

THE TRIP TO NEW HAMPSHIRE  
or  
On Avoiding Aptitudinal Extensions  
and Other Frivolities  
— Part One —  
By Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

### Defining the Indefinable

In a previous article, we mentioned the "Latin Captivity." We noted that, in certain Orthodox countries, even the lectures given in the seminaries were in Latin and, on occasion, seminarians were obliged to preach in Latin to Orthodox congregations that normally spoke just Russian or Ukrainian.

If our problems were limited to the use of Latin, we would be in great shape. But, alas! the problem was not with the Latin language. The problem lay in the Roman Catholic scholastic "theology" that was introduced *via* the Latin language. The rationalistic "theology" of the West had, from many centuries before, begun to introduce new words that reflected the West's slippage from the Orthodox Christian faith, which ended with the West's dependence on human reason in order to "define" the indefinable mysteries of God.

For example, the scholastic term "transubstantiation" was a newly invented Roman Catholic word\* which attempted to explain "in a manner agreeable to human reason whatever is apparently supernatural"\*\* in the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist, wherein the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

### Frivolities and Quackeries

In order to give our Orthodox Christian believers a small sample of the convoluted philosophical reasoning used by the Scholastics to "explain" what takes place in the Eucharist, we quote *verbatim* the following entry in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1909 Edition, p. 583) for the word "Eucharist":

The simplest [*sic*] treatment of the subject is that offered by the Schoolmen [i.e. the Scholastics], especially St. Thomas [Aquinas] (III, Q, 1xxvi, a. 4). They reduced the mode of being to the mode of becoming, i. e. they traced back the mode of existence peculiar to the Eucharistic Body to the Transubstantiation; for a thing has to so "be" as it was in "becoming". Since *ex vi verborum* the immediate result is the presence of the Body of Christ, its quantity, present merely *per concomitantiam*, must follow the mode of existence peculiar to its

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\* It was first used in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

\*\* This is the definition of "rationalism" found in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1962, p. 1660.

substance, and, like the latter, must exist without division and extension, i. e. entirely in the whole Host and entirely in each part thereof. In other words, the Body of Christ is present in the sacrament, not after the manner of "quantity" (*per modum quantitatis*), but of "substance" (*per modum substantiae*). Later Scholasticism (Bellarmine, Suarez, Billuart, and others) tried to improve upon this explanation along other lines by distinguishing between internal and external quantity. By internal quantity (*quantitas interna seu in actu primo*) is understood that entity, by virtue of which a corporeal substance merely possesses "aptitudinal extension", i. e. the "capability" of being extended in tri-dimensional space. External quantity, on the other hand (*quantitas externa seu in actu secundo*), is the same entity, but in so far as it follows its natural tendency to occupy space and *actually* extends itself in the three dimensions. While aptitudinal extension or internal quantity is so bound up with the essences of bodies that its separability from them involves a metaphysical contradiction, external quantity is, on the other hand, only a natural consequence and effect, which can be so suspended and withheld by the First Cause, that the corporeal substance, retaining its internal quantity, does not extend itself into space.

The last time I saw this much convolution was when I visited a pretzel factory near Lancaster, Pennsylvania many years ago.

As anyone can see, the "explanation" given above might as well have been completely in Latin. And, the upshot is that the editors of the *Encyclopedia* finally admit that, when speaking about the Eucharist, they are "face to face with a great mystery"!!

(You mean, this Mystery is the sort of thing even a licensed theologian cannot solve? Be still, my heart!)

Truly, as Saint Paul says, "the world by [human] wisdom knew not God" (I Cor. 1:21). What the Scholastics call "arguments and speculations," Saint Gregory the Theologian calls "frivolities and quackeries" (*First Theological Oration*: vii).

### **Baggage Problems**

Since this divine mystery *cannot* be explained, the Orthodox Church has never attempted to do so. So, when the Saints of the Church speak about the Eucharist, they say only that a "change" takes place. How, or in what manner the change takes place, nobody can say. Or define. A mystery is, by definition, a mystery.

But when the "Latin Captivity" spread to the East, Western rationalism followed. Although Latin is a sonorous language, it carries a lot of baggage nowadays. And a great deal of that scholastic baggage (see *The Catholic Encyclopedia* above) was translated into the languages of the Orthodox countries where the Latin Captivity prevailed. So, for example, "transubstantiation" became "*metousiosis*" in the Greek-speaking churches. The same happened in Russia, in Romania, in Georgia, etc.

Which brings us to my trip to New Hampshire in 1962.

## **"The Russian Sect"**

My seminary professor of Dogmatics, Father John Romanides, asked me if I would be his chanter at a Liturgy that was to be held in a little New Hampshire town, whose name I cannot now remember. Father George Florovsky was to accompany Father John on this trip and give a brief lecture on the recent World Council of Churches General Assembly in New Delhi, India.

As we drove along a two-lane road through the New England countryside to get to the church, Father John was the driver and Father George sat next to him in the passenger seat. I, a mere youth of twenty-three years, sat in the back seat, all starry-eyed and stupefied that I was in the same car with these two prominent men.

At one point (I still don't know what got into me), I leaned forward, and said, "Father George, yesterday in our class in Patrology,\* we were told that, in Russia, the correct theological term for what takes place in the Holy Eucharist was 'transubstantiation,' but that some sect in Russia insisted on using the term 'change.'"

The car almost careened off the road.

After Father John had regained control of the vehicle, he turned, still laughing, to Father George and said, "Father George, can you tell us the name of that Russian sect?"

Father George just smiled and sort of grunted.

## **Not A Laughing Matter**

Maybe we should have been weeping. Thanks to the Latin Captivity, the ancient teaching of the Orthodox Church had been presented as the "terminology of a Russian sect" in an "Orthodox" Patrology class in an "Orthodox" seminary.

To paraphrase Psalm 136, "How could we sing the Lord's song in the strange land of this Captivity?"

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\* The professor of Patrology shall remain unnamed.