et que ces prières correspondent, au moins dans une certaine mesure, aux formules orientales ou latines d’épiclèse.”

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey G. Willis, *Essays in Early Roman Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1964) 130, citing Bernard Botte, says the *Supplices* can be divided into three parts: the first—*Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens deus*—derives from a post-communion in the Gregorian Sacramentary; the second—*iube haec perferri...maiestatis tuae*—is paralleled in *De Sacramentis*, IV, 6, 27 (“*uti hanc oblationem suscipias in sublime altare tuum per manus angelorum tuorum*”); and the third—*in conspectus...gratia repleamur*—reflects language similar to epicleses in the other liturgical families. Cf. Bernard Botte, *Le canon de la messe romaine* (Louvain, 1935) 66.

<sup>20</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:233.

<sup>21</sup> Cabrol, “Épiclèse,” 174-175: “L’anaphore grecque ou orientale suit une marche parallèle au canon des liturgies latines. Le pontife s’adresse, dans la préface, à Dieu le Père, à qui le sacrifice est offert. C’est le Fils qui s’offre en victime, renouvelant la cène et le sacrifice de la croix. Alors intervient le Saint-Esprit, qui, dans l’épiclèse, parachève l’oeuvre de sanctification. Cette progression répond au développement historique des mystères, et à l’ordre de la confession de foi [...].”

natural, and chronological order seems to demand that the role of the Holy Spirit, within the Eucharist as within the Incarnation, comes after the work of the Father and that of the Son.”<sup>22</sup> For this reason, when the Consilium entrusted with the reform of the Roman liturgy following the Second Vatican Council added Eucharistic Prayers to the renewed *Missale Romanum*, it created a more clearly defined consecratory epiclesis in which the Holy Spirit was specifically invoked, as well as a more clearly articulated post-consecratory —or communion— epiclesis wherein a petition was made on behalf of the participants so that they might be transformed by the gift received in the Eucharist.<sup>23</sup> Thus, what scholars observe in the Canon is a “double epiclesis” mimicked by these newly composed Eucharistic Prayers, wherein preparation of the matter of bread and wine takes place before the consecration and then, after the consecration, preparation of the recipients to receive the Sacred Body and Blood of the Lord.

The presence of this double epiclesis in the anaphora, though, is not unique to the Roman Rite. In the fourth-century Egyptian *Euchologium Serapionis*, for example, we find a pre-consecratory epiclesis addressed to God the Father in which the celebrant requests that the oblation be filled with divine power,<sup>24</sup> and then after the consecration what is referred to as a “*Logos* epiclesis,” addressed to the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, is given.<sup>25</sup> This post-consecratory epiclesis in the *Euchologium* prays that the “God of truth,” who is identified as the Father’s “holy Word,” may transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ and that all the communicants may “receive the remedy of life to cure all illness and to strengthen all

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 175: “Ainsi, l’ordre logique, naturel, chronologique, semble demander que le rôle du Saint-Esprit, dans l’eucharistie comme dans l’incarnation, vienne après l’œuvre du Père et celle du Fils.” Translation of the author.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Survey*, ed. Mary Ellen Evans, tr. Julian Fernandes (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1976) 134-138. In this section Jungmann treats the distinctions between the consecration epiclesis and the communion epiclesis (134), and how the consecration epiclesis after the Institution Narrative, as found in the Eastern Churches, is not completely novel in the Roman Rite, at least —to use one example— as found in the Order of Ordination wherein the sacramental rite is considered complete only after the prayer of ordination that makes reference to the operation of the Spirit is prayed (137). As Jungmann notes, the “Eastern viewpoint has...come to be increasingly understood and appreciated in the West. Thus, for example, all three Eucharistic Prayers introduced in the Roman Mass in 1968 include a regular Holy Spirit epiclesis” (138). Cf. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:235.

<sup>24</sup> Hänggi and Pahl, *Prex Eucharistica*, 131 [Anaphorae secundum typum Alexandrinum: Euchologion Serapionis, n. 11]: “Plenum est caelum, plena est et terra gloria tua magna, Domine virtutum. Imple etiam hoc sacrificium virtute tua et communicatione tua; tibi enim obtulimus hoc sacrificium vivum, oblationem incruentam.” Cf. Lallou, *The “Quam Oblationem” of the Roman Canon*, 40: “Fill also this sacrifice with thy strength and thy participation, for we have offered this a living sacrifice, a bloodless offering.”

<sup>25</sup> Lallou, *The “Quam Oblationem” of the Roman Canon*, 39: “The name Epiclesis, in its technical liturgical signification, is an invocation, usually of the Holy Spirit, but sometimes of the Divine Word, that the Divine Person so called upon may effect the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. We distinguish the Epiclesis *simpliciter*, which is that of the Holy Ghost, from the *Logos* invocation in which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is called upon to consecrate the *oblata* on the altar.” Emphasis original.

progress and virtue.”<sup>26</sup> William Lallou cites a similarly dated Egyptian fragment, the *Deir Balizeh*, which was discovered in 1907 and currently housed in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England,<sup>27</sup> as giving additional evidence of a double epiclesis, though this incomplete document only provides us with the pre-consecratory epiclesis, while the post-consecratory epiclesis is presumed lost.<sup>28</sup>

Some scholars have further theorized that in the primitive Roman Rite the *Supplices* was not actually a *communion* epiclesis at all, but a *consecratory* one. Lallou references the work of Rudolf Buchwald, who, in his *Die Epiclesse in der römischer Messe*, proposed this idea, claiming that “the original Roman epiclesis was a Logos invocation, of which we have a remnant in our ‘*Per quem haec omnia*’ at the end of the Canon.”<sup>29</sup> As a reminder, in the *Per quem haec omnia* the priest states that, through Christ, the Father continues “to make all these good things” —that is, the bread and wine for consecration— and that He sanctifies them, fills them with life, blesses them, and bestows them upon us.<sup>30</sup> Paired with this apparent Logos epiclesis in the *Per quem haec omnia*, Buchwald maintained that “an Epiclesis of the Holy Spirit was introduced,” in the primitive Roman Canon, with the remnants of this evidenced in the *Supplices te rogamus*.<sup>31</sup> In support of this theory, scholars point to a letter Pope St. Gelasius I wrote to Bishop Elpidius of Volterra, wherein the pope specifically highlighted the invocation of the Holy Spirit as being a constitutive part of the act of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 40; Hänggi and Pahl, *Præx Eucharistica*, 131 [Anaphorae secundum typum Alexandrinum: Euchologion Serapionis, n. 15]: “Adveniat, Deus Veritatis, sanctum tuum Verbum super hunc panem, ut panis fiat corpus Verbi, et super hunc calicem, ut calix fiat sanguis Veritatis; et fac, ut omnes communicantes remedium vitae accipiant ad curandum omnem morbum et ad confortandum omnem profectum ac virtutem, non in condemnationem, Deus veritatis, neque in contumeliam et opprobrium.”

<sup>27</sup> Lallou, *The “Quam Oblationem” of the Roman Canon*, 44.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 40-41: “We find at times a double Epiclesis, one before and one after the narrative of the Last Supper. This is the case in the *Euchologium Serapionis*, the fourth century prayer-book of Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, in Egypt [...]. The same is true, apparently, of the *Deir-Balizeh* fragment, three tattered sheets of the seventh century, though the second Epiclesis has been lost” (40). “The *Deir Balyzeh* papyrus, on sheet II *recto*, has this Epiclesis, before the words of Institution: ‘Fill us also with the glory which is with Thee and deign to send Thy Holy Spirit upon these creatures and make the bread indeed the body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and (make) the chalice the blood of the new testament’ (41). Lallou takes the Latin text of this prayer from J. Quasten’s *Monumenta eucharistica et liturgia vetustissima* (Bonn, 1935-1937) 41: “Reple et nos gloria tua, quae apud te est, et mittere dignare spiritum sanctum tuum in has creaturas et fac panem quidem corpus domini et salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, calicem autem sanguinem novi testamenti; quia dominus noster Jesus Christus in qua nocte tradebatur [...]”

<sup>29</sup> Lallou, *The “Quam Oblationem” of the Roman Canon*, 43. Cf. Rudolf Buchwald, *Die Epiclesse in der römischer Messe*, in *Weidenauer Studien* 1 (1906) 53. Italics added.

<sup>30</sup> *The Roman Missal*, tr. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy, Third Typical edition (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), “The Order of Mass” n. 97 [“Eucharistic Prayer I”]. Cf. *Missale Romanum*, iuxta typicam tertiam (Chicago: Midwest Theological Forum, 2007) “Ordo Missae” n. 97: “Per quem hæc omnia, Dómine, semper bona creas, santificas, vivificas, benedícis, et præstas nobis.”

<sup>31</sup> Lallou, *The “Quam Oblationem” of the Roman Canon*, 43. Cf. Rudolf Buchwald, *Die Epiclesse in der römischer Messe*, in *Weidenauer Studien* 1 (1906) 53. Italics added.

consecration in the Roman Mass, a detail that Fernand Cabrol finds exceedingly convincing of the authenticity of the presence of an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit in the primitive Roman Rite.<sup>32</sup>

However, a major argument against denoting an explicit epiclesis in the Roman Rite lies in one of its principal exemplars. St. Ambrose's *De Sacramentis*, a document written in the same era as Pope St. Gelasius' letter and one that shows strong parallels with the Roman Canon, likewise lacks an epiclesis in the strict sense of the word. In this regard, Edmund Bishop states that the *Supplices* is not "a prayer for the descent of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity on the bread and wine," but rather has, as its object, the communicants themselves.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Geoffrey Willis adds that a specific calling down of the Spirit at this point in the Canon would seem both "illogical and inconsistent," for "if the gifts have, in response to the Church's petition, been taken up to the heavenly altar," which is what the *Supplices* denotes, "they no longer remain upon the earthly altar for the Holy Spirit to be sent down upon them to consecrate them."<sup>34</sup> In Willis' mind, "the Roman Canon has preserved the really primitive notion, and has never at any time had room for an Epiclesis."<sup>35</sup> However, from the perspective of Fernand Cabrol, restraint should be taken when making definitive claims about the primitive Roman Rite since the varied liturgical developments that took place between the fifth and seventh centuries make it a difficult thing to do with accuracy<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "Quomodo ad divini mysterii consecrationem caelestis Spiritus invocatus adveniet si sacerdos (et) qui eum adesse deprecatur ciminosis plenus actionibus reprobetur." Quoted in Lallou, *The "Quam Oblationem" of the Roman Canon*, 42. Cf. Cabrol, "Épiclèse," 162-163, esp. 163: referring to this quoted text, Cabrol notes that "Ce passage, nous dit-on, viserait une liturgie dont se servait Elpidius, évêque de Volterra, laquelle pouvait contenir une épiclese. Voilà bien des hypothèses, et l'on trouvera que c'est se débarrasser à bon compte de deux textes, dont le second surtout paraît probant."

<sup>33</sup> Edmund Bishop, "Appendix V. Silent Recitals in the Mass of the Faithful," in R. H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 8 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1909) 131-132.

<sup>34</sup> Geoffrey G. Willis, "God's Altar on High," *The Downside Review* 90 (1972) 245-250, esp. 250. Here, though, Willis seems to disregard St. Thomas Aquinas' perspective that the priest does not pray that the sacramental species conected on the earthly altar be borne to the heavenly one, but merely that the prayers of the Mystical Body of Christ be presented to God in heaven. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 83, art. 4 ad 9, Blackfriars vol. 59, ed. and tr. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 162: "Ad nonum dicendum quod sacerdos non petit neque quod species sacramentales deferantur in caelum, neque corpus Christi verum, quod ibi esse non desinit; sed petit hoc pro corpore mystico, quod scilicet in hoc sacramento significatur, ut scilicet orationes sacerdotis et populi angelus assistens divinis mysteriis Deo repraesentet, secundum illud *Apoc.*, *Ascendit fumes incensurum de oblationibus sanctorum de manu angeli.*" Here, St. Thomas is quoting from Rev 8:4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Cabrol, "Épiclèse," 163-164: "L'argument que l'on apporte contre l'existence d'une épiclese romaine est la conformité du canon romain avec le *De Sacramentis*. Or le *De Sacramentis*, dont l'existence au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle n'est pas douteuse, n'a pas plus d'épiclèse que le canon romain, au sens strict du mot. Il paraît peu probable, ajoute-t-on, qu'entre 400 et 492, époque de Gélase, la liturgie ait admis une formule d'épiclèse qui aurait disparu ensuite. Mais cette objection n'a pas grande valeur. Il y a eu dans la messe romaine du V<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle des changements importants dont nous ne connaissons pas le détail, mais dont l'existence est affirmée par saint Grégoire, notamment sur la place du *Pater*, sur la finale du canon, sur la fraction, dont la formule a disparu aussi." Italics original.

## **The Identity of the Angel: the Principal Arguments**

The purpose of this discussion about the form and function of the *Supplices* has been to help frame the principal focus of our paper: the identity of the mediating Angel of sacrifice in the Canon. With the heavy emphasis placed on the *Supplices* as epiclesis, one of the arguments made about the Angel—that is, it being the Holy Spirit—comes into clearer focus. However, the role that the *Supplices* plays in the anaphora as a whole also reveals details that likewise substantiate the other two options about the Angel’s identity: that it represents the entire angelic order or that it is Christ Himself. In this section we will provide a summary of these three approaches to help us understand better their merits as well as their deficiencies.

### ***The Angel as Collective of the Angelic Order***

In his 1929 essay treating the contents of the *Supplices*, the learned liturgical scholar of the twentieth century, Bernard Botte, argues that the reference made to the Angel in the Canon is not indicative of Christ or of the Holy Spirit, but of the entire ministry of angels that serves as a conduit of the sacred exchange between the earthly and heavenly altars. Botte’s position is primarily historical, based on the textual evidence found in the late antique and early medieval liturgical documents.<sup>37</sup> His principal point of reference is, naturally, St. Ambrose’s *De Sacramentis*, which presents one of the oldest exemplars of this section of the Canon. The antiquity of this section is further confirmed by parallel texts found in the liturgical families of the East.<sup>38</sup> Enrico Mazza highlights the Liturgy of St. Mark—more commonly referred to as that of St. Cyril—as a place where we can find a text similar in content to the Roman *Supplices*, making reference to the oblation’s ascension to the celestial altar via a collaborative effort of the entire “archangelic ministry” (*per archangelicum ministerium tuum*), or, as the Greek text notes, the “archangelic

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<sup>37</sup> Bernard Botte, “L’ange du sacrifice et l’épiclesse de la Messe romaine au Moyen-Âge,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 1 (1929) 285-308, esp. 285: “L’ange mystérieux, dont il est question dans le *Supplices* n’est-il pas le Verbe ou l’Esprit-Saint et ne l’invoque-t-on pas en vue de la consécration? J’ai étudié ailleurs cette question, d’un point de vue strictement historique, et j’ai cru devoir y répondre par la négative.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 285n2: “Le texte du *De Sacramentis* l. IV c. VI, nous donne la forme la plus ancienne de cette partie du canon ou du moins l’interprétation la plus ancienne, si l’on soupçonne son texte d’être une reproduction libre du canon: « ... et petimus et precamur ut hanc oblationem suscipias in sublimi altari tuo per manus angelorum tuorum, sicut suscipere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel. » PL 16, 464. 2°) [sic] Le rapprochement avec des prières d’offrande de liturgies orientales apparentées à notre *Supplices* et qui semblent confirmer l’hypothèse que la forme du *De Sacramentis* est primitive.”

liturgy.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Mazza relates that the discrepancy between the Roman Canon’s singular —*per manus sancti Angeli tui*— and the *De Sacramentis*’ plural —*per manus angelorum tuorum*— has to do with the translation of the text from Greek to Latin that drew on the Liturgy of St. Mark’s reference to the “archangelic liturgy,” which could be translated either in the plural, as in Ambrose’s text, or in the singular, as in the Roman Canon.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in the aforementioned fourth-century Egyptian text, the *Euchologion* of Serapion, we encounter, in the intercession section that follows the communion-epiclesis of the anaphora, a reference to multiple angels being sent to aid the faithful as they prepare to receive the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>41</sup>

There are, of course, other texts that lend credence to the identity of the Angel being a collective rather than an individual. In a ninth-century exposition of the Mass that utilizes insights from Pope St. Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*, the anonymous author notes that as the priest begins to recite the *Supplices*, the heavens open and the choirs of angels make themselves present, allowing the visible realities of the earthly liturgy and the invisible realities of the heavenly liturgy

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<sup>39</sup> Hänggi and Pahl, *Prex Eucharistica*, 109 [Anaphorae secundum typum Alexandrinum: Anaphora Marci Evangelistae]: “Eorum qui sacrificia et oblationes offerunt, gratiarum agendarum munera, suscipe, Deus, in sanctum et caeleste et intellectuale altare tuum, in magnitudines caelorum, per archangelicum ministerium tuum: eorum qui multum et parum, clam et palam et libere, offerre volunt et non habent [...]” In the Greek text on p. 108, the “archangelicum ministerium” is, instead, rendered as a kind of archangelic liturgy (“τῆς ἀρχαγγελικῆς σου λειτουργίας”).

<sup>40</sup> Mazza, *Le odierne preghiere eucaristiche*, 71: “Da parte mia vorrei aggiungere che l’esistenza del singolare, a Roma e in Hispania, e del plural a Milano, si spiega in base all’originale Greco di cui il Canone è traduzione. L’anafora di Marco parla di «liturgia archangelica», espressione che può essere tradotta sia con «per mano dei tuoi angeli» (Ambrogio), sia con «per mano del tuo santo angelo» (Roma).” However, JOSEPH BARBEL, in his work *Christos Angelos*, speculates whether the original text of the Canon did, indeed, have the singular *angelus*, but that St. Ambrose’s *De Sacramentis* adjusted this to alleviate the difficulty in pinpointing whether it was legitimate to associate the angelic theophanies in the Old Testament with the Second Person of the Trinity. Thus, Barbel wonders whether the author of *De Sacramentis* adjusted the singular *angelus* in the Canon to the plural (*angelorum*). Barbel’s speculation is admittedly, though, just that —speculation— since at the end of this discussion Barbel recognizes that this theory cannot be strictly proven: “In dem ganzen Streit um die Auslegung stützt man sich in allen Lagern vornehmlich auf jüngere Texte, die natürlich für die Auffassung dieses Gebetes in der Zeit seiner Entstehung keinen überzeugenden Beweis bieten können. Von Bedeutung ist eigentlich nur der Text aus *De Sacramentis*. Für den Fall, daß diejenigen im Recht sind, die in *De Sacramentis* die ältere Form des Gebetes sehen, liegt trotzdem eine Verbesserung des ursprünglichen *angeli* in *angelorum* im Bereich der Möglichkeit, wie selbst BOTTE zugibt. Gemessen an der so ungemein häufigen Bezeichnung des Herrn als Engel, gerade in der ältesten Zeit, wäre es nicht verwunderlich, wenn man ursprünglich in dem Engel des *Supplices* den Herrn gesehen hätte. Soweit ich sehe, hat Ambrosius den Engelnamen bei der Behandlung der alttestamentlichen Gotteserscheinungen nicht auf den Herrn angewandt, und jedenfalls hat er die Ausschließlichkeit einer Deutung dieser (Engel-) Erscheinungen auf den Herrn schon als Schwierigkeit empfunden und nach einer anderen Lösung Ausschau gehalten. Vielleicht hat er (wenn er der mittelbare Verfasser von *De Sacramentis* ist), oder ein Zeitgenosse, in dem ihm vorliegenden *angelus* des Meßkanons und seiner Deutung auf Christus schon eine Schwierigkeit gesehen und hat ihr auszuweichen gesucht durch die Textänderung *angelorum*. Das ist eine Möglichkeit, die sich natürlich nicht im strengen Sinne beweisen läßt” (Joseph Barbel, *Christos Angelos: Die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christlichen Altertums. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ursprungs und der Fortdauer des Arianismus* [Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1941] 284).

<sup>41</sup> Hänggi and Pahl, *Prex Eucharistica*, 133 [Anaphorae secundum typum Alexandrinum: Euchologion Serapionis, n. 16]: “Te enim increatum invocavimus per Unigenitum in sancto Spiritu: misericordiam consequatur hic populus, profectu dignus fiat, mittantur angeli, adesse populo in destructionem mali et in confirmationem Ecclesiae.”

to become perfectly one.<sup>42</sup> Another interesting contribution is given by the ninth-century medieval allegorist, Amalarius of Metz. Although Amalarius is known to revel in heightened spiritual interpretations of sacred realities, he surprisingly provides a rather sober treatment of the *Supplices* in his *De Ecclesiasticis officiis*. Here, Amalarius merely describes this section of the Canon as a prayer of acceptance where the Angel, sent by the command of the priest, communicates to the heavenly realm that which has been accomplished in the earthly realm.<sup>43</sup> We can presume that this was a standard ninth-century perspective since even Amalarius' chief antagonist and theological opponent, Florus of Lyon, a man who tended to have nothing to do with Amalarius' allegorical interpretations, found nothing offensive with this particular interpretation of the *Supplices*.<sup>44</sup>

Based on these details, Jungmann notes that “there is no good reason for departing from the natural sense of the word” ‘Angel’ since, following the details given in the Book of Revelation where the angel deposits incense representing the prayers of the faithful at the heavenly altar,<sup>45</sup> there is a keen sense in the Church’s mind of the “participation of the angelic world in our oblation.”<sup>46</sup> Jungmann furthermore gives additional credence to this notion when he relates how it accords with the Church’s overarching sense of communion “that the angels who (of course) have a very different relationship to man’s redemption, should yet in some way take part in the sacrifice of redemption.”<sup>47</sup> The reason why the Angel is anonymous and why more details are not given at this

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Botte, “L’ange du sacrifice,” 289: “Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis vocem coelos aperiri, in illo Jesu Christi mysterio angelorum choros adesse, summis ima sociari, terram coelestibus jungi, unum quid ex visibilibus et invisibilibus fieri.” Here Botte is quoting the exposition of the Mass entitled *Quotiens contra se* by an anonymous author, found in *Patrologia Latina* 96, ed. J. -P. Migne (Paris, 1862) 1496. Botte mentions that the final sentence is a quote from St. Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*, IV, 60, though in Nikolaus Gihl’s *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Dogmatically, Liturgically, and Ascetically Explained* (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1902) 666, the passage is said to come from *Dialogues*, IV, 58: “What believing soul can doubt that at the hour of the Sacrifice, upon the word of the priest, heaven opens and that choirs of angels assist at this mystery of Jesus Christ, that here the highest is combined with the lowest, the earthly united with the heavenly, the visible and invisible become one?”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Botte quotes from Amalarius’ *De Ecclesiasticis officiis*, lib. III, cap. 25, in *Patrologia Latina* 105, ed. J. -P. Migne (Paris, 1864) 1142: “Precature sacerdos ut praesens oblatio ita sit accepta in conspectu divinae majestatis, quatenus sumpturi eam, simul fiant coelestes et gratia Dei repleti. [...] Credit [Ecclesia] sacrificium praesens per angelorum manus deferri ante conspectum Domini et sentit mandendum esse ab humano ore.” NB: in Botte’s footnote he incorrectly cites this as coming from chapter 35 of the fourth book of Amalarius’ work, whereas it appears in Migne’s edition as being found in chapter 25 of the third book.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.: “Il faut croire qu’il se conformait en cela à l’opinion commune de son temps, car son adversaire acharné, Florus de Lyon ne paraît avoir trouvé rien à redire à cette interprétation.” Botte then quotes, on p. 290, the following from Florus’ *De expositione missae*, in *Patrologia Latina* 119, ed. J. -P. Migne (Paris, 1852) 59-60: “intelligamus sublime altare Dei rationabile et intelligibile esse in electa et rationali creatura, angelica scilicet et humana” (p. 59); “Fit ergo in ista oratione et oblatione sacra consecrationis aliquid incomprehensibile et ineffabile et multo his mirabilius, ut per angelica ministeria et supplicationes tamquam de sublimi altari divinae majestatis conspectibus offerantur in illa immolationis hora, cum adstantibus ministris coelestibus Christus ut proposita consecret adesse credendus est” (p. 60).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Rev 8:3-4.

<sup>46</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:234. There is a similar perspective given by Gihl, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 664n1.

<sup>47</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:234

point in the Canon to better define how this angelic ministry is exercised is, in Jungmann's mind, a means to protect the mystery at the altar, though this can, conversely, cause it to be infected by "unbecoming curiosity."<sup>48</sup> In this regard, Jungmann follows the comments of Nikolaus Gühr, who relates the various options one might have in determining the identity of the Angel in question. As Gühr states,

Many saints and servants of God had a particular devotion to the angel here mentioned, without being able or willing to decide as to his name. Some believe him to be the guardian angel of the church and the altar, or that of the priest, who most effectually assists, directs and enlightens him during the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. – Others suppose, and this appears probable, that it is St. Michael, who is honored as the guardian angel of the Eucharist and of the Church Militant.<sup>49</sup>

In this we find some of the inherent difficulties that arise from this interpretative lens of seeing the Angel in the Canon as a created angelic spirit. Certainly, the historicity of the plural form found in *De Sacramentis* is well attested, and, if, according to Mazza, the Greek form in the Anaphora of St. Mark —the collective “τῆς ἀρχαγγελικῆς σου λειτουργίας” (*archangelicum ministerium/liturgiam*)— was translated into Latin in the singular —*per manus sancti Angeli tui*— when the Canon was being codified, then much could be said for looking upon this angel as representative of the whole ministry of angels. Indeed, as St. Ambrose notes in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah at the altar of incense (Lk 1:8-23), this happened for our benefit, as a sign of God's mercy for His people by sending angels to assist them in worship. Ambrose then notes that if this was the case for the worship offered in the Old Covenant, how much more would this be in the New, when Christ Himself is immolated on the altar for our salvation.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Gühr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 664. Adrian Fortescue, in *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912) 352n1, provides more details citations related to these theories: “Dionysius Cartus (*in Apoc. Enar.* viii, 9) thinks it is St. Michael, Hildebert of Tours († c. 1134: *de mysterio missæ* ; P.L. clxxi, 1188) supposes the celebrant's guardian angel, J. Clichtove (*Elucidatorium Eccles.* Paris, 1516, p. 135) that it is a collective singular, for ‘angels.’ A still more curious idea is that the ‘angelus’ is the celebrant (Durandus : *Rationale*, iv, 44, §9). St. Thomas Aquinas sees the real explanation...that it is the angel in Apoc. viii, 4 (*Sum. Theol.* iii, qu. Lxxxiii, art. 4, ad 9). In the *Or. Christ.*, iii (1903), p. 67, is a text by Anastasius of Sinai (VII cent.), which shows how familiar was the idea of angels carrying the sacrifice up to God (they are seen doing so in a dream).”

<sup>50</sup> Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam (Traité sur l'Évangile de S. Luc)*, Sources Chrétiennes 45, vol. 1 “Livres I-VI,” tr. Gabriel Tissot (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1956) 1, n. 28, p. 61: “Apparuit autem a dextris altaris incensi, quia diuinae insigne misericordiae deferebat ; *dominus enim a dextris mihi, ne conmuear* et alibi : *dominus protectio tua super manum dexteræ tuæ*. Atque utinam nobis quoque adolentibus altaria, sacrificium deferentibus adsistat angelus, immo praebeat se uidentum ; non enim dubites adsistere angelum, quando Christus adsistit, Christus immolatur ; *etenim pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus.*” Italics original.

However, as Jungmann and Gehr infer, there is a natural curiosity and attraction that we have to the things of God, causing us to yearn for greater understanding, or at least speculate. Angels are participants in the sacred liturgy, and we invoke them at every Mass in the Preface and *Sanctus*, and —when prescribed— in the *Gloria*. Nevertheless, the question of whether at this point in the Canon —after the consecration and within what has been described as an epiclestical arrangement, the angelic order would be delegated to mediate the sacred activities occurring at the altar— remains a valid *dubium*. For some scholars, the question of the Angel is so shrouded in mystery that it should be left alone. Thus, Florus of Lyon declared that this section of the Canon should be “reverenced and feared than discussed.”<sup>51</sup> However, St. Robert Bellarmine is more certain when he states that “it would be most absurd to say that the body of Christ should now first be taken bodily into heaven by angels.”<sup>52</sup> As we shall see in what follows, there are two alternatives to this literary and historical perspective, both of which connect us back to the discussion of the form and function of the *Supplices* as an epiclesis.

### ***The Angel as Holy Spirit***

In his study of the origins of the *Te Deum*, the Benedictine scholar Paul Cagin of Solesmes dedicated the third part of his work to analyzing whether this ancient hymn could be understood as the remnant of the primitive Latin anaphora that eventually developed into the Roman Canon.<sup>53</sup> Part of his analysis involved the *Supplices*, as well as the now-defunct antiphon entitled *Emitte Angelum*

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<sup>51</sup> Florus of Lyons, *De expositio missae*, in *Patrologia Latina* 119, ed. J. -P. Migne (Paris, 1852) 58: “Haec verba mysterii tam profunda, tam mira et stupenda quis comprehendere sufficiat? quis inde digne aliquid loquatur? magis veneranda sunt et pavenda quam discutienda.” English translation taken from Fortescue, *The Mass*, 352-353.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei*, lib. III, cap. 24 “*de Missa*,” ob. 11 (Rome, 1838) 805, translated in Fortescue, *The Mass*, 353.

<sup>53</sup> Cagin, *Te Deum ou illatio?*, 198: “Nous allons donc examiner enfin l’hypothèse annoncée dans l’Introduction de ce mémoire, p. 13, et considérer le *Te Deum* non plus comme un cantique, mais comme un type plus ou moins désaffecté d’anaphore, de l’une des anaphores qui ont pu diversifier, dans l’Église latine primitive, le formulaire central de la messe, avant la fixation de ce que nous appelons aujourd’hui le Canon.” On p. 13, Cagin lays out the nature of his study of analyzing the *Te Deum* not just from a particular genre of liturgical text —the *illatio*— but from all the analogous formulae in all the liturgical texts (“Alors j’étudie ces deux formules...dans les relations qu’elles soutiennent avec les formules analogues de toutes les liturgies” [pp. 12-13, emphasis original]). Thus, Cagin makes clear again his ultimate thesis that the *Te Deum* is not a text entirely inherited from outside sources, but is a reflection of a primitive Latin anaphora (“Ce n’est plus alors à un *Te Deum* plagiaire, à une rapsodie quelconque que nous avons affaire, c’est au vrai *Te Deum*, à un *Te Deum* original, et tellement original qu’on peut se demander si’il n’est pas, littérairement, l’égal des plus vieilles anaphores, et si, liturgiquement, il n’a pas été lui-même, à l’origine, en fonction d’anaphore, s’il ne serait pas un type défiguré, fragmentaire, de l’anaphore latine primitive” [p. 13, emphasis original]). As a reminder, the “*illatio*” corresponds to the preface in the Roman Rite as presented in the Mozarabic and Gallican liturgies. Cagin uses a particular *illatio* for Easter Sunday from the Mozarabic Missal of Cardinal Ximenes as the source of his investigation. One can find the text of this *illatio* on pp. 9-10 of his work, as well as a parallel text from the Bobbio Sacramentary on pp. 10-11.

or *Emitte Spiritum*,<sup>54</sup> which was a chant associated with the Fraction Rite in some manuscripts, and as a Communion antiphon in others.<sup>55</sup> Although it might not seem immediately obvious, the connections between a chant sung during the preparation of the Host for distribution to the faithful and the *Supplices* are significant. For starters, if—as had been discussed previously—we are to understand the *Supplices* as a post-consecratory epiclesis wherein preparation is made for the faithful’s worthy and fruitful reception of the Sacred Mysteries, then Cagin underscores how the language of the *Supplices* anticipates the Fraction, and the language of the Fraction, in turn, summarizes the petition of *Supplices*.<sup>56</sup>

In fact, Cagin opines whether the traditional title given by the Missal to the *Communicantes* section of the Canon —“*Infra Actionem*”— is actually a corruption of a more ancient title that would have read, “*In Fractione*,” thus making clearer the connection between the Epiclesis and the Fraction where the *telos* of the sacred species comes to its fruition in its distribution to the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>57</sup> This presumed link between the Fraction and the Epiclesis gains further credence from the fact that the *post-secreta* or *post-pridie* —comprising the anamnetic and post-consecratory epiclesis sections of the anaphora in many non-Roman Western liturgical families<sup>58</sup>— appears in

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<sup>54</sup> On p. 217, Cagin presents three variants of the antiphon in the manuscripts—which range from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries—that contain it. The following is a composite of the text, with the variants in [brackets]: “Emmite angelum [*Spiritum Sanctum*] tuum Domine|ut dignetur santificare [*et dignare sanctificando mundare corda et corpora nostra ad percipiendum*] corpus et sanguinem tuum.|Nos frangimus, Domine,|Tu dignare benedicere [*Tu dignare tribuere*],|ut immaculatis manibus illud tractemus.|O quam beatus venter ille [*O quam beatus pectus illud*] qui christum meruit portare [*quod Christi corpus meruerit digne percipere*] |O quam pretiosa gemma et margarita quam lucis mundi illustrat gratia. [*O quam pretiosa hujus esce comestio quae esuriendam satiat animam*] |O quam beati pedes [*O quam beati viri*] illi qui christum meruerunt sustinere,|cui angeli et archangeli offerunt munera [*munera offerunt*],|sempiterno [*immortali*] et excelso Regi, alleluia.”

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 215: “Il s’agit de l’antienne *Emitte Angelum* ou *Emitte Spiritum*, que plusieurs anciens antiphonaires nous ont conservée, principalement en Italie. On l’y trouve tantôt sous la rubrique *In fractione*, tantôt sous celle-ci: *Dum frangitur corpus*, ou encore: *Ad corpus Domini sumendum*, etc., le plus souvent à la messe du jour de Noël, parfois à celle de l’Épiphanie, ou bien encore à Pâques et à la Pentecôte, soit une fois pour toutes, soit itérativement.”

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 218: “l’Epiclèse, en dernière analyse, implique la Fraction comme acte sacramentel préalable à la dispensation des Saints Mystères, et la Fraction, à son tour, résume ou mieux implique la dispensation elle-même.”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 218-219: “Aussi serait-il intéressant de rechercher si la rubrique *Infra Actionem*, qui précède la Consécration, ot qu’on trouve associée, de temps immémorial, soit au *Communicantes*, soit à l’*Hanc igitur*, ne serait pas, elle-même, autre chose qu’une corruption de *In fractione*. Combien de manuscrits anciens n’écrivent-ils pas en réalité, soit *infract.*, soit *in fract.*? comme si la tradition, plus forte qu’eux, leur imposait cette fidélité inconsciente à une appellation perdue?”

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Solemnia)*, vol. 1, tr. Francis A. Brunner (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics/Ave Maria Press, 1951) 48.

several Gallican texts so as to link the fruitful reception of the oblation with the fractioning of the Body of the Lord for distribution.<sup>59</sup>

One principal piece of documentary evidence that Cagin uses to support his view that the language of the *Supplices* —especially with its reference to the unidentified Angel— connects to both the Fraction Rite and to the antiphon, the *Emitte Angelum/Spiritum*, is taken from the tenth-century Sacramentary of Ratoldus. In the section treating the Easter Vigil, we find the text of this sacramentary directing the priest to pray the following text as he breaks the Host over the chalice:

*Emittere digneris, Domine, sanctum Angelum tuum ad sacrum et immortale  
mysterium, scilicet Corpus et sanguinem tuum: Nos enim frangimus, Domine, illud:  
tu dignare benedicere, et praesta: ut immaculatis sensibus, et manibus illud  
tractare valeamus, et digne sumere. Per Dominum nostrum.*<sup>60</sup>

Cagin’s discussion of this text notes the clear parallel found with the antiphon *Emitte Angelum*, made more explicit in the Sacramentary of Ratoldus by the rubric that directs the antiphon be sung after —or concurrent with— the liturgical text quoted above.<sup>61</sup>

While Cagin’s ultimate purpose for examining this text was to build on prior examples of how certain euchologies can be said to have developed from the anaphoric language of the primitive Roman Rite, our present concern for reflecting on his research is merely to highlight the common elements shared between the *Supplices* as a probable communion-epiclesis and the *Emitte Angelum/Spiritum* as a text and chant accompanying the Fraction Rite. The petition wherein the Lord is asked to send His Holy Angel —given in the Sacramentary of Ratoldus as an infinitive, “*Emittere*,” and in the antiphon “*Emitte Angelum/Spiritum*” as an imperative— parallels the language of the *Supplices*, where the priest humbly asks God to command His Angel to carry the gifts of offering to the altar. Additionally, the remaining content of the *Emittere* of Ratoldus and the *Emitte Angelum/Spiritum* asks that, as the faithful prepare to receive the gift of Christ’s Body and Blood, they may do so with

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<sup>59</sup> Cagin, *Te Deum ou illatio?*, 219. Here Cagin presents two examples. The first is from the *Missale Gothicum*’s formulary LXXVIII, where the *post secreta* reads “Credimus, Domine, credimus IN HAC CONFRACTIONE CORPORIS, et effusione tui Sanguinis nos esse redemptos : confidimus etiam quod spe hic interim jam tenemus, in aeternum perfruit mereamur. Per” (cf. *Missale Gothicum*, LXXVIII [Item Missa Dominicalis]). The second is likewise from the *Missale Gothicum*, though this instance is from its formulary for the Nativity: “Credimus, Domine, adventum tuum : recolimus Passionem tuam. Corpus tuum in peccatorum nostrorum remissione CONFRACTUM, Sanguis sanctus tuus in pretium nostrae redemptionis effusus est. Qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas in saecul” (IV [Ordo Missae in die Nativitatis Domini nostri Jesu Christi]).

<sup>60</sup> *The Sacramentary of Ratoldus* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Lat. 12052), Henry Bradshaw Society 116, ed. Nicholas Orchard (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005) 244, §1115. In Cagin, *Te Deum ou illatio?*, 227, the text of the antiphon *Emitte Angelum* is placed next to the text *Emittere digneris* to show the clear overlap between the two.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 244, §1116: “A. Emitte angelum tuum domine ut dignetur.”

clean senses and hands and, as such, be found worthy to receive the sacred offering (“*ut immaculatis sensibus, et manibus illud tractare valeamus, et digne sumere*”).

The argument for identifying the Angel of the *Supplices* with the third Person of the Blessed Trinity is more clearly outlined in the work of Ludwig Augustin Hoppe. In his study comparing and contrasting the epiclesis in the Eastern and Roman liturgies, Hoppe first focuses on the bodily disposition and gestures of the priest-celebrant. In the East,<sup>62</sup> the priest bows profoundly and imparts a Sign of the Cross at the point of the invocation that asks for the Holy Spirit to descend on the offerings, two things likewise done by the priest during the *Supplices*, though with the Sign of the Cross over the sacred elements only occurring in the traditional form of the Canon.<sup>63</sup> Based on these parallels, Hoppe affirms, along with the other scholars already noted, that the *Supplices* is a form of an epiclesis.<sup>64</sup> Regarding, though, the identity of the mediating Angel in the *Supplices*, Hoppe acknowledges that the evidence given for this being Christ—a matter to be discussed in the next section of this paper—is logical, especially since it resonates with material found in the Church Fathers and with the overall structure of the Canon as the prayer of Christ to the Father in the Spirit. However, a problem to be overcome is found with an unfortunate tautology this interpretation creates.<sup>65</sup> If the Angel *is* Christ, then His activity in the midst of the anaphora is arguably repetitious, bringing up to the heavenly altar His sacred Body and Blood in sacramental form so as only to descend back to the earthly altar to ensure the fruitful reception of Communion for the

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Ludwig Augustin Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis der griechischen und orientalischen Liturgien und der römische Konsekrationskanon* (Schaffhausen, 1864) 198-199. Here, Hoppe highlights details from the Divine Liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom, as well as the liturgies of the Syrian, Armenian, and Alexandrian traditions.

<sup>63</sup> Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 200-201: “So trifft denn auf das Genaueste der Ritus unserer Oration mit dem Ritus der morgenländischen *ἐπίκλησις* zusammen. Wie den griechischen Priester, da er den heiligen Geist ruft, das Bewusstsein um die Grosse seiner Bitte, die Nothwendigkeit ihrer Erhöhung und seine eigene Machtlosigkeit tief zur Erde beugt, so vermag auch der lateinische Priester derselben Bitte und demselben Bewusstsein keinen andern äussern Ausdruck zu geben; und wie jener, so erhebt sich auch dieser, um die erflachte Segnung in dem Segenssymbol des Kreuzes über das Opfer auszugiessen.”

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 201: “Wer könnte in diesem wunderbaren consensus der rituellen Formen, wie ihn die Kirche durch sämtliche Liturgieen genau an der nämlichen Stelle festgehalten hat, ein Werk des Zufalls erblicken oder gar dem Ernste der heiligen Kirche ein leeres Formenspiel zuzumuthen wagen? Wie durch den Text des *Supplices*, so sehen wir uns durch seinen Ritus wieder hineingeführt in die – *ἐπίκλησις*.”

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 172: “Was aber die Deutungen betrifft, welche zu dem *angelus Christus* greift, so findet dieselbe zwar kein Hinderniss in der kirchlichen Sprache, vereinigt sich auch, sofern Christo die Consecrationsmacht nicht abgesprochen werden darf, mit dem erwiesenen Inhalte der Oration an sich, fügt sich jedoch, indem sie zwischen dem *sublime altare* und dem *sanctus angelus* eine Tautologie statuirt, logisch nicht zu der vorliegenden formellen Fassung jenes Inhalts.”

faithful members of His Church. For Hoppe, this tautology “confuses and destroys the picture” being conveyed in this section of the Canon.<sup>66</sup>

In place of this interpretation, Hoppe argues that the identity of the mediating Angel of the *Supplices* is the Holy Spirit. His principal source to support this argument is the Mozarabic Rite’s *post-bridie* found on the feast days of Saints Marciana and Rufina, which, in turn, is an adaptation of the *post-bridie* found on the fifth Sunday of Easter.<sup>67</sup> However, whereas the euchology for the fifth Sunday of Easter speaks of the Angel as the agent to distribute the consecrated offerings to the faithful (*accepta discurrente sancto angelo tuo nobis sanctificata distribuas*), the euchology on the feast days of Saints Marciana and Rufina describe this distribution as occurring through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (*per ministerium sancti Spiritus*).<sup>68</sup> From Hoppe’s perspective, this verbal agreement between these euchological formulae allow us to identify the *angelus* of the Mozarabic *post-bridie* of the fifth Sunday of Easter with the *sanctus spiritus* of the *post-bridie* of the formulae for the respective feasts of Sts. Marciana and Rufina.<sup>69</sup>

Hoppe’s argument is likewise based on insights gleaned from the ancient forms of the *benedictio fontis*, not only in the Mozarabic and Gallican liturgies, but also in the Roman one. Naturally, the Church in both the East and the West has placed heavy emphasis on the activity of the Holy Spirit in the administration of certain Sacraments, such as Sacred Orders, and Sacramentals, such as the blessing of baptismal water. However, Hoppe notes that certain forms of these major euchologies invoke a holy angel in the place where the Holy Spirit is typically invoked.<sup>70</sup> An

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 172: “Denn, verlangt das zur Bezeichnung der Wandlung gewählte Bild (perferri in sublime altare) eine von unten, d.i. von den Opferelementen des irdischen Altares aus, nach oben d.i. zu der menschheitlichen Gegenwart Christi im Himmel sich richtende Thätigkeit, so bittet bei jener Voraussetzung die Oration um die Herabkunft des Logos, um ihn dann sofort wieder zu sich selber, zu seiner heiligen Menschheit, hinaufwirkend darzustellen. Die Tautologie verwirrt, zerstört das Bild.” Emphasis of the quoted section added.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 174: “Confitemur, Domine, confitemur et credimus, pro nostro scelere te corporaliter mortis subiisse supplicium, et pro omnium salute prostrato mortis interitu triumphantibus angelis coelestem patris ex qua veneras ad mansionem reversum. Pro quo *te Deus omnipotens rogamus* et petimus, ut oblata in conspectu tuo nostrae servitutis libamina *ipse tibi acceptabilia facias*, et *accepta discurrente sancto angelo tuo nobis sanctificata* distribuas, ut dum corda nostra corporis et sanguinis filii tui Domini nostri commixtione purificas, petitiones nostras in odorem suavitatis accipias.” Emphasis original to Hoppe’s quotation of the oration from the Mozarabic source.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 175: “Die sub 1. angeführte oratio post-bridie findet sich wörtlich noch zweimal im Mozarabischen Missal: in der Messe des Festes der heil. Marciana und jener der heil. Rufina, mit dem Unterschiede jedoch, dass in ihnen das „*discurrente sancto angelo tuo*“ mit „*per ministerium sancti Spiritus*“ vertauscht ist.” Emphasis original.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 175: “Dürften wir nun — und die wörtliche Uebereinstimmung des übrigen Textes ladet dazu ein — diese Differenz völlig gleichsetzen, so ergäbe sich sofort nicht bloß die Identität des angelus der ersten Oration mit dem *sanctus spiritus* der andern, sondern zugleich auch der Grund für diese eigenthümliche Benennung: der heil. Geist wäre damit als ein vom Vater mit der Erfüllung seines Willens (mit dem Vollzuge der Consecration) beauftragter und dazu ausgesandter Minister, spiritus administratorius (Hebr. 1, 14.), dargestellt.”

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 176: “Es ist eine unumstößliche Thatsache, dass die ganze Kirche des Orients wie des Occidents, von jeher über das Taufwasser den heiligen Geist herabgerufen hat als denjenigen, der ihm die Kraft der Wiedergeburt verleihen soll. Unter den diesfälligen Formularen gibt es nun auch solche, welche zu eben demselben Zwecke einen *angelus sanctus* erleben.” Emphasis original.

example of this arrangement can be found in the Roman presbyteral sacramentary of the eighth century, the *Gelasianum vetus*, in its treatment of the celebration of the rites of Initiation on the Solemn Feast of Pentecost. In one of its alternative blessings of the font, the *Gelasianum vetus* asks that an *angelum sanctitatis* be sent down upon the waters so that those washed clean in them might be regenerated in the Holy Spirit.<sup>71</sup> Based on these details, Hoppe gives his opinion that the Angel of the *Supplices* can be none other than the “holy messenger of the Father and Son, who continually proceeds from the Father and the Son,” the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup>

The strong case advocated by Cagin and Hoppe in favor of the Angel as the Holy Spirit is based on the *Supplices* being a form of an epiclesis. To further corroborate this argument, some ancient Judeo-Christian documents, like the *Ascension of Isaiah*,<sup>73</sup> speak of the Holy Spirit in angelic terms such as the “Angel of the Spirit” and the “Angel of the Church.”<sup>74</sup> As noted before, this sense of the Holy Spirit’s post-consecratory activity in the anaphora led the Liturgical Consilium to make explicit reference to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the communion epiclesis of the newly composed Eucharistic Prayers of the Missals of Ss. Paul VI and John Paul II.<sup>75</sup>

However, despite Cagin and Hoppe’s argument having a credible basis, for some theologians—like Maurice de la Taille, whose critique of the pneumatological approach will be outlined in the next section of this essay—the paucity of authorities in the patristic and medieval periods who likewise subscribe to this view is enough to label this school of thought as mere improbable conjecture. Conversely, though, the status of the *Supplices* as an epiclesis is widely acknowledged.

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<sup>71</sup> *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli. Sacramentarium gelasianum*, edd. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, Leo Eizenhöfer, Petrus Siffrin, *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series Maior, Fontes IV* (Rome: Herder, 1960) 95, §606 [Item alia ad cuccurrendum]: “Domine, sanctae pater, omnipotens aeternae deus, aquarum spiritualium sanctificator, te suppliciter depraecamus, ut ad hoc ministerium/humilitatis nostrae respicere digneris, et super has ablundis aquis et vivificandis hominibus preparatas angelum sanctitatis emittas, quo peccatis vitae prioris abluti reatuque deturso, purum sancto spiritui habitaculum in regeneratis procuret: per dominum nostrum.” Emphasis added. Cf. Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 178: “Ebenso hat die römische Kirche, die bis zur Stunde mit dreifach anstürmender Gewalt betet: „descendat in hanc plenitudinem fontis *virtus Spiritus sancti*,” ehedem über den Taufquell den „*angelus sanctitatis*“ herabgerufen.” Emphasis original.

<sup>72</sup> Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 179: “Wir kennen jetzt den sanctus angelus, welchen die Oration Supplices erfleht, dass er auf des Vaters Geheiss erscheine und die Opfertgaben des Priesters und Volkes zu dem Einen und ewigen Opfer des Einen und ewigen Hohenpriesters erhebe d.i. in den Leib und das Blut Christi wandle. Er hat sich uns in der That in seiner hohen Herrlichkeit, als ein angelus *gloriosus*, enthüllt: es ist kein anderer als der heilige Gesandte des Vaters und Sohnes, der unablässig ausgeht vom Vater und Sohne, um das Werk der Erlösung zu vollenden, – der heilige Geist.” Emphasis original.

<sup>73</sup> *Ascensio Isaiae: Textus*. P. Bettiolo, A. Giambelluca Kossova, L. Leonardi, E. Norelii, and L. Perrone, eds. And trans. Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 7. Turnhout: Brepols, 1995, and *Ascensio Isaiae: Commentarius*. Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 8. Turnhout: Brepols, 1995. Cf. Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017) 229-244. According to Gieschen (p. 229), this document dates between the second and fourth century AD.

<sup>74</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 231.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Annibale Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975*, tr. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) 456-458.

Thus, when we examine the argument in favor of seeing the Angel as Christ, we will find the proponents of this approach likewise basing it on the epictetical nature of this section of the Canon.

### ***The Angel as Christ***

In book four of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, St. Bonaventure states his opinion regarding the Angel in the Canon. Bonaventure presents his argument by first noting the intercessory, mediatory role of angels as spiritual beings that, through their proximity to the throne of God and through their holy, pure, and fervent affection for God, can present our prayers and petitions to the Almighty.<sup>76</sup> However, in the case of the Sacrifice of the Mass, since the angels are—along with us—revering the sacred Body of the Lord in heaven, the only One capable of mediating this sacred reality from the earthly altar to the heavenly one is “the Angel of Great Counsel,” who serves as both our “Pontiff” and “Advocate,” and who continually stands before the face of God: Christ Himself.<sup>77</sup>

The use of the title “Angel of Great Counsel” or “Good Counsel” is loosely connected to Isaiah 9:6,<sup>78</sup> wherein the child born to restore the fortunes of Israel is called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”<sup>79</sup> Origen’s third homily on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, treating a preceding passage in Isaiah 4:1 where seven women respond to the tribulation facing Israel by laying hold of a man who can take away their reproach, identifies the man in question as Christ and further describes Him as “the angel of great counsel” filled with strength and power.<sup>80</sup> Admittedly, Origen is somewhat unique among the Church Fathers who subscribe to an angelomorphic christology in that in some of Origen’s writings he not only associates the Son with an angelic office, but the Spirit as well. For example, in his *Commentary on*

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<sup>76</sup> Bonaventure, *Sententiarum*, lib. IV, distinctio XI, pars 1, dubium 4, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5, ed. A.C. Peltier (Paris, 1866) 478: “Sed hoc intelligendum est, quod sicut Angeli intelliguntur Deo offerre orationes nostras et petitiones, similiter desideria, non propter ignorantiam Dei, sed propter commoditatem nostrum : quia suis sanctis affectibus et puris nos adjuvant, et merita nostra in conspectu Dei explicant, ut ex eorum puritate sancta, et affectione ferventi, ratione dignitatis nuntii sint acceptabilia.”

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.: “Sic intelligendum est offerre sacrificia, quia sacris mysteriis assistentes una nobiscum precantur, ut nostra munera sint accepta, et una nobiscum reveantur sanctissimum corpus Christi, sicut in cœlo: ideo dicuntur in cœlum rapere et consociare, quantum ad hoc quod reputant honore dignum in altari, ut in cœlo. Per hunc etiam modum intelligenda est oratio canonis, quia sicut exponit Innocentius, Angelus ille magni consilii est Christus: per manus illius oramus sacrificium perferri, id est, ipsius meritis et precibus nostrum sacrificium Deo acceptari. Unde ipse est pontifex, et advocatus noster, et apparet continue vultui Dei ad interpellandum pro nobis; et sic patent quæsitæ.”

<sup>78</sup> 9:5, in the Septuagint.

<sup>79</sup> Unless otherwise noted, biblical translation are taken from the *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *Origen: Homilies on Isaiah*, tr. Elizabeth Ann Dively Lauro (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2021) 59-66, esp. 63.

*Romans* Origen identifies the two cherubim affixed to the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 25:22 as representing both the Son and the Spirit, and he also relates, in his *De Principiis*, that the two Seraphim in Isaiah 6:2-3 are likewise the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity.<sup>81</sup>

Other Church Fathers can be cited as maintaining an angelomorphic christology. St. Justin Martyr, for instance, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, argues for a number of connections between certain Old Testament theophanies and the Second Person of the Trinity. In particular, Justin interprets the presence of the Son in the Pillar of Cloud in Exodus 13-14, as well as in one of the three men Abraham encountered at Mamre in Genesis 18, as well as being the one who wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32, and appearing in the Burning Bush in Exodus 3, and as the warrior who appeared to Joshua in Joshua 5.<sup>82</sup> Carefully distinguishing between the eternally begotten Son of the Father and other created angels, St. Justin explains to Trypho his exegetical principle:

Thus, neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any man saw the Father and ineffable Lord of all creatures and of Christ himself, but [they saw] him who, according to God's will, is God the Son, and his angel because of his serving the Father's will; him who, by his will, became man through a virgin; who also became fire when he talked to Moses from the bush.<sup>83</sup>

Like St. Justin, Tertullian, in his *Adversus Praxean*, "assigns all judgment and revelatory activity, including that carried out by the Angel of the Lord, to the Son," being sure, in his work *De carne Christi*, to carefully "state that the use of angel terminology in Christology does not imply

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<sup>81</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 195. Gieschen quotes from Origen's *Commentary on Romans* 111.8: "What are we to think of them as a symbol? Cherubim means fullness of knowledge. Where do we find fullness of knowledge if not in him of whom the Apostle says 'in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' [Col 2.3]? And the Apostle says that of the Word. He also writes the same things of the Holy Spirit when he says: 'The Spirit scrutinizes all things, even the deep things of God' [1 Cor 2.10]." Gieschen then quotes from *De Principiis* I.3.4: "The Hebrew said that the two Seraphim with six wings in Isaiah who cry to one another and say, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord Sabaoth,' are the only Son of God and the Holy Spirit. For our part we believe that the express in the *Psalms of Habakkuk* [Hab. 3.2 LXX], 'In the midst of the two living creatures,' refers to Christ and the Holy Spirit."

<sup>82</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Selections from the Fathers of the Church 3, trans. Thomas B. Falls, eds. Thomas P. Halton and Michael Slusser (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003) 58 (ch. 37.4), 83-88 (ch. 56), 89-91 (ch. 58.4-13), 91-92 (ch. 59.1), and 96 (ch. 62.5), respectively. Cf. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 189.

<sup>83</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 191-192 (ch. 127.4). Cf. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 189. Admittedly, though, some have questioned whether Justin's treatment of his Angelomorphic Christology maintained all the important distinctions when discussing the office of the Second Person as herald of the Father's will, and His nature as the eternal begotten of the Father. For instance, Gieschen focuses on Justin's statement in *I Apologia* 6.1-2, where, in his confession of trinitarian faith, Justin speaks of the "army of the other good angels" who follow the Son and "are made like him." Gieschen then notes that "What is striking about this text is both Justin's acknowledgement [sic] that angels are made like Christ (i.e., of the same nature) and the inclusion of angels as receiving 'worship and adoration' in a sequence after the Father and the Son and before the (prophetic) Spirit" (Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 193-194).

angelic nature.”<sup>84</sup> Similarly, St. Clement of Alexandria understands the pre-incarnate Word as having been an interlocutor with Moses, instructing Moses and going before him when leading the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land.<sup>85</sup> More pertinent to our discussion, the anaphora in the *Traditio Apostolica* refers to Christ as the “Angel of the Father’s will,” which Bernard Botte connects to Isaiah’s “Angel of Good Counsel” in his critical edition,<sup>86</sup> and which is likewise the way in which Christ is identified in the eighth book of the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*: “the first-born of every creature, the angel of the great counsel and sovereign priest.”<sup>87</sup>

Connected to the euchological formula in the *Traditio Apostolica* is an interesting discussion presented by Christiaan Kappes in his exegesis of the blessing of Joseph’s sons by Jacob in Genesis 48.<sup>88</sup> In this chapter of Genesis, Ephraim and Manasseh are brought to the elderly patriarch Jacob by their father Joseph, so that they may receive their grandfather’s blessing. As Manasseh was the older brother, Joseph led him to Jacob’s right, whereas Ephraim, the younger brother, was taken to Jacob’s left. However, when imposing the blessing, Jacob crossed his right arm over his left so that the right hand, and not the left, rested on the younger Ephraim’s head, something that Kappes

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<sup>84</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 193. Here, Gieschen quotes from *Adversus Praxean* 16, which likewise has a cross-reference to *Adversus Marcionem*, 2.27: “It is the Son, therefore, who has been from the beginning administering judgment, throwing down the haughty tower [Babel], and dividing tongues, punishing the whole world by the violence of the waters, raining upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone, as the Lord from the Lord. For He it was who at all times came down to hold converse with men, from Adam on to the patriarchs and the prophets, in vision, in dreams, in mirror, in dark saying; ever from the beginning laying the foundation of the course of His dispensations, which He meant to follow out to the very last. Thus was He ever learning even as God to converse with men upon earth, being no other than the Word which was to be made flesh.” In his *De carne Christi* 14, Tertullian says, “He is indeed called ‘Angel of Great Counsel’, [sic] that is, messenger, by a word that refers to office rather than nature. For he had as his mission to announce to the world the great purpose of the Father, namely that concerning the restitution of humanity. He is not, however, on this account to be understood as an actual angel like Gabriel or Michael.” Here Gieschen likewise gives a cross-reference to Novation’s *De Trinitate* 28.

<sup>85</sup> Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 194. Here, Gieschen quotes from *Paedagogus* I.7: “For it is really the Lord [the Son] that was the instructor of the ancient people by Moses; but He is the instructor of the new people by himself, face to face. ‘For behold,’ He says to Moses, ‘My angel shall go before thee,’ representing the evangelical and commanding power of the Word, but guarding the Lord’s prerogative. [...] Formerly the older people had an old covenant, and the law disciplined the people with fear, and the Word was an angel; but to the fresh and new people has also been given a new covenant, and the Word has appeared, and fear is turned to love, and that mystic angel is born — Jesus.”

<sup>86</sup> *La Tradition Apostolique: D’après les anciennes versions*, ed. Bernard Botte, Sources Chrétiennes 11bis (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1984) 48, 50, §4 (Ethiopic version): “Gratias tibi referimus deus, per dilectum filium tuum Iesum Christum, quem in ultimis temporibus misisti nobis salvatorem et redemptorem et angelum voluntatis tuae, qui est verbum quod a te < non separator >, per quem omnia fecisti, volens, et misisti de caelo in matricem virginis, qui caro factus est et portatus in ventre et Filius tuus ostensus est ex spiritu sancto.” In footnote 2 on p. 49, Botte notes the following: “Allusion à Is. 9, 5 d’après les Septante : l’Ange du grand conseil.”

<sup>87</sup> *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, lib. 8, cap. 36, 3; cf. lib. 2, cap. 24, 3; cap. 30, 2. Quoted in Maurice De La Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, “A Letter to a Theologian on the Angel of Sacrifice and the Sacrifice in Heaven” (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934) 59-79, esp. 62.

<sup>88</sup> Christiaan Kappes. “The Angel of Great Counsel and the Angel-Redeemer: Reception of the Angelomorphic Christ.” In *Let us be attentive! Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy—Prešov (Slovakia), 9-14 July 2018*. Edited by Martin Lüsttraeten, Brian Butcher, Steven Hawkes-Teeples. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2020. Pp. 99-134.

interprets as the prefigured ascendancy of the “younger brother,” the Mystical Body of Christ, over the older, the Jewish people, in the mission of salvation. Building on a commentary by Philo associating the name “Ephraim” with the concepts of “memory” and “fruitfulness,”<sup>89</sup> Kappes presents the anaphora in the *Traditio* as a kind of gloss of Genesis 48:15-16, the verses that contain the blessing formula itself. Here Jacob prays that “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has led me all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (vv. 15-16). Comparing this with the opening protocol in the anaphora of the *Traditio Apostolica*, a parallel is found wherein the celebrant likewise prays to the God who has sent a messenger into the world to guide His people: “O God, through your beloved child Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as Savior and Redeemer and Angel of your will/counsel, who is your inseparable word, through whom you made all things and it was well pleasing to you [...]”<sup>90</sup> Based on this parallel, and relating the language of the anaphora of the *Traditio* to other patristic authors of that period, Kappes notes that

The God ‘in whose sight’ the patriarchs were pleasing...is the visible pre-incarnate Jesus. This accords with a typical preoccupation of proto-orthodox Christians like Justin and Novatian asserting their exegesis over a competing visible-Father exegesis of the late-second and mid-third centuries; namely, God the Father of the Old Testament may not be seen, but only the Son.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to the line of thought taken from the post-apostolic and late antique periods, the argument in favor of seeing Christ as the Angel of the *Supplices* likewise has modern exponents. The learned French Jesuit of the early twentieth century, Maurice de la Taille, when examining the language of the *Supplices*, saw a strong connection between it and the Church’s doctrine of Transubstantiation. Responding to a critique of his principal work, *Mysterium fidei*, by a fellow

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<sup>89</sup> Philo of Alexandria, “Allegorical Commentary,” in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*, tr. C. D. Young (Peabody, MA, 1995) 60-61 (ch. 30:90-31:96). Cf. Kappes, “The Angel of Great Counsel and the Angel-Redeemer,” 105-106. In Philo’s commentary, he notes the distinction between the names of Manasseh and Ephraim, with Manasseh’s meaning “recollection,” and Ephraim’s meaning “memory.” From Philo’s perspective, memory is the more perfect of the two since memory “has its perceptions fresh and harmonious and clear so that it never errs through ignorance.” On the other hand, recollection “is but a mutilated and blind thing,” since it is always preceded by forgetfulness. Because of this, Ephraim, as “memory,” can also be equated with “the fruitfulness (καρποφορία) of the soul of a man found [sic] of learning, which brings forth its appropriate fruit (καρπὸν) when it has confirmed its speculations and preserves them in its memory.”

<sup>90</sup> Translation from Kappes, “The Angel of Great Counsel and the Angel-Redeemer,” 129-130.

<sup>91</sup> Kappes, “The Angel of Great Counsel and the Angel-Redeemer,” 131.

French Jesuit, Adhémar d'Alès,<sup>92</sup> de la Taille, while readily admitting the validity of the majority opinion that saw the Angel of the *Supplices* representing the collective order of angels already at work in the liturgy —and, jointly with d'Alès, critiquing the opinion of Hoppe and Cagin regarding their interpretation of the Angel being the Holy Spirit<sup>93</sup>— nevertheless questioned the objection given to the possibility of the Angel being Christ. Key to de la Taille's rejoinder was the fact that the description of the activity of the Angel —bearing the consecrated gifts (*hæc perferri*) to the heavenly altar— is a proper activity already belonging to Christ's *munera* as Priest, Victim, and Altar.<sup>94</sup>

De la Taille outlines his argument in *Mysterium Fidei*, citing numerous patristic and scholastic theologians to support his approach, including St. Paschasius Radbertus,<sup>95</sup> Thomas of Walden,<sup>96</sup> and the Greek theologian, Nicholas Cabasilas. Perhaps the citation of Cabasilas' work, *Liturgiae Expositio*, most thoroughly outlines de la Taille's argument. From an Eastern perspective, Cabasilas comments on the Latin approach to the consecration of the bread and the wine at Mass. Regarding the *Supplices*, Cabasilas references Matthew 23:19, where the Lord critiques the Pharisees and scribes for viewing the gift placed on the altar as more sacred than the altar which actually makes the gift sacred. In light of this dominical admonition, Cabasilas notes that when the priest prays that the gifts be borne by the Angel from the earthly altar to the heavenly one, the priest

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<sup>92</sup> Adhémar d'Alès, "Bulletin de théologie historique," in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* (1922) 362-384.

<sup>93</sup> De la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, 69n1. Here, de la Taille notes, "As this discussion was carried on with Père d'Alès, there was no occasion for examining the view which identifies our Angel with the Holy Ghost, since my correspondent rejects that view, as I do. That hypothesis, however, put into calculation by Hoppe some sixty years ago, has been taken up again in our day by certain liturgists of note. It has not in its favour the authority of any spokesman of patristic or medieval antiquity. In liturgical texts only two points of support can be found: (i) an antiphon occurring in manuscripts of the tenth-thirteenth century (*cf. Cagin, Te Deum ou Illatio?* p. 217), and wavering between the two following forms: *Emitte Angelum tuum, Domine* and *Emitte, Spiritum Sanctum tuum, Domine*, 'for the sanctification of thy Body and Blood' (there is nothing about a translation of the gifts, but a simple downward *epiclesis*); (ii) a fragment of the *Liber Ordinum (Mysterium Fidei* p. 447), without any reference to the Eucharist, but having in view solely the descent of the Holy Ghost, 'Angel of Truth,' upon the baptismal font. It is too little to confer upon the conjectural interpretation of Hoppe a serious probability. This would be true of his opinion, even if there were not against it an imposing array of scriptural, patristic and liturgical statements in favour of the Word, the Sovereign Priest, the Head of the heavenly hierarchy, that Son of the Father whom, after all, so many other *epicleis* [sic], even of the most remote antiquity, do invoke."

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>95</sup> Principally, his *Liber de corpore et sanguine Christi*, in *Patrologia Latina* 120, ed. J.-P. Migne, 1286 (cap. 8, n. 1), 1286-1287 (cap. 8, n. 2), 1290 (cap. 8, n. 6), 1310-1311 (cap. 12, n. 1), and 1334 (c. 21, n. 2). Cf. Maurice de la Taille, *Mysterium fidei de augustissimo corporis et sanguinis Christi sacrificio atque sacramento: Elucidationes L, in tres libros distinctae* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1921) 276-277.

<sup>96</sup> *Sacramentalia*, tit. 4, cap. 39, fol. 94, quoting St. Bede the Venerable's *De Tabernaculo*, lib. 3, cap. 12, in *Patrologia Latina* 91, 494. Cf. De La Taille, *Mysterium fidei*, 279.

in question references none other than Christ Himself, who alone can sanctify.<sup>97</sup> Thus, for Cabasilas, Christ is not only the gift, but the altar *and* the Angel.

The role of the Angel at this moment, then, is to mediate the Sacrifice, which itself is a very priestly activity. As de la Taille further elucidates his response to the criticism of d'Alès, he declares that

Christ is the Angel who descends, and the Angel who ascends; the Messenger of God, the Interpreter of men; the Angel Mediator. The priest is such a mediator, now turned towards God in the name of men, now turned towards men in the name of God: 'because he is the angel of the God of hosts,' says the prophet Malachias [sic] (2:7) [...]. It follows that Christ, the Sovereign Priest is, as such, the Angel of God *par excellence*.<sup>98</sup>

On the point of Christ's Priesthood and the ministerial priest's participation in that priesthood, as well as the assistance of other ministers playing their proper roles in the sacred liturgy, de la Taille sees the language of the *Supplices* as indicating the important role of hierarchy: just as Christ, "the supreme Liturgus (Heb. 8:1-2), the invisible Priest, the Angel beloved of God (Justin, *Dial*, 93)," has angelic ministers—or deacons—assisting Him, so too the visible priest at the altar, as vicar of *the* Angel Mediator, is assisted by the deacon, a surrogate of the created order of angels.<sup>99</sup> From this, de la Taille states that

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<sup>97</sup> Nicholas Cabasilas, *Liturgia Expositio*, cap. 30, in *Patrologia Graeca* 150, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1865) 433-437: "Latini non aperte petunt sanctificationem et mutationem in corpus dominicum, sed aliis utuntur nominibus eo ferentibus, et quae tantundem valent. Quae est autem oratio? Jube surus ferri dona haec in manu angeli ad supercoeleste tuum altare... Omnia quae intercedendi vim habent et sanctificationem nobis praebent, solus est ipse Salvator. Quenam ergo sunt quae intercedendi vim habent et sanctificant? Sacerdos, Hostia, Altare. Etenim et altare sanctificat, ut vult sermo Domini. *Altare* enim, inquit, est *quod sanctificat donum*. Ergo quoniam solus ipse est qui sanctificat, solus fuerit Sacerdos et Hostia et Altare. ...Ad hoc supercoeleste altare orat sacerdos [Latinus] dona sursum ferri, quod est sanctificari, in ipsum supercoeleste Christi corpus mutari... Quoniam enim altare sanctificat dona ei superimposita, idem est orare ut dona sanctificentur, et orare ut altari superimponantur. (Quae enim est sanctificatio, qua altare sanctificat dona imposita? Ea qua ipse Sacerdos seipsum sanctificavit: scilicet eo quod oblatu est Deo et sanctificatus.) Quoniam enim idem est et a Sacerdos et Altare, et Hostia, idem est et a Sacerdote sacrificatum esse, et in Hostiam illam mutatum esse, et in illo supercoelesti Altari posita et dedicata esse. Propterea, cum aliquod horum trium separatim oraveris, universum exorasti." Cf. De la Taille, *Mysterium fidei*, 276.

<sup>98</sup> De la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, 61. In a similar vein, Prosper Guéranger notes that "There is neither Cherub, nor Seraph, nor Angel, nor Archangel that can possibly execute what the Priest here asks God to command to be done. It is an Act wholly beyond the power of any created being. Now, observe the meaning of the word Angel; it signifies *sent*, and the Son of God was the *One Sent*, by the Father; He came down upon earth among men, He is the true *Missus*, Sent, as He says of Himself: *Et qui misit me Pater* (John 5:37). Our Lord is not simply in the rank of those spirits whom we term Angels and Archangels, placed near to us by God. No, He is the Angel by excellence, He is, as the Scripture expresses it, the Angel of Great Counsel, *Angelus magni Consilii*, of that great Counsel of God whereby willing to redeem the world, He gave His own Son. So then, the Priest begs of God that the Angel may bear away *haec* (*What is upon the Altar*), and may place It upon the Altar of Heaven; he makes this petition in order to show the identity of the Sacrifice of Heaven, with the Sacrifice of earth. [...] Now Who is it that can make these two Sacrifices, to be both one? It is Jesus Christ, the Sent, the Angel of the Great Counsel" (Prosper Guéranger, *On the Holy Mass*, tr. Laurence Shepherd [Farnborough: Saint Michael's Abbey Press, 2006] 96-97).

<sup>99</sup> De la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, 68.

It is the collectivity, or rather the hierarchy, of this supraterritorial ministry which seems to be had in view in the prayer of the Canon for the transfer of the gifts offered up. We ask that the transfer be brought about by the divine Envoy, by the glorified Liturgus seated at the right hand of the Father and intervening here as he shall intervene on the last day.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, while angelic creatures are certainly operative in the liturgy, as the majority opinion rightly specifies, ministering to Christ as they did at His temptation in the desert and during His agony in the garden, the sacrifice that “clinches the alliance of earth and heaven” is not mediated by the hands of created angels, but by the hand of the “Sovereign Angel,” by the hand of Christ.<sup>101</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

As we noted at the start of this paper, our aim was merely to revisit the scholarly debate regarding the identity of the Angel in the *Supplices* to reflect on the role of mediation in the Sacrifice of the Mass and our participation in this mystery. The arguments posed by the three schools of interpretation —the literary and historical school seeing the Angel as representative of the collective angelic order, the pneumatological school seeing the Angel as the Holy Spirit, and the christological school seeing the Angel as Christ— are all well-founded in both textual criticism and theological insight. The literary and historical argument, rooted in the use of the plural form of *angelus* found in St. Ambrose’s Canon in Book Four of *De Sacramentis (per manus angelorum tuorum)*, and in the Liturgy of St. Mark/St. Cyril’s reference to the “archangelic liturgy/ministry,” provides strong textual evidence of the ministry of angels at this point in the liturgy, serving as a collective order in a manner that is not without precedent in sacred scripture.<sup>102</sup> Regarding the pneumatological approach, the status of the *Supplices* as a form of post-consecratory epiclesis for the faithful’s fruitful reception of Holy Communion provides the backdrop to highlight the activity of the Spirit. Not only does the Eastern practice of situating the pneumatological epiclesis after the consecration lend credence to such an element existing in the Roman liturgy, but also the post-consecratory references to the Holy Spirit in some formularies of the Mozarabic *post-pridie* likewise allow for such speculation. Finally, the christological approach has the firm backing of

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>102</sup> We can turn to such activities as the Archangel Gabriel appearing to the Prophet Daniel at the time of the evening offering in the Temple (Dan 9:20-21), or his coming to Zechariah at the right of the altar of incense (Lk 1:11), or the vision of Cherub angels near the Temple in Ezekiel’s vision (Ez 10:1-22), or Isaiah’s vision of Seraphim (Is 6:1-7), or the four living creatures worshipping God in the heavenly liturgy (Rev 4:6-8). Likewise, the descending and ascending angels of Jacob’s Ladder (Gen 28:10-15), has similar overtones to what we find in the ascending/descending aspects of the *Supplices*.

many post-apostolic and late antique Church Fathers, and also carries the weight of significant voices in the scholastic period who see the role of mediatorship in the Canon as an activity belonging solely to the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity.

While it is important to maintain the same level of objective circumspection that many of the scholars treated in this paper have taken in not declaring definitive interpretations of things that have many valid possibilities, it is likewise important to further theological discourse by giving an informed opinion on the matters under discussion. To this end, while the christological argument has legitimate points of critique including the theological nuances that need to be maintained to avoid any semblance of heterodoxy,<sup>103</sup> and also in light of the textual variant that exists between the Roman Canon and one of its earliest exemplars (*De Sacramentis*),<sup>104</sup> one could argue that the benefits of this school of thought are twofold.

First, the properly orthodox theological outlook of Christ's activity as High Priest and —conterminously— mediating Angel, provides a rich insight into the Canon as the prayer of Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The liturgical *munera* of Christ —Priest, Victim, and Altar— corresponds to the dynamic denoting the movement of grace in both salvation history and sacramental reality from the Father (*a Patre*), through the Son (*per Filium*), in the Spirit (*in Spiritu Sancto*), and then, on our end in praise and adoration, back to the Father (*ad Patrem*), through the Son, in the Spirit.<sup>105</sup> Even when in the *Supplices* there appears, as Ludwig Augustin Hoppe noted, a superfluous tautology wherein Christ brings up to the heavenly altar His sacred Body and Blood in sacramental form so as only to descend back to the earthly altar to ensure the fruitful reception of Communion for the faithful members of His Church,<sup>106</sup> this tautology finds a response in the early medieval approach that saw the Angel of the *Supplices* as not just being Our Lord alone, but Our

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<sup>103</sup> To this point, Gieschen notes the following: “The contribution that angelomorphic traditions made to the development of Christology occurred primarily in the first three centuries before the Council of Nicea [sic] in 325 CE [AD]. In this richly generative period there were exegetical efforts to express Christ's preexistence, as well as to affirm his divinity, through the use of traditions found in Israelite and Jewish literature. Culminating in the Arian controversy and the formulations of Nicea, ontological questions were raised which effectively stifled further discussion of the relationship between overt angel traditions and Christ. Therefore, the Arian Christological debate served to veil and bury the important contribution that angelomorphic traditions made to the early expression of Christology” (Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 7).

<sup>104</sup> Something Joseph Barbel attempted to explain in a non-committal way. Cf. Barbel, *Christos Angelos*, 284.

<sup>105</sup> Cipriano Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy: A General Treatise on the Theology of the Liturgy*, tr. Leonard J. Doyle and W.A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1976) 198. Here, Vagaggini notes the general theme in the New Testament that outlines the role of the individual Persons of the Trinity in the work of salvation, and our response: “every good thing comes to us from the Father, through the mediation of His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, by means of the presence in us of the Holy Spirit; and likewise, it is by means of the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the mediation of the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, that everything returns to the Father. *A Patre, per Filium eius, Jesum Christum, in Spiritu Sancto, ad Patrem* —such is the primordial and predominant aspect under which the New Testament speaks of the Trinity.”

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Hoppe, *Die Epiklesis*, 172.

Lord “at the head of the angels.”<sup>107</sup> Additionally, since both the Tridentine liturgical reform and the present liturgical reform invoked a restoration of the liturgy to the norms of the ancient Fathers,<sup>108</sup> consideration of the post-apostolic and late antique Fathers who gave high priority to an orthodox angelomorphic christology should not be quickly disregarded.

The second benefit of this interpretation of the Angel of the *Supplices* as Christ is that it satisfies the understanding of the *Supplices* as a post-consecratory, or communion, epiclesis. Although Hoppe and Cagin’s pneumatological argument would have likewise achieved this end, the evidence for their argument is arguably not as firmly substantiated as the evidence provided by the christological school. The *Logos* epiclesis —something evidenced by the fourth-century Egyptian documents, the *Euchologium Serapionis* and the *Deir Balizeh*, and also argued by Rudolf Buchwald as having been the original Roman approach to the epiclesis— corrects the standard critique levied against the Roman Canon for the lack of a well-defined epiclesis. Liturgical scholars —along with the Church herself through her modern liturgical reforms— have come to a consensus regarding the *Quam oblationem* as being the pre-consecratory epiclesis in the Canon. The identification of a *Logos* epiclesis within the context of the *Supplices* would also supply well for this need as the content of the *Supplices* is ultimately a supplication for the faithful’s fruitful reception of the oblation, which is the purpose of a communion epiclesis as evidenced in other formularies of the liturgical record.

The three schools of thought presented in this paper have significant voices championing their cause, and while the conclusion of this paper has fallen to the side of one school, the christological one, the scholarly circumspection by which we have come to this conclusion can be summarized by de la Taille who notes that “in questions of this kind, the moment we try to determine the thought of those who drew up our ancient formulas, we cannot pretend to reach mathematical certitude. Probabilities suffice, based on the spirit of the epoch, on the interpretation of the age following, and on intrinsic reason.”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> De la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, 61. De la Taille invokes, in particular, Thomas of Walden, the “only great theology of the fifteenth century.”

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Pius V, *Quo Primum*, in *Missale Romanum, Editio typica 1962*, edd. Manlio Sodi and Alessandro Toniolo, *Monumenta Liturgica Pia* 1 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007) 5: “ad pristinam Missale ipsum sanctorum Patrum normam ac ritum restituerunt.” Cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium* 50.

<sup>109</sup> De la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, 67.