The Eucharistic Sermons Of Ronald Knox

By

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Part 1

1. **A Brief Biography**  
   - His Early Days And Education                                       | 1    |
   - Formal Education And A Developing Spirituality                      | 2    |
   - Knox And Friends                                                    | 8    |
   - Knox The Undergraduate At Balliol College, Oxford                   | 12   |
   - Knox The Chaplain At Trinity College, Oxford                        | 18   |
   - A Religious Position Shaken                                          | 20   |
   - Knox In Catholic Holy Orders                                        | 25   |
   - The Influence Of Knox On The Catholic Church Of His Time            | 34   |

2. **Knox – His Preaching Style**                                      | 52   |
   - Politics And Social Conscience                                      | 53   |
   - Conversion And Always On-going                                      | 59   |
   - The Anglo-Catholic Preacher                                         | 61   |
   - Familiarity Breeds Understanding                                    | 65   |
   - But The Familiar Is Itself Only An Imitation                        | 66   |
   - Scripture, Allegory And Metaphor                                    | 69   |
   - Doctrine                                                            | 73   |
   - The Virgin Mary                                                      | 76   |
   - Humour, Care And Preparation                                        | 79   |
   - The Parallel                                                        | 87   |
   - The Length Of A Sermon                                              | 89   |
   - In Summary                                                          | 91   |

## Part 2

1. **The Eucharistic Sermons - An Introduction**                       | 93   |

2. **The Sources For The Eucharistic Sermons**                         | 95   |
   - The Liturgical Movement                                             | 102  |
   - The Feast of *Corpus Christi*                                       | 105  |
   - The Forty Hours Adoration                                            | 112  |
   - Popular Eucharistic Devotions                                       | 115  |

   - The Re-editing Of The Maiden Lane Sermons                           |      |
     by Philip Caraman SJ                                                | 121  |
   - Two Recent Papal Documents                                          | 122  |

3. **Heaven And Charing Cross Collection**                              | 123  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Body</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Bread</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cana And Genesareth (*Bread And Wine)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind The Wall (The Window In The Wall)</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ubi Collegisti Hodie? (The Gleaner)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Prope Est Verbum</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Novum Pascha Novae Legis</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Supper</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Priest For Ever</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. The Window In The Wall Collection</strong></td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City Of Peace</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired Servants</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where God Lives?</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Of Thanks</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Your Servant</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace In Ourselves</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mass And The Ritual</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Best Man</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Examination</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thing That Matters</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Mass And The Mass</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pattern Of His Death</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenge</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Better Country</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus My Friend</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First And Last Communions</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pity For The Multitude</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Postscript On The Sermons</strong></td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Knox And The Three Themes In Eucharistic Theology</strong></td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Introduction

The genesis of this paper began with a letter (15 October 1994) from the late Fr Philip Caraman, (1911-1998) an English member of the Society of Jesus, who was the editor of the three volume collection of the sermons of Ronald Arbuthnott Knox. In response to my request for guidance in approaching the writings of Knox, Fr Caraman suggested looking to the sermons preached on the Feast of Corpus Christi at the church of the same name in Maiden Lane, London: "It could be something very pertinent today." Subsequent pastoral appointments and placements meant that the project was delayed until 2007 when I was able to undertake research in England. In the meantime I had been in contact with Rev. Dr. Milton Walsh, then stationed at the Cathedral in San Francisco, who had completed his Doctorate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, on the apologetical writings of Knox. He provided contact details for the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, at whose Manor House in Mells, Somerset, the majority of the Knox papers are kept. A visit to Mells followed, and then to the other major repositories of Knox archives in England. It was a disappointment that no records of the sermons seem to have been kept at Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, and various approaches for contact with any surviving parishioners who were present at the time of Knox's preaching, proved futile.
Almost all of Knox’s sermons, conferences and writings have been published. But in both the handwritten and type-script papers at Mells, there is ample evidence of the careful reworking and editing that Knox brought to bear on all he wrote and preached, and this offered an insight into the author, his literary technique, his thoroughness in research and in composition, and his dedication.

The visit to Mells, was more than research. In a real sense, it was a pilgrimage. Knox spent the last ten years of his life in the Manor House, which has been in the ownership of the Horner Family since gifted to it by Henry VIII, at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries which began from 1536. Edward Horner, was an early friend of Ronald Knox, and Edward's sister, Katherine, had married into the Asquith Family. At the time of my visit, her son, Julian, was the Earl of Oxford and Asquith. Julian was a grandson of Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928), a former British Prime Minister (from 1908 to 1916). H. H. Asquith was the first Earl of Oxford and Asquith, and was succeeded by his grandson. I was saddened to read of the death of Julian Asquith in January of 2011. His son, Raymond, who graciously arranged the details of my visit, has succeeded his father.

Julian's mother, Katherine, had converted to Catholicism in 1916, following the death, in battle, of her husband Raymond Asquith, and Julian was raised as a Catholic. Katherine inherited the Manor House when her brother, Edward, a friend of Ronald Knox, was killed in the First World War. Katherine had three
children, two girls and a boy. The older of Julian’s two sisters, Lady Helen, was the first convert to be received into the Catholic Church by Knox.

Knox was buried alongside the members of the Asquith and Horner Families in the small graveyard in front of the tower of the late fifteenth century Anglican Church of St Andrew, which is next to the Manor House. One of Knox’s last public appearances, before his death, was at a parish fete to raise money for the restoration of the bells of the church on 22 June 1957.

After her reception into the Catholic Church, Katherine Asquith reordered an out-building in the grounds of the manor to serve as an oratory. Here Knox celebrated Mass daily. During my visit I too had the opportunity to celebrate Mass, daily, in this chapel. To know that I was using the same sacred vessels, wearing the same vestments that Knox wore, and that the Earl was serving the Mass, as he did for Knox, was a highlight. Above the altar is a small oil painting of The Crucifixion by Matteo di Giovanni (after 1430 - 1495) of the Siennese school. (Matteo di Giovanni is well represented among the collection in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.) This pictorial representation of the mystery being celebrated and renewed at the altar, surely inspired Knox, as it did me in that brief stay at Mells.

Part One of this paper consists of a brief biography of Knox and his spiritual development, particularly his emerging Eucharistic devotion, and his manifest
religious influence on young intellectual men. The paper will note his fervour as an Anglo-Catholic priest, and later his doubts about this religious position. After recording his conversion to the Catholic Church, some comment on his influence on the Catholic Church of his time will be made.

Chapter Two will offer an overview of his preaching technique and style.

Part Two, which will treat of the Eucharistic Sermons, begins with an analysis of the certain, and the possible, sources for these sermons: Scripture and doctrine, Knox’s prayer and reflection, the burgeoning Liturgical Movement, the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi, The Forty Hours Adoration, which always coincided at Maiden Lane with the patronal feast, and other popular Eucharistic piety, which did not always reinforce the Liturgy. This section will make mention of two recent papal documents, which while they clearly cannot be sources for Knox, and these documents, themselves, do not draw on Knox’s sermons, nonetheless demonstrate that his teaching is centred within the Church’s teaching and tradition. Reference will be made in the footnotes to correspondence between these magisterial documents and the content of the sermons.

The third and fourth chapters, of this second part, will analyse, in detail, each of the sermons, and this because each was preached as a separate entity. Knox frequently found inspiration for his sermons in the topography and local
community, and from recent events. While the subject matter, for example Transubstantiation, did not allow for much leeway, the particular environment and current events provided a topical perspective by which to frame the subject matter.

After the discussion of each sermon, the whole corpus of work, will be examined briefly in the light of three Eucharistic themes: that the Eucharist both makes the Church, and is made by the Church; the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements, and how this is effected; and the Eucharist as both beneficial Sacrifice and banquet.

In conclusion the paper will recommend that the sermons are not a period piece. They may lack something of the synthesis of current Eucharistic theology, with the retrieval of living memorial, the communio, thanksgiving, and the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic action and in the unity of the faithful. But these are not lacking, at least by implication. And in the emphasis that Knox gives to the social and universal dimensions of the Eucharist; in the clarity of his teaching of the Eucharist as the Sacramental Presence of the Incarnate Christ and the Paschal Mystery; and as a Sacrifice of thanksgiving for the salvation that Christ brought to humanity in the Incarnation and Atonement; Knox is surely relevant today, and a rich resource for a true and authentic appreciation of the Eucharist - the Paschal Sacrament, the Sacrament of Love.

Shane P. Hoctor,
9 October, 2011.
Part 1

1. A brief biography

Ronald Knox gave to his spiritual autobiography the title - *A Spiritual Aeneid*. It was first published in the year following his reception into the Catholic Church (1918). In the time leading up to Knox’s reception into the Church Virgil’s epic poem, *The Aeneid*, was a constant literary companion. This poem traced the beginnings of the city of Rome from the fall of Troy and the subsequent journey of Aeneas, the poem’s hero, in search of a new homeland. Each chapter in the account of his spiritual journey was headed with a quotation from *The Aeneid*.

At the beginning of *A Spiritual Aeneid* Knox commented:

> Your religion builds itself up you know not how; some habits of thought stepped into unconsciously, others imbibed from study, others acquired by prayer. And beyond that, the whole complex of your psychology, moulded by innumerable influences not merely religious, predisposes you this way or that.  

In building up his own religion Ronald Knox took a divergent path to that religion in which he was nurtured in the family circle. After his reception into the Catholic Church this divergence from the religion of his family was trivialized by Arnold Lunn who quoted an alleged statement of Knox: “I had to have some religion, and I couldn’t stand Father’s.”  

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2. In the 1950 edition to which this paper will refer, Knox translated these Latin quotations for the benefit of his new readers.
father the values instilled in him within the family circle, the knowledge of God’s personal love for him, and the love of the Scriptures, remained a constant throughout his life.

**His Early Days and Education**

Ronald Arbuthnott Knox\(^5\) was born in 1888; the sixth and youngest child of Reverend Edmund Arbuthnott Knox and Ellen French. His siblings were Ethel (b. 1879), Edmund (Eddie b. 1881), Winifred (b. 1882), Alfred Dillwyn (Dillwyn b. 1883), and Wilfrid (b. 1886).

Ronald Knox’s early religious formation was evangelical Anglican. There were wider influences, with little effect, from the Quakers and Presbyterianism; and his paternal grandmother’s sister converted to Catholicism. Her family name was Arbuthnott which was given to both Ronald and his father as a second name,\(^6\) This conversion removed the Arbuthnotts from any further familial contact.\(^7\)

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5 In a sermon “The Conversion Of Fr Faber” in Ronald A. Knox, *Occasional Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox* (London: Burns & Oates, 1960) Knox spoke of a friend of Faber who accompanied him on his journey into the Catholic Church; his name was Knox “a … good Protestant name,” 251.

6 Interestingly Knox’s tombstone is inscribed *Arbuthnot*. A financial contributor to the replacement tombstone, after the original had weathered beyond repair, has shown me a photograph of the original. It also has the misspelling. His birth certificate No. 463 of 1888 in the Subdistrict of Market, Warborough, clearly reads *Arbuthnott*. Ronald wrote to his mother on July 1\(^{st}\), 1904: “They spelt Arbuthnott as Arbuthnot round the edge of the [Newcastle, proxime accesit] medal.” Evelyn Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, (Great Britain: Chapman & Hall, 1959), 65

7 Knox recorded that after his conversion he received a congratulatory letter from a Fr David Arbuthnott, an unknown cousin.
Ronald Knox’s maternal grandfather, Thomas Valpey French, was described by Knox’s biographer, Evelyn Waugh, as ‘an ascetic and a visionary’. The life of an Anglican parochial vicar was too limiting for him and with the support of the Church Missionary Union he left family and friends for India. He would become Bishop of Lahore. In spite of the many Catholic authors who nourished his spiritual life, and his admiration for the Catholic Religious Missionaries French encountered on his journeys through India and the Middle East, he had no time for the Catholic Church; likewise he had little admiration for John Henry Newman and his peers (the Oxford Movement) who encouraged a more Catholic interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

Ronald’s paternal grandfather, George Knox, likewise a clergyman but not a bishop, was also solidly evangelical.

Knox’s father, Edmund, later Bishop of Manchester, was a leading figure in the Evangelical School and unsupportive of Tractarianism (the popular name given to the Oxford Movement, the members of which promulgated their theology through published tracts). Waugh commented that in private: “… he (Edmund) admitted that he did not regard episcopacy as an essential of catholicity.” In his autobiography Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, Edmund Knox related his

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8 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 19
9 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 21
10 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 34
difficulties with High Church curates and their ritual devotions. He had other
difficulties with his own family:

I have not succeeded, as my father succeeded, in bringing up my
children entirely in their father’s faith, and for this I take no small share
of the blame, so far as it is blame, to myself. I am well aware that I
have never given the same whole-hearted attention to their education
that my father gave to mine.\footnote{12}

Wilfred and Ronald were to embrace Anglo-Catholicism, though Wilfred never
followed Ronald into the Catholic Church; their brothers Edmund and Dillwyn
were indifferent in religious matters; of the girls, Ethel remained loyal to their
evangelical upbringing and Winifred adopted the Anglo-Catholicism of her
younger brothers. A failure, perhaps, in keeping them loyal to their religious
upbringing, Edmund, was dearly loved by his children. Even as Ronald was
moving further and further from his father’s religious position and almost at his
Reception into the Roman Communion, he could write to his father in these
terms “Dearest Paw.”\footnote{13} This was in contrast with the nickname given Knox’s
father, Edmund, before marriage, when for his stance on sobriety and
‘wholesome religious education’ at Merton College he was called ‘Hard
Knocks’.\footnote{14}

As a consistent promoter of religious education Edmund Knox taught his children
to recognize God’s love, and to respect religious authority. Edmund recognized
that God’s personal love for him was “an actual fact, that must take first place in

\footnote{12}{Edmund Knox, \textit{Reminiscences Of An Octogenarian}, 300}
\footnote{13}{Ronald Knox to his father, July 8, 1917. (Mells Collection, unpublished manuscript).}
\footnote{14}{Penelope Fitzgerald, \textit{The Knox Brothers} rep. (Devon UK: Readers Union Limited Ed.,1978), 23}
my life.”¹⁵ He was convinced that: “(the) Bible (is) a personal message from God to the individual soul, ‘and to read it daily with a resolve to hear what God had to say to me that day – I must find words that were meant for me.’”¹⁶ Of the Sacraments he valued Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, though at that time, the weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper was rare in the Anglican Church. Edmund was a faithful supporter of the authority of ‘the uncriticised Bible’¹⁷ and of The Prayer Book as the ‘embodiment of that purification of religion’ that had taken place in England at the time of the Reformation. Edmund Knox wrote:

> Conscience compelled me to throw in my lot with the opponents of what was first called Ritualism, and afterwards Anglo-Catholicism. That movement I could not square with my own Faith or with that loyalty to the Prayer Book which I had professed at my Ordination, and reaffirmed at every step of my clerical promotion.¹⁸

In 1914 as Bishop Knox of Manchester he published Sacrifice Or Sacrament.¹⁹ It was a response to the ‘vestment controversy’ then being debated by the Convocations of Canterbury and York. Bishop Knox defended the Prayer Book’s rejection of sacrifice, and by association the vestments worn by the priest. In an undated letter to Ronald, but clearly around the time of Ronald’s reception into the Catholic Church, the Bishop wrote:

> If we at least not give prominence to Sacrifice, it is because we desire to emphasize the completeneff (sic) and eternal offering of the one Sacrifice made once for all. ²⁰

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¹⁵ Fitzgerald, The Knox Brothers, 19
¹⁶ Fitzgerald, The Knox Brothers, 19
¹⁷ quoted in David Rooney, The Wine Of Certitude (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 41
¹⁸ Edmund Knox, Reminiscences Of An Octogenarian, 301-302
¹⁹ E. A. Knox, Sacrifice Or Sacrament (London: Longmans, Green & Co.1914.)
²⁰ E. A. Knox to Ronald Knox, undated. (Mells collection, unpublished manuscript).
Founded upon the Evangelical faith of their parents, with its commitment to achieving results through hard work, the Knox Family was an assured and confident unit; the children were at peace and revelled in each other’s company. Family life was shattered when Edmund’s wife, Ellen, the mother of his six children, died in 1892, after months of illness following upon a bout of influenza. Ronald’s sister Winifred reflected back on her mother’s death: “The next two years were so tragic that I will not write of our maimed summer holidays.” In his grief Edmund placed five of his children with relations; Eddie remained with his father. The younger brothers, Wilfred and Ronnie, were sent to their uncle Lindsey in Lincolnshire. He too was a clergyman, and he shared the vicarage with his mother (Ronald’s paternal grandmother) and three unmarried sisters. The young brothers remained here for four years. But each school holidays the children and their father were reunited.

Ronald Knox reflected upon this time in Lincolnshire: “I cannot imagine circumstances better calculated to impress the mind with that form of Protestant piety which the modern world half regrets, half derides as “old fashioned.”

The elements of this Protestant piety included a love of the Scriptures, the observance of Sunday as the Lord’s Day, framed texts on the house walls, family

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21 Winifred Peck, *Home For The Holidays* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., undated), 43
22 Fitzgerald, *The Knox Brothers*, 40
23 Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 5
prayer, and a household ordered under the patriarch of the house. Ronald “… found (nothing) repulsive or frightening in such a religious atmosphere.”

Edmund Knox re-married in 1895 by which time he was Suffragan Bishop of Coventry. The new Mrs Knox, Ethel, over time, would unify the family and provide a listening-ear for her step-children especially as the religion of Wilfred and Ronald was evolving in a different direction to that of their father. Ethel’s father, another clergyman, did not share the austere social and financial background of Edmund Knox. He had inherited handsomely, and lived most comfortably. Not only was Ethel able to support and work with Bishop Edmund after his translation to the See of Manchester, she was able to provide materially, and to develop the social skills of her stepchildren. Winifred wrote of her stepmother:

It was indeed unnerving for a girl of twenty-seven to take charge of a widowed Bishop and his six children; she had, indeed, as eldest at home, and a very capable and conscientious social worker, learnt some habits of organization and command. But far more valuable in her dealings with us was her gaiety, her wit and a capacity for taking life – and us – just as we came, without giving any impression of enquiring into or worrying over our idiosyncrasies.

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24 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 5
25 Peck, Home For The Holidays, 49
Formal Education and a Developing Spirituality

In 1896 Ronald Knox went to Summer Fields School, and in 1900 he entered Eton College. His already manifest intelligence flowered here, and spiritually he began to widen his experiences. In his own words: “it was in the course of my time at Eton that the attitude of my own mind changed, and my religious outlook became assimilated to the ideas of the Oxford Movement.”26 He visited surrounding churches, including a visit in 1904 to the new Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster. He wrote to his step-mother: “(I) wasn’t shocked.”27 His ‘assimilation’ included certain Tractarian gestures and religious objects of devotion, such as the Crucifix. He began to communicate each Sunday, and when an early service was not available in the Eton Chapel (it was held fortnightly) he headed to the “the church down town,” and here he used: “ ... to adopt some of the gestures of Catholicism, such as genuflecting and blessing myself.”28

The beginning of the Oxford Movement is attributed to a sermon preached by John Keble in Oxford on July 14, 1833. Keble (1792-1866) argued for the autonomy of the Established Church in ecclesiastical matters, and especially for the authority of the bishops, and the movement recognized the necessity of State financial support so that its clergy were not beholden to the whims of those to whom they ministered. In Tract 1 this comment was made: “We know how

26 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 16
27 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 65
28 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 38
miserable is the state of religious bodies not supported by the State."\textsuperscript{29} Keble’s arguments attracted Oxford academics and like minded people including John Henry Newman (1801-99) and Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800 92). Later disciples of this initial group included Frederick Faber (1814-63), Richard Hurrell Froude (1803-36), Isaac Williams (1802-65) and Charles Marriott (1811-58). As the Movement gathered momentum it further asserted the Catholic heritage of the Church of England.

In his book, \textit{Anglo-Catholicism A Study in Religious Ambiguity}, W. S. F. Pickering distinguished between the terms \textit{Ritualist} and \textit{Tractarian}. He commented: “The founding Fathers (of the Oxford Movement) were above all cautious in the matter of ritual, for fear of losing ground over secondary issues.”\textsuperscript{30} The Oxford Movement was first and foremost an intellectual movement; the interest in ritual and Catholic practice came later.

In preparation for his Confirmation (which preceded Communion within the Anglican Church) Knox and his peers were given lessons in the significance of Communion. The emphasis in this instruction was on the “congregational presence” of Christ in the Sacrament.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} Tract 1 “Thought On The Ministerial Commission. Respectfully Addressed To The Clergy”; Newman was the author of this tract, quoted in Christopher Dawson, \textit{The Spirit Of The Oxford Movement and Newman’s Place In History}, new ed. (London: The Saint Austin Press, 2001), 93

\textsuperscript{30} W.S.F. Pickering, \textit{Anglo-Catholicism A Study In Religious Ambiguity} rep. (London: SPCK, 1991), 19

\textsuperscript{31} Knox, \textit{A Spiritual Aeneid}, 28
The Thirty-Nine Articles ‘were adopted as a doctrinal standard by the Convocation of the Church of England in 1571 and enforced by the Canons of 1604.’ The ‘congregational presence’ is spelled out in Article XXVII:

The Lord’s Supper is not only a sign of the mutual love of Christians among themselves but rather the Sacrament of our redemption through the death of Christ. And so, for those who receive properly, worthily, and with faith, the bread that we break is a communication of the Body of Christ; likewise the cup of blessing is a communication of the Blood of Christ. The transubstantiation of the bread and wine in the Eucharist cannot be proved from Sacred Scripture; it is contrary to the clear words of Scripture, overthrows the nature of a sacrament, and has been the occasion of many superstitions. The Body of Christ is given, received, and eaten in the Supper only in a heavenly and spiritual sense. Moreover the medium by which the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith. The Sacrament of the Eucharist by the institution of Christ is not reserved, carried about, elevated or adored.

The consequence of this teaching for Knox was the importance of preparing worthily and well for Communion, “and to assume the communicant status involved a spiritual standard worthy of full Church membership.” But as Article XXVIII demonstrated the communicant was under no ‘illusion’ that the Presence of Christ was anything objective and beyond the faith of the one receiving.

In 1903 Ronald was confirmed by his father at Birmingham. Edmund was by now the Suffragan Bishop of Coventry and later that year he was appointed as Bishop of Manchester. In his father’s new See, Ronald was acquainted with a book by

34 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 28
Robert Hugh Benson, *The Light Invisible*. Benson (1871-1914), a writer and novelist, was the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward White Benson (1829-96). In 1903 Benson converted to Catholicism. *The Light Invisible* was his first book (consisting of interconnected short stories) and was published in 1903 while he was still an Anglican. The book chronicled the experiences of an elderly Anglican priest who experienced the proximity of the supernatural in the world of sense. The pastoral activity of this fictional priest in his chapel, his devotion to the Virgin Mary and his solicitude as a confessor brought before Knox the ‘Catholic system’. Knox dated his Catholic conversion, as an Anglican, to this moment. From this moment he began to adopt Tractarian practices and to receive Communion frequently. To these he added asceticism and a devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Knox’s reflection on his years at Eton was prefaced by his thoughts and experience of public school religion. Public school religion, centred around the regular chapel worship, was essentially the transmission of an accepted tradition and of an attitude that could safely support an alumnus throughout his life; the passing on of an established tradition of morality, respect for others and for the right order of society. It was not emotional, it did not emphasize doctrine, except at such times as instruction for Confirmation, and it did not seek to evangelize. The whole atmosphere of the public school was coloured by regular daily worship in the chapel. The religious dimension of the public school echoed and

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36 Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 32
underpinned the whole educative goal: it was directed at producing gentlemen, who would take their expected places in society, and contribute to the common good of an established and ordered society.

Knox's religious development at Eton, and especially from the time of his 'conversion', was distinct from 'public school religion'. His belief system was more doctrinal, personal, exhibiting some emotion in his attachment to St Mary of Eton, and was directed beyond the expected levels of practice in devotion and asceticism. That he committed himself to a vow of celibacy, at the age of seventeen, is an example of this.

Knox's emerging religious system might have alienated him from his peers. It was just the opposite. Towards the end of his time at Eton he was elected a member of Pop (the influential group of senior students) and then elevated to Captain of the College.

Knox And Friends

Knox's circle of friends and his influence on them, both at Eton and later at university, has been the subject of some recent speculation. Waugh (in his biography of Knox) cited a passage from A Spiritual Aeneid in which Knox stated that: "I was just beginning to form close and intimate friendships … my nature
craved for human sympathy and support.”³⁷ Waugh wrote that: “Of these ‘close and intimate friendships’ one may be identified as especially prompting this vow.”³⁸

Two brothers had entered Eton and Ronald became very close to the younger of them. Waugh does not insinuate anything more than friendship in this relationship but a recent biography of Harold Macmillan³⁹ concluded from this passage that Knox was homosexual, and this was evidenced in his later close friendships with ‘B’ and ‘C’. B and C were so designated by Knox in his spiritual biography; B was Guy Lawrence and C Harold Macmillan. Both were attracted to Knox’s extreme Anglo-Catholicism and fell under his influence while he was a Fellow at Trinity. Lawrence became a Catholic during the first World War and died of injuries sustained in battle. Macmillan toyed with conversion but remained faithful for life to his Anglicanism.

Knox’s religious influence on the young schoolboy, Macmillan, whom Knox was tutoring for entry into Oxford University, (he tutored Macmillan at the Macmillan home Birch Grove House, near East Grinstead in Sussex),⁴⁰ was opposed by the non-Conformist Mrs. Macmillan who eventually had Knox replaced. This was an occasion of great sadness for Knox.⁴¹ He referred to this time as tutor, and his

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³⁷ Waugh, Ronald Knox, 72  
³⁸ Waugh, Ronald Knox, 72  
³⁹ Charles Williams, Harold Macmillan (London: Phoenix Paperbacks, 2009). The current fascination with attributing sexual motives to subjects of biographies, seems to this paper, to invite unwarranted and unnecessary speculation, and to encourage unfounded implications.  
⁴⁰ Williams, Harold Macmillan, 21  
⁴¹ Waugh, Ronald Knox, 107
replacement by Mrs. Macmillan, as: “of considerable importance in my life.”

With hindsight he recognized this experience as: “the only period – a period of about a month and a half – when I ever experienced before 1915 an attack of what Anglicans call ‘Roman fever’.” Mrs. Macmillan’s rejection of Knox’s Anglo-Catholicism brought him to realize that his vision of Anglicanism was not the common position. On the peripheries of Anglicanism was Rome his only option?

Though the Knox influence on Harold was removed from the Macmillan home, Macmillan remained a life-long friend and valued the influence that Knox had on him: “He was the only man I have ever known who really was a saint … and if you live with a saint, especially a humorous saint, it’s quite an experience.”

The conclusion reached in the Macmillan biography, referred to above, has received a critique in the most recent published biography of Knox. The author, Terry Tastard, wrote:

In a recent biography of Harold Macmillan, Charles Williams has concluded that Knox was homosexual and that this was an element in his friendships with Macmillan and others. The evidence cited is mainly an opaque passage by Waugh about schoolboy crushes at Eton … Lord Williams might be right in his conclusion, but the truth is that simply we do not know.

Charles Williams distinguished between homosexual and homoerotic and viewed the relationship as the former and not the latter. Tastard is correct to state

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42 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 76
43 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 77
44 Macmillan quoted in Williams, Harold Macmillan, 25
45 Terry Tastard, Ronald Knox And English Catholicism (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2009)
46 Tastard, Ronald Knox And English Catholicism, 47
47 Williams, Harold Macmillan, 31
“that simply we do not know”; there is no evidence in any of Knox’s writings to suggest his sexual orientation, nor any evidence of an internal struggle to sublimate his tendencies. Knox’s distress, as demonstrated in his spiritual autobiography, was the validity of his religious position – which was his first attack of “Roman fever” and the later conversions to Rome of many of his friends. His enthusiasm, that was so infectious and magnetic, was for the promotion of extreme Anglo-Catholicism. Edmund, his father, who knew him intimately as a son and a fellow cleric considered that his son’s conversion to Rome would result in: “The burying of your talent. That talent has been conspicuously the gift of exercising religious influence on young men of education.”

Edmund Knox, Ronald’s father, could side with Mrs. Macmillan against Anglo-Catholicism, but both recognized Ronald’s religious influence. It was this religious influence that brought an end to Ronald’s tenure as tutor. Mrs. Macmillan never suggested any other influence on her son. Edmund Knox was always ready to correct what he perceived as errors and excesses of religious fervor and ritual; research for this paper has found no indication that Edmund perceived any other reason for his son’s desire for close friendship, or as a reason for his proselytizing. Moreover, Ronald was acutely aware, as his vow of celibacy demonstrated, that his need for friendship and intimacy could be a danger and a

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48 Edmund Knox to Ronald Knox 8 January 1917 (unpublished manuscript, Mells Collection) also quoted in Tastard, Ronald Knox And English Catholicism, 81
distraction both for his spiritual development\textsuperscript{49} and that of the young minds that were attracted to him.

An observation from Christopher Dawson (1889-1970), the eminent English Catholic historian, in his study of the Oxford Movement and its leaders, is helpful in the current discussion. Dawson referred to a study on the Oxford Movement by Geoffrey Faber,\textsuperscript{50} in which Faber examined the leaders of the movement: “not on their own theological and moral conceptions but on the basis of modern psychology;” and Dawson continued:

But since the importance of the Oxford Movement is entirely dependent on its spiritual achievement we may well ask what help we are \textit{likely to get from a method which explains personality by reducing} human behaviour to its physical and non-rational elements.\textsuperscript{51}

Dawson also clarified a misunderstanding that Geoffrey Faber made about a passage in Newman’s letters dealing with his (Newman’s) relations with Froude. Newman had written: “I have thought vows (of celibacy) are evidence of \textit{want of faith} (i.e.) trust.” Faber understood this to mean the proposal of a “mutual pledge of celibacy,” which Froude rejected, whereas Dawson showed that Newman did not mean another’s lack of faith, but that it “shows a lack of trust \textit{in God}.”\textsuperscript{52} And this became clear as Newman continued: “Why should we look to the morrow? It will be given us to do our duty as the day comes; to bind up duty by forestallment

\textsuperscript{49} As wrote in \textit{A Spiritual Aeneid}: “I must have ‘power to attend upon the Lord without impediment”, 44
\textsuperscript{50} Geoffrey Faber, \textit{Oxford Apostles} (Faber & Faber Paperbacks, 1974). The book was first published in 1933 prior to Dawson’s study of the same year.
\textsuperscript{51} Dawson, \textit{The Spirit Of The Oxford Movement and Newman’s Place In History}, vi -vii
\textsuperscript{52} Dawson, \textit{The Spirit Of The Oxford Movement and Newman’s Place In History}, viii
is to lay up manna for seven days; it will corrupt us?"\(^{53}\) From this discussion Dawson concluded: “Such mistakes are the nemesis of a psychology which regards every spiritual or self-transcending tendency as a disguised form of the sexual impulse.”\(^{54}\)

Daniel Macpherson in an article in *The Pastoral Review*\(^{55}\) commented on Knox’s discussion of the virginity of Mary. Knox’s words, and the conclusion that Macpherson drew, have some relevance to the current discussion. Knox wrote: “If we pass over the facts of sex in silence, it is not because we think them disgusting but because we think them too holy to be mentioned in common talk.” Macpherson commented: “Like many of the Church Fathers Knox had a horror of unchastity but possessed an idealized, and therefore positive, notion of the value of physical love within marriage.”\(^{56}\)

In a study written well before Macpherson’s article, Thomas Corbishley quoted from a passage in *A Spiritual Aeneid* concerning Knox’s school days and concluded that Knox: “seems to have been protected from the impact of grosser temptations.”\(^{57}\) Of Knox’s reticence to address sexual difficulties in his sermons

\(^{53}\) J. H. Newman quoted in Dawson, *The Spirit Of The Oxford Movement and Newman’s Place In History*, viii
\(^{54}\) Dawson, *The Spirit Of The Oxford Movement and Newman’s Place In History*, viii
\(^{56}\) Macpherson, “The Spirit Of Christmas Past,” 32
\(^{57}\) Thomas Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest* (Sheed and Ward: London and New York, 1964), 15
and at retreats Corbishley considered: “(that it) was largely due to his general desire to emphasize the positive aspect of the Christian life.”

Moreover, as this paper will suggest later, a lifelong thread through all his writings and preaching, was his commitment to making the Truth of Religion known, and encouraging people to greater devotion, and ultimately to help them to heaven. His motives were not self-seeking.

**Knox The Undergraduate At Balliol College, Oxford**

When Knox left Eton to go up to Balliol College at Oxford University he went up as an emerging Ritualist, clearly influenced by Tractarian beliefs, and shaped by G. K. Chesterton’s exposition of *orthodoxy*. (Though, Chesterton’s book of the same name was not published until 1908, two years after Knox had left Eton, in 1903 Chesterton had responded to an attack against belief in God and Christianity by Robert Blatchford, a newspaper editor.) Knox’s early religious formation was now bound together with these new found influences. That his religious beliefs grew and developed at Oxford was further evidence of his personalized religion rather than that of the public school. He reflected that, unlike the public-school tradition which was “a dye that will wash; … the corresponding tradition in religion does not … survive in most cases even the

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58 Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest*, 15-16
60 Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 30
relatively gentle mangle of a university education.”

Shane Leslie, a contemporary of Knox at Eton and a life-long friend, echoed Knox's assessment, "Boys brought their home creed with them (to Eton) and, perhaps, returned with its fragments."

At Oxford in 1906 Knox found himself in a secular environment, and the Balliol College worship uninspiring. He sought solace, companionship, direction and inspiration from Tractarian influenced communities: Pusey House, the Cowley Fathers, and later, at the Anglican monastery on Caldey Island. As a consequence of his experience with the Caldey community he recorded:

The value of devotions to the Blessed Sacrament was now a clear article of my creed, and was to become the chief cause for which I was prepared to do battle.

Knox attended his first Catholic service in England in 1910 on the Feast of the Assumption. He attended this Mass simply because there was no service at the local Anglican Church where he was staying, and the Catholic prayer book that he used indicated the Feast, that day, was one of obligation; to fulfil this obligation he attended the Roman Catholic church. Yet Knox could not embrace all Catholic beliefs and rituals and he remained convinced that his vocation was as yeast within the Anglican Communion:

Remember that I was not choosing between the Church of England and the Church of Rome; my heart was all in the Church of England, not as

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61 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 20
62 Shane Leslie, The End Of A Chapter (London: Constable and Company, 1926), 41
63 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 71.
a system of dead formulas, but as a living body of people to whom I had a message (though my voice were but an inconsiderable cry) to return to the old paths and renew the waste places.\textsuperscript{64}

By the time of his ordination as a deacon at the Cathedral in Oxford in 1911 Ronald was less convinced and he wrote to his Catholic friend, Francis Fortescue Urquhart, and known as ‘Sligger’, a Fellow of Balliol College:

Dear Slig,
I take the plunge this Sunday as deacon (Our Lady of Ransom). It will be kind if you’ll remember me. I don’t really see my way beyond Anglican orders at present. At the same time I can’t feel the Church of England is an ultimate solution: in fifty years or a hundred I believe we Romanizers will either have got the Church or been turned out of it. I may not live to see it, but I hope never to live so long as to cease praying for it.\textsuperscript{65}

Knox The Chaplain At Trinity College, Oxford

Now a deacon, Knox was offered the position of Chaplain at Trinity College, and with the chaplaincy a Fellowship. At Trinity he began to attract to himself undergraduates, and other clerics who shared ‘the Sacramental tradition’.\textsuperscript{66} He related that after his first sermon in the Trinity Chapel: “an undergraduate (afterwards not only my friend but my penitent) declared excitedly … ‘Such fun! The new Fellow’s been preaching heresy – all about Transubstantiation.’ ”\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{64} Knox, \textit{A Spiritual Aeneid}, 86.
\textsuperscript{66} Knox, \textit{A Spiritual Aeneid}, 79
\textsuperscript{67} Knox, \textit{A Spiritual Aeneid}, 94
After his Ordination as an Anglican priest in 1912, he worked up and down the country preaching and encouraging Eucharistic devotion. His response Some Loose Stones (published 1913) to a work, Foundations, by some eminent Anglican theologians indicated that by this time Knox’s Eucharistic theology was Catholic. In responding to Foundations Knox had come to believe that the greater threat to Anglicanism “was not Protestantism but Modernism.”

Modernism was an attempt by some Catholic intellectuals in the early years of the twentieth century to reconcile Church teaching with modern science and thought. Through a program of radical interpretation and the higher criticism, the Scriptures, and the traditional teaching on revelation and the Sacraments, were all to be re-expressed in line with contemporary thought. In place of objective belief, religious experience was to set the standard.

Knox was encouraged to take up the cudgel against Modernism by his Tractarian and Anglo-Catholic associates. His first strike was a poem in the style of Dryden (1631-1700) and inspired by Dryden’s political satire Absalom and Achitophel. Knox gave his satirical poem the title Absolute and Abitofhell. This was first published in the Oxford Magazine and later in Knox’s collection Essays in Satire. The authors of Foundations were all cited in the poem under Biblical or classical aliases. Among the lines of this poem are these: “The thing was

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68 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 112
69 First published in 1928
canvaƒ’d, and it feemed paft doubt Much we adher’d to we could do without;”\(^{70}\) and the potent: “When fuave Politenef, temp’ring bigot Zeal, Corrected, “I believe,” to “One does feel.” \(^{71}\)

Knox’s satire became an instant success, and was taken in good humour by those he took to task. Many of the authors of *Foundations* were friends and companions of Knox. In his own words: “I was in the very centre and stronghold of the movement which produced *Foundations.*” \(^{72}\)

Because he was at the very centre he was further encouraged to counter the thinking behind *Foundations* in a more serious and considered form than his satire. This encouragement led him to write *Some Loose Stones*. In the Preface of this work Knox wrote:

> ... this book is an attempt to get behind that vocabulary, that atmosphere, and point out the language as simple as I can make it where this modern theology is carrying us, and why (in my thinking) it is hopelessly discontinuous with the tendencies of historic Christianity.\(^{73}\)

Within *Some Loose Stones* Knox revealed that he had embraced the Catholic belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He stated, in response to the argument of *Foundations*:

> Is it not evident from the outset that the whole of Eucharistic theology is based upon an attempt to interpret our Saviour’s own words, This is my Body, This is my Blood? The believer says to himself, Clearly this

\(^{70}\) “The thing was canvassed, and it seemed past doubt Much we adher’d to we could do without;”

\(^{71}\) “When suave Politeness, temp’ring bigot Zeal, Corrected, “I believe” to “One does feel.”


\(^{72}\) Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 99

\(^{73}\) R. A. Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, 3\(^{rd}\) Impression (London, Longmans, Green & Co.,1914), ix
means something; how exactly are we to express what it does mean? That effort at expression goes on until it reaches its final careful statement at the Council of Trent.\textsuperscript{74}

Knox further argued: “Eucharistic experience, does not, as a matter of observation, precede, it follows on and arises out of, Eucharistic doctrine.”\textsuperscript{75} Throughout this book Knox would posit that the authors of \textit{Foundations}, and modern theology in general, preferred to argue inductively: “by means of the hypothesis, upwards instead of downwards.”\textsuperscript{76} Scholastic theology, on the other hand, prefers to work: “deductively, from first principles which need no proving.”\textsuperscript{77} Knox was intent to reaffirm that Christianity was a revealed religion, whose truths are permanent; it was not a religious experience that is subjective. Towards the end of \textit{Some Loose Stones} he stated:

> My only contention is, that in religion it (Modernism) is definitely out of place, because we are only trustees of tradition; and whereas our spiritual talents have been given us to be multiplied, there are strong reasons for thinking that it will be safest to produce at the Last Day the deposit of Faith in its original currency, with no danger of diminution.\textsuperscript{78}

One of Knox’s religious heroes was Cardinal John Henry Newman. In the nineteenth century Newman devoted his life to repel \textit{liberalism} within religion. In his \textit{Biglietto Speech} (given at Cardinal Howard’s Palace in Rome on May 12, 1879) immediately prior to his elevation as a cardinal Newman defined liberalism:

\textsuperscript{74} Knox, \textit{Some Loose Stones}, 178
\textsuperscript{75} Knox, \textit{Some Loose Stones}, 178
\textsuperscript{76} Knox, \textit{Some Loose Stones}, 30
\textsuperscript{77} Knox, \textit{Some Loose Stones}, 30
\textsuperscript{78} Knox, \textit{Some Loose Stones}, 215
Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as the other .... Revealed religion is not a truth, not an objective fact; not miraculous: and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy.\textsuperscript{79}

Liberalism differed from Modernism in so far as the latter sought to express revealed religion in terms compatible with contemporary scientific methods, but both elevated the subjective acceptance by an individual believer over the objective reality. Knox commented: “For we are not concerned, now, to find how we can represent truth most adequately, but how we can present it most palatably.”\textsuperscript{80} And in opposition to this position Knox argued:

While theologians are trying desperately to reduce Christianity to those elements which it affirms in common with other religions, the really modern cry is to know wherein it differs from other religions; on what recommendation it proposes to enter the lists against them.\textsuperscript{81}

Ronald Knox had become the champion, and the best known preacher, of the extreme Anglo-Catholic churchmanship, and of the opponents of Modernism. One commentator on his time at the extreme end of Anglicanism has described his position as: “impishness which characterized his high Anglican days.” The commentator continued:

One gains the impression it was great fun being an Anglo-Catholic, in possessing all the appurtenances of Continental Catholicism, and at the same time enjoying the intellectual and sensual pleasures of an Oxford elite.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{80} Knox, \textit{Some Lose Stones}, 9
\textsuperscript{81} Knox, Some Loose Stones, 14
A Religious Position Shaken

In 1915 amidst this ‘great fun’ Knox saw ‘a ghost’.

On the morning of ‘St. Augustine’s Day’ he went up to London to be present at his brother Wilfred’s first Mass as an Anglican priest. It should have been a day of great rejoicing, “then, suddenly I saw the other side of the picture.” The title of the chapter in A Spiritual Aeneid in which he described this moment is Seeing a Ghost.

A doubt, a ‘shadow of a scruple’, had arisen in his mind to suggest the invalidity of the Anglican priesthood, and thus the invalidity of the Mass he was attending, and that all the ritual and the accessories to the service were “all settings to a sham jewel.”

The following year he wrote from Bishopscourt, Manchester:

Slig, have a good Easter. It’ll be the first for ten years at which I shan’t have been certain I’ve been to my duties.

In the time between ‘seeing a ghost’ and his Reception into the Church his father was actively engaged in trying to dissuade him from leaving the Anglican Church. Though their ecclesiastical positions were becoming more polarized, both were

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83 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 173.
84 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 173
85 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 173.
86 Ronald Knox to ‘Sligger’, April 22, 1916. (unpublished manuscript, British Library Collection.)
critical of the Modernist movement, and the consequences of the ‘Higher Criticism’ of Scripture.\(^{87}\)

The First World War added to Ronald’s increasing uncertainty. Oxford was emptying of its young men as they enthusiastically offered themselves for military service, and many of his ‘disciples’ to Anglo-Catholicism were killed in the trenches. With the certain prospect of battle, and possible death, some of these ‘disciples’ had decided to seek immediate reception into the Catholic Church, rather than to continue questioning their religious position as Anglo-Catholics. B, Guy Lawrence, of whom prior reference was made, was among these ‘disciples’. At the news of Lawrence’s death Knox was “completely numbed to all feeling for three or four days, but expecting all the time that when I became unnumbed I should simply break down.”\(^{88}\)

For a time Knox considered offering himself, with Government and ecclesiastical permission, to the German authorities to minister to the British Anglican prisoners of war. This desire arose from his concern for his protégés who would be without the Sacraments. The chaplains department of the time had a ‘pronounced anti-Sacramentalist attitude’.\(^{89}\) Knox’s friend Maurice Child applied for a chaplaincy to the Chaplain-General and was asked what he would do for a dying man. He answered: “‘Hear his confession and give him absolution.’”\(^{88}\) The correct answer

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\(^{87}\) As an expression of satire Knox used the methods of Higher Criticism to dissect Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes Novels. This essay is included in Knox, *Essays In Satire*, 98-120

\(^{88}\) Ronald Knox to Laurence Eyre quoted in Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 171

\(^{89}\) Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 155
was: “Give him a cigarette and take any last message he may have for his family.”

Evelyn Waugh recorded that Knox’s suggestion for chaplaincy to prisoners of war was rejected because it was “tantamount to collusion with the enemy.”

While he was inactive on the battle fields and in the camps he was writing letters to his Anglo-Catholic protégés and encouraging prayer for the troops. He published a small work *An Hour At The Front* and he encouraged Eucharistic Devotion. In November 1914 he orchestrated an adaptation of the Forty Hours Devotion (a Catholic devotion of continuous Adoration for forty hours before the Blessed Sacrament) in various towns throughout England. In his own words: “on any week-day in that November it was possible to reflect that at one town in England the Blessed Sacrament was being adored.”

A Capuchin friar, Padre Giuseppe da Ferno, began this devotion, of Forty Hours continuous Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, in Milan in 1537. Apart from lasting as “nearly as possible for forty consecutive hours ... it should begin in another church at the exact moment when it ended in one, and so be kept up all the year round.” The organization of this devotion was testament to the growing influence of the Anglo-Catholic practices (though, in this instance, the devotion was limited to a month rather than all year round), to Knox’s own

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90 Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 135
91 Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 135
92 Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 159
Eucharistic devotion, and also to the Anglo-Catholic desire to emulate Roman Catholic piety and devotion as closely as would be tolerated.

As the war progressed, and as more of his friends were turning to the Catholic Church, or were dying in battle, Knox's own uncertainty of his religious position grew. In 1915 he wrote *Diabolus Loquitur.*\(^9^4\) This list of thirty-one reasons for following his friends into the Church of Rome is countered by thirty-one reasons for remaining. An example of his devil's advocacy will illustrate his state of mind:

xxix) You'll be able to get an altar whenever you want it, even abroad: and to have the befits of the Sacraments. xxix) But you won't say Mass in old parish churches; and you may have to go Much further (sic) afield to have your confession heard in England, in the country.\(^9^5\)

In this wilderness of uncertainty Ronald withdrew from most of his engagements and ecclesiastical duties. He took a temporary teaching position at Shrewsbury School in Shropshire\(^9^6\), filling in for a friend who had joined the Army to fight in the trenches of the First World War.

Ronald was living two lives – while active in the school he: “appeared simply as a clergyman of eccentric views, taking a long holiday from most of the official

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\(^9^5\) Knox, *Diabolus Loquitur* (unpublished Mells TS)
\(^9^6\) Shrewsbury School “was founded by Royal Charter in 1552, and identified as one of the ‘Great’ public schools by the Clarendon Commission in 1868.” Charles Darwin was one of its most famous alumni; see [http://www.shrewsbury.org.uk/](http://www.shrewsbury.org.uk/) (accessed 30 Aug. 2011)
practices of religion;" when he was idle: “I would plunge at once into self-questioning, brooding, and something not unlike despair.”⁹⁷

Knox was later to acknowledge that it was his need for authority in religion that led him to the Catholic Church, and his certainty of the authority underpinning the Anglican Church was weakened from the day of his brother Wilfred’s First Mass: “For authority played a large part in my belief, and I could not now find that any certain source of authority was available outside the pale of the Catholic Church.”⁹⁸

The divine authority of the Church made valid and effective the central action of the Church – her worship, and especially the Eucharist. As his doubts grew about the Anglican Church and the divine authority for its institution so Knox questioned the ‘Mass’ he was celebrating: “I never celebrate without wondering if anything is happening.”⁹⁹

In Anglican Cobwebs⁹⁰ he elaborated on the validity of Orders and the Authority of the Church. He stated:

For that is what it means, when the Catholic Church declares Anglican orders invalid; the priests whose ministrations I have been frequenting were not true priests of the New Covenant, could not, therefore effect Christ’s miracle of Transubstantiation.⁹¹

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⁹⁷ Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 185.  
⁹⁸ Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 212  
⁹⁹ quoted in Waugh, Ronald Knox, 145.  
⁹⁰ Ronald Knox, Anglican Cobwebs (London: Sheed and Ward, 1927)  
⁹¹ Knox, Anglican Cobwebs, 8
But he had a further argument to explain his point:

… even if the Catholic Church acknowledged the validity of Anglican orders, it would still be quite a new chapter in your spiritual history that is opening before you;¹⁰² and this because: Even if the minister who absolved you (in Confession) had valid orders, he would still have no jurisdiction, and therefore no power to forgive sins. In the Confessional, he sits as judge; the powers which he exercises as judge do not belong to himself, they are delegated to him by the Church. And the minister who listened to the tale of your sins, being himself outside Catholic unity, had received no commission from the Church to remit and to retain sins in her name.¹⁰³

His concern was not only the authority of the Anglican Church. In the Preface to the reprint of *A Spiritual Aeneid* he commented: “I was intensely preoccupied with Modernism.” Contrasting the Catholic response to that of the Anglican he said: “where Rome was marble, Lambeth was wax.”¹⁰⁴ It was not just in the matter of the Mass that he was doubtful; there was no clear Anglican response to this challenge to doctrine.

As a Catholic priest he addressed a gathering in Glasgow in 1926. He explained how the authority of the Church could give certainty to belief (and by extension to what Knox himself needed):

To believe a thing on authority does not mean believing a thing simply because you are told to believe it.

The authority of the Church in matters of belief does not, in itself, involve any idea of coercive authority at all. To believe on the authority of the Church is to believe a thing which we could have no opportunity of finding out for ourselves because the Church, whose knowledge

¹⁰² Knox, *Anglican Cobwebs*, 8
¹⁰³ Knox, *Anglican Cobwebs*, 8-9
¹⁰⁴ Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, xiv
surpasses ours, makes herself responsible for the assertion that the thing is so.\textsuperscript{105}

To guide his decision Knox sought the advice of many within the Anglican Church. His father thought that “I was mistaking for a call to Rome what was in truth only the realization that my previous position had been impossible.”\textsuperscript{106}

In 1915 Knox visited the home of Lord Halifax, the “recognized lay leader of the Anglo-Catholic movement.”\textsuperscript{107} Halifax was among the many Anglicans whom Ronald consulted in his time of uncertainty. At this meeting Knox unexpectedly encountered Fr Cyril Charles Martindale (1879 -1963) of the Society of Jesus. Martindale was a convert, received into the Catholic Church by the Jesuits at Bournemouth, and ordained a priest in 1911. He was at the Halifax home researching for his biography of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson. Both Knox’s and Martindale’s recollection of their meeting are recounted by Waugh. The two accounts have marked differences, but what is clear is that Martindale cautioned Knox about negative reasons for wishing to leave the Anglican Church. Knox recalled Martindale saying: “Of course, you couldn’t be received like that.”\textsuperscript{108}

At this stage of his journey Knox was eager to accept Martindale’s advice. Some years later he was less than eager to accept his advice on another front. When the English Catholic Bishops appointed Knox to make a new translation of the

\textsuperscript{105} Ronald Knox “Authority” (September 3, 1926) given in Glasgow under the auspices of the Catholic Truth Society (unpublished manuscript, Mells Collection).
\textsuperscript{106} Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 179
\textsuperscript{107} Waugh, Ronald Knox, 146
\textsuperscript{108} Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 177
Vulgate Bible, Martindale was among those chosen for the advisory committee to assist Knox. This committee was chaired by Bishop Flynn of Lancaster, (whom Knox had known from his days at St Edmund’s, Ware) and the diocesan archives, (housed in the Lancashire Records Office) contain typed copies of all of Knox’s correspondence with the Bishop. Martindale, initially, was delighted at the choice of Knox but expressed a desire:

… (that Knox) would let Catholics down easily and not make his work too different from what they were accustomed to, and not change ‘consecrated phrases’. (Knox) said: (1) there were now no ‘consecrated phrases’; that (2) he wanted to write an entirely new version without special attention to Cath/s (sic) or anyone else; and (3) that he was paying no attention to different styles in the evangelists but, in the N.T. would use a ‘timeless English’ (as if there could ever be one!) and in the O.T., a kind of pseudo-archaist style.\(^{109}\)

This “personal controversy,” as Waugh described it, was resolved in an unusual manner. In 1940, “Fr Martindale went to Denmark, was caught in the German invasion, and held incommunicado for the rest of the War.”\(^{110}\)

From the chance meeting with Martindale at the home of Lard Halifax, Knox sought a more positive outlook and began to read even more widely, and to seek more advice from many of his friends. He gave up his position at Shrewsbury School and worked for the War Office, all the while continuing his reading, and finding that he was moving towards unbelief. The question that he asked of himself was:


\(^{110}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 288; another of the committee was also problematic. Of Fr Hugh Pope OP (1869-1946) Knox wrote: “… Hugh Pope still marks down every word that differs from the Douay.” Knox to Bishop Flynn, July 28, 1941. (TS copy, Lancashire Records Office).
Could I conscientiously join the only institution which looked like the Church of Christ, or must I remain outside, retaining perhaps in myself some half-light of faith, but unable to teach, to proselytize, or to assert?111

He sought further counsel from Fr Martindale. This time he advised that Knox “had nothing to gain by waiting.”112 But still Knox wavered.

His wrestling and uncertainty came to an end when he was received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church by Abbott Fernand Cabrol (1855-1937) of Farnborough Abbey on September 22, 1917.113

Lorene Hanley Duquin in her work A Century of Catholic Converts114 wrongly credited Fr Martindale as the celebrant at Knox’s Reception into Full Communion. In this she has perpetuated the error of an earlier study of conversions to Rome - Catholic Converts by Patrick Allitt.115

Knox made his First Communion the following day, and was confirmed at Westminster Cathedral by Cardinal Bourne on October 6. ‘Sligger’ Urquhart acted as his sponsor.

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111 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 204
112 Knox, A Spiritual Aeneid, 205
113 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 158; Waugh did not name the Abbot. Fernand Cabrol was Abbot from 1903 to his death: “relinquishing actual rule to an abbot coadjutor in 1924.” E. P. Colbert, “Cabrol, Fernand” in New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 2 (Washington DC: Thomson Gale, 2003), 839
114 Lorene Hanley Duquin, A Century Of Catholic Converts (Huntingdon USA: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2003), 45
115 Patrick Allitt, Catholic Converts British And American Intellectuals Turn To Rome (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 162
Knox In Catholic Holy Orders

In 1919 he advanced rapidly to the priesthood, sub-deacon on June 22nd, deacon soon after, and priest on October 5th. Similar to his advance through Orders within the Anglican Communion Knox was given great liberty in his preparations for Holy Orders. As Waugh recounted: “The Cardinal (Bourne) … left him, as the Bishop of Oxford had done, to devise his own course of studies.”

Following his Reception into the Catholic Church in the previous century, John Henry Newman sought to live as a priest within a community. The Oratorians, which he introduced into England, were founded by St Philip Neri (1515-1595). The Benedictine Fr Hubert Van Zeller (1905–1984), a monk of Downside Abbey, who would become Fr Knox’s confessor and friend for many years, recalled that Knox:

...had not himself felt the attraction at any time to the monastic life. Observances as such did not greatly edify him, and the ceremonial frankly bored him.

The Knox of former days found great satisfaction in the religious community of Caldey Island with its ceremonial and monastic observance; while the Cowley Fathers were a spiritual solace at Oxford. Immediately prior to his Reception into the Catholic Church he was on retreat at Farnborough Abbey. Following his

116 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 167
118 Hubert Van Zeller, One Foot In The Cradle (London: John Murray, 1965), 171.
reception into the Church he lived amongst the community of Brompton Oratory. Knox expressed his admiration and gratitude for the Oratorians in a published sermon of 1949: “Few of you have the same sense of indebtedness to the sons of St. Philip as I have; I, who first learned from their influence what it meant to be a Catholic, what it meant to be a priest.”

But it was neither in community, nor religious life, that he would live and work as a priest. This was the more unusual as, before his conversion, Knox had little contact with the Catholic secular clergy. Waugh recorded that the only secular priest that he knew was Father Maturin, then the chaplain to the Catholic undergraduates at Oxford. Maturin had been a member of the Cowley Fathers. A review of Waugh’s biography in The Tablet of October 10, 1959, commented: “Ronald Knox has left the best known name among the secular priesthood, but what he shared with his brother-priests was their prerogatives, not their pastoral experience.”

Knox’s first real contact with the secular clergy was at St. Edmund’s College, Ware. He was appointed there in 1918 and remained for seven and a half years. This college was both a school, and the seminary for the Westminster Diocese. He taught both in the school, and in the seminary. Following St Edmund’s, from 1926 to 1939, he was chaplain to the Catholic undergraduates at...

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120 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 177
121 The Tablet (Vol. 213 No. 6229 Oct. 10, 1959), 857
122 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 175
Oxford. Later he was to live in the large manor houses of Aldenham Park and Mells. It was in these two houses that he completed his translation of the Vulgate Bible.

Along with not sharing “their pastoral experience,” by and large Knox lived from his own means gained by his writing and speaking engagements.123

His unique clerical career had put him: “outside the normal course of ecclesiastical appointments”124 but in 1951 he was appointed as a Protonotary Apostolic which conferred on him the title Monsignor. Two years earlier, his secular priest brothers elected him to the Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy. This group of twenty-four clergy was established in 1623: “as the Old English Chapter, to take over the government of the Church in England from the Arch-priests who had succeeded Cardinal Allen in 1594.”125 While it was responsible for ecclesiastical governance in the absence of bishops after the Reformation, it had ceased to have any jurisdiction when the Hierarchy was re-established in England in 1862. The name was changed to the Old Brotherhood at this time.126 Knox’s election to this body was testament to his acceptance by

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123 Knox wrote six detective stories to supplement his income: The Viaduct Murder (1925), The Three Taps (1927), Footsteps At The Lock (1928), The Body In The Silo (1933), Still Dead (1934), Double Cross Purposes (1937); Waugh, Ronald Knox, 188. In the preface Knox wrote, in 1928, for The Best Detective Stories Of The Year he set out the rules for a detective novel, which were adopted as the oath of initiation of the Detection Club (founded in 1929). Its members included Knox, G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy Sayers, and Agatha Christie. P. D. James, Talking About Detective Fiction (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2009), 53-5 discussed these rules.
124 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 305
125 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 316
126 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 317
his confreres, in spite of his unique priesthood. Robert Speight wrote in Ronald Knox The Writer:

Ronald Knox was much quicker than Newman to feel at home in his new family; and it is fair to add that the family treated him very much better than they treated Newman.\textsuperscript{127}

As he was accepted into the ranks of his brother priests, and became a valued retreat giver\textsuperscript{128} and sought after preacher, even though his initial knowledge of, and contact with, the secular clergy was scant, so his religious practice as a Catholic became more centred and less at the extreme. His journey to the Catholic Church, through a need for authority, had mellowed his enthusiasm for some of the external expressions of religion. What Knox sought was “frequent prayer and really deep spiritual reading.”\textsuperscript{129} W.S.F. Pickering has remarked on Knox’s: “sobriety when he became a Roman Catholic.”\textsuperscript{130}

Though he was not a member of a religious Order, his later close association with the Jesuits at Oxford has led to some confusion. In his book Worship and Theology in England 1900 – 1965 The Ecumenical Century\textsuperscript{131} Horton Davies highlighted the contribution of the Jesuits (the Society of Jesus) to preaching and the liturgical renewal in England in the twentieth century. Among the Jesuits,

\textsuperscript{127} Robert Speight Ronald Knox The Writer (London & Melbourne: Sheed & Ward, 1966), 137
\textsuperscript{128} e.g. Ronald Knox, A Retreat For Priests rep. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948) and Ronald Knox, The Priestly Life A Retreat (London: Sheed and Ward, 1959)
\textsuperscript{129} Van Zeller, One Foot In the Cradle, 171
\textsuperscript{130} Pickering, “The Impossibility of Ridley Votive-Candle Stands,” 421
\textsuperscript{131} Horton Davies, Worship And Theology In England The Ecumenical Century 1900 -1965 (Princetown, New Jersey: Princetown University Press, 1965)
renowned for preaching and for their theological writings on the Eucharist, he included Ronald Knox!\textsuperscript{132}

\textbf{The Influence Of Knox On The Catholic Church Of His Time}

At the time of Ronald’s conversion Bishop Knox wrote to his daughter Winifred “Well, they have him now, and they will make no sparing use of him.” \textsuperscript{133} Knox’s initial appointment to St Edmund’s College seemed to give the lie to the Bishop’s prophecy. Knox had trod the national stage as the champion of Anglo-Catholicism, but at the beginning of his Roman Catholic life he was confined to a small and not particularly successful academic institution: “It’s (St Edmund’s) obscurity was hardly better than prolonged penance for so scintillating a debater and scholar.”\textsuperscript{134} But on weekends and during holidays Knox was able to fulfill preaching and other engagements and to continue writing. Gradually his influence in his new Church increased. By the time of his death Knox’s writings were popular and influential in the United States, and throughout the whole English speaking world.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{132} Davies, \textit{Worship and Theology In England}, 260, 262, 275, 276
\textsuperscript{133} quoted in Fitzgerald, \textit{The Knox Brothers}, 152; When Ronald was received in to the Church his father wrote him out of his Will. Perhaps alluding to this Knox wrote in \textit{The Belief Of Catholics}: “Wills are drawn up in which the heir forfeits his rights if he should make his submission to Rome,” 25
\textsuperscript{134} Allitt, \textit{Catholic Converts}, 188
\textsuperscript{135} David Mathew, \textit{Catholicism In England The Portrait Of A Minority: Its Culture And Tradition} 2nd ed. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), 271: “Two priests, Mgr. Ronald Knox and Fr D’Arcy, had through their writings and personality, an unparalleled influence on the literate part of the Catholic community.”
Still for his prominence among Catholics in the United Kingdom he was for many a paradox. As a writer, broadcaster on the BBC, preacher and retreat giver, he was widely recognized, but underpinning religious influence is sanctity. Harold Macmillan was convinced of his sanctity,136 as was his biographer, but others were not convinced. A review of the Waugh biography in The Times Literary Supplement (referred to earlier) of Friday, October 9, 1959, observed:

The reader cannot help thinking of Knox as he might have been: either as a brilliant leader of our established system, or possibly a great rebel against it. Sanctity may be the result of suffering. Can it be the result of such obvious waste?137

In his study, After The Victorians,138 A. N. Wilson referred, briefly, to Knox’s apologetics, based solely, one might conclude, on his correspondence with Arnold Lunn, which was later published as Difficulties.139 As The Times article was unsure of Knox’s sanctity, so Wilson was ambivalent about Knox’s Catholicism:

In Ronald Knox’s own case, Roman Catholicism, like crossword puzzles and acrostics and detective stories, seems to have worked for him like a systematic exclusion of experience as much as one sought to explore his complexities. To read his works of apologetics is to be amazed at the breezy way in which Knox sees Roman Catholicism as a perfect solution.140

136 see above, 13  
137 The Times Literary Supplement October 9, 1959, 570. This article was cut from the newspaper and preserved in Sir Shane Leslie’s copy of the Waugh biography in the collection of the library of Eton College. Shane Leslie’s copy of the biography is heavily underlined and with copious margin notes.  
138 A. N. Wilson, After The Victorians (London: Hutchinson, 2005)  
139 Ronald Knox and Arnold Lunn, Difficulties 3rd ed. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1932)  
140 Wilson, After The Victorians, 295
For Wilson, Knox epitomized his age which had produced the cryptic crossword and the ‘whodunnit mystery’. In his opinion the rise of these and other puzzles was the consequence of an age which considered that any problem: “Keynesian or Marxist economic theory, Roman Catholicism, communist or fascist doctrine”\textsuperscript{141} could be solved merely by worrying about it “for a long time.” Moreover, he judged Knox’s life as “an elegy for the never-forgotten dead.”\textsuperscript{142}

It is true that Knox never forgot the decimation of his circle of friends in the First World War, however Wilson failed to distinguish between life-destroying grief, and that grief which, based on faith and hope, will always raise prayers for the departed, because of belief in the Resurrection. Knox constantly returned, particularly in his Eucharistic Sermons, to the presence of the departed in each and every Mass, not just as a memory but part of the Church in the Communion of Saints: “More important presences come to mind: our Lady and the saints and the faithful departed”,\textsuperscript{143} and elsewhere:

\begin{quote}
And shall we not cling, above all, to the Sacrament which provides us with a real opportunity of making ourselves one with those we love? … We remember God’s servants and handmaids who have gone before us, outstripped in the race for eternity; who now sleep in the sleep of peace, while we must watch still in the watchfulness of war.\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{141} Wilson, After The Victorians, 293
\textsuperscript{142} Wilson, After The Victorians, 294
\textsuperscript{143} Ronald A. Knox, “This Mass And The Mass” Sermon XVI in The Window in the Wall (London: Burns & Oates, 1956), 90
\textsuperscript{144} Ronald A. Knox, “The City Of Peace” Sermon II in The Window in the Wall, 10
Knox was given to melancholy, and to undervalue his achievements. He described himself (in a letter to Cardinal Hinsley, quoted by Waugh, in which Knox requested that he not be appointed as President of the St Edmund’s College and seminary) as “a born worrier.”¹⁴⁵ This was evident during his tenure at the Oxford Chaplaincy. In the Lent of 1938 he wrote: “I am under a great cloud of depression about my work here and the young generally.”¹⁴⁶ And he was often “haunted by the fear of failing powers.”¹⁴⁷ Fr C.C. Martindale SJ wrote to Evelyn Waugh in 1958 after Knox’s death: “I think he was rather sad at times: he told a friend of mine that he’d never got any joy out of religion.”¹⁴⁸ Thomas Corbishley contrasted Knox and Newman. He reflected on the “unfair treatment” of Newman by the hierarchy of his time and the suffering of Knox:

> Ronald Knox, we feel, suffered not so much from outside opposition as from a sense of failure which sprang, as much as anything, from the very demands he made on himself.¹⁴⁹

Corbishley had already hinted at this when he wrote in the Preface to his study of Knox as a priest: “Any priest will be all too conscious that his personal qualities fall far short of the message he seeks to deliver.”¹⁵⁰ What saved Knox was: “(his)

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¹⁴⁶ quoted in Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 237; see also Fitzgerald, *The Knox Brothers*, 218
¹⁴⁹ Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest*, 28
¹⁵⁰ Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest*, viii
capacity for laughter, even for laughing at himself”\textsuperscript{151} The subtitle of Milton Walsh’s study on Knox as apologist echoed this observation.\textsuperscript{152}

The *Times* review cited above questioned the readiness with which Waugh attributed holiness to Knox. The novelist:

“Graham Greene in reviewing Evelyn Waugh’s biography of the Catholic priest Ronald Knox, wrote of the difficulty faced by the biographer in describing the spiritual life of his subject: ‘We have a sense of breaking into a life far more private and exclusive than a bedroom.’”\textsuperscript{153}

Thomas Corbishley wrote: “The life of sanctity is the story of an alliance – the alliance between an earthbound creature and the time-transcending grace of God.”\textsuperscript{154} *The Times Literary Supplement*, as was shown, was unconvinced of Knox’s holiness, though it conceded grudgingly that: “Sanctity may be the result of suffering”. Knox’s fellow Catholics discerned ‘the alliance’ and were less reluctant to draw negative conclusions from Knox’s own self-perception of his influence and success; they did not view his suffering and self-doubt as precluding holiness of life. The Jesuit philosopher and friend of Knox, Fr Martin D’Arcy, preached the panegyric at Knox’s Solemn Requiem Mass in Westminster Cathedral:

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{151} Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest*, 28
\textsuperscript{152} Milton Walsh, *Ronald Knox As Apologist Wit, Laughter And The Popish Creed* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007)
\textsuperscript{153} quoted in Piers Paul Read, *Alec Guinness* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 568
\textsuperscript{154} Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest*, 1
\end{footnotesize}
Many of his friends were startled and confused to find that he apparently thought them superior to himself ... it was so obvious that he was a favourite of God as well as man ... He who thought himself of such little worth, could use the gifts which God had given him ... to insure that the word Roman in Roman Catholic should no longer feel foreign ... His Lord and Master has said to him: Come, no longer to serve as his amanuensis and special interpreter, but, please God to see him face to face.\textsuperscript{155}

Knox has bequeathed the legacy of a large body of published works, the greatest of which is his English translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible. But this has been eclipsed by newer translations which have translated directly from the original Greek and Aramaic. Knox was obedient to his commission to translate directly from the Latin Vulgate text, which was the authorized translation for use in the Liturgy of the time, but while constrained by his brief he also consulted the original texts, and on his departure from Oxford quickly learnt Hebrew.\textsuperscript{156}

As with the Knox Bible, most of his published works remain unknown to new generations.

Robert Speight imagined a college library some fifty or a hundred years on from the publishing of his study on Knox the writer. In this future time, the only work of Knox’s that would have relevance, in his opinion, would be \textit{God and the Atom}.\textsuperscript{157}

This essay was written in response to the dropping of the Atom Bomb on

\textsuperscript{155} quoted in Waugh, \textit{Ronald Knox}, 333-334
\textsuperscript{156} Waugh, \textit{Ronald Knox}, 284
Hiroshima, and later on Nagasaki, in 1945. This “catastrophic leap in the history of human achievement”\textsuperscript{158} challenged all of Knox’s (and by extension humankind’s) certainties: belief in the existence of God, hope for the future, trust in one’s fellow men and women. In Knox’s opinion the dropping of the bomb should not have happened; the threat of such annihilation would have been enough deterrent. He could understand the political motives for why it happened but from the historical moment that the bomb was dropped:

… the world will never be quite the same; a new dimension of danger has been added to our daily lives; undreamt-of possibilities, appalling alternatives, of good and evil have been opened up; God, himself, as never before, has been called into question; dazzling progress and utter annihilation starkly confront us …\textsuperscript{159}

A new world had opened up, and he was questioning how the Church could give an account of her teachings, and her belief in Christ. In an unfinished work _Proving God: A New Apologetic_ he wrote:

What I am concerned with is our apologetics, and that great work of apologetic, some day to be written, which shall suggest to the reader that in approaching Christian theology he is approaching something that is alive, not a series of diagrams.

He will read the New Testament, not as a set of “passages” which must somehow be reconciled with one another, but as the breathless confidences of living men, reacting to human situations, and inflamed with zeal for their Master.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{158} Knox, _God And The Atom_, 12
\textsuperscript{159} Speight, _Ronald Knox The Writer_, 147
\textsuperscript{160} Ronald Knox, _Proving God A New Apologetic_ an unfinished manuscript published in _The Month_ (1959) (With a Preface by Evelyn Waugh), 16
Knox was not to know that only six years after his death Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) would convene the Second Vatican Council. One of its first actions was a reform of the Sacred Liturgy – *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of December 4, 1963. Knox had preached extensively on the Liturgy and the Eucharist, the Liturgical Rites which had emanated from the Council of Trent (1545-1563):

> The Christian liturgy seems to have grown up at haphazard, on no principle, every age leaving some mark on its development until it was crystallized four centuries ago.\(^{162}\)

The liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council introduced a greater use of the vernacular, and a revised Missal, *The Missal of Paul VI*. Earlier, during Knox’s lifetime, Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) had introduced reform into the Liturgies of Holy Week, and Waugh recounted that Knox had “lived to see the Roman Church abandon many of the features he emulated as an Anglican.”\(^{163}\) The relaxation of the Eucharistic Fast was one such change, and “the irruption of the laity into the liturgy.”\(^{164}\) Commenting on Knox’s response, Waugh wrote: “Some of his later sermons (particularly the Corpus Christi series at Maiden Lane) are rebukes addressed to himself for his sentimental regret at the changing face of the Church.”\(^{165}\)

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\(^{161}\) The Council which was not convened to discuss doctrine but was to be an aggiornamento. In stating his rationale for the Council he is reputed to have said: “I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in.”

\(^{162}\) Ronald Knox, “The Challenge” Sermon XVI in *The Window In The Wall*, 100


\(^{164}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 111

\(^{165}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 111
Waugh’s comment has more of the autobiographical as his own displeasure with the liturgical changes which followed the Council is well documented.\textsuperscript{166}

If Knox was unhappy with the relaxation of the fast,\textsuperscript{167} for example, he recognized the benefits it offered for frequent reception of Communion:

And if the conditions under which we live and work interfere with the gathering of ourselves together, then the disciplines of an earlier age must be relaxed; not for her to set limits to the compassion of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{168}

Waugh has recounted an instance when Knox was asked to celebrate a baptism in the vernacular. Knox responded: “The baby doesn’t understand English and the Devil knows Latin.”\textsuperscript{169} Waugh admitted that this terse response was due more to Knox’s general conservatism. Perhaps there was sentimental regret in the changes that had taken place in his lifetime, for Knox had expressed the conviction: “It goes without saying that the Christian liturgy, already so venerable, is less likely than anything else to be modified by the hand of time. Yes, it will be the same in all essentials.”\textsuperscript{170} But he foresaw that: “The language in which the vernacular prayers are said, will be a language, perhaps, which the human race has not invented.”\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{166} See A Bitter Trial Evelyn Waugh And John Carmel Cardinal Heenan On The Liturgical Changes ed. Scott M. P. Reid (London: The St Austin Press, 2000)
\textsuperscript{167} see Ronald Knox, “Pity For The Multitude” in The Window in the Wall, 129
\textsuperscript{168} Knox, “Pity For The Multitude,” 129
\textsuperscript{169} quoted in Waugh, Ronald Knox, 111
\textsuperscript{170} Ronald Knox, “First And Last Communions” Sermon XIX in The Window In The Wall, 120; see also Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, par. 37.54: “(the Liturgy’s) basic structure is not within our power to change, nor can it be held hostage by the latest trends.”
\textsuperscript{171} Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 120
Ashley Beck has considered a possible Knoxian response to the reforms of the Liturgy and the widespread use of the vernacular: “would (he) were he alive now, avoid the 1970 Missal like the plague?” Knox may well have responded with his text above: “Yes, it will be the same in all essentials.” He might, however, make some comment on the translation from the Latin:

… the fact, as I see it, is that where religion is concerned our standard of translation has been, and remains, miserably low. Literalness has been accepted as our rule, and dullness is the result.

In a footnote to his hypothetical question Beck questioned Waugh’s comment on sentimental regret. In *The Mass in Slow Motion* Knox expressed a wish: “I only know I always rather wish these Secret Prayers after the Offertory were said out loud, because they are so attractive, some of them.” The conciliar revision granted ‘Knox’s wish’; the Secret Prayer was renamed the *Prayer over the Gifts* and it was to be proclaimed out loud. Beck was also of the opinion that Knox would have welcomed the increase of Scripture in the Liturgy of the Word, and in particular the greater access to the Old Testament in the three year Sunday and Solemnity cycles, and the two year weekday cycle.

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Any perceived difficulty that Knox may have had, and Waugh certainly did, are no longer relevant with the authorized usage of the Extraordinary Form of the Mass.\(^{175}\)

Ashley Beck cautioned of “two pitfalls”\(^{176}\) that were to be avoided in an assessment of Knox’s importance to the Church. The first of these was the commonly held position that the Second Vatican Council changed everything, and all that preceded it was superseded. The second was a “nostalgia” for the past.

Knox himself had cautioned (though not in any assessment of his contribution to Catholic life!) against the first ‘pitfall’ in a sermon on St Albert the Great preached in 1932. Knox took as his text: “Every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old” (Mt. 13:52). Speaking of the foundation of the Church, Knox stated: “Our Lord, therefore, is not exactly creating a new thing in the world when he lays the foundations of his Church;”\(^{177}\) and the apostles realized: “that every new thing in human history is built against the background of some older thing which went before it.”\(^{178}\) Towards the end of this sermon Knox reflected on the effect of the First World War: “Today, perhaps more than ever, the world is eager

\(^{175}\) Benedict XVI, *Summorum Pontificum*, Motu Proprio, 2007

\(^{176}\) Beck, *Ronald Knox*, 55


\(^{178}\) “St Albert The Great,” 47-8
to make a clean sweep of its past." In contrast the Church “will always bring new things and old out of its treasure-house, will not consent to the modern worship of the modern.”

In a pamphlet published in 1995 Kevin L. Morris wrote:

His extensive religious writings reflect a conventional, traditionalist and scrupulous exposition of the Faith, rooted in respect for the teaching authority of Rome. This would seem to qualify him as a man for the present pontificate (Pope John Paul II 1978 – 2005), yet his books are no longer printed, and he is little discussed.

An online article promoting Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, has verified Morris’ assessment. The author published this article during his tenure as parish priest there, and along with a history of the church, he recorded:

A visitor of particular note came in 1908, the year of the Eucharistic Congress in London. Mgr Ronald Knox preached at the Patronal Feast that year and the invitation extended to 26 times altogether. His sermons were published in book form under the titles ‘Between Heaven and Charing Cross’ and ‘Window in The Wall’.

Not only is the date incorrect, Knox was twenty years of age at that time and still an Anglican and an undergraduate at Balliol, but the titles of the collected sermons are not exact, and familiarity with the Prefaces of both collections would inform the reader that it was in 1926 when the invitation was first extended. Further familiarity with the contents of the latter collection would securely place

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179 “St Albert The Great,” 49
180 “St Albert The Great,” 50
many of the sermons within the time of the Second World War; Knox has added footnotes to specify when a particular sermon was preached.\footnote{184}{for example “Self-Examination” Sermon XI in Ronald A. Knox, \textit{The Window In The Wall} (London: Burns & Oates, 1956) “... was preached at the time of the Nuremberg trials...” 65}

The Morris pamphlet was an attempt to renew interest in Knox’s writings, and perhaps as a reminder to his readers why Cardinal Heenan (Archbishop of Westminster 1963 – 1975) regarded Knox as: “perhaps the greatest figure in the Church of the twentieth century.”\footnote{185}{Morris, \textit{Mgr Ronald Knox: A Great Teacher}, 3} Morris would be pleased by new studies and the reprinting of many of Knox’s works (many by Ignatius Press, San Francisco). This paper has already made reference to the most recent biography by Terry Tastard; the American priest Milton Walsh has published \textit{Ronald Knox as Apologist},\footnote{186}{Milton Walsh, \textit{Ronald Knox As Apologist Wit, Laughter And The Popish Creed}; reference quoted above} referred to earlier, and \textit{Second Friends}\footnote{187}{Milton Walsh, \textit{Second Friends C. S. Lewis And Ronald Knox In Conversation} (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008)} - a rather strained attempt to bring together the religious writings of Lewis and Knox who were not closely associated in life. \textit{The Wine of Certitude A Literary Biography of Ronald Knox}\footnote{188}{Rooney, \textit{The Wine Of Certitude A Literary Biography Of Ronald Knox}; reference quoted above} by David Rooney was quoted earlier in this text.

The French scholar, Solange Dayras, gave an insightful portrait of Ronald Knox, which this paper has adopted to summarize this first section; and as Dayras continued, in her article, to demonstrate the relevance of Knox for our time, so the following analysis of his Eucharistic Sermons at Maiden Lane will suggest his
continuing relevance for Eucharistic theology and devotion in a world vastly different to his:

Here we have a decidedly pre-Conciliar personality, the product of a markedly selective education, relatively untouched by the missionary energies of his ancestors, and lacking the theological competence of his brother Wilfred. In all this, Knox gives the impression of someone living in a close circle of friends who share his culture and religious convictions, far from the madding crowd. He seems like a distinguished amateur who is equally at home with the Bible and Lord Sandwich.  

This description of Knox could suggest that Knox was cloistered from reality, but, Dayras acknowledged that:

... some of the problems raised by Knox are still with us today. Although the context has changed, Knox's parodies describe a situation which is still with us: that is to say, a loss of simplicity in faith, the replacing of the magisterium by subjective hermeneutics; ... (the) rise (of) a new mentality conscious of the relativity of any systematic formulation. In *God and the Atom* (which expresses already the anxieties of our own day) Knox raises an issue which is still crucial: can ethical progress keep in step with technological progress?  

And she noted that, in his Eucharistic sermons, he: "(drew) attention to the social and universal dimensions of the Eucharist." 

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190 Dayras, "A Gallic View Of Ronald Knox," 283
2. Knox – His Preaching Style

Public speaking and preaching were associated with Knox as an undergraduate, Anglican clergyman, and later within the Catholic Church. Reminiscing on his student days at Oxford, an English theologian of the Congregational Church, and one time Principal of Mansfield College at Oxford, Nathaniel Micklem (1888-1976), wrote of his experience at the Oxford Union: “The most witty and famous speaker in my time was Ronald Knox of Balliol.”\(^{192}\) In one undergraduate speech at the Union Knox’s words were reported in *The Times*. Micklem quoted from this speech: “The honourable gentlemen (Micklem could not remember who they were) have turned their backs upon their country and now have the effrontery to say that they have their country behind them.”\(^{193}\)

In his analysis of the sermons of Knox, Horton Davies has distinguished three phases and styles of his preaching:

Polemical sermons were preached in his Anglo-Catholic days, apologetical sermons during his period as Roman Catholic chaplain to Oxford University (1926-1939), and during his later years he composed some superb liturgical sermons.\(^{194}\)

The series of sermons preached from 1926 at Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, are among the liturgical sermons.

\(^{192}\) Nathaniel Micklem, *The Box And The Puppets* (London: Geoffrey Blees, 1957), 34
\(^{193}\) Micklem, *The Box And The Puppets*, 35
\(^{194}\) Davies, *Worship And Theology In England*, 247
Duncan Macpherson has written: “Nearly all the certainties of the world into which Knox had been born were called into question in his lifetime.”\textsuperscript{195} He considered that Knox’s life and preaching were a response and an answer to these uncertainties. At the time of publication of The Window in the Wall (the second volume of Eucharistic Sermons) Knox wrote in the Preface: “(there is) no harm to have a kind of Eucharistic commentary on these last crowded decades.”\textsuperscript{196}

**Politics And Social Conscience**

While Knox’s sermons are a response to these uncertainties he “never developed a strong political perspective”\textsuperscript{197} and as a Catholic “(h)e had never shown the slightest interest in what is sometimes described as “social Catholicism.”\textsuperscript{198} Waugh recounted that: “Once only, on St James day, 1937, did he preach a political sermon”\textsuperscript{199} encouraged by the passion around him on the current Spanish Civil War. His prayer was for peace so that “the Church there (can) do its work unhindered.”\textsuperscript{200} He was profoundly changed by the loss of so many friends in the First World War, and with the Second World his response was patriotic but the pulpit or the conference were not used as vehicles of

\textsuperscript{195} Duncan Macpherson, “The Spirit Of Christmas Past”, 29  
\textsuperscript{196} Knox, *The Window In the Wall*, viii  
\textsuperscript{197} Macpherson, “The Spirit Of Christmas Past,” 28; see R. A. Knox, “The Church And Politics” in *Off The Record* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953), 74-5 where Knox said of himself: “But I dare say I’m talking nonsense; politics aren’t at all in my line.” *God And The Atom* was a very clear “moral and philosophical tract”, Waugh, 303, but it was not a sermon.  
\textsuperscript{198} Speight, *Ronald Knox The Writer*, 146  
\textsuperscript{199} Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 228; in fact Caraman dated this sermon “Church And State” to July of 1938. It is published in Knox, *Occasional Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox*, 212-7  
\textsuperscript{200} Ronald Knox quoted in Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 229
propaganda for the Allies’ cause; more often the Eucharistic sermons preached at Maiden Lane expressed his regret for the disunity that the war had brought about:

War has sundered the nations – yes, it can interrupt the exchange of commerce, of ideas, of diplomatic courtesies. It cannot interrupt the current of sacramental fellowship which unites us with all Christians, even with our enemies, when we and they partake of the same heavenly banquet.  

In the sermon *Giving of Thanks* which he preached at the time of the advance of the Allies through Italy and the liberation of Rome, Knox gave thanks that the city was “won, standing” and unlike the ruined Abbey of Monte Cassino. This reference to current events came at the end of the sermon and served no political agenda. It gave a contemporary context to thanksgiving which along with “praise, reparation and intercession (are) … an integral part of the Christian sacrifice, as one of its chief ends.” Another example was the Corpus Christi sermon of 1946, preached at the time of the Nuremberg trials. This was not the occasion to extol the defeat of Fascism, rather, it was timely to examine judgment itself, which is ultimately “the privilege of God himself.” Knox argued: “The man who judges a fellow creature on earth stands his own trial, in doing so, before the tribunal of eternal justice.” As with the other sermon, quoted above, Knox used the contemporary event, in this case the Nuremberg trials, as the inspiration for his discussion not on political matters, nor even on justice per se,

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202 Ronald A. Knox, “Giving Of Thanks” Sermon V in *The Window In the Wall*, 33
203 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 32
204 Ronald A. Knox, “Self-Examination” Sermon XI in *The Window In the Wall*, 66
205 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 66
but for a consideration on the worthy or unworthy reception of the Eucharist. This arose from the Epistle of the Feast which was taken from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians: “Whoever, therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:27 NRSV). Moreover, St. Thomas Aquinas reiterated the scriptural text in the Sequence he composed for the Feast of Corpus Christ: “The good, the guilty share therein, With sure increase of grace or sin.”206

The conferences given to the undergraduates at Oxford University did offer an opportunity to encourage the listeners to shape their ‘world view’ and ambition through their Catholic Faith, but these conferences were essentially apologetics – an explanation of Catholic belief, and a catechetical program to equip the undergraduates with a deeper understanding of their Faith. Terry Tastard considered that the call to holiness was the strength of Knox’s chaplaincy, but “it was a lack of social involvement that was its weakness”.207 all the more as the Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War, the rise of Fascism and Socialism in Europe, and subsequently the beginning of the Second World War, occurred during his tenure at the Chaplaincy.

207 Tastard, Ronald Knox And English Catholicism, 127; a tribute in The Tablet 210, (1960), 157, made a similar observation.
One occasion to consider the influence that the Church should exercise on the broader community was in the conference “The Church and Human Progress.” Knox contrasted Christ’s Parables – the Mustard Seed (Mat.13:11-12) and the Leaven (Mt.13:33):

... the growth of the mustard seed shows you the Christian Church as a body which swells in size, whereas the spread of the leaven shows you the Christian gospel as an influence which radiates force and communicates it to its neighbourhood.

Knox explored the Church’s influence, and from a review of social progress, he concluded that “the world has become a more comfortable place to live in.” He was not certain, though, whether the Church alone could take the credit for this improvement. He continued by challenging the undergraduates:

... under modern conditions we Catholics ought, more than ever, to be taking the lead in enlightening the conscience of the world; that, largely we are not doing it, and it is our fault that we are not doing it.

The conference was a call to a form of ‘Catholic action’, but it was also an explanation of his reasons for the lack of political perspective, or social Catholicism, in his sermons and conferences.

It is quite true that the Catholic Church has never made social reform the first plank in her programme ... Her message has always been addressed to the individual soul, rather than to the political community.

209 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress” Conference XIX In Soft Garments, 166-7
210 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 168
211 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,”169
212 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 169
Knox cited slavery, as an example: “St Paul could tell masters to be kind to their slaves, without saying they must be set free.” The Church, and “the spirit of the Christian religion asserted itself” slowly, and change did happen in society: “gradual, yes, and unnoticed, but that is the way of the leaven when it goes to work.” Moreover, the Church must always have regard for the ‘other side of the picture’: “we cannot afford to neglect principles, cannot afford to leave out one half of the truth.” As a consequence, a thirst for peace must also recognize the “instinct for patriotism”; human liberties must not be sacrificed in “redressing injustice”; and “the relief of human misery without defying the sanctities of divine law.” The Church, unlike “other reformers,” cannot simply pursue one set of principles. The reasoning of this conference was also manifest in the Eucharistic sermons quoted above.

In the first published sermon from Maiden Lane, “One Body” in the volume *Heaven And Charing Cross*, perhaps written around the same time as the Oxford conference above and not re-published in the latter volume, Knox had a similar regret. Knox said: “the fellowship of Catholics all over the world ought to be enough to give the world peace.” That such peace had not been attained he concluded was not the Church’s fault: “it is our fault, the fault of Catholics who have not been Catholic enough.” And this sermon recognized that “world-

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213 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 169
214 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 169
215 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 171
216 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 171
218 Knox, “One Body,” 5
politics are on too vast a scale to engage the active loyalties of undistinguished citizens like ourselves." The world-stage might be too vast an arena for the individual’s Christian’s activity, but practical charity within the local community, or parish, allowed for the growth of peace. The Eucharist, the Sacrament of peace, should have its primary effect (that of peace through charity) within the daily circle of family, friends and meetings.

The Maiden Lane sermons were directed to building up the holiness and devotion of the community, and each individual, celebrating and receiving the Eucharist, and any ‘social response’ was a by-product, and nonetheless welcome. Moreover as Knox told the undergraduates in the conference quoted above:

... what I am suggesting is that, since you are here to be educated, you should pay some attention – whatever attention your ordinary work and engagements permit – to getting some grasp of the problems that are exercising the modern world; and not merely in studying these in the light of your religion, so that you may be able to give a good account of what the Church teaches, and why …

He encouraged an awareness of the world situation, or the national economy, and active involvement, where possible, to improve or alleviate the situation, but, at the same time, the human initiative should not be over-estimated, as the work of the Church in the world was God’s work, and only God can know the effectiveness of this work.

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219 Knox, “One Body,” 5
220 Knox, “The Church And Human Progress,” 172
221 Ronald Knox, “Real Bread,” 83
Conversion And Always Ongoing

Conversion, understandably, was a constant theme in his sermons and conferences.\(^{222}\) In 1927, ten years after his reception into the Church, Knox preached a series of sermons at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Eden Grove, Holloway. These were published as *Anglican Cobwebs* and were directed to Anglicans still hesitant about conversion to Rome; as Knox wrote in the Preface: “They are published in the hope that they may be of some use … by clearing up their minds on a few practical points.”\(^{223}\) The reader is reminded in these pages of Knox’s *Diabolus Loquitur* – his personal list of reasons and contras for staying within the Anglican Communion or for submitting to Rome.

The first of the sermons included an instance of his own Eucharistic history. He reflected that, while an Anglican, in receiving Communion, he never experienced those: “feelings of sweetness and tenderness, such as God often gives to devout Christians in order to cherish and inflame their love of the Holy Eucharist.”\(^{224}\) Knox stated: “I do not think I ever had such feelings as a Protestant,”\(^{225}\) and he continued that the lack of such feelings may have been that: “God (was) starving me into the Church.”\(^{226}\) As he continued to encourage those who wavered, he taught them that ‘the feelings of sweetness and of tenderness’ were God “sustaining you in the wilderness,” but they were “not part of the grace which

\(^{222}\) Speight *Ronald Knox The Writer*, 135
\(^{223}\) Knox, *Anglican Cobwebs*, unnumbered.
\(^{224}\) Knox, *Anglican Cobwebs*, 12
\(^{225}\) Knox, *Anglican Cobwebs*, 12
\(^{226}\) Knox, *Anglican Cobwebs*, 12
comes to us from the mere fact of receiving Communion." The grace of the Sacrament was unperceived; the feelings were "an added grace." The feelings, in themselves, were no guarantee of the reality of the presence in the Sacrament, but they were indications that God was reaching out to a person. Knox was never persuaded that emotions were indicators of spiritual growth.

In the second sermon, Knox dealt with the 'cobweb' of the influential other who had not converted to Catholicism, and who was causing a scruple in the one considering conversion. It was Knox's intent to offer, to that hesitant person, such sufficient independence to remain uninfluenced by the other's standing and persuasion, and respond to the personal grace offered: "The question for you is not why grace has not yet knocked at his door. The question is whether it has knocked at yours." This second sermon also has a hint of his own religious history; Knox was clearly conscious of the influence he had on others. Knox's father had admired his son's talent for: "exercising religious influence on young men of education." As a young chaplain and Fellow of Trinity, he was enthusiastic in recruiting for the Anglo-Catholic movement. As his own religious certainty tottered, and especially during the years of the First World War, when so many of his friends, in the face of battle and probable death, were converting

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227 Knox, Anglican Cobwebs, 13
228 Knox, Anglican Cobwebs, 14
229 Knox, Anglican Cobwebs, 27
230 see above 14
to Catholicism, Knox could not offer any guidance for or against their conversion.

The theme of conversion was not limited to those vacillating about joining the Catholic Church; it was a constant throughout all the sermons. Conversion did not simply imply a move from one Church to another; it was an ongoing growth in one’s devotion and conviction. In the case of the Maiden Lane sermons this was directed at the Eucharist.

The Anglo-Catholic Preacher

As a young Anglo-Catholic priest championing his cause Knox could be provocative. The three sermons titled Naboth’s Vineyard in Pawn which he preached in August 1913 at St. James’s, Plymouth, began with this challenge to the congregation: “We are proposing, dear brethren, on these three Sundays, to examine, and, where necessary, to criticize the position in which we stand as members of the Church of England”;

Only a woman could have invented the Reformation Settlement. For it is the woman’s business to serve up the remains of what you had hot for dinner last night as a cold lunch for today; to darn socks in

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231 see also Mathew, Catholicism In England The Portrait Of A Minority: Its Culture And Tradition, 253: “The number of conversions to Catholicism had greatly increased during the War, especially among those in the fighting lines who became more conscious of an anchorhold of faith.”

232 originally printed by the Society of St Peter and St Paul, 1913, rep. in Knox, University Sermons.

233 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons of Ronald A. Knox, 449
preference to buying new ones; to cut down her husband’s knickerbockers to make trousers for her son. And the Reformation as carried out by Elizabeth was a continual process of darning and patching and cutting down ceremonies; and hashing up odds and ends of the Catholic religion.\textsuperscript{234}

This was provocative, but perhaps it alluded, though in an insensitive metaphor, to the 1898 response of the Cardinal Archbishop and the bishops of the Province of Westminster to a letter addressed to them by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, in response to the Apostolic Letter of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), \textit{Apostolicae Curae} of 1896, on the validity of Anglican Orders, which the apostolic letter denied. The bishops wrote:

\begin{quote}
That in earlier times local Churches were permitted to add \textit{new} prayers and ceremonies is acknowledged … But that they were also permitted to \textit{subtract} prayers and ceremonies in previous use, and even to remodel the existing rites in the most drastic manner, is a proposition for which we know of no historical foundation, and which appears to us absolutely incredible.\textsuperscript{235}
\end{quote}

Knox’s polemic sermons were intended to raise shackles and to rally the supporters. Horton Davies considered that: “The earliest sermons are often marred by the partisan spirit and by an over-indulgence in facetiousness.”\textsuperscript{236}

In a similar vein, Arnold Lunn (1888 – 1974), while still an agnostic, included his opinion about Knox’s satirical piece \textit{Reunion All Round}\textsuperscript{237} in his critique \textit{Roman

\textsuperscript{234} Knox, \textit{University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox}, 451
\textsuperscript{235} quoted in Alcuin Reid OSB, \textit{The Organic Development Of The Liturgy} (Farnborough: St Michael’s Abbey Press, 2004), 59
\textsuperscript{236} Davies, \textit{Worship And Theology In England, The Ecumenical Century 1900 -1965}, 247
He wrote: “The trouble with Knox is that he is a Catholic, but only nominally a Christian. He is much more interested in the Church than in the founder of the Church.” The ‘complaint’ might fairly be applied to many of the early polemical sermons of Knox (such as *Naboth’s Vineyard in Pawn*).

The Preface of *Roman Converts* boldly stated its intent:

This book is written in the hope that the reader may succeed where I have failed, and may find some satisfactory explanation for the fact that a Church committed to beliefs which seem untenable, still continues to win converts from men not inferior in genius and in acuteness of thought to the heretics who remain outside her fold.

Lunn analyzed the conversions of John Henry Newman, Henry Edward Manning (later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster), George Tyrrell (a Jesuit priest who embraced Modernism), Ronald Knox and G. K. Chesterton.

Karl Keating has reviewed Lunn’s critique of Knox in the light of their later correspondence (published as *Difficulties*). He accepted that Lunn’s “complaint … was not entirely untrue.”

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238 Lunn, *Roman Converts* (already cited). Shane Leslie wrote a response to Lunn’s book in defence of Knox which was published in *The Dublin Review*. Knox thanked Leslie for “taking up the cudgel” for him. (undated TS, Archives of Eton College, Library.)
239 Lunn, *Roman Converts*, 199
240 Lunn, *Roman Converts*, v
241 Karl Keating, *Controversies High-Level Catholic Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001)
242 Keating, *Controversies High-Level Catholic Apologetics*, 80
When Knox delivered his devotional and liturgical sermons, nothing was further from the truth. It was impossible not to preach Christ when the subject of the sermon was the Eucharist; and it was equally impossible not to preach Christ when the Eucharist – Christ’s Body and Blood – was the source of the unity of the Church with Christ and each of the members.

Likewise, Knox’s early Anglican sermons directed to spiritual formation, or to the teaching of an article of doctrine, were less likely to stir up raw emotion. In 1915 he gave four conferences – *Bread Or Stone: Four Conferences On Impetrative Prayer.*\(^{243}\) In calm, considered, reasoning Knox explored whether prayer effected any result: “But how can prayer be any use, when the same sorrowful Mother hears the rosaries of Rouen and Dublin being told with opposite intentions to the rosaries of Vienna and Cologne?\(^{244}\)

Knox argued that prayer was answered: because of the goodness of God the Father; the omnipotence of God; the prayer and example of Jesus; and by submission to the will of God. He concluded the fourth conference in these words:

> When by God’s mercy we receive a fuller revelation in Heaven, there will be many of the prayers we have uttered we shall think better of, I do not think there will be many we will regret.\(^{245}\)

\(^{243}\) also published by the Society of SS. Peter and Paul; Ronald Knox, *Bread Or Stone: Four Conferences On Impetrative Prayer* (Kessinger Publishing, USA.)

\(^{244}\) Ronald Knox, “Abba Father” in *Bread Or Stone*, 3

\(^{245}\) from “Non quod Ego” in *Bread Or Stone*, 55
And the hoped for consequence in the lives of his listeners was perseverance in prayer.

**Familiarity Breeds Understanding**

A important component of Knox’s preaching technique was the illustrations drawn from the daily experience of his listeners. He used effectively this ability to identify with his listeners as he sought to develop their spiritual lives, or to explain an article of doctrine. As the earlier example from *Naboth’s Vineyard in Pawn* has shown, Knox was not unaware of household activities and routines. Milton Walsh has observed of Knox’s use of ordinary experience:

> The advantage of drawing on ordinary experience is twofold. First it is universal: it appeals to what is common to all people, not just those with a philosophical or mystical. Secondly, it is immediate: the listener does not have to hear something he will have to think about; the image from daily life evokes an unreflected cry of recognition.  

The familiar not only resonated with the experience of his listeners, it helped them to imagine and to enter into his reasoning and purpose: “He always appealed to the imagination of his listeners, but much more rarely to their emotions, because he knew that emotions do not last.” One illustration from the Eucharistic Sermons, though, might not have resonated with the congregation at Maiden Lane, but it was clearly an experience of Knox: “We have

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246 Walsh, *Ronald Knox As Apologist*, 103
247 Speight, *Ronald Knox The Writer*, 134
forgotten even what it was to stay in a large house with half a dozen servants to look after it.”

In “The Great Supper” the congregation was invited to imagine what it was like for “the rows of hungry tramps and beggars, and pavement-artists” to find themselves in the banquet hall of the king (Lk 14:23). The members of the congregation might never have experienced hunger and homelessness, or made a living from pavement-art, but Corpus Christi Church was in the precinct of Covent Garden and encounters with such people were not unfamiliar.

**But The Familiar Is Itself Only An Imitation**

Knox was also intent to show that the things of the natural order are pale imitations of the realities of heaven. As he preached in one sermon: “the whole of this visible creation is but a thin plank between us and eternity.” The familiar experience shared with his listeners was not all one-way and for ease of comprehension. He instructed his listeners that when Jesus used familiar images he meant the *reality*. When Jesus spoke of the vine, the bread, the gate, the sheepfold, himself as shepherd, the living water, and so forth, he spoke of the

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248 Ronald A. Knox, “As Your Servant” Sermon VI in *The Window In The Wall*, 34
249 Ronald A. Knox, “The Great Supper” Sermon VIII in *Heaven And Charing Cross*
250 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 74
251 Knox, “Real Bread”, 82
252 Knox, *The Belief Of Catholics*, “Similarly, in speaking of the supernatural world, we use metaphorical language about "life", "food", "health," and so on; but in doing so we do not suggest that the supernatural world has less of reality than ours; rather, it has more. We use metaphor, because our faculty of conception cannot really go beyond the terms of our experience.”
reality of which the earthly counterpart was only a poor, though real, imitation:

"The common bread which we eat is only a sham, a copy, an image of that true bread which came down from heaven."²⁵³ And Knox continued:

Always, it is the things which affect us outwardly and impress themselves on our senses that are the shams, the imaginaries; reality belongs to the things of the spirit.²⁵⁴

He further emphasized this point by encouraging his listeners to adopt, as their ‘funeral motto’ the epitaph on the tomb of Cardinal Newman: “Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem” (Out of shadows and appearances into truth).

The created order came into being through Jesus, “(and) he gave common bread and wine for our use in order that we might understand what the Blessed Sacrament was when it came to be instituted."²⁵⁵ Jesus walked and lived among men but:

The supernatural world, not the natural, was the familiar haunt of his mind; to him, grace was the real water, the unity of his own Mystical Body was the real vine; all paternity took its character from the fatherhood of God, not the other way about.²⁵⁶

Emotion was a shared human experience, but this too was neither evidence of true religious feeling, nor a lasting experience of the real, the supernatural, world.

²⁵³ Knox, “Real Bread”, 80
²⁵⁴ Knox, “Real Bread,” 81
²⁵⁵ Knox, “Real Bread,” 80
²⁵⁶ Knox, Lightning Meditations, 55
In a conference “The Fear of Death” Knox spoke of John Wesley’s conversion from his fear of death to him looking “forward to death without a tremor.” Knox considered that after this conversion, from the fear of death, Wesley allowed the emotions to dominate the imagination which “makes the things of eternity seem real to a man, as if they lay within the range of his ordinary existence.” This could not be so. In Knox’s judgment this ‘ecstatic type of religion’ was not Catholic. As the interest of this paper is the Eucharist, the following will offer an example of Knox’s reasoning.

The acceptance of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist came not from an experience of such Presence but because the Church proposed it to her members - grounded in Christ’s words and actions, in accordance with Scripture and Tradition; and the believer accepted the Church’s teaching with “a firm direction of the will and intellect.” Emotion was no sure guide to understanding and accepting ‘the things of the Spirit’ even when these realities were expressed in the tangible, the familiar and the common-place.

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259 Knox, “The Fear Of Death,” 38; see also Romano Guardini, Preparing Yourself For Holy Mass new ed. (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1997), 147: “Our belief can be neither that of testing nor of criticizing; it can only be that of belief, and belief implies obedience. As it is a question of mystery, we must acknowledge it solely because of God’s word.”
Scripture, Allegory And Metaphor

Knox had a deep love and knowledge of the Scriptures, and this was a foundation for all his sermons and conferences. He began his meditation on “Creation” in *A Retreat For Priests* indicating his knowledge and appreciation of the Old Testament:

In this retreat, I am going to do something which is, I suppose, unusual, but which will not, I hope seem unduly far-fetched. I mean to take as my text for each meditation, or rather the subject which acts as a jumping-off point for each meditation, a story from the Old Testament.

In Knox’s estimation familiarity with the Scriptures was deficient within the Catholic Church of his time. During the task of translating the Bible he vented his frustration at the members of his advisory committee, and some members of the hierarchy:

In the second place, it is extraordinary, and to me a scandalous, fact that for years now it has been impossible for a Catholic in England to buy a copy of the New Testament at all. However bad my version was, it would surely be better than nothing. I wonder why the priests who are so eloquent in defence of the Challoner version take no steps to see that the Challoner version is put on the market?

Elsewhere Knox commented:

The clergy, no doubt, search the Scriptures more eagerly, and yet when I used to go round preaching a good deal, and would ask the Parish Priest for a Bible to verify my text from, there was generally an

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261 Knox, “Creation” in *A Retreat For Priests*, 1
262 Letter from Ronald Knox to the Bishop of Lancaster, May 12, 1944, (unpublished manuscript TS, Lancashire Records Office)
ominous pause of twenty minutes or so before he returned, banging the leaves of the sacred volume and visibly blowing on the top.\textsuperscript{263}

The girls at Aldenham Park received something of his love of the Scriptures, and the effect that Scripture should have on Knox himself, and on others, when, in a discussion of the Gospel at Mass, he said:

Try to live near to our Lord; get inside the thought of what his words mean, live on that model, so that you may be a friend of his, so that you may be the kind of person he feels at home with. Then, unconsciously, you will influence other people.\textsuperscript{264}

Here was another instance of Knox leading his listeners to a deeper understanding of the liturgical action, which always expressed the Church’s belief, so that this amplified understanding would influence their Christian living and worship.

The Eucharistic Sermons of Maiden Lane drew their genesis, respectively, from the Song of Songs, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Book of Ruth, the Letter to the Hebrews, the Prophets, and the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians. An example, taken randomly, will demonstrate Knox’s method of interweaving his text with the message he wished to convey. “This Mass and The Mass,” Sermon XIV of \textit{The Window in the Wall} collection began with a text from the prophet Ezechiel Chapter 47 – about the stream which flowed eastward from the temple and eventually became a mighty torrent impossible to cross. Knox contrasted:

\textsuperscript{263} Ronald Knox quoted in Waugh, \textit{Ronald Knox}, 296
\textsuperscript{264} Ronald Knox, \textit{The Mass In Slow Motion}, 42
“the tiny stream that flows out from the temple doors, and the great river into which it broadens all at once.”\textsuperscript{265} He contrasted the intimacy of the Mass for the individual and the reality that the Mass was offered: “\textit{pro omnibus circumstantibus}, for all the people standing round.”\textsuperscript{266} The celebration of the Mass gathered into unity not just the congregation present in a particular place, but absent members, the housebound; it was “for all faithful people, all over the world.”\textsuperscript{267} It was offered in union with the Pope, the local bishop, and in union with Mary and the saints; and it remembered the faithful departed. Knox explained that: “The Mass is no longer your Mass, as you fondly thought of it.”\textsuperscript{268} The conclusion drawn, of course, was no blinding insight, but, as the sermon was preached in the Holy Year (presumably 1950), it reminded the parishioners of Maiden Lane of their place in the Universal Church, and the universal efficacy of the Mass; something that personal piety and devotion could easily overlook. This is but one example where Knox used Scripture and familiar experience as allegory and metaphor to illustrate contemporary issues and current events, and to link these with the annual celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Allegory and metaphor were common tools in all his sermons and conferences: “the metaphor is for Knox a privileged means of seeing and describing … it
entertains and it instructs." An allegory is defined as: "an extended or continued metaphor."

"The Window In The Wall," the opening sermon in the collection of the same name, took up the story from the Song of Songs in which a young man sought out his lover who had been taken into the harem of King Solomon. Christian Tradition had always seen the Song of Songs as an allegory of God’s love for the individual, and the loving response of the individual to God’s call to freedom. Knox was not limited by this interpretation. He used the story as an allegory for the Eucharist as the window into the supernatural; and he preached that the call of the ‘village lover’ to his bride was an allegory for Christ, who through the Eucharist, invited a person into freedom: “calling us away from the ointments and the spikenard of Solomon’s court, that stupefy and enchain our senses.”

In the sermon, “Jesus My Friend”, he drew upon a more familiar experience at a railway terminus, as an allegory for Jesus as a personal friend. Knox invited the listeners to consider the procession moving forward to receive Holy Communion. Instead of the recipient, Knox focused on Christ in the “sacred Host” and imagined him looking out for a friend in a crowded terminus:

“Is my friend there?” he is saying; waiting for you, like the person who comes to meet you at a crowded terminus, looking out for that

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269 Milton Walsh, *Ronald Knox As Apologist*, Rome 1985, (Doctoral Dissertation at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Faculty of Theology. unpublished manuscript, Mells), 46; quoting from Solange Dayras, *Du Trait d’espirit*, 769
272 Ronald A. Knox, “Jesus My Friend” Sermon XVIII in *The Window In The Wall*
particular trick of walking, that particular way of holding yourself, which will single you out at a distance.\textsuperscript{273}

Knox wanted his listeners to realize that Christ recognized each individual, and was waiting to meet with each individual in “the interminable queue which is slowly moving eastwards.”\textsuperscript{274}

**Doctrine**

Knox was not a formally trained theologian and he readily admitted to this. He said of himself, in his first serious work *Some Loose Stones*: “I have no claim and no competence to write a theological book.”\textsuperscript{275} Prior reference was made to the flexibility that Knox was granted in his preparations for Orders both within the Anglican Church and then the Catholic Church. Evelyn Waugh remarked on this unusual theological education:

> There are those who have said that Ronald subsequently suffered from the lack of a full, formal theological training. Certainly, to the end of his life, he tended to refer theological problems to others, but that was in accordance with his temperament.\textsuperscript{276}

His brothers, Dillwyn (a renowned Greek language scholar), and Wilfred (a respected theologian), remarked, when they heard of Ronald’s desire, to undertake a new translation into English of the Vulgate Scriptures: “A bad text and he doesn’t know very much Greek … Or theology except what I’ve taught

\textsuperscript{273} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 113  
\textsuperscript{274} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 113  
\textsuperscript{275} Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, vii.  
\textsuperscript{276} Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 168
him. Moreover, after his First in Greats at Oxford, Knox said it made him neither a professional philosopher nor a professional historian: “but it left me with a fierce love of sifting evidence and the power of not being fascinated into acquiescence when superior persons talked philosophy to me.”

Thus it was not as a theologian that he preached. He was as meticulous in explaining the Church’s doctrines as a theologian, but in more accessible terms than a treatise or lecture hall. In *The Belief Of Catholics* he wrote:

> It appears, then, that the two processes are going on side by side, the decline of Church membership and the decline of dogma; the evacuation of the pew and the jettisoning of cargo from the pulpit … to some extent, the decline of Church membership causes the decline of dogma.

And he developed the decline of church membership and the decline of dogma:

> No preacher would deliberately judge the credibility of his message by the credulity of his audience. But the prevalent irreligion of the age does exercise a continued unconscious pressure upon the pulpit; it makes preachers hesitate to affirm doctrines whose affirmation would be unpopular.

The importance he gave to a sound doctrinal basis for his sermons and conferences sprang from his conviction that Catholics should become more familiar with their faith and its celebration and expression in the Liturgy; and to become more reflective and thoughtful in their manifestation of it. His parting
thought in the sermon quoted above ("This Mass And The Mass") was: “Your own prayer will ring truer, strike deeper, if just for a moment you have faced the glare, and felt the burden;” the glare of the “full tide of prayer which is the prayer of the Church universal” and the burden carried by the Pope with the prayers and demands of all the Church.

The Christian Religion is founded on the truth of the Incarnation – that the Word of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The condescension of God’s only begotten Son was for the salvation of humankind. This salvation was realized in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. “The Atonement is the primary purpose of the Incarnation; the road that begins at Bethlehem leads to Calvary.” In the same sermon he preached on God’s “delight to be with the sons of men.” He stated: “And as the Incarnation is the historical expression of that eternal tendency, so the Holy Eucharist is its sacramental expression.”

As the Eucharist made present not only God’s desire to be in the midst of people, it was also the abiding memorial and celebration of the Atonement.

281 Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 92
282 Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 92
283 Ronald A. Knox, “A Priest For Ever” Sermon IX in Heaven And Charing Cross, 87
284 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 86
285 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 86
Lunn, as was noted previously, observed a seeming lack of Christ-centredness in the preaching of the young Knox.\textsuperscript{286} As was said earlier this could never arise in the context of the Eucharist.

**The Virgin Mary**

At the time of his ordination as an Anglican deacon Knox “took a private vow, … never to preach without making some reference to our Lady.”\textsuperscript{287} In the third sermon (“Windows In Heaven”) of the series *Naboth’s Vineyard In Pawn*, quoted above, Knox concluded with an expression of hope; in the knowledge that ‘(o)ur needs have still a place in the compassionate heart of Mary.”\textsuperscript{288} Knox was certain that Mary “whose child-bearing salvation” restored a world of sin would “restore unity to a divided Christendom.”\textsuperscript{289} In another of the Anglican sermons “The Religion Of The Tabernacle” Knox prayed that Mary would “help us her poor children as with faltering hearts we seek for Jesus.”\textsuperscript{290} The clearest example of Knox’s intention to refer to Mary in his Anglican sermons, “by way of satisfaction for the neglect of other preachers”,\textsuperscript{291} was in a sermon preached at the Church of St James the Less in Plymouth. The title of this sermon was “Mary In The XXXIX Articles.” Knox argued deductively\textsuperscript{292} from the doctrine of Original Sin and the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. Article IX of the XXXIX Articles taught the doctrine of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{286}{Lunn, *Roman Converts*, 199, quoted above.}
\footnote{287}{Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 86 footnote}
\footnote{288}{Knox, *University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox*, 466}
\footnote{289}{Knox, *University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox*, 466}
\footnote{290}{Knox, *University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox*, 481}
\footnote{291}{Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 86 footnote}
\footnote{292}{As he had demonstrated in *Some Loose Stones* in contrast to the inductive reasoning of the authors of *Foundations*.}
\end{footnotes}
Original Sin that every person who has existed: “was born into the world deserving God’s wrath and damnation.” This was not true of Jesus Christ who is both God and Man, as Article XV clearly stated: “Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void.” Knox asked at what moment of time: “was the entail of Original Sin broken off?” If it was at the moment of Christ’s conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, then the Sinless One had taken flesh from a sinner, Mary. Knox argued that, if, in God’s plan for the Incarnation it was necessary that Christ be conceived, not in the “ordinary process of nature,” surely Mary’s impurity through sharing in Original Sin was inconsistent. Knox concluded that if Christ was void of sin, then it followed that Mary too: “was void of original sin.” With a hint of irony he followed this conclusion with:

And that, I suppose, is why our Prayer Book Collect for Christmas Day is careful to describe Jesus as born, not merely of a virgin, but of a pure virgin.

To make the acknowledgement that Mary was preserved from Original Sin: “in virtue of the foreseen merits of the Passion of Jesus,” it followed that Mary was also free of ‘actual sin’. Such sin would have brought about a ‘second fall’ if Mary

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293 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox, 481
295 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox, 504
296 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox, 505
297 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox, 505. “Almighty God, who hath given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin …; “The Collect” for The Nativity Of Our Lord” in The Book Of Common Prayer ed. Ebury Press (London: Ebury Press, 1992), 72
298 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox, 505
had sinned after being made free from sin from the moment of her conception. As with the beginning of her life, so with her death; she was preserved from the corruption of death. Knox concluded that after a Conception so graced by God, Mary surely would be in heaven body and soul. He made no explicit mention of the doctrine of the Assumption. And while there was a strong and consistent teaching in the Church’s history, the doctrine was not solemnly defined until 1950 by Pope Pius XII, long after this sermon was delivered. Having spelt out Mary’s biography Knox rested his case: “can we grudge her any of the praise which has been accorded to her?”

As a Catholic, Knox may have considered that he did not need to ‘make satisfaction for the neglect in other preachers’. His Eucharistic sermons concentrated on Christ: his Real Presence under the forms of Bread and Wine, and the effect of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Sacrament, on the Church. The Christ-centredness of these sermons is evident in the sermon “Jesus My Friend,” but so was the latent presence of Mary. Knox examined the mutual influence of friendship, but of Christ he said:

Nothing about us can influence him, there is nothing in him that needs to be influenced. If you come to think of it, I suppose he was the only person who ever came across our Blessed Lady without being the better for it. … No, the influence is all on one side.

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299 In Knox, The Belief Of Catholics, 164-5 he stated that St John Damascene (645-750) “confidently affirms … the doctrine of our Lady’s Assumption.”

300 Pope Pius XII “Munificentissimus Deus” Apostolic Constitution of November 1, 1950.

301 Knox, University And Anglican Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox, 506

302 Knox, “Jesus My Friend” Sermon XVIII in The Window In The Wall, 117
Humour, Care And Preparation

Knox never lost the wit of the Oxford Union days but the humour was more gentle in his sermons and conferences. When, in the midst of translating the Bible at Aldenham Park, he inherited the chaplaincy of the girls of Assumption College, Kensington, London, (who were relocated because of the bombing of London during the Second World War), Knox preached them weekly sermons on the Mass, as well as the Creed, and the Gospels. The sermons on the Mass were collected and published as *The Mass in Slow Motion*. An element of humour and shared experience was vital to retaining the attention of the girls: “let’s get on to where the priest washes his hands. I always wonder whether the faithful ever think the clergy never wash at home, they do so much of it in public.”

In December 1988, to mark the centenary of Knox’s birth, the journal *Priests & People* devoted an issue to his memory. Two of the girls who were part of the group at Aldenham Park shared their reminiscences, and one made direct reference to these weekly conferences:

> At five o’clock, I think it was, he gave us the talks that became the *Slow Motion* books. Not a great sermon-lover in later life, I

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303 Referred to previously.
304 Knox, *The Mass In Slow Motion*, 80
305 *Priests & People* Vol. 2 No. 10 (December 1988)
nonetheless loved these. We all did. Girls taken out on Sundays by parents were said to insist on being back by five.\textsuperscript{306}

Thomas Corbishley has written in appreciation of Knox's identification with these school girls. He took up one of Knox's tenets for translation from another language - to get inside the skin of the person you sought to interpret or translate - and he applied it to Knox's sermons at Aldenham: “How well he got inside the skin of these young English female scamps! Almost too well some have felt, put off by the slang and the naiveté of expression.”\textsuperscript{307}

Corbishley wrote these words in 1964. In 1961, an American priest, Leonard Feeney,\textsuperscript{308} published \textit{London Is A Place}, a review of the many aspects and attributes of that city. A chapter of this book was titled "Clouds Over London." In this chapter Feeney commented on some of the literary figures prominent in London then, or earlier. The tenor of this chapter and his 'prejudice' was unmistakable in this comment on John Henry Newman: "John Henry Newman was in mind and strength a Catholic. He was in heart and soul an Anglican."\textsuperscript{309} Of Knox's spiritual wisdom he wrote:

\begin{quote}
Life, says Monsignor Knox - by way of proposing a parable - may be compared to an examination we must all take in order to get into Heaven. The saints are taking this examination for honors (sic), the rest of us for pass degrees. And God will be glad to pass all of us,
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{306} Isabel Quigly, “‘One Of Ronnie Knox's Little Girls’ Part 1” in \textit{Priests & People} Vol. 2 No. 10 (December 1988), 427
\textsuperscript{307} Corbishley, \textit{Ronald Knox The Priest}, 117
\textsuperscript{308} Fr Leonard Feeney (1897-1978), at one time was under ecclesiastical censures, for his extreme stand on the doctrine of no salvation outside the Church. In 1949 he founded his religious community. In 1972 all censures against him and his followers were removed and the majority of the community was reconciled with the Church. See S.M. Clare, “Feeney, Leonard” in \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia} Vol. 5 (Washington DC: Thomson Gale, 2003), 663-4
\textsuperscript{309} Leonard Feeney, \textit{London Is A Place} (Boston: The Ravensgate Press, 1961)
\end{flushright}
provided we do not disturb the saints while they are taking their examinations. This Knoxian version of "The Laborers (sic) in the Vineyard" might be called "The Loafers in the Classroom."  

Feeney was equally unimpressed by the Knox Bible and remarked that Knox had given the Church his own vocabulary as a means of revising: “the bad English of the Church he entered.” He concluded his appraisal of Knox with a reference to *The Mass In Slow Motion*. He paraphrased an earlier quatrain of Chesterton in praise of Knox:

Mary of Holyrood must weep indeed  
Knowing what immemorial saints it shocks,  
To see Mass measured at a movie speed  
And offered to Hollywood in the name of Knox.  

A journal that Feeney edited, *The Point*, and which was published by the Religious Congregation he founded, The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, offered an alternative appraisal to *The Times* obituary of Knox. Feeney wrote:

It might be argued that Ronald Knox did not always know what grave damage he was doing to the Church when he sat down to his typewriter; but there is no disputing the reality of that damage - or its lasting effect.

That this article remains posted online indicates that the so-called damage continues.

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310 Feeney, *London Is A Place*, 92  
311 Feeney, *London Is A Place*, 118-9  
312 Feeney, *London Is A Place*, 120  
313 The website of the Religious Congregation which Feeney founded still posts an article from *The Point*.  
Feeney and others misunderstood Knox's wit and humour; they were in the minority.

At a tribute dinner in 1939 for Knox, to mark the end of his chaplaincy to the Catholic undergraduates at Oxford, the speaker Donald Woodruff\textsuperscript{315} said: “In particular he has restored the sermon to its position as a work of art.”\textsuperscript{316} Waugh alluded to this address when he commented: “Ronald created a new and entirely individual form for the traditional art. His sermons were prepared, revised, and rehearsed with every refinement of taste and skill.”\textsuperscript{317}

An undated handwritten manuscript for a reflection for Maundy Thursday exemplified this revision and re-working. Knox wrote:

\begin{quote}
First, let us talk about being in charity with our neighbours. You know, I think in the first ages of the Church they were conscious as we are seldom conscious, nowadays, of the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament of unity.
\end{quote}

In its final form it read:

\begin{quote}
In the first ages of the Church, men saw in the Holy Eucharist not merely a sacrament which united them to Christ, but a sacrament which united men to one another in Christ.
\end{quote}

This sentence appeared two pages later in the final form of the meditation.\textsuperscript{318}

\textsuperscript{315} Douglas Woodruff was editor of \textit{The Tablet} between 1936 and 1967
\textsuperscript{316} Douglas Woodruff quoted in Walter Drumm, \textit{The Old Palace The Catholic Chaplaincy at Oxford} (Dublin: Veritas, 1991), 181
\textsuperscript{317} Waugh, \textit{Ronald Knox}, 241
\textsuperscript{318} R. A. Knox “Holy Hour For Maundy Thursday” (unpublished handwritten manuscript, Mells Collection, undated), 2 & 4
This handwritten text was unusual because, from his days as an Anglican don, Knox used a typewriter. Waugh noted: “The typewritten sheet became an adjunct of all his sermons”\(^{319}\) and Knox admitted that: “The first (of the three principles which governed his addresses and sermons) is never to speak without having what I propose to say written down.”\(^{320}\) On one occasion Knox began an address to the Converts’ Aid Society: “I rise, not only with a sense of nervousness (as, indeed, I always do when I have no manuscript in front of me)…”\(^{321}\)

The sermons were not merely reworked until the author was satisfied, each sheet was carefully marked to highlight the emphases and nuances that Knox wished to convey.\(^{322}\) A sermon was never discarded,\(^{323}\) and often after revision for a new audience it was delivered afresh with topical references;\(^{324}\) but when he was invited to preach again in the same church (as with the annual Maiden Lane sermon) he never repeated an earlier sermon.\(^{325}\) However, Sermon XXII “The Sacrament Of Peace” in *Stimuli*\(^{326}\) (a collection of short pieces originally published in *The Sunday Times*) suggests that an insight could be used for complementary purposes. The similarity in the titles “The Sacrament Of Peace” (*Stimuli*) and “The City Of Peace” in *The Window In The Wall* collection infer a

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\(^{319}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 120

\(^{320}\) quoted in Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 120-121

\(^{321}\) Speech delivered by Monsignor Ronald Knox on behalf of the Converts’ Aid Society (unpublished manuscript TS, Mells Collection)

\(^{322}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 241

\(^{323}\) Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid*, 156

\(^{324}\) “Holy Year Sermon” in *University And Anglican Sermons* and “The Mass And The Mass” in *The Window In The Wall* were both written in 1950, and exhibit great similarity.

\(^{325}\) Knox, *Occasional Sermons of Ronald Knox*, vi

\(^{326}\) Knox, *Stimuli*, 45-6
close relationship. This became obvious when both stated: “(b)ut Jerusalem itself stands remote among the hills, as if to let the rumours of world-history pass it by.”

The latter sermon was preached “early in the Second World War,” and in the Preface to Stimuli Knox dated much of its content to the War years. As the shorter sermon mentioned the Eucharist as the source of unity, in a world and society divided by war, it might well be a précis of two or three of the Maiden Lane sermons which developed this theme at greater length.

Knox eventually collected and published his sermons, but even then a revision might occur when the possibility arose (and particularly after the end of rationing in the Second World War and paper for printing was available again), or there was a demand for a new edition. The Maiden Lane Sermons are an example; they were published in two volumes: Heaven And Charing Cross and, then The Window In The Wall, which retained only three of the sermons published earlier: “The Window In The Wall” formerly named “Behind The Wall”; “The Gleaner” formerly “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?”; and “Real Bread” (with no revision of title). These three sermons were chosen for no other reason than: “After much stock-taking, I have decided to preserve only a few of the earlier series, my own favourites.”

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328 Knox, “The City of Peace” Sermon II in The Window In The Wall, 7
329 Philip Caraman SJ, “Knox the Preacher” in Priests & People Vol. 2 No. 10 (December 1988), 408. Many of the sermons included in the three volume collection of Knox’s sermons edited by Philip Caraman had been published individually before in The Tablet or other periodicals and in the journals of religious congregations and institutions.
330 Both volumes have been referred to previously.
331 Knox, The Window In The Wall, vii
The composition, and the eventual publication of his sermons, might suggest that they were essays,\(^{332}\) though references to Scripture, or other sources, were not listed,\(^{333}\) but Knox intended them as oratory.\(^{334}\) Waugh quoted from Knox’s Preface to the series of twelve sermons *The Mystery of the Kingdom*:

> I have generally found that the spoken word demands more preparation than the written; not have I more regard for the susceptibilities of newspaper critics than I have for the pious ears of a Catholic congregation.\(^{335}\)

A tribute in *The Tablet* at the time of his death elucidated the manner of his regard for the listeners:

> He preferred the conference to the sermon, for it was his constant desire to close the old conventional gap between the language of the pulpit and the speech of the sitting room, as he also narrowed the space between the written and the spoken word.\(^{336}\)

This regard for ‘the pious ears of a Catholic congregation’ meant that Knox had first to identify with his listeners, and not merely in the common and familiar experiences of life. This particular familiarity was not the fruit of a prolonged stay in any one place, or with a particular community, but arose through their shared Catholicism. Thomas Corbishley SJ observed: “He spoke for the Catholic Church, and when he spoke to the members of that Church … he spoke to them always in a way that might help them to appreciate more fully their Catholic

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\(^{332}\) Caraman SJ wrote in his article “Knox The Preacher”, 408: “The sermons are more akin to essays than the ordinary pulpit discourse.”

\(^{333}\) In many instances Philip Caraman SJ included the references in his editing of the sermons.

\(^{334}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 241

\(^{335}\) Ronald Knox quoted in Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 242

heritage.” In his study of the writings of Knox, Robert Speight reflected similarly:

What is it then, that distinguishes these sermons from others that have held their place in the devotional literature of England? It is, I think, a certain note of familiarity – in the sense that Knox was addressing, and consciously addressing the members of his own family. He was preaching, if you like, to the converted – even though many of them might need to be converted all over again. (Which of us, indeed, does not?) He presupposed an acquaintance with Catholicism – its doctrines, its idiom, and its history.

As he spoke to the members of ‘his family’ about their common belief, traditions, customs and experience, he was always conscious of addressing an individual. He gave this advice to clergy:

There is one point about preaching which is all-important, and is nearly always forgotten; you aren’t talking to a crowd of people; you are talking to one person, the person God meant your sermon to help … Choose an imaginary soul that is there or might be there, and try to interpret that soul to yourself; to make it see where God’s will is leading it, what plans God has for it. Actually the person your sermon will help will be somebody quite, quite different from the person you imagined, with quite other problems to face. But that person will be helped, because you were trying to bring Christ to birth in Christian souls, you were not letting off pious platitudes in the air.

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339 Knox, *The Priestly Life A Retreat*, 153-154; Solange Dayras “A Gallic View Of Ronald Knox,” 282, also commented on this element of his technique: “In some ways the note on universality and immediacy in his preaching is due to his conviction that his own religious experience was quite ordinary.”
The Parallel

The parallel was another of his literary devices. It differs from an allegory or metaphor, for a parallel in writing or in oratory repeats certain words or phrases: "so as show their correspondence." Knox used parallels, with the repetition of certain words and phrases, to heighten the anticipation of the listeners and to build up the address until it reached its climax.

In the Maiden Lane sermon "The Mass And The Ritual" he paralleled Holy Communion, and Jesus' words *Hoc est Corpus meum*, with the birth of a person, a marriage and death. "Every Communion we make is a birth, a marriage and a death." He repeated the Latin words, *Hoc est corpus meum*, placing them first on the lips of an individual, and then on Christ’s lips as he instituted the Eucharist. An infant at baptism presented his body, *Hoc est corpus meum*, to be spiritually washed; bride and groom presented their bodies each to the other at marriage; the dying person presented his body for anointing; and Christ has offered his Body, *Hoc est Corpus meum*. Through the Incarnation Christ was inseparably united to the human condition. Each Mass remembered his birth at Bethlehem; his ‘marriage’, at the reception of Holy Communion: "(Christ) plights his love to us in a supreme manner"; and his death:

Not only in the sense that somehow, mysteriously, he who was immolated once and for all on Calvary makes fresh offering of his

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342 Knox, "The Mass And The Ritual", 57
death each time we celebrate the holy mysteries; but in this sense too, that his sacramental presence in our bodies at least is a transitory one; it is withdrawn from us when he has given us the opportunity to profit by it as we should.\textsuperscript{343}

In “One Body” he preached that the accidents of bread and wine, that is their taste, colour, smell, size shape, and chemical properties, through the Consecration at Mass: “inhere in a Substance not their own, the very Substance of our Lord’s Body and Blood.”\textsuperscript{344} This is the Doctrine of Transubstantiation (which will be treated more fully in the next section); it is a supernatural union not accessible to the human senses, nor knowable by human reason alone. Likewise, for those who receive the Lord’s Body and Blood: “our natural ties ought to be supernaturalized when we partake of this holy gift.”\textsuperscript{345} He built upon this premise: “Husband and wife, one now in Christ; mother and child, one now in Christ, friends, school-fellows, neighbours, guild members, one now in Christ.”\textsuperscript{346}

Knox’s friend, Shane Leslie, observed that: “Ronnie Knox continued the old discredited technique of piling up parallels which are not parallels at all.”\textsuperscript{347}

A reflection on Mass as a birth, marriage and death, may have stretched the imagination of the congregation at Maiden Lane, but it provided the opportunity to recall the Incarnation and the abiding presence of Christ, through the Eucharist,

\textsuperscript{343} Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual”, 58
\textsuperscript{344} Ronald Knox, “One Body,” 8
\textsuperscript{345} Knox, “One Body,” 8
\textsuperscript{346} Knox, “One Body,” 8
\textsuperscript{347} handwritten note in Sir Shane Leslie’s copy of Waugh, \textit{Ronald Knox}, (Archives of Eton College Library).
in the midst of humanity. It linked the offering of each human body, at critical times in life, with the self-offering of Christ on the Cross.

A parallel with human relationships through the reception of the Eucharist and the change to the bread and wine through Transubstantiation, likewise, was not a parallel, however the repetition of “one now in Christ” and the broad sweep of human associations highlighted the depth of communion he encouraged, and that Holy Communion should foster.

**The Length Of A Sermon**

Robert Speight observed that by Knox’s time: “The public patience with the pulpit was less than it had been in Newman’s time.” And even in the nineteenth century the public was considerably less tolerant than those who listened to the sermons of earlier Anglican divines. Contrasted with the liturgical homily of today, Knox’s sermons are significantly longer. Knox was reputed to have said: “A good sermon should be like a woman’s skirt: short enough to arouse interest but long enough to cover the essentials.” This paper has had no success in verifying the source or the occasion for this witticism; it did not appear in a

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348 Speight, *Ronald Knox As Writer*, 139
349 Caraman SJ, “Knox The Preacher”, 409
published collection of Knox quotes *The Quotable Knox*; nor was it included in an article published in the August 1959 edition of *The Month*. This was, nonetheless, sage advice, no matter who was the author.

Each sermon preached at Aldenham Park, which formed the ‘slow motion’ trilogy, was timed to go no longer than fifteen minutes. Each conference to the undergraduates at Oxford was allotted thirty minutes. In their published form (in the volume *The Window In The Wall*) the Maiden Lane sermons run, on average, over six pages in single spacing. Knox’s reflections, broadcast on the BBC, especially those at Christmas time, were of similar length to the sermons; and many of these were incorporated into the first of the three volume anthology of sermons *The Pastoral Sermons Of Ronald A. Knox*. A clear indication of the length of his sermons, and indeed of the genre which he might have labeled ‘sermon’ came in the Preface to *Stimuli*. He wrote: “and even in these more strenuous days we do not find fault with a sermon if it is the right side of twenty minutes.”

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352 “Sayings Of Monsignor Ronald Knox,” *The Month* Vol. 22 No. 2 (August 1959)
353 The Mass In Slow Motion (1948); The Creed In Slow Motion (1949); The Gospel In Slow Motion (1950)
354 Knox, *The Mass In Slow Motion*, 72
355 Beck, *Ronald Knox*, 27
357 Knox, *Stimuli*, v
Because of their brevity, Knox hesitated to designate as sermons the contents of *Stimuli* and another collection of short meditations, *Lightning Meditations*. These were contributions to *The Sunday Times*, and the Prefaces to both books described the content as both ‘scoldings’ and ‘comfort’. Knox thought that their brevity: “may catch the eye, now and again, of somebody who would protest that he was too busy to read a whole sermon.”

**In Summary**

This section has endeavoured to give an overview of Knox’s preaching style, and to highlight the preparation and careful crafting that Knox brought to his preaching. It has not drawn greatly upon the ‘occasional sermons’, occasional referring not to the frequency of the address, but to the special occasion for which they were prepared. In the sense of ‘special occasion’ the Maiden Lane Sermons might also be considered ‘occasional’ rather than pastoral, into which volume Philip Caraman has placed them.

No matter what was the occasion, or wherever was the location and congregation; or for what purpose the address was to be given; Scripture, doctrine, Tradition, familiarity with his listeners and their experience, his

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358 Philip Caraman SJ wrote the preface to *Lightning Meditations* and labelled the articles ‘sermons’.
359 Knox, *Stimuli*, v
360 Ronald Knox, *Lightning Meditations* reference quoted above
361 Knox, *Stimuli*, vi
meditation and prayer, and meticulous research were all brought to influence what he delivered from the pulpit, or from the armchair at a conference or retreat. For all the effort he expended, his: “aim was not literary but apostolic … he was concerned, not that his listeners should be excited but that they should be saved.”\textsuperscript{362} In \textit{Anglican Cobwebs} Knox emphasized this:

\begin{quote}
God has put you here. He has put you here for one single end, to which every other end must be subordinated – to glorify him by attaining the salvation of your own soul in eternal life.\textsuperscript{363}
\end{quote}

From his school days at Eton College, Knox grew and matured in his understanding and devotion to the Eucharist as the Sacramental Presence of the Incarnate Christ among humanity. As an Anglican priest he lobbied for, and fostered, Eucharistic Reservation and Adoration. As a Catholic priest, whose day began with the Mass, and whose appreciation of the Liturgy was communicated to others, Knox was solicitous for the spiritual growth and increased devotion of those who gathered to hear him. As a spiritual guide he offered wise, practical, and clear direction. He recognized that a teacher should impart a lesson that would endure and be effective. In the Eucharistic Sermons, as well as the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and the Real Presence, the social and universal dimensions of the Mass, he emphasized the consequences of a worthy or unworthy reception of Holy Communion.\textsuperscript{364}

\textsuperscript{362} Speight, \textit{Ronald Knox As Writer}, 139
\textsuperscript{363} Knox, \textit{Anglican Cobwebs}, 42
\textsuperscript{364} Ronald A. Knox Sermon XI \textit{Self-examination} in \textit{The Window In The Wall}, 65-71
Part 2

1. The Eucharistic Sermons – An Introduction

In 1926 Father Kearney invited Ronald Knox to preach during the celebration of the Forty Hours Devotion, which at the Corpus Christi Church of Maiden Lane, coincided with the Feast of Corpus Christi. The full Latin name of the Feast is Festum Sanctissimi Corporis Christi (The Feast of the Most Holy Body of Christ). A rubric for the feast stipulated that: “Sermons are discouraged during the Forty Hours. But sermons about the Holy Eucharist are tolerated.”

At the end of this engagement Knox was invited to return for the celebration the following year. Thus began an annual commitment which spanned twenty-six years; twenty-six world-changing years.

The number of sermons, however, which were published in the two volumes, and which Knox said were delivered “every year, late on the feast of Corpus Domini,” is confusing. Twenty-six sermons were published beginning from 1926. Yet the sermon “A Better Country” was given in 1953, the year of Queen Elizabeth’s coronation. And the sermon “Pity For The Multitude” referred to the relaxation of the Eucharistic Fast; the first of the concessions, which allowed for the consumption of water before Communion, was granted by Pope Pius XII in

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365 Fortescue, The Ceremonies Of The Roman Rite Described, 386
366 This paper has already made reference to the two published volumes of the sermons. The first contained nine sermons of which three were republished in the latter volume of twenty sermons.
367 Knox. The Window In The Wall, vii
1953. As two Corpus Christi sermons were not delivered in the same year, it suggests that this later sermon was preached the following year. Thus, two possibilities suggest themselves: that there was a gap in the cycle, or that at least two of the sermons were not published.
2. The Sources For The Eucharistic Sermons

The Church’s teaching on the Eucharist was, of course, the primary source from which Knox drew. This teaching was itself founded on Christ’s words and actions, and the Scriptures. Knox was shaped by Scholastic theology, in particular the writings of St Thomas Aquinas, who was largely the author of the liturgical texts for the Feast of Corpus Christi. A brief review of the origins and these texts is needed as background to the Feast and the liturgical celebration both of the High Mass on the Feast itself, and of the liturgical elements which comprised the Forty Hours Adoration. For Knox drew on these images and liturgical texts.

The belief of the Church is based both on Scripture and Tradition. The living Tradition is enshrined in the teachings of the early Fathers, the Councils and the Magisterium. In the Eucharistic sermons Knox referred, or alluded briefly, to St Augustine, to St Gregory the Great, to St Bernard of Morlaix, to St Thomas Aquinas, the Council of Trent, to the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas Á Kempis, to Cardinal Newman, St Thérèse of Lisieux, and Popes Pius X and XII. Elsewhere he wrote of his preference for French spirituality:

> I wonder if you find, as I do, that spiritual reading comes easier in French than in English? The reason being, so much of the world’s best spirituality come from France; and that even when you get a reasonably good translation (which you very seldom do), there are certain words in the vocabulary of French piety which have no equivalent in English. Such a word is *abandon*, the slogan of Père de Caussade.  

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368 Knox, *The Priestly Life*, 92; his reference to poor translations is interesting. Leonard Feeney was very critical of Knox’s translation of the autobiography of St Therese of Lisieux, completed weeks before his death. Feeney wrote: “In clothing her thoughts with his words – adjusting her
Corbishley has noted the influence Knox’s affinity with De Caussade’s ‘spiritual tag’ – “the sacrament of the present moment”.  

As any reference to these, and other sources, was usually by way of allusion, and references were never listed, it is thus difficult to assess the extent of their influence. This moreso, with the French School of spirituality, as Knox was more likely to appropriate the sentiments and express them in his own English style.

Earlier in this paper, his admiration for Newman and the Oxford Movement was noted. This Movement, and Newman as its leader, saw the early Church and its response to the challenges of its time, as a sure guide, response, and direction, for the renewal of the Church of England in the nineteenth century. That Knox, also, was influenced by the early Christian writers and Fathers, was suggested by the title of his 1927 collection of sermons Anglican Cobwebs. St John Chrysostom had used the term, translated as ‘cobweb’: “Though waves rise against me, the seas, the wrath of rulers: these are to me no more than a

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369 Corbishley, *Ronald Knox The Priest*, 111
cobweb." His apologetical work The Belief Of Catholics, of the same year, explicitly referred to the Fathers and the development of Catholic Belief, in his exposition of the reasons for Catholic belief. Such explicit references were not in the sermons, but it is reasonable to surmise this important source had an implicit influence.

However, two contemporary authors, suggest their explicit influence on his thought, though again no direct reference was made.

The Jesuit Maurice de la Taille (1872 -1933) had published The Mystery Of Faith in which he spelled out his teaching on the Sacrifice of the Mass:

... sacrifice, in its proper sense, has two factors: the (outward) act of offering and the immolation. The victim is either offered to be immolated, or is offered by immolation, or is offered as immolated. Neither the offering alone not the immolation alone suffices to confer victimhood; both are required.

In De la Taille’s explanation:

At the Last Supper, Christ made the offering of himself as the Victim “to be immolated”; on Calvary he offered himself by immolation; in the Mass, the Church offers him “as immolated. The Church’s offering of Christ as immolated must be seen, however, in the light of the eternity of Christ’s sacrifice.

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371 St John Chrysostom, “Before his exile, Nn1-3” in The Divine Office, Vol. 3. Knox’s sermons were intended to wean the hesitant convert away from such ‘Anglican cobwebs’.
372 In Knox, The Belief Of Catholics, 94, he referred explicitly to the Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch and Clement of Rome as evidence of “an institutional religion already firmly established.” And again he made reference to the Patristic texts supporting Peter’s primacy, without quoting them; see 161.
374 O’Connor, The Hidden Manna, 239
De la Taille “makes the Mass depend solely on the past sacrifice”, and as such the Mass is a passive sacrifice, because the active sacrifice has been offered once and for all. God the Father has accepted this sacrifice, and this acceptance was manifest in the Resurrection and the Ascension. “Thus the passive sacrifice of having been accepted remains forever.” Thereby making the connection with the liturgy in heaven, where the Lamb, who was slain, is the light of the city; and where the marriage of the Lamb is celebrated. But the notion of passive sacrifice has been criticized for it overlooks the reality that: “Christ is the priest who principally offers the sacrifice of the Mass … he actively offers the sacrifice of himself in the Mass every time.” Christ is the eternal Priest, and as such intercedes for the faithful at the Father’s right hand.

Another probable contemporary influence on Knox was a book published in 1925 by Abbot Anscar Vonier (1875-1938) of Buckfast Abbey. His work has the title *A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist*. The key, to which the title referred, is the Eucharist as Sacrament, and the book is a lucid explanation of the theology of the Eucharist in the writings of St Thomas Aquinas, who himself developed this teaching. In the Introduction to the latest reprint, Aidan Nichols OP, observed

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376 Selman, *A Guide To The Eucharist*, 105
377 *Rev. 21:23b; Rev. 19:7*; “The saints who will be in heaven will not be in need any longer of purification through Christ’s priesthood; but having been purified, they will be in need of consummation through that same Christ on whom their glory depends.” *Summa, III, q.22, a.5, ad 1*, quoted in Abbot Vonier, *A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist* new ed. (Bethesda, Maryland: Zaccheus Press, 2003-4), 174
379 Hebrews 9:11 and St Thomas Aquinas, “For this reason Christ’s priesthood is said to be eternal.” *Summa, III, q.22a.5* quoted in Vonier, *A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist*, 175
380 Vonier, *A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist*
that the book: “was evidently written as a Thomist rejoinder to the much acclaimed and influential Mysterium Fidei, a study of the Mass by the French Jesuit Maurice de la Taille (Paris, 1921).”\textsuperscript{381} Nichols related that in 1924 the English Dominican, Vincent McNabb (1868-1943)\textsuperscript{382}, had written “A New Theory Of The Eucharistic Sacrifice”, which criticized an aspect of the De la Taille theory.

De la Taille argued:

\ldots that the Last Supper constituted the priestly oblation by Christ of the flesh that, by bloody slaughter, was sacrificed on the Cross. This implies that, considered as the sacrifice of our redemption, Calvary was incomplete without the foregoing Supper and what took place there. It also implies that the first Mass, which the Lord Himself celebrated in the Upper room, is more truly the opening phase of the Sacrifice of Christ than is the sacramental presentation of the Sacrifice.\textsuperscript{383}

Nichols showed that Vonier “seconds McNabb’s criticism” though he never mentioned the French Jesuit by name. Moreover, Vonier’s was, in Nichols opinion, a wider critique:

\ldots not de la Taille, the individual writer, so much of the entire school of thought which, particularly in France, sought to describe the Eucharistic sacrifice in terms drawn elsewhere than from sacramental theology.\textsuperscript{384}

Vonier reaffirmed Catholic teaching that: “The sacraments are signs of God’s action; they are perfect signs because they contain and they bring about the very

\textsuperscript{381} Aidan Nichols OP in Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, xii
\textsuperscript{382} Knox would refer to his death in the sermon “The Best Man”, 64
\textsuperscript{383} Nichols OP in Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, xii-xiii
\textsuperscript{384} Nichols OP Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, xiii
thing they signify.” \(^\text{385}\) He emphasized that: “The sacramental world is a new world created by God, entirely different from the world of nature and even from the world of spirits.” \(^\text{386}\) But the sacraments are “complete realities in themselves, existing in their own right;” they are not: “mere veils of more substantial realities.” \(^\text{387}\) A Sacrament is “an object of the senses”; \(^\text{388}\) hence, for example, water, bread and wine, oil, are the matter of sacraments, and the sacraments, while divinely instituted, are conferred by human hands. Vonier stressed the unity between faith and sacraments; faith preceding and the sacraments ‘rewarding’ faith, as it were. Sacraments are Christ’s ‘tools’ for the sanctification of humanity; they both signify that sanctification and bring it about.

The Sacraments draw their energy and life from: “Christ in person, a radiation from the charity of the Cross, a stream of grace from the pierced side of Christ.” \(^\text{389}\) A sacrament, looks back to the Cross, makes present that saving act, and looks forward to the consummation of salvation. “Sacraments … represent the Cross in the double aspect of atonement for sin and worship of God.” \(^\text{390}\)

With regard to the Eucharist as Sacrament-Sacrifice, Vonier urged his reader to “take the signs, both things and words … and see whether they do really signify a

\(^{385}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 4
\(^{386}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 22
\(^{387}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 22
\(^{388}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 16
\(^{389}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 29
\(^{390}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 31
sacrifice;” this because “Christian sacraments do what they signify.” 391 He continued: “We know the hidden content of the sacrament through the external sign, both things and words, or to be more technical, its matter and form.” 392 The Eucharist is indeed a sacrifice:

... because its words and elements clearly signify sacrifice; we know that there is the Body and Blood of Christ because the Eucharistic sacrament signifies the Body and Blood of Christ as clearly as Baptism signifies the washing of the soul. 393

From the signification stems, all else attributed to the Eucharist mystery, even the explanation of the change that takes place in the elements. In emphasizing the sacramental activity of God, Vonier with St Thomas Aquinas, distinguished this form of divine activity from “simple omnipotence”: “The Eucharistic sacrament is performed, not through a divine imperative, but through a divine symbolism or, if you prefer it, through a divine remembrance of the past.” 394 This sacrament looks back to the Last Supper and Jesus’ Death on Calvary, it makes that present now, and it looks forward to the consummation of that sacrifice in heaven. 395 Vonier reiterated the distinction between Christ in heaven, and the Sacrament of the Altar: Christ in heaven is there in Person, on the altar sacramentally present. 396

391 Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 64; the double consecration manifests the separation of Body and Blood which occurred in Jesus’ death.
392 Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 64
393 Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist
394 Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 65
395 “... the representative signification in every sacrament of a past, a present, and a future; the past being the death of Christ on the cross, the present being the very thing which the external symbol signifies, the future being the union with Christ in glory.” Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 39
396 “He must be there in specie aliena - in a condition different from His natural one – in order to safeguard the character of the sacrament as a sign.” Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 21
He also showed that from the sacrament-sacrifice came the sacrament-banquet, and that this banquet was sacrificial.

Knox’s teaching on the doctrine of the Eucharist was directly related, at least to Scholastic theology, if not to its representation in Vonier’s work.

The explanation of Mass as sacrament-sacrifice, based on Aquinas, is the “approach favored (sic) by almost all recent Catholic theologians especially after the various magisterial teachings of Pope Pius XII.”

Knox’s own prayer and reflection was an important source for the sermons, also, as was his appreciation of the Liturgy. The sermons delivered to the girls at Aldenham Park, were careful but simple analyses of the ritual of the Mass, with the hope of a future increased knowledge, attention and devotion. The sermons of Maiden Lane were liturgical, both, because they were preached during the liturgy, and they sought to heighten the immediate appreciation and devotion of those who were celebrating the Mass there and then.

**The Liturgical Movement**

The Liturgy informed his sermons, but what do they owe to the influence, on Knox, of the growing Liturgical Movement, which is comprehensively examined in

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397 O’Connor, *The Hidden Manna*, 240
Alcuin Reid’s study. Knox certainly acknowledged and appreciated, in the sermons, the reforms of Pope Pius X (1903-14), and he referred to those of Pope Pius XII, which have been discussed earlier in the light of Waugh’s description of ‘Knox’s sentimental regret’.

Knox was undoubtedly a liturgical reformer in his Anglo-Catholic days, as he sought to include Catholic rites and sacramentals into his own devotional life and Anglican worship. And it is clear, from the author of The Mass In Slow Motion, and from his earnest promotion of knowledge and participation in the Mass, and in the worthy reception of Holy Communion, that there was common ground; though Knox would have been more at ease with the early movement rather than the reformist agenda which would follow, and indeed in the years after the Second Vatican Council.

Reid has concluded of the early Liturgical Movement:

(it) was not founded in order to create oases of medieval liturgical splendor or archeological delight, but to nourish everyday Christian life by participation in the Liturgy celebrated in local churches and chapels.  

Abbot Cabrol, who had received Knox into the Church, gave great encouragement to the liturgical movement, and he once complained: “the

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398 Reid OSB, The Organic Development Of The Liturgy referred to previously.
399 Reid, The Organic Development Of The Liturgy, 71
average English Catholic show(s) little interest in the Liturgy."^400 Through Farnborough Abbey and its publications, the then, largely Continental Liturgical Movement, gained a foothold in England.\(^{401}\) Cabrol, himself, published a missal for the people’s participation. The introduction of the 1921 edition contained these words:

> This is the reason for the present translation of the missal: to put at the disposition of the faithful the best and simplest means of understanding the Mass and taking part in its rites and prayers … \(^{402}\)

The Augustinian canon, Pius Parsch (1884-1954), was the leader of the Liturgical Movement in Austria. That he took his religious name, Pius, to express his admiration of Pius X, indicated his liturgical agenda. He commented on his time as a chaplain in the First World War:

> I spent four years at the front as a chaplain. It was in the course of this work that I began to realize the importance of the Bible for both priests and layfolk. I realized too how important it was that people should learn to understand the Liturgy and take an intelligent part in it. I returned home from the war full of these two discoveries and resolved to devote the rest of my life to propagating these ideals.\(^{403}\)

A greater knowledge of the Scriptures, and an increased participation in the Liturgy, these were at the heart of the early liturgical movement, and they were in harmony with Knox.

^400 Abbot Cabrol quoted in Reid, *The Organic Development Of The Liturgy*, 79
^401 The thirty-volume *Dictionnaire d’Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* was published from 1924 onward by the Farnborough Abbey Press, Reid, *The Organic Development Of The Liturgy*, 79
^402 quoted in Reid, *The Organic Development Of The Liturgy*, 81
^403 Pius Parsch OSA quoted in Reid, *The Organic Development Of The Liturgy*, 100
But there were some currents in the Movement which seemed to make “the restrained ethos of the Roman Rite ... adapted to ‘modern man,’ rather than modern man, for his welfare, to it.” Such an observation recalled Knox’s criticism of the text *Foundations*, which desired to rework religion so that it fitted to the needs of Knox’s fictional Mr Jones.

**The Feast of Corpus Christi**

Following a Eucharistic vision granted to an Augustinian nun, Juliana of Liège, in 1209, the bishop of the diocese instigated a feast of the Eucharist in the local liturgical calendar. Pope Urban IV (1261-1264) was formerly Archdeacon of Liège, and as Bishop of Rome, in the bull *Transitus* of 1264 he inserted the feast within the Calendar of the Western Church. The death of Pope Urban IV in the same year had a limiting effect on how widely the feast was first accepted. The bull is described by one author: “(as) arguably the most beautiful document on the Eucharist ever composed by a successor of Peter.” Urban IV gave his reason for the institution of the feast in the general calendar, and in so doing distinguished it from the liturgical celebration of Holy Thursday:

> Therefore, although this memorial Sacrament is frequented in the daily solemnities of the Mass, we nevertheless think it suitable and worthy that, at least once a year – especially to confound the lack of faith and

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404 Reid, *The Organic Development Of The Liturgy*, 83  
405 published in O’Connor *The Hidden Manna*, 192-6  
407 O’Connor *The Hidden Manna*, 192
the infamy of heretics – a more solemn and honorable (sic) memory of this Sacrament be held. This is so because on Holy Thursday, the day on which the Lord himself instituted this Sacrament, the universal Church, occupied with the reconciliation of penitents, blessing the chrisrn, fulfilling the Commandment about the washing of the feet and many other such things, is not sufficiently free to celebrate so great a Sacrament.\footnote{408}

Earlier in the bull Urban IV used the term “real presence”: “(in) what may be the first use of the term Real Presence in respect to the Eucharist, a term that became common thereafter.”\footnote{409} Urban taught that: “in this sacramental commemoration of Christ, Jesus Christ is present to us in his proper substance, although under another form.”\footnote{410} With the clear statement on Christ’s presence in the Sacrament, the bull also highlighted the Mass as both sacrifice and meal.\footnote{411} These aspects of the Mass, or the Eucharist, were often overshadowed by the emphasis given to the Real Presence at that time.

The new universal Feast of Corpus Christi was to be celebrated on the “Thursday after the octave of Pentecost,”\footnote{412} and was a Holy Day of Obligation. In the revised liturgical calendar, after the Second Vatican Council, the Feast was renamed a Solemnity (rather than “a double of the first class with a privileged octave of the second order”)\footnote{413} and in countries where it was not observed as a Holy Day of Obligation is was to be celebrated on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday (this was also formerly the custom).

\footnote{408}{Urban IV “Transiturus” quoted in O’Connor The Hidden Manna, 195; see also Pius Parsch, The Church’s Year Of Grace Vol. 4, trans. William G. Heidt OSB, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1962), 17}
\footnote{409}{O’Connor The Hidden Manna, 196}
\footnote{410}{Urban IV “Transiturus” quoted in O’Connor The Hidden Manna,193}
\footnote{411}{Adam, The Liturgical Year, 170}
\footnote{412}{Urban IV “Transiturus” quoted in O’Connor The Hidden Manna,196}
\footnote{413}{Fortescue, The Ceremonies Of The Roman Rite Described 6th ed., 374}
Urban IV commissioned the Dominican priest and theologian, Thomas Aquinas, to write some, if not all of, of the texts for the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours for the feast.\textsuperscript{414} In his sermon “Self-Examination” Knox quoted a stanza from Aquinas’s sequence (\textit{Lauda Sion}) to reinforce his own message on the need for careful preparation and the right disposition to receive Communion.\textsuperscript{415}

The Introit for the Mass of Corpus Christi was taken from Psalm 80 (Vulgate numbering) and it gave praise to God for feeding his people: “with finest wheat (and) … honey from the rock.”\textsuperscript{416} In response to God’s beneficence the people were to: “Rejoice in God our helper; sing aloud to the God of Jacob.” In praising God for the wonderful sacrament which is the memorial of Christ’s Passion (\textit{Deus, qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis}),\textsuperscript{417} the Collect prayed that the faithful, in adoration and thanksgiving for Christ’s Body and Blood, would continually experience the fruits of the redemption which he has brought. A commentator on the text of the Collect has shown that the Latin \textit{venerari} (to venerate):

\begin{quote}
\ldots does not imply some mere pious action … ‘veneration of the sacred mystery of Christ’s Flesh and Blood’ consists in an active participation in the holy Sacrifice, in the fitting use of It as food, and in living virtuously as a consequence.\textsuperscript{418}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{414} Adam, \textit{The Liturgical Year}, 170
\textsuperscript{415} Knox, “Self-examination”, 69: “The good, the guilty share therein, With sure increase of race or sin, The ghostly life, or ghostly death.”
\textsuperscript{417} \textit{Missale Romanum} rep. (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée & Co., 1956), 337
\textsuperscript{418} Parsch, \textit{The Church’s Year Of Grace} Vol. 4, 22
The Epistle was taken from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (11: 23 – 29), the earliest Scriptural reference to the Institution of the Eucharist by Christ. In this reading St Paul warned of the consequences of an unworthy and unprepared reception of the Eucharist. The Gradual used two verses from Psalm 144. Again the beneficence of God was proclaimed as: “(t)he eyes of all creatures look to you Lord and you give them their food in due time.” The Alleluia and Verse (Jn 6:56-57) were taken from the Gospel of the day (Jn 6:56-59), which continued Jesus’ discourse, with the crowd, after the Miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

The Sequence was a poetic compendium of the Eucharistic theology of St. Thomas Aquinas: “with that concision and solemnity for which (he) had such a wonderful talent,” and it embraced the images of Jesus as Saviour and King, as the true Shepherd, as the living Bread. It proclaimed the Eucharist as “foreshowed” in the sacrifice of Isaac (Gn. 22:1-19), the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12), and the manna from heaven (Ex. 16:4). It reiterated that when Christ instituted the Eucharist he gave a new paschal offering: “(t)hat closed the ancient paschal rite”, and that Christ had commanded that his words and actions be continued:

\[
\text{Christ willed what he himself had done} \\
\text{Should be renewed while time should run.}
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419 Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist The Paschal Sacrament, 24 discussed whether St Paul or St Mark’s Gospel was earlier.
In memory of his parting hour.\textsuperscript{423}

The Sequence affirmed the presence of Christ: “concealed beneath the two-fold sign,” and that his presence was complete under the sacred signs even though: “it baffles nature’s powers of sense and sight.” This eucharistic gift was offered both to an individual and to many, but it was the one Christ that each received, the whole Christ, but whose presence, because it was complete, was not multiplied: “(b)e one, or be a thousand fed.” Knox would explain this aspect of the Real Presence, in a discussion of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, in “Cana And Genesareth” (Sermon III in the \textit{Heaven And Charing Cross} collection). The Sequence continued by proclaiming that while the Bread was broken, as Christ’s body was broken on Calvary, his death was once and for all, and cannot be repeated; the breaking of the bread in the Eucharist did not repeat what cannot be repeated, but rather sacramentally represented this sacrifice. Christ was not broken, though the Eucharistic bread was broken, for in his Risen and Ascended Body he lives in the fullness of his Divine Person which he gives in Holy Communion; he lives in this fullness, interceding now for those still on their earthly pilgrimage, while awaiting that final day when the faithful will live: “(i)n fields of immortality.”\textsuperscript{424} Knox referred to this in the Sermon “Pity For The Multitude”\textsuperscript{425} when he stated that the same pity that Christ showed in the feeding of the Four Thousand (Mt 15:32-39) continued through his Eucharistic presence.

\textsuperscript{423} from \textit{Lauda Sion in Lectionary} Vol. 1, 602
\textsuperscript{424} from \textit{Lauda Sion in Lectionary} Vol. 1, 603
\textsuperscript{425} Knox, “Pity For The Multitude”, 127
The Offertory Prayer looked back to the instructions in regard to the Levitical Priesthood (Lev 21:6), and the ritual purity that such a ministry demanded. The Secret Prayer asked the Lord: “(g)raciously bestow on Thy Church, …. the gifts of unity and peace, which are mystically shown forth in the gifts now offered.”426 (Ecclesiae tuae … unitatis et pacis propitius dona concede: quae sub oblatis muneribus mystice designantur.)427 Knox took up and developed the theme of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Unity and of Peace, with reference to this prayer.428

The Preface of the Mass, and the Octave which followed the Feast, was that of Christmas: “we are thus reminded of the close connexion which exists between the two mysteries of the birth of Christ and the Eucharist.”429 The place of Jesus’ birth, Bethlehem in English, comes from the Hebrew – bêt lehem, and one possible meaning of the Hebrew is house of bread.430 Knox favoured this translation and used it in the sermon “The Gleaner” where he emphasized the connexion between Christ’s Incarnation, his Birth, and the Eucharist. Basing himself on the story of Ruth (The Book Of Ruth) Knox contrasted the two widows, Orpah and Ruth. Their mother-in-law, Naomi, offered them the option of returning to their homeland; Orpah did so, while Ruth accompanied Naomi to Bethlehem (her homeplace). Knox used these two widows to depict: the call of the world and

427 Missale Romanum, 338
428 Knox, “The City Of Peace”, 8
429 Guéranger, The Liturgical Year Vol. X, 265
the natural, and the call of the Church to enter into the supernatural. Ruth symbolized the Church who: “brings us to Bethlehem, to the House of Bread.”

At the Communion, the antiphon proclaimed two verses from the Epistle (1 Cor. 11:26-27), and reminded those who were to receive Holy Communion, that in the reception of the Lord’s Body and Blood they were announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again; a caution against an unworthy Communion.

The Postcommunion Prayer anticipated the: “eternal enjoyment of Thy Divinity, which is prefigured by the reception in this life of Thy precious body and blood” (divinitas tuae sempiterna frutione repleted: quam pretiosi corporis et sanguinis tui temporalis perception praefigurat.) The Postcommunion prayer was echoed in the Magnificat Antiphon for Second Vespers of the Feast of Corpus Christi: “we receive a pledge of the glory that is to be ours, alleluia” (et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur, alleluia.)

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431 Knox, “The Gleaner”, 42
432 translation in The New Marian Missal For Daily Mass, 513
433 Missale Romanum, 339
435 from Magnifical Antiphon of Second Vespers of Corpus Christi in The Liber Usualis (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée & Co., 1956)
The Forty Hours Adoration

Prior mention was made of the adaptation of this Catholic devotion that Knox had organized as an Anglican priest during the First World War. The symbolism behind the continuous exposition of the Blessed Sacrament over forty hours was explained as a reminder of the forty day fast undertaken by the Lord Jesus after his baptism; but more commonly in memory of the hours between Jesus’ Death and Resurrection which St Augustine numbered as forty. The rubrics which regulated the devotion were still, at the time of Knox’s preaching, those published by Pope Clement XII (1730-40) in the Instructio Clementina of 1731. (This instruction was replaced by a revision of 1973 and later translated into English as Holy Communion And Worship Of The Eucharist Outside Mass.)

A Eucharistic Procession through the streets of the city or town was traditional, but such a public demonstration was not the custom in England. The procession which followed the opening Mass, and that which followed the Mass of Deposition on the third day, were usually around the interior of the church building.

The principal Mass of the second day was usually a Mass for Peace. In “One Body” (Sermon I of the Heaven And Charing Cross) Knox noted in general, the efficacy of Exposition of the Sacrament but that: “when we celebrate the Forty

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Fortescue, The Ceremonies Of The Roman Rite Described 6th ed., 383

Hours, we do it for a special purpose and that purpose becomes evident the moment we consider the ceremonies which constitute it." The reason for a Mass for Peace arose from the threat posed to Christianity by the Ottoman Turks in the sixteenth century. The Forty Hours Devotion began as a local celebration in 1537 at Milan, and finally, in 1571, an alliance of Christian princes defeated the Ottoman fleet in the Battle of Lepanto. The immediate threat posed in the sixteenth century no longer obtained for subsequent generations but the need to cultivate and promote peace always remained.

The Forty Hours Devotion, as with all Eucharistic adoration, flowed from the Mass and was directed to the celebration of the Mass. "The celebration of the eucharist in the sacrifice of the Mass is the true origin and purpose of the worship shown to the eucharist outside Mass." While the liturgical revision which followed the Second Vatican Council has simplified the rubrics for extended exposition, and emphasized the relationship between the Mass and Eucharistic adoration, the relationship was not lacking in the practice of former years. Even then a rubric directed: "(a) second altar bread is laid upon the paten" (that is for the purpose of exposition in the monstrance). The footnote that explained this rubric, also noted that the practice: "is not absolutely necessary but is more correct." The celebration of Mass during the time of exposition, albeit at

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438 Knox, "One Body", 1
another altar in the church, as with the Mass for Peace on the second day, nevertheless obscured the right relationship.

Jungmann has written of the enthusiasm of ‘the medieval man’: “to look at the sacred Host at the elevation (it) became for many in the later Middle Ages the be-all and end-all of Mass devotion;”\textsuperscript{442} and he noted, from the twelfth century, the records of the eucharistic miracles in which our Lord was reputedly seen on the altar in his humanity. Of these he wrote: “(while these) cannot withstand critical examination, still they are professions of faith.”\textsuperscript{443} The desire to see led to a practice, uncountenanced by the ecclesiastical authority, of running between churches to catch the consecration and elevation, as often as possible, and even waiting outside the church until the bell sounded heralding the consecration, and departing immediately afterwards.\textsuperscript{444} The use of the monstrance, from this time, was an extension of the desire to look on the sacred Bread.

The Feast of Corpus Christi began at this time, and while its genesis was a vision granted to Juliana of Liège in 1209, and the celebration, later, would include a Eucharistic Procession through the town, it should not be seen as an extension of this excessive desire to see. Though perhaps unintelligible to the people, the texts of the Liturgy, through the words and poetry of St Thomas Aquinas, proclaimed, professed and focused on the Church’s belief in the Mass as meal

\textsuperscript{444} Jungmann, S.J., \textit{The Mass Of The Roman Rite: Its Origins And Development}, Vol. 1, 121
and sacrifice, with past, present and future dimensions, and the Real Presence as the sacramental Presence of the Crucified and Risen.

**Popular Eucharistic Devotions**

Both the Liturgical Movement, and theologians of the early twentieth century, were concerned with the extra-liturgical eucharistic devotion and piety of the faithful.\(^{445}\)

Abbot Vonier was not attributed, in Reid’s study, with any leadership in the early movement. As a theologian he made this comment in his study of the Eucharist as Sacrament:

> Might we not remark that, in our days, almost the whole of Eucharistic literature, and a vast amount of the Eucharistic worship and devotion, is based more on the concomitance of the Eucharist than on its sacramental elements? Nothing, of course, could be more legitimate and helpful; we have the whole Christ in the Eucharist: such is Catholic faith.\(^{446}\)

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\(^{445}\) see Guardini, *Preparing Yourself For Mass*, 112: “One theme in particular has fallen under this deplorable influence: the Sacred Heart. By rights this devotion belongs to the profoundest level of Christian piety. Its expression should be huge with the magnitude of revealed truth and vibrant with the power of Christ’s conviction. It should be noble and pure. Instead, it is only too often characterized by an intolerable effeminacy and unnaturalness.”; and with regard to the Mass he observed, 113: “In place of the missal’s powerful language, we find Mass devotions abounding in artificial conceptions and soft, unnatural sentiments.”

\(^{446}\) Vonier, *A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist*, 73; Concomitance was the term Scholastic theology gave to affirm that the Eucharist contains “the whole Person of Christ”; the presence of the accidents of the Body of Christ in the Sacrament. Such accidents are “Christ’s various states, as mortality and glory.” Through concomitance also the Body is not without the Blood, and the Blood is not without the Body. This, of course, is why it is not necessary to receive both species in Holy Communion. Because a body is animated by a soul then Christ’s soul is also associated with the Eucharist not by the sacrament but concomitance. “The divine things, then, come into the Eucharist in virtue of divine immensity; the finite things … are in the Eucharist through an act of God’s power similar to that act which changes bread into Flesh and wine into Blood.” Vonier, 144
For Vonier the Eucharist, as sacrament, preserved Eucharistic piety and devotion from extremes, and returned it to its source – the Sacrifice of the Mass. But even here he cautioned of the tendency of modern piety:

to read into the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice (a) certain factor of a more extreme kind which seem to give greater reality to the Eucharistic immolation than is warranted by the strictly sacramental view.\textsuperscript{447}

The concerns of the early Liturgical Movement were spelled out in the 1914 paper, \textit{La Piété de L’Église}, by Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960), within the detailed “plan of action” in the section on Piety. Beauduin, is considered as a Founder of the Liturgical Movement. He had visited Farnborough Abbey three times, thus further encouraging the Movement there. His professed aims were:

2. The basing of our daily private devotions, meditation reading etc., on the daily instructions of the Liturgy, the Psalms, the other liturgical books, and the fundamental dogmas of Catholic worship.
3. Reanimation and sublimation of the devotions dear to the people by nourishing them at the source of the Liturgy.\textsuperscript{448}

This, it will be recalled, was also the aim of the Second Vatican Council, when it emphasized the necessary link between Eucharistic Adoration outside Mass and the celebration of Mass.

The concerns of the theologians and the liturgists were well founded. This paper has obtained a facsimile edition of \textit{Sentinel Of The Blessed Sacrament},\textsuperscript{449} a

\textsuperscript{447} Vonier, \textit{A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist}, 77
\textsuperscript{448} quoted in Reid, \textit{The Organic Development Of The Liturgy}, 73
\textsuperscript{449} \textit{Sentinel Of The Blessed Sacrament} Facsimile edition (no publisher’s details printed)
collection from the 1901 editions of the journal, *The Sentinel*, of the American People’s Eucharistic League. The journal included, a timetable of Eucharistic Adoration, the dates and locations of the Forty Hours’ Adoration, doctrinal articles from St Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868), the Founder of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers. A community of this congregation was established in New York on 12 December 1900. *The Sentinel* and the League were established before the foundation of the community, and after its establishment both were placed under this community for guidance and direction.

In the journal, alongside the orthodox expositions on the doctrine of the Eucharist, there was published stories and poems associated with the Sacrament of the Altar, and numerous illustrations. One illustration presented a young, androgynous Christ gazing out from behind a grille, holding the Host and bearing a cross and lily, while a dove was drinking of the blood which flowed from his Sacred Heart. The title of the illustration was “Jesus, Prisoner of Love, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist.” The prayer which accompanied the illustration read: “May my soul, o divine Captive, be bound to thy Tabernacle by the precious chains of Faith, Confidence and Charity!”

Among the stories was “The Sanctuary Lamp” (presumably fictitious) by Kathleen Eileen Barry, which was published in two parts. A troupe of Turkish acrobats, 

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450 from June 1901, *Sentinel Of The Blessed Sacrament*, 174  
451 from June 1901, *Sentinel Of The Blessed Sacrament*, 174; Colman O’Neill OP *New Approaches To The Eucharist* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), 68 has commented on this devotion: “A sense of the purpose of the sacrament already excludes many forms of false and superstitious devotion to the so-called “prisoner of the tabernacle.”
travelling with a circus in Ireland, had heard of the riches of the Convent at Tramore, and entered the chapel, under cover of night, to steal the famed, golden sanctuary lamp, and other precious items. Sr Concepta, a young nun, “beloved by all”, had accidentally dropped her silver Cross in the chapel during Vespers and had returned to the chapel to retrieve this precious possession, when she came upon the thieves. Petrified by fear, she nonetheless perceived the robbers evil intent, towards the sanctuary lamp and the other sacramentals, and now of her, but summoning a remembrance of a childhood game of heroics with her brother, she managed to grab hold of the robbers’ guns and aim them in their direction. Her resolve thwarted the robbery and the desecration of the Blessed Sacrament. But it was too much for Sister who sank unconscious to the floor beside the sanctuary lamp which had fallen from the robber’s hand.

The sanctuary lamp featured again in a poem titled “To The Sanctuary Lamp” (anonymous). It began:

Oh happy Lamp! how sweet ‘twould be,
If I could day and night like thee,
Within this holy temple stay,
And burn my weary life away
With love of Him who for us died,
And on our altars doth abide
To be our comfort, food and stay,
Our Life, our Truth and only way.

452 Their entry through a window high in the wall necessitated contortionists, but the stereotype of Muslim perpetrators is unacceptable.
453 Kathleen Eileen Barry, “The Sanctuary Lamp” in Sentinel (undated) 333-6, 366-8
454 “To The Sanctuary Lamp” in Sentinel (undated), 128
To proffer these examples is not to denigrate the Eucharistic Faith, devotion and sincerity of the authors. But with the illustration of Jesus as the Prisoner of love in the tabernacle, they are given to highlight the excess and inaccuracy in doctrine of much then contemporary piety. Furthermore, it demonstrates how far such piety had moved away from the Sacrament-Sacrifice of the Mass, and the relation of the Sacrament to the natural Presence of Christ in heaven, in his risen and ascended Body.

Knox’s sermons were directed at fostering eucharistic devotion and piety, by actively engaging with the Liturgical action, and preparedness for Holy Communion. His sermons were firmly grounded in doctrine and Scripture, and the theology of the school-men. His distaste for sentiment was another barrier to any identification with contemporary piety. As an accomplished word-smith, he surely would have shied away from the saccharine sentiment, the trivialization of respect for the Eucharist, and of the predictable rhyme (not to mention the content) of so much of the poetic content of (in this example) the Sentinel.

The commission to reform The Manual Of Prayers in 1937 is evidence of the above. The Manual comprised “extra-liturgical, vernacular prayers which are authorized for use in public services. The language of the current edition was stilted to the point of indecorum.” Like the Knox translation of the Bible, the bishops appointed a committee to make recommendations for the reform. Knox worked on the English translations from the Latin and the Italian throughout

Waugh, Ronald Knox, 253
1937-8; he had originally nominated Fr Martindale SJ as a more suitable reformer. But when the task fell to him he expressed his concern “(for) converting England,” at least in the area of language. He wrote of the inferiority of the English prayers in the Manual, contrasted with the English of the Anglican and Reformed Traditions. He left the more widely used hymns such as the “Pange Lingua, Te Deum, O Salutaris Hostia, and Tantum Ergo” in their familiar forms, but re-wrote ninety-eight prayers. There was some initial opposition to his translations but the book was approved in 1942. With the death of Cardinal Hinsley (who had supported the revision), in 1943, the bishops at their Low Week Meeting (May 3-8) decided on another amended and revised edition, thereby consigning Knox’s revision “to oblivion.” Ironically, the new revised edition, which appeared in 1953, was a more radical reform than Knox’s.

In re-writing The Manual Of Prayers, Knox was respectful of what was venerable by use, and thoroughly alert to the distraction and hazard that over sentimental, and confused metaphor, can cause for authentic devotion and piety. It cannot be suggested that he advocated the excessive Eucharistic piety, ungrounded in sound doctrine and appreciation of the reality of the Sacrament-Sacrifice. His references to the abiding Presence of Christ in the tabernacle, within his sermons, were of the Incarnate Son of God, who instituted the Eucharist and

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456 Knox to Archbishop Amigo of Southwark quoted in Waugh, Ronald Knox, 254
457 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 255
458 Waugh, Ronald Knox, 291
459 Knox, The Belief Of Catholics, 198 cautioned that “an exaggerated pietism may make them (men’s consciences) too rigid.” This caution against scrupulosity will recur throughout the Maiden Lane Sermons.
freely chose to remain sacramentally in the midst of the faithful, for their
nourishment when sick, and for Adoration and spiritual Communion. But the
primary reason for the Sacrament was the celebration of the Mass until Christ’s
second coming.

The Re-editing Of The Maiden Lane Sermons by Philip Caraman SJ

The Maiden Lane sermons were originally published in two volumes. Thus far,
reference has been restricted to these volumes published under the aegis of
Knox, himself. This paper will now include reference to the republishing and
editing of the sermons by Philip Caraman SJ as they appeared in the collection
_The Pastoral Sermons of Ronald A. Knox._ As Knox did not directly identify his
references and sources, in the collections which were printed in his lifetime, the
student of Knox must be grateful even for the minimal clarification which
Caraman gave, in the editing and dating, and the provision of some scriptural
references and devotional sources. His revision of the texts adopted current
prose usage with regard to capital letters applied to a specific doctrine and the
Lord’s name. Like Knox, Caraman did not arrange the sermons sequentially. His
renaming of certain sermons can cause confusion, as does the inclusion of four
more sermons on the Eucharist. One is identified as a sermon to “convent school
girls,” but no specific location or time was given to the other three. These four

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461 Though a number of the scriptural quotations are not specified.
462 Knox, “The Mirror Of Conscience,” 335
sermons will escape examination because they are not parts of the series given at Maiden Lane.

In the discussion of the individual sermons which now follows the renaming of an earlier sermon will be given in parentheses, and where Caraman has renamed a sermon this name will be indicated by an accompanying asterisk.

Two Recent Papal Documents

Kevin L. Morris\textsuperscript{463} observed that Knox’s writings, because of their fidelity to the teachings of the Church, and their careful exposition of Catholic Doctrine, should have found a new audience, particularly during the pontificate of John Paul II. They did not. In the discussion of the individual sermons, which follows, reference will be made both to the Encyclical Letter \textit{Ecclesia De Eucharistia} (On The Eucharist And Its Relationship To The Church) of Pope John II (2003),\textsuperscript{464} and to the Apostolic Exhortation \textit{Sacramentum Caritatis} (The Sacrament Of Love) of Pope Benedict XVI.\textsuperscript{465} Neither of these magisterial documents drew upon Knox’s sermons, but the references will highlight the consonance of Knox’s instruction with the teaching of the Church, and its relevance for contemporary Eucharistic teaching and devotion.

\textsuperscript{463} see 49 above
3. Heaven And Charing Cross Collection

One Body

This is the first of the sermons in the first collection. But it was not the first sermon preached at Maiden Lane. Though Knox gave no date for the sermon he made mention of the forthcoming Eucharistic Congress: “to take place in a country of our own speech, and one separated from us by only a few miles of sea.”\(^\text{466}\) This gave a clue to the year; it was the thirty-first Congress\(^\text{467}\) and was held in Dublin from 22 June to 26 June in 1932, \(^\text{468}\) on the one thousand and five hundredth anniversary of St Patrick’s arrival in Ireland. Because the Mass of the second day of the Forty Hours Devotion, was always a Mass for Peace (referred to previously), Knox preached on the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Peace. Reminding his listeners that the city which hosted a Eucharistic Congress became the: “centre of the world for the time being, and the focus of the world’s peace,”\(^\text{469}\) he located his theme in a contemporary event, and thus highlighted peace as a benefit which flowed from the Eucharist. True peace, the peace that Christ brought on the evening of Easter Sunday, was a threefold gift: “peace with God, peace within ourselves, and peace with each other.”\(^\text{470}\) It was the

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\(^{466}\) Knox, “One Body”, 2  
\(^{469}\) Knox, “One Body,” 3  
\(^{470}\) Knox, “One Body,” 3
“fellowship of Catholics all over the world,” the *philadelphia*\(^1\) so evident in the early Church, which should bring about this peace, for such a fellowship was rooted in the common celebration of the Eucharist. This fellowship was evident in the bread and wine used in the Eucharist; the bread made of so many grains, the wine, the unity of so many grapes. Not only do the elements in themselves symbolize the unity of those who offer them, once:

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\ldots \text{the miracle of Transubstantiation has happened, then not less but more the sacred Elements become a sacrament to us of our common union in Christ. For here, beyond the furthest reach of our earth-bound imaginations, the accidents of bread and wine inhere in a Substance not their own, the very Substance of our Lord’s Body and Blood.}\(^2\)
\]

The accidents of bread and wine, the physical qualities which identify them to human senses, are now held together in being, not by that very substance which is of the essence of bread and wine, but by the substance of the Lord’s Body and Blood; they ‘have life’ in him. So those who share in the Eucharist, themselves, have their life and unity in Christ, and are the Body of Christ. Knox’s argument was firmly couched in the terms of Scholastic theology. The practical application of his teaching was to encourage his listeners to: “realize our membership in Christ,” and by so doing, in a ripple effect, spread peace.

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\(^1\) Knox also referred to the *philadelphia* in an earlier the sermon “Early Christian Experiment In Communism” preached in December 1924 and published in *University And Anglican Sermons Of R. A. Knox*, 329. In this sermon, preached to the St Vincent de Paul Conference in Glasgow, he stated: “As Christians we are bound to have charity towards all men.” And quoting from St Paul: “… especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10). As Michael Collins related in 1992: “He (Knox) could well have become a rich man if he wished but he gave it all away. The royalties of one book he gave to a convent. He directed that all the royalties on his translation of the Bible should be paid to the Archbishop of Westminster for good works. Often he told needy acquaintances of a public fund which would relieve them, and then entered into a private arrangement with the treasurer so that he could supply them from his own pocket without their knowledge.” Michael Collins, “Ronald Knox-A Forgotten Legend Part II” in *The Priest* 48, 7 (1992), 32

\(^2\) Knox, “One Body,” 8
Real Bread

This sermon, which was reprinted in the second volume, was based on Is 55:1-2:

You that have no money, make haste, buy and eat, without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you?

In the reprint the text was paraphrased and was based on Knox’s own translation: “Who will come and get him food, no price to be paid?”

This sermon focused on what was real, and reality belonged not to the natural order. Previously, reference was made, in the section But The Familiar Is Only An Imitation, to Jesus’ use of images to illustrate his teaching: images such as ‘vine’, ‘living water’, and bread, which Jesus contrasted with that ‘true bread which has come down from heaven’. The text for the sermon spoke of the Divine Economy, that is, God’s generosity which was extended to humanity without price and without limit. How different, and ultimately unsatisfying, was human economy. Knox illustrated his point with a reference to the current unemployment, itself: “(a) symptom of some hidden and mysterious disease which has come upon an over-civilized world.”473 In this rare social comment, Knox attributed the current economic problems to an over-supply of grain which threatened to make it “too cheap,” and thus much of it must be destroyed to protect profit. Knox observed:

No, you cannot estimate the value of such a gift (Jesus’ Flesh and Blood) by any human standard, and least of all by a standard we are

473 Knox, “Real Bread,” 16 (reference taken from Heaven And Charing Cross)
accustomed to use in daily life, the standard of rarity. We confuse value with price; we think that because a thing is difficult to come by it is worth a great deal, that because the opportunities of enjoying a thing are so rare, no such opportunity should be lost.474

The Divine economy, which is most evident in the Real Bread come down from heaven, was offered: “without money and without price,” and because it was so readily available: “we put (it) down, for that reason as not worth having!” At a time of national and international economic uncertainty, instead of turning to the graces offered by God, and especially to the frequent reception of Holy Communion, people sought satisfaction and security in the very things that could not satisfy. This was in contrast to those who responded to the uncertainties of life and this world by a deepening of faith and religious practice: “at such times men have often turned to their religion with more ardour.”475 In support of this, Knox alluded to the sermons of St Gregory, Pope Gregory I (590-604), and to the “rhythm of Bernard of Morlaix” (St Bernard of Cluny - mid. 12th century).

The second reading of The Office of Readings for St Gregory’s Memorial (3 September) is taken from his sermons on the Book of Ezekiel. St Gregory expressed his regret at the distractions and worldliness which resulted from the affairs of state (he was at one time the papal representative at the Imperial Court at Constantinople from 579), and the demands made upon him as Bishop of Rome:

When I lived in a monastic community I was able to keep my tongue from idle topics and to devote my mind almost continually to the

474 Knox, “Real Bread,” 19
475 Knox, “Real Bread,” 15
discipline of prayer. Since taking on my shoulders the burden of pastoral care, I have been unable to keep steadily recollected because my mind is distracted by many responsibilities.\textsuperscript{476}

Bernard of Morlaix, was a Benedictine monk and poet. His Latin poem \textit{De contemptu mundi} (On Contempt for the World) was dedicated to Abbot Peter the Venerable of Cluny (1122-57). The poem was: “a bitter satire against the moral disorders of his time.”\textsuperscript{477}

Knox concluded this sermon, and his exhortation to turn from the shadows to the truth of that world which shines through the Eucharist, by stating: “This gift, which is himself, is not for the few, but for everybody.”\textsuperscript{478} The Divine economy made no distinctions between people, thus there should be no hesitation in accepting the Gift that was freely offered, and which exceeded: “All the graces bestowed on our Lady and the Saints, all the visions and the ecstasies and the power of working miracles.”\textsuperscript{479} While these were favoured glimpses of the real world, the Eucharist made this real world present to all.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{477}] B. J. Comaskey, “Bernard Of Cluny” in \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia} 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. Vol. 2 (USA: Thomson Gale, 2003), 312
  \item[\textsuperscript{478}] Knox, “Real Bread,” 20
  \item[\textsuperscript{479}] Knox, “Real Bread,” 20
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Cana And Genesareth (*Bread And Wine)

This sermon has interest because it was an explanation: “put as imply as I can, (on) the theology of the Eucharist.” It was Knox’s demonstration of Transubstantiation in response to, the then, current challenges to the doctrine in the Press. To address that challenge Knox turned to two of Christ’s New Testament miracles: the change of water into wine at Cana (Jn 2:1-11) and the Feeding of the Five Thousand by the Lake of Genesareth (Sea of Galilee) (Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13).

In his discussion of the change of water into wine at Cana the preacher began by stating that the water was not annihilated and then the wine created from nothing. The water was changed: “St John refers to Cana of Galilee as the place where Jesus made water wine; he actually altered something which was there into something else.” He invited the congregation to consider how this change might have happened and offered two possibilities for their consideration. The first was that only the accidents of water had changed, and though it tasted, smelled, and looked like wine, it was only a change of the accidents. This Knox

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\[\text{Knox, “Real Bread,” 16}\]
\[\text{Knox, “Real Bread,” 16; Knox does not indicate what the challenges were, but his desire to explain the doctrine “if we are questioned about it by our Protestant friends.” It is unlikely that Knox is referring to the theory of “transignification” which was proposed by the French priest Yves de Monthcheuil SJ (1900-44) and Edward Schillebeeckx OP (1914-2009). “Transignification is the theory that things are what we mean them to be for us or what we use them for.”}\]
\[\text{“according to the theory … there is a change of meaning, not of substance, in the Eucharist.” Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist, 76 & 78. Paul VI, Mysterium Fidei, Encyclical Letter, 1965 par. 46, showed the deficiencies in the theory; quoted in Selman, 82.}\]
\[\text{Ronald A. Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 23; see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par. 54}\]
identified as ‘transaccidentation’,\textsuperscript{483} which is not a total change, a change only of the accidents of wine; thus mere trickery, as the wedding guests were not really drinking wine, but water which had the properties of wine.

In contrast with the miracle of Cana, where there was a total change, in the Eucharist, the Lord Jesus: “changes the substance without changing the accidents.”\textsuperscript{484} In such an action: “our sense-experience … remains undisturbed,” for in:

\[\text{… the Blessed Sacrament it is his Will that the change should be supra-sensible, and that the substance which is truly present (the Lord’s own Body and Blood) should be only seen, only tasted by faith.}\textsuperscript{485}\]

Knox continued his exposition of Transubstantiation by demonstrating that the substantial change into flesh and blood was a substantial change, not into any flesh and blood, but into a particular Body: “(the) Body which was born of Mary at Bethlehem”; and “the Blood which was spilt for our Redemption on Calvary.”\textsuperscript{486}

A further aspect of the change that occurred to the bread and wine at Mass also required an explanation; to address this he turned to the Feeding of the Five Thousand since this miracle would underscore:

\[\text{How it is that an unlimited quantity of material substance – all the hosts that have ever been consecrated since the first Maundy Thursday, all the Hosts that will ever be consecrated until the Last}\]

\textsuperscript{483} Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 24;  
\textsuperscript{484} Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 24  
\textsuperscript{485} Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 25 \textsuperscript{486} Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 26
Judgement – can be changed into a limited quantity of material substance, the Body and Blood of Christ?  

In this miracle nothing had changed, neither the substance, nor the accidents of bread and fish, only the quantity. “In the one case (Cana) there is a change without multiplication; in the other (Genesareth) multiplication without change.”

In the light of the latter miracle Knox reasoned that:

God could have changed every Host in the world into his own Body, visible to our sight and sensible to our touch; so, if he would he could have multiplied that sacred Body, substance and accidents alike; so that it would suffice for every altar in the world until the end of time.

This was not God’s manner of action. In the Eucharist the substance alone is multiplied, but in fact, as he expounded, this was not the case as:

… extension in time and space, is as much as colour or taste or touch, one of the accidents which inhere in the substance of a thing, not part of the substance: the substance itself has no parts or magnitude, belonging as it does to the supra-sensible order. It is not part of the substance of our Lord’s Body, but the whole of it, that is conveyed by each Host in that ciborium behind me.

After such a brief, but intense, incursion, into the underpinning philosophy of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, Knox returned to the two miracles so that, as was usual, the congregation might return home with a practical lesson on the

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487 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 26
488 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 27
489 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 27
490 “the distinction that the Doctor makes between the simple power of God and his sacramental power.” Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 65
491 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 28
Eucharist; how Christ: “wants his marvelous Sacrament to be used, about the place he wants it to take in our lives.”

This lesson consisted in three points: that the Sacrament: “was to be a thing for ordinary use, and also a thing for special occasions.” The Feeding of the Five Thousand was the consequence of the daily need for sustenance; the wedding at Cana directed the Eucharist, also, to special celebrations. The second point, drawn from both miracles, related to the “social character” of the Eucharist; it drew people together: “It is the sacramental assertion of that bond of fellowship which unites all the faithful.” Knox returned to the composition of the bread and wine, made from many grains and grapes, as reinforcement of the reality of this fellowship. The third point was to invite the co-operation of all those who received the Sacrament. The Lord entrusted the filling of the water jars to the waiters. Had they half-filled the containers, the result was less wine. By the lake the disciples were commanded “give ye them to eat,” and from their hands all those gathered were “miraculously satisfied.” As the waiters and the disciples had to co-operate to the full, so each communicant must allow the Gift of the Eucharist to have its full effect.

Before turning to the next sermon it must be noted that Knox intended to give as simple an explanation, as time allowed, on the doctrine of the Eucharist.

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492 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 29
493 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 29
494 Knox, “Cana And Genesareth,” 30
Therefore much was left unsaid, and the content of the sermon was limited to the question, and defence, of Transubstantiation. For example, in stating that the substantial change into flesh and blood was into a particular Body, and particular Blood, he did not elaborate on the different mode of existence that this Body and Blood had. It was a sacramental mode of existence, that is: “beneath the signs of the sacrament, as every sacrament is by its nature a sign.”\textsuperscript{495} Christ is truly present but not in the same manner in which he is present in his Risen and Ascended Body in heaven, which is his natural presence. Knox alluded to this distinction when he provided for the possibility that God could change every host into Christ’s own Body visible and sensible to the touch (which action God did not take).\textsuperscript{496} More important was the implication in these words: “in this most august Sacrament of his risen and ascended Body.” Here Knox implicitly distinguished between the mode of the presence in the Sacrament of the Altar, and Christ in heaven, and he declared that it was a Sacrament, though he did not elucidate on the nature of a sacrament.

Knox may have judged that the subject of the Eucharistic teaching of the Church was not fully rounded in this sermon, as it was not included in the second volume.

\textsuperscript{495} Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist , 64
\textsuperscript{496} Another reference to the distinction between divine omnipotence and the sacramental activity of God.
Behind The Wall (The Window In The Wall)

The two titles indicate that this sermon was included (with a name change) in the second volume. The scriptural text, for this sermon, was taken from the Song of Songs (Song 2:9-10) and in the second volume, as was his custom, the text quoted was from Knox's own translation. An earlier section of this paper has looked at Knox's use of allegory as he built upon the story of the village lover in search of his betrothed, now ensconced reluctantly in Solomon's harem. The sermon returned to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, in this instance as 'the window' which allowed the natural world to catch a glimpse of the supernatural through the Sacramental presence of the risen and ascended Body of Christ. Knox showed that a window belonged both to the exterior and the interior: "so (Christ's) glorified Body belongs at once to time and eternity." The Eucharist, as the Sacrament of that Body and Blood, was a window which both opened up the natural to the supernatural world, and at the same time transformed the natural world. Knox likened this transformation to a "beam of sunlight":

… (which) coming through the window lights up and makes visible the tiny motes of dust that fill the air, so those who live closest to him (Christ) find, in the creatures around them, a fresh charm and a fresh meaning, which the jaded palate of worldliness was too dull to detect.

497 see also John Paul II, *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, par.59, 56: “my eyes have gazed in recollection upon the host and the chalice, where time and space in some way ‘merge’.”
498 Ronald A. Knox, “Behind The Wall,” 37
499 Knox, “Behind The Wall,” 38
More than this, Holy Communion was also the Lord’s way to wean people away from attachment to the natural order. Knox mused on the reluctance of some to make frequent use of this Sacrament: “because we still cling to the world of sense.” Perhaps, too, he mused, it was a reluctance, or even stubbornness, to abandon oneself into the Lord’s hands, and allow: “him to work the marvels of his grace in us.” He concluded this sermon with the reminder that God showed how transitory was life; the people and supports of life were gradually removed. Only the Eucharist allowed Christians to reach the departed; only the Eucharist gave the: “grace to hear his voice, and obey his call, and live with him in heavenly places.” With this conclusion Knox returned to the call of the village lover at the window of the harem.

David Rooney has written of this sermon: “it is a masterful evocation of the pursuit of a soul by Christ.”

_Ubi Collegisti Hodie? (The Gleaner)_

This is the third of the sermons to find its place in both volumes. The text was taken from the Book of Ruth (2:8) The text in the second volume was Knox’s own translation. This sermon has also been treated previously to show the contrast afforded the Christian, in the choices of the two sisters-in-law, that is, to return to

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500 Knox, “Behind The Wall,” 38
501 Knox, “Behind The Wall,” 39
502 Knox, “Behind The Wall,” 40
503 Rooney, _The Wine Of Certitude_, 372
their homeland, or to follow Noemi (Naomi) into a new homeland; the choice between the world, or to heed the call of the Church to forsake the world. In drawing on the story of Ruth’s fidelity to her mother-in-law, her subsequent marriage to Booz (Boaz) of Bethlehem, and of her descendants who culminated in our Lord Jesus Christ, Knox referred to a chapter in a book of French meditations, “The Field of the Holy Eucharist.” Elsewhere Knox had admitted to his preference for French spiritual writers.504

Based on Ruth gleaning (not reaping but following behind the reapers, gleaning the scraps and wisps of grain remaining) in the field of Booz, at Bethlehem ‘the house of bread’, Knox likened himself and his congregation to gleaners; but gleaners in a special field, the field of the Eucharist. The Lord Jesus bought this field by his Incarnation: “being rich he became poor for our sakes; he sold all he had and bought that field.”505 His death was the sowing of the grain. (Knox referred to the Johannine text: “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies it yields much fruit” (Jn 12:24 NRSV). The cultivation of the field was the consequence of: “all the merits of his life and Passion.”506 The watering was from:

... the tears shed over Jerusalem, by his sweat in Gethsemane, by the blood of his scourging”; and: “… from that one Sacred Body, that was sown in tears by the rock-tomb on Calvary, sprang a harvest worldwide, incalculable, inexhaustible, the harvest of the Holy Eucharist.507

504 Knox, The Priestly Life, 92; see above 94
505 Ronald A. Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 44
506 Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 44
507 Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 44
Knox reminded his congregation that Pentecost was a Jewish harvest festival. The Feast of Corpus Christi, celebrated as it was on the Thursday after the Octave of Pentecost, was by Knox’s description: “our spiritual Harvest Home,” in which: “(we) carry in triumph through field and hedgerow that consecrated Sheaf which is the harvest of Calvary.” Knox’s association of the Eucharist with Calvary and the resurrection was important. He acknowledged the fruits and the unity between Jesus’ death on Calvary and his resurrection with its sacramental Presence in the Eucharist. As he and they continued to glean in the Field of the Eucharist, the memory of the salvation that Jesus brought through his death and resurrection must be always before their eyes. Frequently, as in this sermon, he returned to the difference between the Saints and those he was addressing.

As was noted earlier, Knox had an affinity with French spirituality and such guides made comparisons to the privileges and spiritual consolations received by the Saints. St John Vianney (1786 – 1859) observed in a catechetical instruction:

There are those who lose themselves in prayer, like a fish in water. There is no division in their hearts. How I love those noble souls. Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Colette saw our Lord and spoke to him as we speak to one another.

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508 Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 44
509 Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 45
510 see also Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, par.79: “They should cultivate a desire that the Eucharist have a deeper effect on their daily lives ...”
511 see 73 of this paper for the Leonard Feeney’s distaste of such comparisons.
It was the Saints who were the reapers in the field and all others were gleaners; though Knox made no concession to the evident fact that Saints have had to work at holiness. However, Knox emphasized that the graces offered to the Saints, and especially the blessing which came to them in the Eucharist, were offered to all: “It is not his (Christ’s) generosity that is wanting, if we glean so little from his harvest; it is ours.” Knox urged his listeners to persevere and to look for fulfillment in no other field than that of the Eucharist. At the end of her day in the field Ruth rested at the feet of Booz and was eventually claimed by him as his bride. All who have gleaned in the field of the Eucharist, at the end of their labours will: “be united with (Christ) for ever”; an implicit reference to the Eucharist as the foretaste of the banquet of heaven.

**Prope Est Verbum**

The English translation of this title is ‘The Word Is Near” and Caraman identified the reference to Rom 10:8 (itself referring back to Deut 30:14). The gospel story of the Roman centurion and his ill servant (Lk 7:1-10) was the source of this sermon. Its relevance to the Eucharist was the centurion’s profession of unworthiness which the Liturgy adopted as the congregational response to the Invitation to Holy Communion. Knox praised the faith of the centurion: “that did

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513 Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 49; see also Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, par. 94, 121: “the Eucharist is at the root of every form of holiness, and each of us is called to the fullness of life in the Holy Spirit.”

514 Knox, “Ubi Collegisti Hodie?,” 50

515 Deut 30: 14 “No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe” (NRSV).
not need the reassurance of actual, personal contact.”

Through his military experience this Roman soldier knew the efficacy of orders; a command was given by a superior and an action was carried out, often at a distance, and often without the physical presence of the commanding officer. This was the faith that the soldier had in Jesus; Jesus’ command would effect the healing without the necessity of his physical presence: “That faith, as our Lord himself implied, is a rare one.” Knox presented the miracles of Jesus as performed in person and often with physical contact; words reinforced by gestures. The ministry of Christ and his miracles led Knox to conclude:

There are two really staggering affirmations which the Christian religion involves, compared with which all its other doctrines are easy to assimilate. One is this, God cares for everybody. And the other is this, God cares for me.

By his Incarnation Jesus became close to humanity – he became a man and lived among men, but the Incarnation limited Jesus to a specific geography, and to a specific historical time. Knox asked: how then did the care of God for all, and for each, manifest itself to all who lived after the time of Jesus’ earthly life? How did the necessity of physical contact with him, so much a part of his healing

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516 Ronald A. Knox, “Prope Est Verbum,” 54; see also Ronald Knox, “Faith And Half-Faith” in Lightning Meditations, 21-2
517 Knox, “Prope Est Verbum,” 54
518 Basing himself on the Fathers of the Church, in their examination of the Incarnation, St Thomas Aquinas “taught that Flesh has become the instrument of salvation … Not by some remote action at a distance, but person-to-person, even body-to-body, contact God has willed to save us in Christ” in O’Connor, The Hidden Manna, 270
519 This is also an allusion to the matter and form of the Sacraments.
520 Knox, “Prope Est Verbum,” 55; for Knox, the apologist of Catholic Belief, the miracles of Christ are not, of themselves, proof of his divinity, but what they demonstrate “is that Almighty God would not have vindicated our Lord’s career by such prodigies of Nature, if our Lord had been either a Deceiver or deceived as to his own Mission.” Knox, The Belief Of Catholics, 122. Thus they are indicators of his genuineness as God’s Incarnate Son.
521 Knox, The Belief Of Catholics, 189-90 described the wonder of the Incarnation and the Immaculate Conception which prepared for it, and Mary’s perpetual virginity.
actions, manifest itself to the people of a new age who were as much in need of healing as the people amongst whom Jesus lived and walked? The answer was the Eucharist. Knox stated:

To kindle our love with any consciousness of his near Presence, the Incarnation was not enough.

To secure that further object, the Incarnation of our Lord was at once perpetuated and universalized in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.\(^{522}\)

The Eucharist demonstrated God’s care for all, and care for each through individual Communion. Knox revisited the centurion and his profession of unworthiness. Knox regarded this profession as the only appropriate response to the Gift of the Lord’s Presence. But more important than the communicant’s disposition of unworthiness was the Lord’s own desire, as he showed to the centurion, to come himself ‘under the roof’. Knox prayed that the Lord’s desire to "come to us himself" would transform all who received him. With an unacknowledged paraphrase of St Paul (Gal 2:20) Knox concluded the sermon: “henceforth we may live no more, but he in us."\(^{523}\)

St Paul spoke of himself as “crucified with Christ.” The Eucharist made present Christ’s self-offering on Calvary and the acceptance of this offering seen in the Resurrection. By his allusion to St Paul, surely Knox pointed to the Church, and each of the faithful, as being united with Christ in his offering to the Father; and at

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\(^{522}\) Knox, "Prope Est Verbum." 58

\(^{523}\) Gal 2:20: "… and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (NRSV).
the same time reinforcing the necessity of such self-offering for salvation and
identity.

**Novum Pascha Novae Legis**

This sermon (The New Pasch Of The New Law)\(^{524}\) returned to the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. It began with a refutation of “rationalist critics” who considered that this miracle was no miracle at all but rather a type of sacrament in which Christ: “taking his five thousand followers apart, initiated them into the mystery of a sacrificial meal, dividing up five loaves among the multitude in a symbolic manner.”\(^{525}\) According to this reading the account of the miraculous multiplication was a later development. Knox used two arguments to counter this theory: first, all four evangelists recorded the event, and: “it (was) the miraculous element in the story that (was) emphasized above all else”;\(^{526}\) secondly, all four evangelists: “(took) it for granted that the primary purpose of the miracle was to satisfy a common physical need.”\(^{527}\) Hence the multiplication was necessary, as a small morsel each would hardly satisfy the hunger of the crowd. This miracle, as Knox had shown in the earlier sermon “Cana And Genesareth,” was (along with the change of water into wine at Cana) a preparation for an understanding of how bread and wine could be changed into

\(^{524}\) a quotation from the Sequence for Corpus Christi, *Lauda Sion*: “That closed the ancient paschal rite: the old is by the new replaced.” *The Lectionary* Vol. 1, 601-2

\(^{525}\) Ronald A. Knox, “Novum Pascha, Novae Legis,” 62

\(^{526}\) Knox, “Novum Pascha, Novae Legis,” 63

\(^{527}\) Knox, “Novum Pascha, Novae Legis,” 63
Christ’s Flesh and Blood, and how this Flesh and Blood would be multiplied to feed the many.

The discussion of the Feeding of the Five Thousand was then used as a ‘springboard’ for a comparison between the old and the new covenants; the implication in the title of the sermon. Knox’s description (in this sermon) of the choice of the Chosen People, their journey through the wilderness, and their eventual entry into the Promised Land, echoed his description of the “Ecclesia or Assembly of God” in his treatise The Church On Earth.\(^{528}\) As the Israelites journeyed through the wilderness they were fed by the manna from heaven (Ex 16:14-35). The miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand: “is an intermediate stage between the gift of manna in the wilderness and the gift of our Lord’s Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist.”\(^{529}\) Knox then gave three comparisons and three contrasts between the manna and the ‘bread for the five thousand’. Both the manna and the bread were given as food in the wilderness as daily sustenance, nothing was to be taken home. The Eucharist, likewise, was daily bread which will cease when the homeland of heaven was reached.\(^{530}\) Second, all ate. The manna, the bread for the five thousand, and the Eucharist, were offered for all to eat as a bond of fellowship: “the Holy Eucharist is a bond which at once attests

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\(^{528}\) R. A. Knox, The Church On Earth (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1929), 6-7
\(^{529}\) Knox, “Novum Pascha, Novae Legis,” 65; the Christian unity of which he spoke referred to the unity of those who could receive; it should not be read as an ecumenical statement, though the sharing at the common table is the desire of the Ecumenical Movement.
\(^{530}\) Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist, 172: “The greatest of the sacraments, the Eucharist, is no exception to this law of transitoriness. The Eucharist, divine as it is, will pass away as faith and hope will pass away; but the graces of the sacrament, the res sacramenti, will remain for all eternity, in the perfection of Christ’s Mystical Body.”
and promotes our Christian unity.”\textsuperscript{531} As each of the Israelites gathered only as much manna as would satisfy, so the disciples distributed “as much as they would.” The Eucharist nourished spiritually in proportion to the openness of each to the Gift. Knox pictured the effect of the Eucharist on: “an ordinary workaday Christian like you and me” and its increase in the: “incessant prayer (and) heroic mortifications” of a Saint.\textsuperscript{532}

He then outlined the differences between the manna, the five thousand, and the Eucharist. The Israelites had to gather the manna themselves though it fell close to the camp. At the feeding, the disciples wanted to send the people away to fend for themselves, but Jesus commanded the disciples to feed them themselves. From the feeding onwards Jesus was providing for: “the administration of his great Sacrament.”\textsuperscript{533} The feeding of the five thousand demonstrated the generosity of God in Christ, of which the Eucharist was this generosity at its fullest. As such, it demanded an appropriate response of generosity: “give them something to eat yourselves.”\textsuperscript{534} This became further evident in the difference between the two covenants:

\begin{quote}
... under the old dispensation man could do nothing for himself, must remain a mere pensioner on the divine Goodness, contributing nothing to his own support ... under the new dispensation (humanity) is dignified with the privilege of offering something to God as well as receiving from him.\textsuperscript{535}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[531] Knox, “\textit{Novum Pascha, Novae Legis},” 66-7
\item[532] Knox, “\textit{Novum Pascha, Novae Legis},” 67
\item[533] Knox, “\textit{Novum Pascha, Novae Legis},” 68
\item[534] see also Benedict XVI, \textit{Sacramentum Caritatis} par. 84: “The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission: “an authentically eucharistic Church is a missionary Church.”
\item[535] Knox, “\textit{Novum Pascha, Novae Legis},” 69
\end{footnotes}
“(God’s) everyday gifts of bread and wine” were brought forward for the celebration of the Eucharist; humanity brought to the Lord what it had received from his bounty. No matter how “little we can do” nevertheless it is something. Moreover the benefits of the Eucharist would: “multiply and transform the trembling faith, the lukewarm charity.”\(^{536}\) His final contrast between the two dispensations, as seen in the Eucharist, was that it was not merely for: “the bare satisfaction of our needs; grace overflows its measure.”\(^{537}\) The Eucharist was more than Food for the journey. Christ remained among his people through the Reserved Sacrament.

**The Great Supper**

St Luke recounted the Parable of The Great Dinner (14:16-24). St Matthew’s account (22:2-10) was of a wedding feast. Both accounts pertained to the ‘kingdom of God/kingdom of heaven’. Knox mentioned, but gave little attention to which of the accounts was the ‘true one’. He considered that reading both provided: “(a) composite picture which contains no element of inconsistency.”\(^{538}\)

To this banquet many guests were invited, but on the day itself they all found excuses to absent themselves. As a consequence, the banquet hall was filled with anyone the servants could bring in. Knox interpreted the story to mean, that, the original guests who absented themselves and rejected Jesus’ invitation were

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\(^{536}\) Knox, “*Novum Pascha, Novae Legis*,” 69-70  
\(^{537}\) Knox, “*Novum Pascha, Novae Legis*,” 70  
\(^{538}\) Ronald A. Knox, “The Great Supper,” 71
in particular, the Jewish leaders. The Gentiles heard and accepted the call, and were admitted to the hall, so that it was filled to overflowing. The rejection by the original guests had allowed the “utter condescension of God” to open the feast to all people. Knox invited his listeners to picture the surprise of this call:

Twenty minutes ago, a soup-kitchen would have seemed a Paradise to them; they would have picked a crust of bread out of the gutter; and now they are sitting down before splendid dishes, at tables loaded with the things they have never seen except in shop windows.  

Having pictured this scene he reminded the congregation that this was a description of them receiving Holy Communion:

Grace that can make saints of us all, if we will. We went out into the streets to look for a meal, and we were swept out of the streets into a banquet. And more than a banquet – a wedding feast.

Exploring St Matthew’s context of a wedding-feast, Knox showed that: “(f)or, as by the Incarnation, the Church becomes the mystical Bride of Christ; so in the Sacrament of Holy Communion the Christian soul is espoused to Christ.”

Inspired, perhaps, by a sentiment from the opening paragraph of The Confessions of St Augustine: “You arouse us so that praising you may bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you,” Knox affirmed that the hunger of each person was for God, no matter how worldly a person had become. This hunger was fed in the

539 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 74
540 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 75
541 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 75
542 St Augustine, The Confessions, intro, trans. and ed. Maria Boulding OSB 2nd printing (New York: New City Press, 1997), Book 1,1, 39
Eucharist; the embrace which sated the hunger. The guests who absented themselves would remain hungry, for they were in pursuit of their own interests and ambitions.

But such insatiable hunger could be the future lot of those who were gathered into the hall: “if we absently ourselves from the marriage-supper of Christ.” The story of the great supper spoke of a once only event, whereas the Eucharist was offered as Food on a daily basis.

To this caution, not to abstain from attendance at Mass, Knox added a lesson about the guest evicted from the feast on account of his lacking a wedding garment (Mt 22:11-14). Knox regarded this addition to St Matthew’s account as a possible reference to Judas Iscariot. He saw this odd occurrence as Jesus’: “(wish) to make a special and last appeal” to Judas’ conscience. Judas was to lose “the wedding-garment of charity.” For Judas would be present at the Last Supper, at the Institution of the Eucharist: “with that black purpose in his heart.” Knox surmised that Judas received the Eucharist: “that very Body and Blood which he had sold for thirty pieces of silver.” From this singular interpretation, Knox warned of receiving Holy Communion in mortal-sin. Such a person: “makes

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542 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 76; see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par. 41; and Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, par. 72-3.
544 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 77
545 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 77
the choice of Judas and deserves Judas' punishment." With such words, Knox exhorted the congregation of Corpus Christi on their patronal feast to:

... offer reparation to him, with full hearts for all the outrages and indignities by which his Sacramental Presence is profaned, wittingly or unwittingly, by the careless or by the impious. With such words, Knox exhorted the congregation of Corpus Christi on their patronal feast to:

With their acts of reparation the members of the congregation were to pray that due honour and adoration would be given to the Sacred Heart of Christ in the Eucharist; the congregation was to praise God in Christ for his limitless love. As it was Corpus Christi Parish, then its members should be especially devout and vigilant at Mass and in the reception of the Sacrament. With another local reference he finished: “Yours is a Royal borough.” The people of Corpus Christi lived in an area with a special attachment to the monarch, and also with a particular allegiance to the King of Kings. Christ, as King, was proclaimed in the Sequence for Corpus Christi; he was described as “thy Shepherd-King,” and the apostles had gathered “(w)ithin our new King’s banquet hall.”

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546 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 78
547 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 79
548 devotion to the Sacred Heart, and to the Heart of Mary, was a feature of the spirituality of the Frenchman, St John Eudes, and his “An Exercise For Holy Mass XXV What We Must Do To Assist Worthily At The Holy Sacrifice Of The Mass” in Bérulle And The French School Selected Writings The Classics of Western Spirituality ed. William M. Thompson, trans. Lowell M. Glendon, pref. Susan A. Muto (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) 322-5, is suggested by Knox’s sermon: “Pray that just as he changes the lower, earthly nature of bread and wine into his body and blood he might change and transform also the sluggishness, coldness and dryness of our earthly and arid heart into the fire, tenderness and agility of the holy, divine affections and dispositions of his divine and heavenly heart.”, 323
549 Knox, “The Great Supper,” 79
550 Laudat Sion Sequence of Corpus Christi in The Lectionary Vol. 1, 601
The final sermon in the *Heaven And Charing Cross* collection, though it was a separate entity, reads, in a way, as a summary of all that had preceded. Knox took as his text: “I am with you all days” (Mt 28:20).

He looked back to the first Maundy Thursday, and reminded the congregation:

Now, in that first Communion which our Lord gave to his Apostles on the first Maundy Thursday, he gave to them the same precious gift, exactly the same, as he gave to us this morning.

But there was a difference - on that first Maundy Thursday the sacrifice of Calvary had not happened, yet what Christ took, broke, blessed and shared was exactly the same Body and Blood which would be offered on Calvary and in every Mass until the end of time.

Knox explained that the Sacrifice of Christ: “although it was effected in the world of sense and under the conditions of time, is yet in its own nature spiritual and eternal.” The merits of Christ’s sacrifice brought about Mary’s Immaculate Conception, though chronologically it occurred before Calvary. In like manner, the Sacrifice of Calvary, sacramentally present in the Eucharist, could occur before the actual sacrifice in time. Because Christ’s Sacrifice “(is) in its own nature spiritual and eternal”; every Mass continued the Sacrifice of Calvary which

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551 Ronald A. Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 80
552 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 81
553 There is a suggestion here of the writings of Maurice de la Taille, SJ, see above 93-4
554 Ronald A. Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 81
of itself can never be repeated. It was Christ, himself, who gave his own Body and Blood at the Last Supper “with his own hands”; Christ was “all the time, principal Agent”\textsuperscript{555} in his Passion; he was both Victim and Priest. In every Mass he offered the same bloodless Sacrifice through the hands of the priest, and in each Mass Christ continued “the work he began on earth, our reconciliation with the Father.”\textsuperscript{556}

Knox went on to illustrate, how in the Blessed Sacrament, there was not only a continuation of the action of Maundy Thursday, and the events of Good Friday, but also the continuation of the whole of Jesus’ life: “He came into the world for three ends, to be, to suffer, and to do.”\textsuperscript{557} Knox elaborated:

The Blessed Sacrament itself is a continuation of Bethlehem, is an eternal Nativity … in the mere consecration of the Holy Eucharist bread is made Flesh, made that same Flesh … The Holy Eucharist is the continuation of Calvary; as he pleaded before the Father in the days of his humiliation for the forgiveness of our sins, so now, glorified, yet under the veil of humble appearances he pleads. And when Holy Communion is administered to the faithful, it is the continuation of that long and laborious Ministry through which the Son of Man went about to do good.\textsuperscript{558}

As the Eucharist is the continuation of Bethlehem, where Jesus’ divinity was shrouded by his humanity, so in the Eucharist both his divinity and humanity are concealed under “the forms of common things.” On Calvary, Christ accepted the insults and bore the indignities of his executors: “in his Sacramental Presence he

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{555} Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 82
\bibitem{556} Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 82
\bibitem{557} Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 83
\bibitem{558} Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 85
\end{thebibliography}
is patient of outrage and sacrilege.

This patience included: “our carelessness in Church, our indelout Communion.” Knox was surely referring to the Book of Proverbs, when he said of Christ: “For his delight is to be with the sons of men.” As he treated of the Incarnation of Christ he stated: “(a)nd as the Incarnation is the historical expression of that eternal tendency, so the Holy Eucharist is its sacramental expression.” Moreover, “The Atonement is the primary purpose of the Incarnation.” Jesus Christ was born to die on Calvary.

This was of great importance in regard to the Eucharist, for the Sacrament was not instituted solely so that Christ could remain among his people: “but in order that being present he may be offered up.” Knox affirmed that the Real Presence was necessary for the Mass to be a true sacrifice. The Mass did not repeat, but it continued the “immolation and the oblation of the Spotless Victim.”

By use of analogy Knox sought to provide some insight into this mystery. He asked the congregation to imagine a musical composition, and the many performances of that piece in the years following its composition. Each new performance was not a rewriting but a continuation of the single act of

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559 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 85
560 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 86
561 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 86; Prov 8:31: “... rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.” (NRSV); “… at play everywhere in his world, delighting to be with the sons of men.” (JB)
562 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 86
563 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 86
564 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 87
565 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 87
composition. This analogy falls short when we ponder the various styles and interpretations given the same piece of music by different players, even with the guidance of the composer’s markings; and each performer has an individual and recognizable technique. Furthermore, the performer will not necessarily fulfill the composer’s vision and intention, and what the composer wrote, he does not continue to do. Nonetheless the analogy offered some insight into the mystery of the Mass as the continuation of the one Sacrifice of Calvary.

To reinforce the relationship and the difference between the Mass and Calvary, Knox made it clear that the Mass does not multiply Calvary, for the Mass is “Calvary, sacramentally multiplied,” and at the Mass it is: “not the priest doing what Christ did; it is Christ continuing what Christ began.” 566 Paradoxically this, too, eroded the force of his musical analogy. It was Christ who gave the power for his one Sacrifice to be offered at the hands of priests; the fictitious composer only provided the means for another to perform.

Next, Knox elaborated on Christ doing good. Through the Sacrament of the Eucharist he continued his healing and restorative work. Just as he desired to come personally and heal the centurion’s servant (Lk 7:6), so in Holy Communion Jesus came to each individual: “Think for a moment of your Host … In that Host, Jesus Christ himself waits for you.” 567 Each celebration of Mass, Knox hoped, would be for each person who celebrated:

566 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 88
567 Knox, “A Priest For Ever,” 90
... as great, as strange, as joyful a thing as if on this very day Christ were descending into the Womb of the Virgin and becoming Man, or hanging upon the Cross, were suffering and dying for mankind's salvation." It ought to seem so: does it?\textsuperscript{568}

\textsuperscript{568} Knox, "A Priest For Ever," 90; Knox did not acknowledge the source of this quotation which Caraman has identified as coming from Thomas Á Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ} Book IV, 2,6. The edition consulted in this paper is trans. Sherley-Price rep. 1975 (London: Penguin Books, 1975), 189
The City of Peace

This second sermon of the second volume (the first “The Window In The Wall” was discussed earlier) has a number of interwoven threads. It was preached early in the Second World War, and for Knox and the congregation at Maiden Lane the vivid memories of the loss of family and friends in the earlier world conflict must have been fresh in their minds. Knox took as his text: “Jerusalem is built as a city which is one in fellowship” (Ps 121 (122):3).

The psalm was a celebration, and a rejoicing, at the arrival of pilgrims at Jerusalem, the city of peace, and particularly at the Temple. It prayed for the continuing protection of the city and for peace within the city. Knox recalled that: “the yearly of the Passover was the signal for the reunion of all faithful Jews at a common centre.” Jerusalem was this common centre, and the life of the city and its attraction for the pilgrims, was the Temple. The Passover pilgrimage, the most important in the annual cycle of feasts and seasons, was likened to: “the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes on a grand scale.”

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569 Ronald A. Knox, “The City Of Peace” in The Window In The Wall, 7 footnote
570 Patrick Boylan, The Psalms A Study Of The Vulgate Psalter In The Light Of The Hebrew Text Vol 2 (Dublin: M.H.Gill & Son, 1924), 287
571 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 9
572 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 9
With the replacement of the old dispensation by the new covenant God’s people had a new “rallying point”: the altar at which Mass was celebrated. At the Church’s beginning the Mass was celebrated in the homes of Christians, and their unity was manifest, for all could gather within the walls of the home. With the expansion of the Church this was no longer possible, but the developing local Churches still maintained a communion with each other and in their gatherings: “it was felt from the first that every Christian was mystically united to all other Christians by his participation in the mysteries.” Though Christians were scattered across the continents, nevertheless they were still united. This unity came from the Eucharist, and, at the time that he preached this sermon he could affirm: “War has sundered the nations … It cannot interrupt the current of sacramental fellowship which unites all Christians, and even with our enemies, when we and they partake of the same heavenly banquet.”

To accentuate the centrality of the Eucharist for the Church, unity with Christ and in Christ with each other, he stated: “The whole notion of a Christian solidarity grows out of, and is centred in, the common participation of a common table.” And the very food and drink of that table, even before they were changed into the Lord’s Body and Blood, manifested that unity - many grains made one loaf,

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573 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 8
574 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 9
575 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 11; see also John Paul II, *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*: “The seeds of disunity, which daily experience shows to be so deeply rooted in humanity as a result of sin, are countered by the unifying power of the body of Christ. The Eucharist, precisely by building up the Church, creates human community.” 25
576 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 8; the whole of John Paul II’s encyclical *Ecclesia De Eucharistia* demonstrates that the Eucharist builds the Church, and by Christ’s Institution and command the Church makes the Eucharist; see also Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, pars. 14-5
many grapes made up the one cup of wine. Though, at the altar Christ was nearest to his people, yet he was remote, for it was his sacramental Presence on the altar, his natural presence, in his risen and ascended Body, is in heaven. But, Knox explained that: “one of the chief ends he attains, by that nearness of his, is to draw us, his children, closer together.”

He linked fellowship with peace (the text for the sermon). Over the gifts of bread and wine, the Secret Prayer was prayed. The proper, for the Secret Prayer of Corpus Christi petitioned: “Grant, Lord, to thy Church the gifts of unity and peace, which are mystically betokened by these gifts we are offering to thee.” He emphasized that the same Christ who united all in himself was present wherever the Mass was celebrated, and present in the same way: “present in space, though not under the conditions of space.” The mystical unity and peace which the Eucharist brought about could not be severed by war, nor by death. It was not some consoling “sentimental make-believe” that included the remembrance of the departed at Mass: “they, too, are somehow partakers of the altar; no Mass is complete unless they, too, are remembered.”

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577 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 8; also Vonier, A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist: “The Eucharistic sacrifice is fundamentally a corporate act, the act of the Church herself”, 169
578 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 8
579 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 8
580 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 11
581 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 12
As he did often, he concluded the sermon with a paraphrase of a text from the Letters of St Paul, in this instance: “Neither life nor death nor any other creature can separate us from the love of Christ; in that love we are all one.”

**Hired Servants**

Knox turned his attention to the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) and, after a brief resume of the story, he invited the listeners: “to give sufficient attention to the details, the exquisite touches with which this epic of the human heart is etched in.”

The specific detail which had attracted him was the reason for the younger son’s repentance. It was his recollection of his father’s ‘hired servants’. He sat among the pigs without food to eat, while his: “father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare” (Lk 15:17b NRSV). Expanding on the son’s hunger for food Knox asked:

> What is this hunger for food which only becomes articulate at the sight of beasts feeding, and then expresses itself in a hunger for home? It is the hunger of the immortal soul for God; he has made us for himself, and our hearts cannot rest until they find rest in him.

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582 Knox, “The City Of Peace,” 13; “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:38-39) The Eucharist, then is the Sacrament of Love. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* begins with the words of St Thomas Aquinas: “The sacrament of charity …”, par. 1
583 Ronald A. Knox, “Hired Servants,” 15
584 Knox, “Hired Servants,” 16
Knox returned to a theme that he used in an earlier sermon, “The Great Supper”, and his inspiration again was St Augustine, from the opening paragraph of The Confessions.\textsuperscript{585} Knox reflected on this hunger specifically in the lives of Catholics: “this longing for God makes itself felt most, expresses itself best, in hunger for our soul’s bread, the Holy Eucharist … without it we languish.”\textsuperscript{586}

He considered the situations of those who had drifted away from Communion; or whose life-style had separated them from Communion; or who had ceased to believe in the truth of the Eucharist. When they received the grace of conversion: “their eyes will turn enviously towards, what, towards whom? Towards you and me … we are those hired servants privileged with a privilege they can only estimate.”\textsuperscript{587} But did the privileged hired-servants recognize the privilege. Knox turned reversed the word’s of the prodigal to ask:

“How many sons there are, sons of my Father, outside their Father’s house, perishing with hunger; and here I have more than I can eat, have more of sacramental grace offered me than I know what to do with!”\textsuperscript{588}

In the context of the responsibilities of love, that are a consequence of sharing in Holy Communion, these words also challenge the Christian to show concern and assist all those in need, but that was not Knox’s purpose. Though practical charity is a fruit of the Eucharist, his primary concern was the spiritual growth and

\textsuperscript{585} see 119 above
\textsuperscript{586} Knox, “Hired Servants,” 17; see also Corbishley’s observation above, 78
\textsuperscript{587} Knox, “Hired Servants,” 17
\textsuperscript{588} Knox, “Hired Servants,” 18
maturity of his listeners. In this light the congregation was to consider those “outside the Father’s house”, and in the recognition, that they too were “really sons, though sons in exile,” to note that:

... often there is a generosity about their failings, which is lacking to our virtues! If they come back to him (the Father), they will be the Magdalens, the Augustines, the great penitents, and therefore the great Christians.\(^589\)

Those who have not wandered away can be inferior in virtue, and hinder the gift of the Eucharist from having its full effect in their lives. And so Knox exhorted the congregation to give themselves along with Christ’s sacrifice; so that each will:

... aim at nothing less than making the life of Jesus Christ ours; immolating ourselves to God, annihilating ourselves before God, in him and through him and in union with his Sacrifice, so that we can say. “It is no longer I that live; it is Christ lives in me.”\(^590\)

The quotation from St Paul (Gal 2:20) was also, in an allusion, Knox’s conclusion to the earlier sermon “Prope Est Verbum.” In the present sermon he used Paul’s words to show that if that life was not attained: “the Bread of our Master’s house is being wasted on us.”\(^591\) These were unusually strong sentiments for Knox. But he did not leave the people ‘hanging by a thread’; his words were to reinforce the Eucharist as “panis Fortium” (the Bread of the strong): “(It) is meant to energize us and vitalize us, not merely to discipline and soothe us!”\(^592\). He asked our Lady and the “saints of the Blessed Sacrament” to intercede for all present to become

\(^{589}\) Knox, “Hired Servants,” 18
\(^{590}\) Knox, “Hired Servants,” 19
\(^{591}\) Knox, “Hired Servants,” 19
\(^{592}\) Knox, “Hired Servants,” 19
more generous in their dealings with God, and to ask for: “more boldness and
imaginativeness in the graces we ask from him.”593 Such was necessary, he
reminded the congregation: “in these times that are so difficult, so dark for the
future of religion.”594 And those words have a prophetic ring for Christians now,
as has the contemporary relevance of his closing prayer: “May the grace of this
holy feast be new life, new energy, new adventurousness to us all.”595

Where God Lives?

Unusually, Knox chose three texts for this sermon: “Daily I must listen to the
taunt, Where is thy God now?” (Ps 41(42):3); “Tell me, my true love, where is
now thy pasture-ground, where now is thy resting-place under the noon’s heat?
(Song 1:6); and “They said to him, ‘Where dost thou live?’ He said to them,
‘Come and see; so they went and saw where he lived, and they stayed with him
all the rest of the day, from about the tenth hour onwards” (Jn 1:38-40). In its own
way, each of the texts asked the age-old question: “Where is thy God?” Assailed
by the taunts of his enemies King David asked the question in earlier times:596

And we, because the age in which we live is impatient of old formulas,
because the set of its mind is against the supernatural, share, often
enough, that confusion and hesitation of his.597

593 Knox, “Hired Servants,” 19
594 Knox, “Hired Servants,” 19. The historical time of the sermon was not noted; his words
suggested a nation then at war.
595 Knox, “Hired Servants,” 19
596 Knox attributed to David the authorship of the psalm, but in fact it was not of Davidic origin and
the commentary of Patrick Boylan, The Psalms A Study Of The Vulgate Psalter In The Light Of
The Hebrew Text Vol 1 3rd impression (Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son, 1926), 149, makes this clear.
Moreover, the reference to the ‘house of God’ excluded David as the Temple was constructed by
Solomon, David’s son.
Science with its research and challenges had added to this insecurity, and though such scientific research will never disprove the existence of God, nor less discover God’s dwelling, nevertheless, the Christian imagination:

... tied down as it is to the world of space and sense, will not be satisfied by the answers which commend themselves to the reason. We demand that, somehow, we should be allowed to locate the presence of God as concentrated and focused in one particular spot.\textsuperscript{598}

Knox acknowledged that God, was, of course, everywhere, but that did not necessarily infer that God was any closer to us. For a Christian, the answer to “Where is thy God?” was the Incarnation: “For thirty-three years of human history it was possible to say, ‘There is God!’”\textsuperscript{599} But such a profession no longer obtained. While one could visit the Holy Places, made sacred by their association with Christ’s earthly life and mission, his past spatial presence at those places did not make him present there, now. It was the Eucharist that allowed him to be present now in time. Knox conceded that:

... we cannot fathom the mystery of the change which is effected in the consecrated elements, we have no clue to understanding the manner in which Holy Communion imparts its virtue to our souls. But one thing we can say without bewilderment or ambiguity – God is here.\textsuperscript{600}

Knox looked then at the place of Eucharistic reservation, the Tabernacle. He noted that Christ’s Sacramental Presence now was public and accessible, not dissimilar to his temporary dwelling near the activity and ministry of John the

\textsuperscript{598} Knox, “Where God Lives,” 22
\textsuperscript{599} Knox, “Where God Lives,” 23
\textsuperscript{600} Knox, “Where God Lives,” 24
Baptist, which was “in a place of coming and going.” Jesus’ Presence in the Sacrament had also veiled him from human senses, and to come to him necessarily involved an act of faith. And he dwelt simply: “he has chosen simple things, common things to be the hiding-place of his majesty.” It is in the Tabernacle that the Sacrament was reserved, but Christ had also chosen to dwell in the hearts of believers, and such believers should ensure that he was given a ready welcome and a fitting home.

Before moving to the next sermon, some comment should be made about the opening statements of this sermon regarding the Gospel of St John. Knox had used the disciples’ curiosity to know more about Jesus as one frame for his subject. And he regretted the limited information which the evangelist recounted of: “those unforgettable hours when he and St Andrew paid an afternoon call on our Blessed Lord in his own lodging-place.” And thus Knox described the Fourth Gospel as:

… a series of fragments … preserved from the hoarded memories of a very old man, who follows his own train of thought, as old men will, not stopping to consider what details it is that his hearers want to know. Nobody you would say would be a worse journalist.
These remarks mirrored the description of the Fourth Gospel, and its author, in the introduction to his own commentary on the New Testament.\textsuperscript{605}

Previously, mention was of the criticisms of Leonard Feeney, particularly through the Journal \textit{The Point}. The edition of July 1958, highlighted Knox’s: “burning malice toward the Gospel of St John.”\textsuperscript{606} The journal was suspicious of Knox’s compliance with Church teaching, particularly the explicit conciliar decrees (Florence, Trent and Vatican I) on the divine authorship of the Four Canonical Gospels. Moreover, Pope Leo XIII taught: “the books of the Bible, ‘with all their parts, have been written under the \textit{dictation} of the Holy Spirit’.”\textsuperscript{607} And this because Knox described the gospel as a ‘series of fragments’; and entertained the possibility that John had used an amanuensis with the responsibility for the arrangement of the whole gospel.

The sermon began with Knox’s rhetorical regret that John had not given a detailed description of Jesus’ dwelling, as would allow for some intimate clues to his personality, such as a visit to someone’s house would give with the perusal of the furnishings, the paintings, the books, the curios. And the Introduction to Knox’s commentary, which ‘raised the ire’ of \textit{The Point}, was simply Knox’s explanation of the particular literary form which he identified as distinguishing the

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\textsuperscript{605} Ronald Knox, \textit{A New Testament Commentary For English Readers} Vol 1 2\textsuperscript{nd} impression (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1955), xiii-xv; see also Knox, “The Peculiarities of St John’s Gospel” in \textit{Off The Record}, 52-3
\textsuperscript{607} “The Problem Of Monsignor Ronald Knox” from \textit{The Point}, July, 1958, 8
Fourth Gospel from the Synoptics. As Knox was critical of the ‘Higher Criticism’, a threat, he considered, which undermined the very authority of the Scriptures, it was improbable that he himself would set out to undermine a canonical Gospel!

**Giving Of Thanks**

This sermon was Knox’s response to the advance of the allied troops through Italy, and the liberation of Rome, without damage or destruction. Its scriptural basis was the return of the cleansed Samaritan Leper (Lk 17:17). Knox reckoned this episode as: “the only occasion on which you can quote our Lord as insisting on the duty of gratitude.” Whereas, Knox numbered thirty or forty times that, St Paul, in his Letters, insisted on the duty to be grateful. The word Paul used for gratitude was *eucharistia*. That Paul often joined thanksgiving with prayer suggested, for Knox, a possible reference to the Sacrament of the Eucharist. He quoted: “make your requests known to God, praying and beseeching him, and giving him thanks as well” (Phil 4:6b Knox). The Eucharist was “by its very title, in its very origins, a sacrament of thanksgiving.”

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608 Knox, *A New Testament Commentary For English Readers* Vol 1, xiv
609 Ronald A. Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 33
610 In the sermon “Gratitude” originally published in *Introibo* of March-April, 1927, Knox made earlier mention of the cleansing of the Ten Lepers, and in this sermon he said: “... do you remember what the word “Eucharist” means? Yes, it means giving of thanks.” republished in *University And Anglican Sermons*, 375
611 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 28; see also R. A. Knox, “Recessional” in *Stimuli*, 141-2
612 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 29
recounted three occasions\textsuperscript{613} on which Christ offered public thanks to God: the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Jn 6:11); the Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:41b); and at the Last Supper (Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22: 17-19). At the Last Supper, in the face of his impending arrest and Passion: “the thought which fills the heart of our Divine Lord at that first Mass of Christendom is an overwhelming impulse of gratitude.”\textsuperscript{614} Knox emphasized the actions of the Lord at the Last Supper as recorded in St Paul’s account (1 Cor 11:23-25), which are repeated in every Mass - Jesus took bread, gave thanks over it, broke it and said the words of Institution, as he gave it to his disciples to eat. He did similarly with the cup, taking it into his hands, giving thanks, and offering it to the disciples to drink from as he said the words of Institution.

Walter Kasper has indicated the significance of Jesus’ actions:

\[\ldots\text{ at the Last Supper Jesus did not merely take up pre-existing Jewish table customs \ldots This he did in two ways contrary to Jewish practice, Jesus handed around, for all to drink, the cup which belonged to the head of the household, and he accompanied the presentation of the bread and of the cup with significant words.}\textsuperscript{615}

Moving forward from "that first Mass of Christendom" Knox examined praise and thanksgiving present in the Liturgy of the Mass, and particularly at the Consecration, as the actions and significant words of Jesus were repeated.

\textsuperscript{613} The NRSV translation of Mt 11:25 reads: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth \ldots”; the alternative option is ‘praise’ and the Knox translation concurred with this, thus giving only three times.

\textsuperscript{614} Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 29

\textsuperscript{615} Walter Kasper, “The Unity And Multiplicity Of Aspects In The Eucharist” trans. Sr Josephine Koeppel OCD in \textit{Communio} XII No. 2 (1985), 116-7
The *Gloria*, the hymn of praise, adoration and thanks, prepared for sacrifice. In the Introductory Dialogue to the Preface the celebrant proclaimed: “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God” to which came the response: “It is right and just.” This outpouring of thanks continued into the Preface, and Knox observed: “For every mystery of our faith, from our Lady’s Child-bearing to the expectation of the faithful dead, it is always thanks we offer to God, just here.” The moment of Consecration repeated the actions of Christ at the Last Supper. Knox mentioned the priest’s reception from the Chalice in the Rite of Mass then celebrated. Before he drank from the cup he prayed from Psalm 115 (116):

> What return shall I make to the Lord for all He has given to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.

Knox commented: “He (the priest) will make sure, before he completes the sacrifice, that it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving from first to last.” St Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) taught that the Mass: “(was) an *Immolation*: there is a destruction of the victim.” In a sacrifice, the offering was consumed, and in the Mass this took place at the priest’s communion. Christ, because he lives in his risen and ascended Body in heaven was not destroyed, only the sacramental signs. Knox’s father, Edmund, basing himself on the teaching of St Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), stated:

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616 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 30
617 trans. by Sylester P. Juergens SM in *The New Marian Missal*, 689
618 Ronald A. Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 30
619 Francis Selman, *A Guide To The Eucharist*, 104
620 Selman, *A Guide To The Eucharist*, 104; see also Vonier, 73: “the Eucharistic sacrifice is not directly a mystery of Christ’s Person, it is primarily a mystery of Christ’s Body and Blood. Christ’s Body is offered up, Christ’s Blood is offered up.”
In fact, a sacrifice is not completed without a true and real destruction. For the sacrifice to be effected on the altar, it is necessary that first the victim be placed upon it in its integrity, and then that it be destroyed. Now here is a very plain and explicit doctrine of sacrifice. It is also carried out by the Church of Rome with perfect consistency and perfect openness. 621

E. A. Knox downplayed the notion of sacrifice within the Anglican Communion Service. His son, in highlighting the priest’s communion, was clearly attesting to the Mass as both a Sacrifice and Sacrament of Thanksgiving. As he continued, he showed that the prayer at the Communion from the Chalice was testimony to the “worthlessness of (humankind’s) aspirations towards God”; these aspirations needed unity with “the perfect aspirations of the God-Man here offered up in sacrifice.” 622 As sinful humanity was incapable of offering the atoning sacrifice for its sin; as sinful humanity cannot adequately offer praise to God, and had not the means to know what was best for itself: “… we will put it all in our Lord’s hands, make him our plenipotentiary and let him act for us, win for us just the graces and the favours he wants us to have.” 623

It was likewise with thanksgiving; only united with and in Christ’s offering can the Church offer a sacrifice of thanks; no individual can comprehend the greatness of the Gift God has given, nor the depth of God’s love. To illustrate his point, Knox gave the example of a child, “just beginning to speak,” receiving a present. The child only had eyes for the gift and not for the giver “as if there was no connexion

621 E.A. Knox, *Sacrifice Or Sacrament*, 2
622 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 31
623 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 31
between giver and gift.” He concluded by insisting on the place of thanksgiving, in the Christian sacrifice, along with praise, reparation for sin, and intercession. Praise came before thanksgiving: “because we praise God in himself, without any thought of our own interest.” Then followed thanksgiving, and then, reparation and intercession. Referring to Michelangelo’s frescos on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and its depiction of the Creation of Adam, Knox encouraged the congregation to adopt a similar posture before God; a posture of “utter dependence … creaturely reliance, on him.” This Knox called the “eucharistic attitude.” With his reference to Adam in the Sistine Chapel, Knox gave thanks that the city of Rome had passed unscathed into the control of the Allied Powers.

As Your Servant

Here Knox spoke of Jesus as servant, with reference to Lk 12:43 (Knox):
“Blessed are those servants, whom their master will find watching when he comes: I promise you, he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and minister to them.”

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624 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 32
625 Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 32
626 see also St John Eudes in Bèrulle And The French School, 323-4
627 Ronald A. Knox, “Giving Of Thanks,” 32; see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, 21: “Proclaiming the death of the Lord “until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26) entails that all who take part in the Eucharist be committed to changing their lives and making them in a certain way completely “Eucharistic.” see also Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, par 77, 99: “Eucharistic spirituality is not just participation in Mass and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It embraces the whole of life.”
Knox associated the fulfillment of his text, in the banquet of heaven, with Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, when “he knelt down and washed (the disciples’) feet.”

By this action Jesus demonstrated that he was present, in the midst of men and women, as their servant. This was not: “a momentary gesture ... He came to earth, and lived for the sake of men.” Knox observed: “The whole process of the Incarnation, if you come to think of it, is a topsy-turvy kind of arrangement; it is God doing something for the sake of man, when man only exists for the sake of God.”

This whole activity of Jesus, primarily, was in response to, and fulfillment of, the Father’s will, but it “did not exclude the influence of (his own) ordinary human motives,” (such as his pity for the multitude which had nothing to eat), and, though he came to serve, he accepted the ministrations and the hospitality of others. “But the whole nature of his career marks it out for what we are accustomed to call it – a ministry.” As such, Jesus spent himself for the benefit of others, and he continued to do so, now, through the Sacraments. Knox contrasted the continual “and unobtrusive” service of the Lord with the occasional help that people sometimes need:

... our Lord is ready to meet all our needs, chime in with all our moods, from the day of our First Communion to the day when we receive him in Viaticum. Always waiting there in silence, not pressing his services upon us, but ready if we want him.

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628 Ronald A. Knox, “As Your Servant,” 34
629 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 35
630 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 35
631 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 36
632 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 37
633 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 37
Knox then gave two illustrations of this service, and he united them through the image of a priest stooping - to give a child Holy Communion and a dying person Viaticum. Concerning a child’s reception of Holy Communion, Knox wondered why a child needed the Bread of the strong; why a priest should stoop to give first Holy Communion to a child of five years of age. His response to this scenario recalled Jesus’ words to Peter, when Peter railed at the Lord washing his feet: “It is not for thee to know now what I am doing, but thou wilt understand it afterwards” (Jn 13:7 Knox). Knox described Peter as “bewildered by the condescension.” Knox made a link with Jesus’ words to Peter, and the canonization of Pope Pius X (1903-1914), which was celebrated on 29 May, 1954. Pius’ 1910 decree, Quam singulari, addressed the “apprehensive resistance” of many towards lowering the age for first Communion. The canonization was the Church’s approbation of this lowering of age, among other aspects of Pius’ pontificate. It demonstrated that, though, at the time the wisdom of Pius’ decree was questioned, time had proved its veracity. And Knox remarked that this should not have surprised anyone, as Christ himself called the little children to him.

As with the aptness of a child’s reception, so with a dying person; the reception of Holy Communion demanded: “(that) surely we must be at our best.” But he continued:

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634 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 38
636 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 39
... even as we hesitate, a gracious Figure brushes us aside, still bent on his errand of mercy; *Propter nos homines* (on account of us men); the dying man can do so little for himself; because he cannot come to our Lord, our Lord comes to him. 637

The example of the Lord’s service was to be the motivation for all Jesus’ followers: “you in your turn ought to wash each other’s feet” (Jn 13:14b Knox).

Only Eucharistic sermons were permitted during the Forty Hours Adoration. Knox situated the Washing of the Feet, thus, in a eucharistic context by commenting on it during the period of Adoration, and by referring to it within a sermon on the Eucharist. Peter Henrici has shown that Jesus’ command, which followed the washing, was not a specific command to ritualize the washing of the feet, but to link this action of Jesus with his death. The full extent of his servant-hood would be manifest in his death. Henrici observed: “The imitation of Christ’s self-sacrifice should inform the Christian daily, expressing itself in his daily action.” 638 The self-offering of Jesus, which did not look solely back to the past, but was sacramentally renewed and made present in the Eucharist, gave the “basis and framework for all Christian life” and enabled the “daily routine of the Christian (to take) on a sacrificial character of its own.” 639

Knox’s sermon, derived from Jesus’ example at the Last Supper, was also, by implication, a direction to unite oneself with Jesus’ self-offering throughout his

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637 Knox, “As Your Servant,” 39
639 Henrici SJ, “The Sacrifice Of Christ And The Sacrifice Of The Faithful,” 150
whole life of service, and especially in his death. The Eucharist made this possible.

**Peace In Ourselves**

Knox described the annual sermons preached at Maiden a Lane as “a kind of Eucharistic commentary on these last crowded decades.” It followed that the sermons, too, were a Eucharistic commentary of his personal response to those ‘last crowded decades’. In the melancholy and tiredness, rather than euphoria and relief (the sermon was written just after the end of hostilities in Europe), which run though this sermon, there is a strong suggestion of the personal toll on Knox, that the war had exacted. The title was evocative, as was the admission: “the cruel divisions introduced into the world, into states, into families by these six years of war,” was felt, too, in “(the) disharmony (in) your life and mine.”

At first reading, the opening of the sermon seemed to confuse the chronology of the evening before Jesus’ Passion and Death. Quoting Zech 13:7, Jesus said: “I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” (Mt 26:31). Knox imagined that Jesus’ words and thoughts were more concerned at the fate of his disciples than his own, because they would “lose that centre of common

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640 see above 48; see also Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, par. 92, 118: “The eucharistic form of life can thus help us foster a real change in the way we approach history and the world.”
641 Ronald A. Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 47, footnote
642 This sermon is one of the three on the Eucharist that Solange Dayras has identified as drawing attention to “the social and universal dimension of the Eucharist”; see above, 48.
643 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 49
644 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 50
Knox then turned to the prayer of unity which Jesus prayed for his disciples and also: “for those who are to find faith in me through their word; that they may all be one; that they too may be one in us, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee” (Jn 17:20b-21). Jesus prayed that all who believe in him would be bound together “with that very unity which binds together the three persons of the Godhead itself.” The quotation from Zechariah was spoken in the Garden of Olives, whereas the prayer for the unity of the disciples, and their disciples, was made in the Upper Room, before the departure to the Garden of Olives. Jesus prayer “fortifying their human hearts” was thus made in anticipation of the scattering.

The congregation at Maiden Lane was linked to those events, and the prayer of Holy Thursday, for the Thursday celebration of Corpus Christi looked back to the Supper and the Institution of the Eucharist; Knox called Corpus Christi, ‘Unity Thursday’.

He reiterated that the Eucharist was the sacrament of unity. It was itself a miraculous unity, for the accidents of bread and wine were held together, not by the substance of bread and wine, but by the substance of the Lord’s Body and Blood. The words of the Lord held them in place: “the same word which prayed .... that the apostles remain one.” He continued:

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645 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 47
646 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 47
647 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 48
648 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 48
The unity which unites three persons in one Godhead, the unity which preserves in being a set of accidents that have lost their substance – that is the unity we pray for, and claim as our own, when we gather round our Father’s table at the Holy Eucharist.649

The Liturgy, he remarked, was “dominated by this idea of oneness in Christ,” and he found in the Prayer over the People, for Thursday of the Second Week of Lent: “one of the most beautiful, and at the same time one of the most obscure petitions, we make during Lent”: ‘ut congregata restaures, et restaurata conserva’ (that thou wouldst bring together and mend, mend and for ever preserve, what now lies broken).650 The war had disrupted so many millions of people, and these people, in their weariness of the war, might have neither the will, nor the inclination to learn the formula for peace. Knox expanded on the prayer and said that it asked for more than just a few years of relative calm before the next conflict. The prayer sought “some kind of world order, based on real justice, to give Europe statesmen who will keep their word and will grant freedom to their fellow countrymen.”651 Knox was hesitant about political comment, but here was a keen observation on the quality of the politician needed for the future.

The world needed restoration and mending, and so did each person, especially in his or her personal relationship with God: “Haven’t we got to be at peace within ourselves before we can bring any peace to the world in which we live?”652 Knox,

649 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 48
650 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 49; the translation was his own. Another version is “that Thou mayest gather and restore what they (God’s servants) have lost, and preserve what Thou hast restored to those who glory in Thee.” Juergens SM, The New Marian Missal, 210
651 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 49-50
652 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 51
the spiritual guide, then directed the congregation to draw closer to the Eucharist: “You will learn to integrate yourself, pull yourself together, ... precisely in proportion as you manage to get more closely in touch, and more intimately in touch, with the Eucharistic life of our Lord.” The Eucharist, because it opened into the supernatural world: “catches up your life into a rhythm that echoes the heavenly music.” Returning to the union of the accidents of the bread and wine, and the substance of the Lord’s Body and Blood, he concluded: “it reigns amidst chaos, and will it not reign amidst the chaos of your heart.” The Eucharist was the very gift of the unifying love, the bond of the Trinity, and thus it had the power to unite: “scattered thoughts ... conflicting ambitions.” There was one thing that remained, if this was to happen; that was to present the gifts of bread and wine, and along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist: “the direction of our lives.”

The Mass And The Ritual

The title of this sermon might insinuate that the subject matter would be an examination of the ritual actions which comprised the Mass. This was not so. The title of the sermon referred to the *Collectio Rituum* – The Ritual; the Manual for celebrating the Sacraments and Blessings used by priests. Knox was to take “three most solemn moments” of human life (birth, marriage, dying), and the

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653 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 51
654 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 51
655 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 51
656 Knox, “Peace In Ourselves,” 52; see also Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, par. 8
Sacraments associated with them, Baptism, Matrimony and the Anointing of the Sick, and demonstrate that these moments were present in every Mass. The text for the sermon was: “As Christ comes into the world he says, No sacrifice, no offering was thy demand; thou hast endowed me, instead, with a body” (Heb 10:5 Knox).

Knox distinguished between the religious ceremonies of the Jews and those of Christians; the former expressed itself in sacrifice, the latter in sacraments. And furthermore: “whereas sacrifice means the destruction of a body … (sacraments) mean the consecration of our bodies to God.” He explained that at birth, at a marriage, and in death, a body is presented to God, and he played on the words of Jesus’ at the Last Supper: Hoc est corpus meum. The infant presented itself at baptism with those words; with those words bride and groom presented themselves each to the other (and for God’s blessing on their union) at their marriage; and with those words the dying person presented for the Anointing. At these solemn moments: “God finds his opportunity to breathe sacramental grace into their souls.”

These three moments were actions of self-offering, but they could only be made because (as his text said):

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657 He was not denying that the Mass is a Sacrifice, rather he was discussing the Seven Sacraments as a whole.
God himself was made flesh, took upon himself a passible Body like ours, offered it at every moment of his life to his Heavenly Father, was born in it, labored in it, suffered in it, died in it.\textsuperscript{660}

Throughout our Lord’s life he was able to say: “This is my Body”: to Mary “to feed and tend”; to his foster-father “to support and protect”; in his public ministry “to claim that Church which is (his) destined Bride”; in his death “for you Joseph, to bury, for you, Magdalen, to embalm.”\textsuperscript{661} In the Eucharist he said, “\textit{Hoc est Corpus meum},” and invested those words with a new and special meaning, and: “(in) so saying, he shews (sic) himself again in those three states of his Incarnation.” And so he concluded: “Every Communion we make is a birth, a marriage, and a death.”\textsuperscript{662}

There was a practical lesson to be drawn to foster participation and devotion to the Eucharist, and in preparation for Holy Communion. In this case, it was to look at, and learn from, the dispositions of those biblical persons present at the time of Jesus’ birth, at his death and burial, and at his visits, for Holy Communion was the occasion when Jesus visited. And it was a marriage, just as in the Song of Songs, when the bridegroom was “standing behind the wall, and bidding his beloved come away into the fields and the villages.”\textsuperscript{663}

\textsuperscript{660} Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual,” 55-6
\textsuperscript{661} Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual,” 56
\textsuperscript{662} Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual,” 56; Knox is not denying, that in Communion, it is the Risen Christ who is received. Benedict XVI, \textit{Sacramentum Caritatis}, discussed the Eucharist as a nuptial Sacrament with a particular application to the Sacrament of Marriage, pars. 27-9. One has only, too, to recall John Paul II and his exposition of the Nuptial meaning of the body.
\textsuperscript{663} Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual,” 57
At Jesus' birth there were two groups of people, the shepherds who were watching and waiting in the silence of midnight, in contrast to the inn “too full of other guests to give a thought for his miraculous birth.” At Jesus' visit to Bethany, Martha was intent on offering hospitality, while Mary sat listening at his feet: “in a humility which makes us forget self, hearing his word, in a raptness of attention.” At his tomb were the soldiers who fell asleep, and “the women who could not rest till they had embalmed his memory.” As he spoke of Jesus' death, he reminded his listeners that the Victim “who was immolated once for all on Calvary makes fresh offering of his death every time we celebrate the holy Mysteries.” His death was thus present in every Mass, because the Mass is a sacrifice. And his death was also present: “in this sense too, that his sacramental Presence in our bodies at least is a transitory one.”

He summarized his theme when he said that the Eucharist was the presence of Jesus' Body born at Bethlehem; his Body “spent with labours for (his) Bride the Church, made one with (his) faithful in this Sacrament,” and his Body given up in death.

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666 Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual,” 58
668 Knox, “The Mass And The Ritual,” 58
The Best Man\textsuperscript{670}

That the Feast of Corpus Christi, in that year, fell on the Feast of the Birth of St John the Baptist (June 24), thereby displacing this latter feast to the following day, allowed Knox to develop his Eucharistic theme around the person of St John the Baptist; specifically with the use of the Baptist's words as recorded in St John's Gospel: "He must become more and more, I must become less and less (Jn 3:30 Knox). As the Feast of the Baptist's Birth was displaced to allow for Corpus Christi, Knox could not imagine "any saint … accepting that situation with a better grace than St John the Baptist";\textsuperscript{671} he, thus "(proposed) St John … as one of the Saints of the Blessed Sacrament,"\textsuperscript{672} though he neither received the Eucharist, nor was present at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.\textsuperscript{673}

And moreover, Jesus had said of him: "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Mt 11:11 NRSV). John gave way to Jesus; he was indeed the 'Best Man' to the bridegroom; and this from the earliest moments of his life. Knox pointed to the similarity of the texts which described the growth and development of the infants, John and Jesus. St Luke wrote of John: "(t)he child grew" (Lk 1:80 NRSV); and of Jesus: "(t)he child grew" (Lk 2:40

\textsuperscript{670} The July-August 1925 edition of \textit{Introibo} included Knox's sermon "Our Devotion To St John The Baptist." He spoke of the Baptist as the 'Best Man' with reference to his humility even from the time in his mother's womb. And at the conclusion of this sermon he spoke of allowing the Lord to increase especially at Holy Communion; in \textit{University And Anglican Sermons}, 345-9

\textsuperscript{671} Knox, "The Best Man," 59

\textsuperscript{672} Knox, "The Best Man," 60

\textsuperscript{673} Knox acknowledged the Gift of the Holy Spirit, which brought the Church to birth; it is surely implicit that the outpouring, too, was the conferral of the power to fulfil Jesus' command to "Do this, in memory of me."
NRSV). Knox joined these two verses together and said that here was contained “the whole biography of St John.” Knox asserted that while John grew and developed physically, spiritually: “He never grew up – it was the Christ-child, his cousin, that grew up within him.”

To explain this proposition, Knox drew on the Parable of the Sower, and the symbolism of the seed as the word of God. The Sower sowed and John received the seed; St Luke had written that in the wilderness “the word of God came to John son of Zechariah” (Lk 2:2b NRSV). Uniting the Parable of the Sower, with Jesus’ words about the wheat grain which needed to fall into the earth and die so as to bear fruit (Jn 12:24), Knox stated that “what grew up was not St John; it was the Word of God, Jesus Christ.”

From the “seed sown” in John the Baptist, Knox imagined a crop growing. On the surface it seemed “(a) sea of green” though, underneath, all manner of weeds were vying for survival, but the crop had won out. This image, of the successful growth of the crop, was for Knox: “the image of a soul in which Divine grace has the upper hand.” Knox quoted from Psalm 109:2: “Dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum – dominate against thy enemies,” and he offered it as a prayer for all who go forward to receive Holy Communion. Christ, who gave

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674 Knox translated these verses similarly.
675 Knox, “The Best Man,” 60
676 Knox, “The Best Man,” 60
677 Knox, “The Best Man,” 61
678 Knox, “The Best Man,” 61
himself in Holy Communion: “must become more and more, I must become less and less.” Knox called this attitude, to the desired effects of Holy Communion, “Christ-assertiveness” in contrast with “self-assertiveness.” St John the Baptist epitomized the attitude.

John’s words were used by the priest as the invitation to Holy Communion, and these words were also testimony of John’s humility. When he proclaimed those words: “he knew that he was directing the attention of his disciples towards another Teacher; … that he would lose, gradually, all his popularity; … and he didn’t mind.”

“The disposition of unworthiness, yet again emphasized expressly before communion,” wrote Hans Urs von Balthasar, “must permeate everything (i.e. in the Eucharistic celebration).” He saw this:

… manifested obviously in the preparation of the gifts: one has nothing better to offer, indeed may try to offer nothing other than this little bit of “fruit of the earth and work of human hands,” practically a vacuum into which the Lord gives himself kenotically and pours out his fullness.

By way of a novel, practical lesson, at the end of this sermon, Knox directed the congregation to look, not to the saints of old, if that was less than helpful, but at

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680 Knox, “The Best Man,” 62
681 Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 16: “It is significant that these words (of John the Baptist) are repeated at every celebration of Holy Mass, when the priest invites us to approach the altar … Jesus is the true paschal lamb who freely gave himself in sacrifice for us…”
682 Knox, “The Best Man,” 64
684 von Balthasar, “The Holy Church And The Eucharistic Sacrifice”, 145
the recent death of the Dominican scholar and open-air preacher, Fr Vincent McNabb (1868–1943). Knox linked this priest with St John the Baptist, for McNabb had preached the panegyric for a fellow Dominican, Fr Bede Jarrett (1881–1934), the first of his Order in modern times to be sent to Oxford University. McNabb had said of Jarrett: “He was a burning and shining light” (Jn 5:35), words which Jesus had used to describe John the Baptist. In turn, Knox would apply to McNabb, as his appropriate epitaph, the text Knox had chosen as the basis for this sermon.

**Self-Examination**

The inspiration for this sermon, and for its opening text, was the Nüremberg Trials (1945-6) which followed the Second World War. These trials were named after the city in occupied Germany in which the trials were conducted. Those on trial were Nazi war criminals, whom Knox described as: “men who, till yesterday felt that they were above the law; felt, too often, that considerations of human justice need not apply to their actions.” His text was: “My judgement is judgement indeed; it is not I alone, my Father who sent me is with me” (Jn 8:16b Knox). The choice of this text sounded a warning which Knox made explicit: “We

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687 Ronald A. Knox, “Self-Examination,” 65
are concerned, when we pass judgement on our fellow creatures, to put ourselves right in the eyes of Almighty God.” Knox, “Self-Examination,” 66
Judgement was God’s privilege, and divine judgement was entirely free of prejudice and jealousy, unlike human judgement, which, in the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth by the Jewish leaders, revealed its limitations. Knox could not stress more forcefully: “We, as we give just or unjust verdict, as we impose deserved or undeserved sentence, at this hour (the war trials), are claiming for ourselves, or forfeiting, the Divine approval.”

Knox followed this caution with a discussion on the text from St John’s Gospel. Because of the unity which Jesus enjoyed with the Father: “Every perspective seen by the eyes of the Incarnate was true; he was himself the truth.” Yet when he walked among the people of his time, he was not doing so as judge. By the very fact of their choice, those who rejected or accepted him were their own judges. This, Knox elaborated, was a theme of St John’s Gospel, the preference of many for darkness rather than for the Light which is Jesus. Knox argued, then, that as a person’s acceptance or rejection of Jesus was its own judgement, so for all times: “our own lives, our own dispositions. mark us down already for the doom that is about to be ours in eternity.” With this stated, Knox progressed to that judgement which followed death, and of that judgement he

688 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 66
689 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 66
690 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 67
691 In the final chapter of God And The Atom Knox made explicit reference to this text and to the Sequence of Corpus Christi. The uncritical embrace of technology had its consequences.
692 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 67-8
said, unlike the sifting of evidence and the discovery of facts that was a prerequisite for human judgement: “(God) does not have to find out the truth, he knows it already.”\textsuperscript{693} In the light of God’s knowledge, Knox deemed, as more helpful for conversion and the improvement of Christian living, a disposition that acknowledged: “in a sense, our judgement is happening now.”\textsuperscript{694}

Thus far, in this sermon, he had not spoken of the Eucharist, but he made the link between judgement and the Eucharist, by the Epistle for the Feast of Corpus Christi (1 Cor 11:23-29),\textsuperscript{695} reckoned as one of, if not, the earliest Scriptural account of the Institution of the Eucharist. Knox quoted from the text:

\begin{quote}
It is the Lord’s death you are heralding whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, until he comes. And therefore, if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup unworthily, he will be held to account for the Lord’s body and blood. A man must examine himself first, and then eat of that body and drink of that cup; he is eating and drinking damnation to himself if he eats and drinks unworthily, not recognizing the Lord’s body for what it is (1 Cor 11:26-29 Knox).
\end{quote}

St Thomas Aquinas reinforced the scriptural message in one of the stanzas from the \textit{Lauda Sion} (the Sequence which he composed for the Feast):

\begin{quote}
The good, the guilty share therein,  
With sure increase of grace or sin,  
The ghostly life, or ghostly death.\textsuperscript{696}
\end{quote}

Digressing briefly from the Eucharist, Knox spoke of the presence, and the closeness, of the Lord at all times: “Yet to allow for the weakness of our own

\textsuperscript{693} Knox, “Self-Examination,” 67  
\textsuperscript{694} Knox, “Self-Examination,” 68  
\textsuperscript{695} For an earlier reference to this sermon and the epistle of the day see above, 50  
\textsuperscript{696} quoted in Knox, “Self-Examination,” 69; likewise quoted earlier, 50
imaginations, he likes us to think of him, doesn’t he, as coming for a visit now and again.” He took two scriptural references to illustrate his point: “My Father and I will come to him” (Jn 14:23); and “Behold I stand at the door and knock” (Rev 3:20). If the visit was a surprise, then it was the fault of the one visited, for: “(Christ) came into the world to save it, not to pass sentence on it(); still not to find out what is wrong with us, but eager for our good.” And he asserted that the Eucharist was not, in fact, a surprise visit, for: “at a time of our own choosing, (he) will leave it to us to invite him when we want him to come.”

The preparedness for his visit in Holy Communion was often not as recollected as it should be, but such distractions and “day-dreaming” were not what St Paul condemned in the epistle. In Knox’s description, St Paul was solicitous for Christians to rid themselves of “secret infidelities”, the faults and failings deep within which resisted and prevented the Eucharist from working its good. The relationship between sacramental Confession and preparation for the Eucharist was restated by an appeal: “(to) really dig deep”; an invitation to be more honest and probing in the examination of conscience, and in the confession of sin. This would surely happen if the grace of the Holy Eucharist was allowed: “to fill the soul to its depths.” Conversion was a necessary preparation for Holy Communion, and when required sacramental Confession of serious sin and

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697 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 69
698 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 69
699 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 70
700 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 70
701 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 71
702 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 71; see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par. 36; and Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, par. 20
703 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 71
Absolution. These would be enhanced if the grace of the Eucharist was given full freedom to enter into a person, and to work its good.

Knox ended the sermon by stating, that in holy Communion, Christ visited as: “Friend … Physician who comes to heal us, (and) Auditor who comes to put our accounts straight for us.” To lay all before the auditor, now, would result in hearing these words after death: “‘His sins? That is all right; we've been into all that before!’”

**The Thing That Matters**

The kernel of this sermon was the emphasis on the Mass, rather than Holy Communion which: “important as it is, awe-inspiring as it is, figures as something secondary in intention to the Mass itself; a gracious corollary, a stupendous after-effect, which unites us in a special way with the thing done.” The text was: “It is through him, then, that we must offer to God a continual sacrifice of praise” (Heb 13:15a Knox).

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704 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 71
705 Knox, “Self-Examination,” 71
706 Ronald A. Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 76
707 In his translation Knox ascribed the authorship of the Letter to the Hebrews to St Paul, this is disputed: see Myles M. Bourke, “The Epistle To The Hebrews” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 920: “However, most of the reasons given for denying Pauline authorship are of such weight as to be compelling.”
Knox had recently visited the city of Exeter, in Devonshire in the southwest of England. There he preached on the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the ‘Prayer Book Rebellion’ of 1549.\textsuperscript{708} In what was, then, a largely Catholic part of England the local community had objected to the imposition of \textit{The Book Of Common Prayer}. Lord Russell was dispatched by Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, to quell the uprising and his three thousand-strong troops consisted largely of German and Italian mercenaries.\textsuperscript{709} Eamon Duffy has said of the 1549 Prayer Book: “it set itself to transform the lay experience of the Mass, and in the process eliminated almost everything that had till then been central to lay Eucharistic piety.”\textsuperscript{710} A tenet of this Prayer Book was to encourage the Communion of the lay faithful, which, as Knox showed, would be one of the recommendations of the Council of Trent, and as Knox said: “for all the world as if (the Council Fathers) shared the opinions of the Reformers.”\textsuperscript{711} But as Knox emphasized, whereas, the Council of Trent sought, in encouraging the lay faithful to receive Holy Communion: “to honour the sacrament of Holy Communion,” the Reformers: “were concerned to discredit the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice.”\textsuperscript{712}

Knox invited the congregation to consider what did not happen at a Protestant Communion Service; and what was received when a Protestant approached for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[708] This sermon appears not to be included in any of the Caraman edited volumes.
\item[709] Henry Offley Wakeman, \textit{An Introduction To The History Of The Church Of England} 7\textsuperscript{th} ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1904), 281
\item[710] Eamon Duffy, \textit{The Stripping Of The Altars} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 464
\item[711] Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 74
\item[712] Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 74
\end{footnotes}
Communion, and the desired effects. He did not doubt the believer’s conviction that, Christ was somehow present in the bread and wine: “communicating himself mysteriously to the soul of the worshipper”\textsuperscript{713}, and it was as important for a Protestant, as for a Catholic, to approach with faith. But for the Catholic the presence of Christ did not depend on personal faith. What was lacking for the Protestant worshipper was the: “transaction external to himself,” \textsuperscript{714} that is, the Sacrifice of the Mass. For the Protestant, the presence of Christ, in whatever way Christ was present was for the personal benefit of the worshipper alone; the bread and wine, as with the water in Baptism: “were hallowed only for the satisfaction of a human need.”\textsuperscript{715} Knox distinguished between the act of receiving Communion, and Christ’s sacrificial action in the Mass: “If I am worthy, if I am willing, he gives himself to me; but, worthy or no, he gives himself for me, as for all mankind, his brothers; on earth, as in heaven, he is our High Priest and representative.”\textsuperscript{716} Knox considered that the imposition of the Prayer Book: “robbed the English people no less really, and far more importantly, than when they took away the common lands which had been free to all in the time of the monasteries.”\textsuperscript{717} With the emphasis on Holy Communion rather than on sacrifice: “the thoughts of the believer were turned fatally in upon himself.”\textsuperscript{718} This fostered a religion based on feelings, with its share of doubts about one’s personal

\textsuperscript{713} Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 75
\textsuperscript{714} Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 76
\textsuperscript{715} Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 76
\textsuperscript{716} Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 76
\textsuperscript{717} Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 77
\textsuperscript{718} Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 77
standing before God, and thus opening a Christian to possible scruples. Knox observed:

… a man who enjoys bodily health is not always thinking about whether he is well or not, and a Christian who enjoys spiritual health is not always thinking about whether he is saved or not. I don't mean that he doesn't want to be saved, I don't mean that he is prepared to neglect his salvation; but his first concern is not that, it is something other. His first concern is that God should be worthily worshipped, for the sake of his own glory.\textsuperscript{719}

It must be noted, that Knox, was not insinuating, in this description, that Protestantism was preoccupied with salvation, rather than the essential attitude of offering praise and thanks to God. What he demonstrated was that a religious attitude focused on personal concerns, had overlooked the opening words of the Lord's Prayer - \textit{hallowed be Thy name}. Praise was the first response to God. Whenever, and wherever, the Mass was offered, Christ was offering himself to the Father at the hands of a priest and: "through him not you or I but all mankind is pouring out its helpless, stammering accents of worship."\textsuperscript{720} It was not coincidence that The Lord's Prayer, and the breaking of the bread, preceded the Communion: "God's glory first, the Paternoster (sic) said, and the Victim broken; and then we can gather round the altar rails, and make the sacrifice, by communicating with it, more than ever our own."\textsuperscript{721}

\textsuperscript{719} Knox, "The Thing That Matters," 77; Knox might well have commented on the Jansenist heresy – they had the Mass but limited salvation.

\textsuperscript{720} Knox, "The Thing That Matters," 77

\textsuperscript{721} Knox, "The Thing That Matters," 77; see John Paul II, \textit{Ecclesia De Eucharistia}, 18: "The Eucharistic Sacrifice is intrinsically directed to the inward union of the faithful with Christ through communion; we receive the very One who offered himself for us, we receive his body which he gave for us on the Cross and his blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28).
This Mass And The Mass

The sermon was based around the vision of Ezekiel 47:3-6, when he saw the stream flowing eastward from the Temple, which grew into “a torrent I might not cross any longer.” Knox spoke of the Church’s adaptation of this allegory in the Vidi aquam, used, in Easter-tide, to replace the Asperges (the sprinkling with Blessed Water at the beginning of Mass). Knox took the allegory and saw another meaning: the universality of the Mass, and it was suggested in the title of the sermon.

This Mass, that was being celebrated at a particular location (Corpus Christi Church), was one and the same with every Mass that has ever been offered, and will ever be offered. And as with every Mass, all the members of the Church were united in Christ’s self-offering: those present in the Church, the housebound, the ill and the dying, the absent and the distant, those who had fallen away, the Saints in heaven, the souls awaiting heaven, and all the faithful departed. Knox described the Mass as “a family affair.”

From this he discussed what were called ‘private Masses’, even in the instance where not even a server was present, and he said, of a priest celebrating a

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722 A sermon preached at St Edmund’s Ware in 1950, “Holy Year Sermon,” also took as its theme the vision of Ezekiel, and contained much of the content of the sermon being reviewed, including the universality of the Mass, and the discussion about private Masses; in University And Anglican Sermons, 426-431
723 Ronald A. Knox. “This Mass And The Mass,” 89; see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par. 39; see also Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, par. 32
private Mass: “he would find himself interceding not only for himself but pro omnibus circumstantibus, for all the people standing around.” \(^{724}\)

The Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner (1904 -1984), raised concerns about the value of private Masses in an article he wrote in 1949. \(^{725}\) Colman O'Neill OP \(^{726}\) took issue with Rahner, and he pointed to the Encyclical Letter of Paul VI Mysterium Fidei (The Mystery of Faith) of September 3, 1965. Pope Paul devoted Chapter 32 of this letter to those who questioned the value of private Masses. He titled the Chapter “No Mass Is ‘Private’,” and it will be quoted in full, as it taught of the value of each Mass, and concluded, with the theme of Knox’s sermon “The Thing That Matters,” when he contrasted the absence of Sacrifice and the reception of Holy Communion alone:

\[\text{32. It is also only fitting for us to recall the conclusion that can be drawn from this about “the public and social nature of each and every Mass.” For each and every Mass is not something private, even if a priest celebrates it privately”; instead, it is an act of Christ and of the Church. In offering this sacrifice, the Church learns to offer herself as a sacrifice for all and she applies the unique and infinite redemptive power of the sacrifice of the Cross to the salvation of the whole world. For every Mass that is celebrated is being offered not just for the salvation of certain people, but also for the salvation of the whole world. The conclusion from this is that even though active participation by many faithful is of its very nature particularly fitting when Mass is celebrated, still there is no reason to criticize but rather only to approve a Mass that a priest celebrates privately for a good reason in accordance with the regulations and legitimate traditions of the Church, even when only a server to make the responses is present. For such a Mass brings a rich and abundant treasure of special graces to help the priest himself, the faithful, the whole Church and the}\]

\(^{724}\) Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 88; see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par.31
\(^{725}\) “The Many Masses And The One Sacrifice” referred to in Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist, 97-8 and in O’Neill OP, New Approaches To The Eucharist, 46
\(^{726}\) O’Neill OP, New Approaches To The Eucharist, 39-62
whole world toward salvation—and this same abundance of graces is not gained through mere reception of Holy Communion. 727

O’Neill’s difficulty with Rahner was that he made the “effectiveness of the sacrifice depend on the devotion of the faithful taking part in it,” 728 and, as Selman showed, Rahner “seemed to make it impossible for souls in Purgatory to benefit from Masses, since they are not present at them.” 729 Because the Mass is a sacrifice it also benefited those not physically present, as every Mass was an action of the Church. 730

It is not clear whether Knox was familiar with Rahner’s arguments, but it is clear, from his discussion, that the Mass, as a sacrifice, was of benefit not only to those present, because it was the action of Christ, to which the whole Church was united. 731

Knox saw the parish Mass as a clear expression of the ‘family affair’ that the Mass should be: gathered with the priest: “the father of the congregation,” who: “… adopts them at the font, … corrects their faults in the confessional” and is “the bread-winner, welcoming his children and dividing up their portions for them.” 732

Knox described the family meal as a: “common feast of unity, everybody

727 Paul VI, Mysterium Fidei, Encyclical Letter, 1965 par. 32 online at www.vatican.va (retrieved Aug.11, 2011)
728 Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist, 98
729 Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist, 98
730 Selman, A Guide To The Eucharist, 98
731 see John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par.24 quoting from Lumen Gentium, 1
732 Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 89
conscious of their common relationship to their father and one another."\(^{733}\) At Mass, the family present approached almighty God, and brought with them the intentions of other people not able to be present. At that parish gathering the priest: “tells God that he is offering it (the Mass) for the bystanders themselves and also for their intentions on behalf of other people”,\(^{734}\) but it continued to expand as the Mass is offered: “for all faithful people, all over the world.”\(^{735}\) And now this Mass can be seen for what it was:

… the one sacrifice that is going on all over the world, of which this Mass, your Mass, is only the pin-point, focused at a particular moment of time, within a particular determination of space. Your family worship is not merely that of the parish; it’s the worship of the whole Christian family … (and) More distant presences come to mind; our Lady and the saints and the faithful departed.\(^{736}\)

This sermon was delivered in the Holy Year of 1950,\(^{737}\) and Knox concluded the sermon by encouraging his listeners to pray for the Holy Father, then Pope Pius XII. Knox reminded the people that the Pope was named in every Mass, because he was the father of the family of the Church on earth. In his person was manifest the unity of the Church; those who journeyed to Rome on the occasion of a Holy Year were attesting to their loyalty and unity with the Pope. Those who were unable to travel made, also, the same attestation.

\(^{733}\) Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 89
\(^{734}\) Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 89
\(^{735}\) Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 90
\(^{736}\) Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 90
\(^{737}\) Footnote 722 referred to another sermon preached in the Holy Year. It is not evident which was preached first, but both conclude similarly with prayer for the Holy Father and loyalty to his person.
At the end of this discourse on the scope of the Mass Knox returned to the stream of Ezekiel’s vision. This time he called it: “the full tide of prayer which is the prayer of the Church universal.” Plunging oneself, albeit briefly into that tide, seeking to feel its full force, will enrich personal prayer, devotion, and understanding at: “the solitude of the Mass you are offering, just you and a few friends about you.”

**The Pattern Of His Death**

Knox revisited St Paul’s text on the institution of the Eucharist: “So it is the Lord’s death that you are heralding, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, until he comes (1 Cor 11:26).” As with his considerations on the composition of St John’s Gospel, Knox offered his reflections on the transmission of St Paul’s teaching: “The theology of St Paul has not come down to us in the shape of carefully thought out catechetical instructions.” In the case of Paul’s teaching on the Eucharist, it was in response to certain abuses that had crept into the Corinthian Church, particularly in the manner of celebrating the *agape* (the shared love-feast) which preceded the Eucharist. The rich members of the community were gathering earlier, so that they could partake of their finer fare before the arrival of the less affluent. Knox used this inappropriate behaviour, not

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738 Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 91-2
739 Knox, “This Mass And The Mass,” 92; Note the similarity between with the words of Vonier: “The Eucharistic sacrifice is fundamentally a corporate act, the act of the Church herself; we are never isolated worshippers in the great rite, even when we are but a few gathered around the altar in some remote church, for we are in communion with the Catholic Church.” Vonier, *A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist*, 169
740 Ronald A. Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 93
to highlight disunity within the community, but to show a disposition required for
Mass and Communion:

... their merriment is ill-suited, to an occasion which must, in some sense, be an occasion of mourning. You cannot receive Communion without associating yourself with a death. You are heralding the death of Jesus Christ, until he comes again.\textsuperscript{741}

Knox wondered, when St Paul, used these words, “what kind of perspective opened out ... before St Paul’s imaginative view?” \textsuperscript{742} Whatever the answer, the Second Coming, has not occurred yet, but still the Church must herald the Lord’s death. But what was his meaning?

Knox used prayer before a martyr’s relics to illustrate his answer. Such prayer was, in a sense, heralding a death, the death of the particular martyr. And in dying for the Faith, the martyr’s death: “was more worth while (sic) than any other kind of death ... was a title to glory.”\textsuperscript{743} Hence, the martyr’s remains were given due honour and veneration, but for all that, the martyr was not present; he or she lived in heaven. It was not Christ’s dead body that was offered in holy Communion, it was: “precisely the risen Body, the living Body of Jesus Christ.” And he summed up the difference: “When we venerate the relics of a saint, we see him there, but in death. When we venerate Christ on the altar, he lives there, but lives unseen.”\textsuperscript{744}

\textsuperscript{741} Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 94  
\textsuperscript{742} Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 94  
\textsuperscript{743} Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 95  
\textsuperscript{744} Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 96
Because it was the Risen Christ present on the altar, and received in holy Communion, and as St Paul reiterated often: “Christ, now he is risen from the dead, cannot die any more” (Rom 6:9 Knox), but there remained the manner of ‘heralding his death’. The answer lay in the sacrifice of the Mass:

Christian tradition teaches us that the Holy Eucharist does not merely consist in the consecration of the elements and their reception by the faithful; it is something more, it is a sacrifice. And because it is a sacrifice it involves, somehow, the death of a Victim, and the application of that death to our needs. What is heralded in these mysteries is Christ dying, not Christ dead.  

Christ’s sacrifice and death was offered once and for all on Calvary, and the Sacrifice of the Mass did not repeat what cannot be repeated. Though the Sacrifice of the Mass was a mystery, (Knox did not undertake any theological explanation here) the preacher reaffirmed the certainty: “that the Victim who is there presented to the Eternal Father for our sakes is the dying Christ.” In his posture of death, Christ pleaded for humanity on Calvary, and would continue to do until his Second Coming: “‘This is my Body which is being given for you … this is my Blood which is being shed for you’; so he spoke to his apostles when his death lay in the future, so he speaks to us now that his death lies in the past.”

The Church has taken upon herself something of this victim character of Christ. Knox demonstrated how St Paul: “rejoiced in his own sufferings, because they helped to ‘pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ leave still to be paid, for

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745 Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 97
746 Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 97
747 Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 98
the sake of his body, which is the Church” (Col. 1:24b Knox). Knox alluded to Christ’s words: “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before you … If they persecuted me, they will persecute you” (Jn 15:18,20b NRSV).

He ended the sermon with the customary practical application for all present. Both he and they had to assume something of the posture of a victim, particularly because, in holy Communion, Christ came as Victim.748 Knox referred to *The Imitation Of Christ* as an inspiration. Chapter 12 of Book 2 “On The Royal Road Of The Cross” was based on Jesus command to follow him as he carried his cross (Mt 16:24). The *Imitation* proclaimed: “Be assured of this, that you must live a dying life. And the more completely a man dies to self, the more he begins to live to God.”749 Knox concluded: “If I could only die a little, to the world, to my wishes, to myself; be patient and wait for his coming, content to herald his death by dying with him!”750

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748 It must be remembered that Knox emphasized that the risen Christ was received in holy Communion, otherwise it could not be the Bread of Life. But even in his risen and ascended Body, in the Sacrifice of the Mass, his offering is re-presented.
749 Thomas Á Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 88
750 Knox, “The Pattern Of His Death,” 99
Knox returned to a favourite text: “This is my body, on your behalf” (1 Cor 11:24), and in the sermon he explained his choice of ‘on your behalf’ instead of the text he used in his own translation ‘given up for you’. It suited Knox’s purpose to use ‘on your behalf’. It provided for a clearer affirmation that the whole of Christ’s life – indeed the Incarnation – was on behalf of humanity. Here he returned to the words propter nos homines (literally ‘on account of us men’ taken from The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed) as the basis for a sermon. Using a literary technique (the parallel), he said that three times Christ said: “This is my body … on your behalf.” The first time Christ proclaimed those words was when he took a human body: “By taking a human body at all, how utterly did he, who was pure spirit, dispossess himself!” That was not the end of it: “ … (his body) should be fashioned and grown as our human bodies are fashioned and grow; it should be a prisoner in the womb; it should have the inarticulate needs of childhood.” Through the Lord’s condescension, those who received his very Body in holy Communion were uniting themselves to Christ in his humiliation:

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751 At the beginning of this sermon Knox remarked: “The Christian liturgy seems to have grown up at haphazard, on no principle ...”; 100. Reid, The Organic Development Of The Liturgy; and Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis see a principle of organic development within the growth of the Liturgy. Pope Benedict stated par. 3: “If we consider the bimillenary history of God’s Church, guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we can gratefully admire the orderly development of the ritual forms in which we commemorate the event of our salvation.” Knox appears to be following Jungmann who wrote: “Towards the end of the middle ages growth became a wild and unhealthy profusion and so the Council of Trent and Pope St Pius V called a halt … and a period of standstill was inaugurated ...” quoted in Reid, 156.

752 Ronald A. Knox, “The Challenge,” 101. He quoted the phrase ‘on your behalf’ in his own New Testament commentary, 158; the only other text consulted which agreed with this phrase was A Catholic Commentary On Holy Scripture (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1953), 1093. see the earlier discussion 79-81

753 Knox, “The Challenge,” 102

754 Knox, “The Challenge,” 102

755 Knox, “The Challenge,” 102
“Are you ready to be made one with me in the darkness of the womb, clinging to me by faith, when you can see nothing but night around you?”756 This was a graphic description of the challenge to faith that confront a believer when the light was hidden. But it was also a graphic description of the challenge to Christ’s trust in his Father, and in his mission, in the dark moments of the Passion.

The second instance of Christ saying ‘on your behalf’ was in his pastoral ministry: “this weak body became the accomplice of the wonders our Lord performed on earth.”757 This was called “theandric action”; as Knox explained: “when all that is most human in the Incarnate is associated with the achievements that are most divine.”758 Knox explained further, that, when Christ worked his miracles his body was not supported by any “native strength beyond human strength … each miracle took its toll of that frail human organism”;759 Christ did not spare himself. The consequence and the challenge for the one who received that Body in Communion was a preparedness: “to be made one with me in my constant defiance of fatigue, to pray, to work, to face new situations, resolute and unflagging, as I did.”760

The third time Christ said ‘on your behalf’ was in his Passion: “Almighty God letting things happen to him.”761 He was given into the hands of his enemies and
led this way and that, and now in the Eucharist: “carried this way and that at the discretion of human wills, but still pardoning, still absolving, still loving.” The acceptance of suffering, and its accompanying helplessness, was the third challenge present in the reception of Communion. Knox concluded this sermon by stating that the presence of these three dispositions, which were the challenge issued by holy Communion, were not necessary for the worthy reception of Holy Communion. The Sacrament was not: “a privilege reserved for an élite of souls of almost perfect souls,” and this, as he noted, was the “error of the Jansenists.” St Pius X had extended the opportunity for holy Communion to “hesitating and struggling souls.” A Communion, well prepared and open to allowing the grace of the Sacrament to work, would foster these dispositions.

The sermon began and ended with the, then, liturgical action of the priest’s threefold Domine non sum dignus (Lord, I am not worthy) before the Communion of the Faithful. In the context of the sermon Knox elaborated on the action to express:

Lord, I am not worthy, because I am not humble; but I do want to be humble. Lord, I am not worthy, because I am backward and slothful in your service; but I hate my backwardness, I hate my sloth. Lord, I am not worthy, because I am a bad sufferer; but how I wish it were

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762 Knox, “The Challenge,” 104
763 Knox, “The Challenge,” 104
765 Knox, “The Challenge,” 105
otherwise! Let it be otherwise, Lord; speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed.\textsuperscript{766}

\textbf{A Better Country}

Queen Elizabeth II was crowned on Tuesday, June Second, 1953. Two days later Knox preached this sermon. Though full of patriotism and gentle national pride, Knox looked not to details of the coronation, except to contrast it with one of the rituals of a Papal Coronation. It was an ancient Roman custom, preserved in the former coronations of Popes, which Knox found lacking in the English ceremony. That custom\textsuperscript{767} was the burning of a bundle of sticks before the newly crowned Pope, with the proclamation of the words "\textit{sic transit gloria mundi}" (thus passes the glory of the world). Knox said of these words: "nobody knows where they came from, who invented them,"\textsuperscript{768} a similar sentiment is in Book I, Chapter 3 of \textit{The Imitation of Christ}: "Oh, how swiftly the glory of the world passes away."\textsuperscript{769} Knox reflected that: "Man was born for eternity, and every experience of his, when he comes to look at it afterwards, is found to be unsatisfying, not simply because it was impermanent, because all the while it was imperfect.\textsuperscript{770}

\textsuperscript{766} Knox, “The Challenge,” 105
\textsuperscript{767} Which may have originated in Roman times, and in particular at the triumphant processions accorded victorious generals and emperors.
\textsuperscript{768} Ronald A. Knox, “A Better Country,” 107
\textsuperscript{769} Thomas Á Kempis, \textit{The Imitation Of Christ}, 31; a footnote in the translation consulted referred the reader to I Jn 2:17: “The world and its gratifications pass away.” (Knox)
\textsuperscript{770} Knox, “A Better Country,” 107
He commented that even the crown: “set on the royal forehead, is only, after all, a collection of mineral products, prized because there are not more of them.”\(^{771}\)

The better prize was “the imperishable glories of heaven.”\(^{772}\)

“Man is born for eternity”; Knox reminded the congregation that in the Marian prayer *Salve, Regina*, (Hail, Holy Queen), Christians described themselves as in exile, after the Fall in the Garden of Eden.\(^ {773}\) Antecedent to the writing of this prayer, St Peter urged believers: “Beloved, I call upon you to be like strangers and exiles” (1 Pet 2:11 Knox). This, too, was the prior experience of Israel in Egypt, as it journeyed in search of the Promised Land. And later in Babylon, the Jews yearned to return to Jerusalem. He chose the text: “We have an everlasting city, but not here” (Heb 13:14 Knox); it was not Jerusalem, but heaven. This text expressed the present Christian exile, but Knox made it clear that, while in exile, Christians were not to be poor citizens. Rather the exile was to promote patriotism because patriotism: “is derived from, and symbolizes, that yearning love with which we look towards our heavenly country.” And respect was due for the authority of the monarchy, as the symbol of “the supreme power of Almighty God”\(^{774}\) to whom all allegiance was owed.

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\(^{772}\) Knox, “A Better Country,” 108

\(^{773}\) “poor banished children of Eve … and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus;” text from *Compendium Of The Catechism Of The Catholic Church* (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2006), 182

No mention of the Eucharist had yet been made. With the discussion of exile, Knox established that the Christian was on a journey, for which he listed the necessary provisions. These were spelt out in the liturgy:

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\ldots \text{(e)sca viatorum, the food of travellers} \ldots \text{ecce panis angelorum factus cibus viatorum, behold the bread of angels, sent to pilgrims in their banishment! Qui vitam sine termino nobis donet in patria, so may we pass eternity, poor exiles, on our native shore! The Holy Eucharist is our viaticum, our allowance of food at every stage in our travels.}^{775}
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The congregation might have been surprised at Knox’s use of the term \textit{viaticum}, and Knox acknowledged this.\textsuperscript{776} \textit{Viaticum} was the term generally reserved for the last Communion received before death. But the Eucharist was the daily nourishment for the pilgrimage, and he played on the Latin word \textit{via} (way) and its juxtaposition with the Latin \textit{cum} (with or for). And with this explanation Knox could return to a favourite spiritual theme. He told the listeners of that discouragement, which was often felt, at the seeming lack of effect that the Sacrament of the Eucharist was having in people’s lives.

He proposed that instead of viewing the Eucharist solely as \textit{medicine}, which seemed not: “to cure the diseases of our souls … to strengthen them, give them fuller, more robust faith”;\textsuperscript{777} there was a more helpful manner of considering the Eucharist. It was: “to think of the Blessed Sacrament … as the food of our souls;

\textsuperscript{775} Knox, “A Better Country,” 109-10; see also John Paul II, \textit{Ecclesia De Eucharistia}, par. 61, 58: “Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you” (I Kg 19:7)

\textsuperscript{776} Thomas Aquinas described the Eucharist as \textit{viaticum}: Summa III, q. 73, a.4; quoted in Vonier, \textit{A Key To The Doctrine Of The Eucharist}, 41

acting on us, as material food does, without our knowing it, yet all the time sufficing for the day’s needs.” As elsewhere, Knox counselled for the scrutiny of spiritual progress, but not scrupulosity. The scrutiny, which he encouraged, was to recall that the Eucharist was “marching food.” He urged the congregation never to forget the journey it had undertaken, and to be alert to distractions; and even the emerging distraction of radio: “you may turn a switch, and listen endlessly to the jarring voices of a discordant world.” In contrast to this he said: “There, over the altar, our King is enthroned, but hidden under symbols, and in silence. And yet so close to us; closer than hands or feet.” With these words he alluded to the passing nature of earthly kings, and the everlasting nature of the true King.

**Jesus My Friend**

A similar theme, to that with which he concluded the previous sermon, opened this reflection: the seeming lack of spiritual growth in the believer despite frequent Communions.

Drawing from his text: “Iron sharpens iron, and friend shapes friend” (Prov 27:17), Knox asked his listeners to think of “our Eucharistic Lord as a friend, a

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781 His own translation read: “Iron whets iron, friend shapes friend.”
personal Friend.” In support of this, he referred back to the Last Supper when Jesus said: “I have called you my friends” (Jn 15:15 Knox), and he argued that the Hebrew words Jesus used: “throws into relief the reciprocity of human friendship, and thereby raising his apostles to a kind of equality with himself.”

This ‘reciprocity of human friendship’ was in contrast to a shepherd unable to care individually with so many sheep, or a doctor, whose time was limited, because of many patients. In contrast a friend “(was) at your disposal.” That, Knox emphasized, was the way that Jesus wanted it to be, and no more so than in Communion, where Jesus, as it were, looked out for each person: “like the person who comes to meet you at a crowded terminus, looking out for that particular trick of walking, that particular way of holding yourself, which will single you out at a distance.” Knox then distinguished between human friendship and friendship with Jesus. Human friendships were subject to change, they were transitory, and sometimes superficial, whereas: “the Friend who makes himself known to us in the Blessed Sacrament … is always at hand, always available.” Furthermore, human friends could be distant. But the “token of eating bread” brought Jesus much more close; and human friendship could not guarantee such real knowledge of the other. While time could alter the tolerance and the intimacy within a friendship, not so with Jesus:

... the Friend who comes to you in the Holy Eucharist is the same yesterday, today and for ever; and as better knowledge brings more

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782 Ronald A. Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 112
783 see also John Paul II, Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par. 22
784 Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 112
785 Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 112
786 Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 113
787 Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 114
intimacy, you can find nothing there but what will make his qualities more lovable.\footnote{Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 115}

Human friends could be fickle, especially in times of hardship, or at the time of a loss of standing in society’s opinion. Jesus, however, went into the house of Zacchaeus, the tax-collector (Lk 19:1-10): “Always the same welcome from (Jesus), whatever coldness there has been on our part.”\footnote{Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 115} Jesus’ friendship was so unconditional, so freely given, that it could be taken for granted, but moreso than human friendship could be taken for granted.

Only when human friendship was severed, especially by death, was the significance of its role in a person’s life realized. While a friend’s death heightened this realization, because the benefits of the Eucharist were: “in the order of grace; … we are not aware of them, we cannot count or check them,”\footnote{Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 116} they were easily forgotten. Knox admitted that at times the benefits of the Eucharist were felt, but as this paper has shown previously, he considered such feelings as:

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\ldots \text{something to which we ought not to attach a great deal of importance;} \ldots \text{All those feelings of ours are a mere echo, a mere by-
product of Divine grace; they are no more to be confused with grace itself than the humming of the wheels are to be confused with the work the machine is doing.}\footnote{Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 116}
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Knox conceded that a person might want some positive indication of spiritual advancement but feelings were not a reliable gauge. He reminded the
congregation that grace cannot be weighed or measured, and that Holy Communion was: “an intimacy with Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{792} With reference to the text of the sermon he stated: “your friendship with So-and-so inevitably knocks you into a particular shape” and this happened as “the result of daily contact.”\textsuperscript{793} Friendship with Christ has a one way influence, for there: “is nothing in him that needs to be influenced.”\textsuperscript{794} As an example of this, mentioned earlier, he spoke of the influence that our Lady had on Christ: “he was the only person who ever came across our Lady without being the better for it. No, the influence was all on one side.”\textsuperscript{795} Christ’s influence on the communicant, receptive to his influence, was certain.

He offered two examples from life to illustrate how Christ, in the Eucharist, could imperceptibly influence one’s life: a school-girl emulating her favourite teacher’s handwriting; a young-man adopting the turns of phrase and speech of his fiancée’s family. Likewise, but with lasting consequence, was the effect of “the daily influence of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{796} Knox ended with the reaffirmation that Christ was unchangeable, always constant, while he and the members of the congregation were constantly changing. One thing had not changed in them: “you and I, now as then, are the unworthy friends of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{797}

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\textsuperscript{792} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 117  
\textsuperscript{793} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 117  
\textsuperscript{794} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 117  
\textsuperscript{795} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 117  
\textsuperscript{796} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 118  
\textsuperscript{797} Knox, “Jesus My Friend,” 118
\end{flushright}
First And Last Communions

This penultimate sermon in the second collection continued to emphasize the unchanging nature of Christ – yesterday, today and forever. The text was: “What Jesus Christ was yesterday, and is today, he remains for ever” (Heb 13:8 Knox).

The sermon began with a discussion on the exception to the laws of science, that was Jesus Christ, who: “(communicated) energy without losing energy in itself,” and this because “the source of those energies was Divine.” After the end of his earthly ministry, when he ascended into heaven, this energy continued, only the manner of Christ’s Incarnate Presence had changed in the world, and this was through the Eucharist: “present substantially on our altars under the forms of bread and wine.” Knox asked the congregation to return to the first ever Mass on Maundy Thursday. What the apostles received was the same as was received now. They received Christ’s Vaticum, which: “(derived) its efficacy from a meritorious cause, his Passion, which was not yet in existence.” Though the apostles may not have realized, it was the new sacrifice of the New Covenant: “the transition … from the bloody sacrifices of the old law to the one bloodless sacrifice of the new.” Though there was a new sacrifice, which replaced the imperfect ones that had preceded it, it was the same Sacrament, now and forever.

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798 Ronald A. Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 119
799 Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 119
800 Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 120
801 Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 120; Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, 19: “The ancient rite has been brought to fulfillment and definitively surpassed by the loving gift of the incarnate Son of God.”
received until Christ’s return. Here, Knox made the distinction between the manner of offering, and the same Victim offered and received.

Moving from this first Mass, Knox imagined the last Mass, the “Viaticum of the Holy Mass itself,” and he envisaged some modifications. A previous chapter, noted Evelyn Waugh speculation on Knox’s sentimental regret about liturgical change, and especially in the Maiden Lane sermons. In that sermon Knox envisaged some differences affecting the last Mass ever to be said: perhaps the nationality of the celebrant; or contemporary styles of ecclesiastical architecture; or the language of the vernacular prayers; but: “the Christian liturgy, already so venerable, is less likely than anything else to be modified by the hand of time.”

To digress, in essence Knox was correct. The liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and the ongoing liturgical reform, in particular of the Mass, were concerned to accentuate and restore to prominence, the central element – the mystery of Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection – with the “full, conscious and active participation” of all present.

After this prophetic hypothesis, albeit brief, he returned to the last ever Mass. The present, before that celebration, was an intermediate time, a time of: “failing

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802 Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 121
803 see above, 42
804 Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 120
energies (so it would appear) in those institutions which we thought were unalterable and undying.”\textsuperscript{806} And the uncertainty on the world stage was also experienced at the personal level. “The personal presence of our Lord on earth”\textsuperscript{807} was a guide to both. For there was both a social and a personal Eucharistic history; both looked back to the first Communion and anticipated the last; and the same Christ was present. A person’s last Communion, Knox thought, would not be dissimilar to the first: “the choice of time will not be yours; that other people will be making the arrangements for you, and that your part will be one of consent rather than active co-operation.”\textsuperscript{808} The same Christ would be given and received.

He began the sermon with the energy that was never lost in its exercise, and he concluded by stating that this Divine energy was contained in full in the Eucharist, “the Sacrament that never alters.”\textsuperscript{809} And he prayed: “May he grant us grace to receive him always as children in our simplicity, as dying men in the utter abandonment of ourselves to him.”\textsuperscript{810}

\textsuperscript{806} Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 121
\textsuperscript{807} Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 122
\textsuperscript{808} Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 123
\textsuperscript{809} Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 124; Benedict XVI, \textit{Sacramentum Caritatis}, 19 -20: “we enter into the very dynamic of (Jesus’) self-giving; he describes the substantial change in the eucharistic elements as “a sort of ‘nuclear fission’... which penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the whole world.”
\textsuperscript{810} Knox, “First And Last Communions,” 124
Pity For The Multitude

The final sermon of the two volume series was based on the Feeding of the Four Thousand (Mt 15:29-38), which happened soon after the feeding of the Five Thousand. Knox took as his text: “I am moved with pity for the multitude; it is three days now since they have been in attendance on me, and they have nothing to eat” (Mt 15:32b Knox). Knox opted for the word ‘pity’ in his translation because it implied: “a sort of physical discomfort in the speaker; he experiences that sort of sick longing which is sometimes evoked in us by the spectacle of human tragedy.”\textsuperscript{811} And he noted that our Lord’s compassion: “because human was spontaneous; because it was divine, (it) was on the grand scale.”\textsuperscript{812} And he observed that, from this number of the recipients of the Lord’s ‘pity’, (the four thousand) both as witnesses to, and recipients, members of the Church would be recruited.\textsuperscript{813}

The Feast of Corpus Christ was a reminder that the same pity still continued; this was further manifest in the solicitude of Pope Pius X to extend the opportunity for frequent Communion. And more recently, then, the relaxation of the Eucharistic fast allowed a greater possibility for frequent Communion. Pope Pius XII, in the apostolic constitution \textit{Christus Dominus} of 1953, allowed for the consumption of

\textsuperscript{811} Ronald A. Knox, “Pity For The Multitude,” 125-6
\textsuperscript{812} Knox, “Pity For The Multitude,” 126
\textsuperscript{813} Knox, “Pity For The Multitude,” 127
water before Communion; his later decree of 1957, reduced, to three hours, the fast from food and alcohol.\(^\text{814}\)

It is difficult to date the sermon on the basis of the relaxation of the eucharistic fast, but it would seem to suggest that it was preached around 1954. And this year, because in 1957, the Feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated on the nineteenth of June. Earlier, Knox had been diagnosed with cancer of the liver, and with difficulty had delivered the *Romanes Lecture* at Oxford University on the eleventh of June. He returned to Mells the following day, and Waugh recounted that his last public appearance was at the local Anglican church fete on the twenty-second of June.\(^\text{815}\) Waugh’s recollection did not rule out a visit to Corpus Christi Church, but it seemed highly unlikely given Knox’s health; he died the following month (August 24\(^\text{th}\)).

Towards the end of the sermon, Knox, again cautioned, as he had done on previous occasions, against scrupulosity in preparation for Communion, but as was seen earlier, he was equally solicitous about a good preparation. With the relaxation of the fast, and the possible celebration of Mass later in the day, this was even more necessary. He suggested praying to the Holy Spirit: “To make a home in us worthy of Christ’s coming. It may be we shall not make a great

\(^{815}\) Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, 332
success of it, but the effort must be there."\textsuperscript{816} And he prayed that Christ would have pity on all who received him, and all those who neglected him.

\textsuperscript{816} Knox, "Pity For The Multitude," 130
4. Postscript On The Sermons

The Maiden Lane Sermons have now been discussed in some detail, and with abundant quotations from the texts. This paper makes no apology for this. To paraphrase Knox’s words and sentiments would be to deprive this study of his unique style and turn of phrase, and his individual art of communication. The conclusion, which now follows, will be guided by three central themes in Eucharistic theology.
5. Knox And The Three Themes In Eucharistic Theology

In his study of the Eucharist\textsuperscript{817} Aidan Nichols considered that: “the achievement of twentieth-century eucharistic theology is simply the retrieval of what was best in the eucharistic doctrines of the preceding nineteen centuries.”\textsuperscript{818} This retrieval brought together what he termed as the ‘three themes’ which have run throughout the development of eucharistic theology. The three themes were the Eucharist as the foundation of the Church; the Real Presence, the manner of that presence and the reason for the presence; and that the Eucharist was a real sacrifice which brought benefits. Nichols commented that these three themes were not always evident simultaneously in earlier studies.

Walter Kasper has also written of the lack of balance which had sometimes taken place in earlier eucharistic theology:

The three aspects of the eucharist – which in Scholastic theology are ranged beside and after one another in relative independence – the \textit{Eucharistic Real Presence}, the \textit{eucharist as Sacrifice}, and the \textit{eucharist as Sacrament} are, then, an indissoluble internal unity. They are aspects of one whole, namely, of the sacramental representation of the one salvation mystery of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{819}

This observation found an ally in David Power when he wrote about scholastic theology and its focus on the Real Presence and the ‘philosophical analogy’ which it found to express the nature and the manner of the change that occurred

\textsuperscript{817} Aidan Nichols OP, \textit{The Holy Eucharist} (Dublin: Veritas, Oscott Series, 1991)
\textsuperscript{818} Nichols OP, \textit{The Holy Eucharist}, 102
\textsuperscript{819} Walter Kasper, “The Unity And Multiplicity Of Aspects In The Eucharist” trans. Sr Josephine Koeppel OCD in \textit{Communio} XII No. 2 (1985), 138
to the bread and wine: “the larger biblical signification of the paschal background, of the gift of food and drink and of the common table was gradually lost to view.”820

Ronald Knox’s sermons were preached in the twentieth century and to some extent, his teaching on the Eucharist is evidence of the retrieval that Nichols noted. Nichols, however, made no reference to Knox or the sermons in his review of the twentieth century.

Based on Scripture, with an evident knowledge and appreciation of the Old Testament, Knox’s sermons emphasized the truth of the Incarnation and the Atonement, and its abiding presence in the world through the Real Presence of Christ, the Crucified and Risen, under the sacramental forms of bread and wine. He had come to belief in this from his early years. He sought to explain the doctrine of Transubstantiation in terms that the congregation of Maiden Lane would understand. While in his later years he hoped for a new and vital approach to apologetics, he was not distracted by the challenges to scholastic theology and Transubstantiation, by the popular Press, and some theologians of the twentieth century.821

821 His response to Foundations is evidence of this.
Knox taught the reality of the Sacrifice and its fruits for the Church, and he clearly described the Eucharist as a corporate meal, which was centred around the celebration of the Sacrifice of Calvary, and which, because it is the Sacramental re-presentation of this Sacrifice, is itself union with Christ and his Death and Resurrection. Thus it builds the unity of the Church, and the Church, herself, makes the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the action of Christ, and thus the action of the whole Church which is united in Christ. At every Mass the whole Church is united and involved.

He distinguished between a Communion Service and the Sacrifice of the Mass, he noted: “If I am worthy, if I am willing, he gives himself to me; but, worthy or no, he gives himself for me, as for all mankind, his brothers; on earth, as in heaven, he is our High Priest and representative.”

Knox reiterated that the Mass was not the multiplication of the once and for all Sacrifice on Calvary, but it was the multiplication of the Sacrament of that sacrifice, which Christ instituted at the Last Supper, and commanded his Apostles to continue.

In emphasizing the Mass as a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, Knox demonstrated, an essential aspect of the eucharist, which he then rightly noted was secondary to praise of God, though coming before reparation and petition.

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822 see above 578
823 Knox, “The Thing That Matters,” 76
At a time of war and upheaval, Knox highlighted the social dimension of the Eucharist even in the face of the disruption of families and nations. This Sacrament of Unity and Peace, was primarily the Sacrament of Charity, for it contained the Incarnate Love of God for humanity. Thus celebrating and receiving the Sacrament fostered the growth of unity and peace, even with enemies. As the Gift of the Trinity, it united the faithful in that foundational Source of unity which is the Trinity, and this unity grew throughout the Church, nourished by the Sacramental Presence of the incarnate Son of God.

As the action of Christ himself, through whom all things were made, the Eucharist had a universal dimension, which extended into heaven, and brought the supernatural world, though veiled as Sacrament, into the present and passing world. Through the celebration of the Mass, and worthy reception of Holy Communion, the believer daily entered more truly into this world without end. As the action of Christ in the midst of his Church, through his priests, the Eucharist united the Church here, with the Church in glory, and the members of the Church being purified.

The development of the Eucharist from a Jewish ritual meal, with its rich emphasis on living memorial, on thanksgiving and praise of God the Creator, on the Passover and the Paschal Lamb, has been retrieved in contemporary eucharistic thought. The unity of the words and actions at the Last Supper, with Calvary, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Second Coming, are all
proclaimed in the mystery of faith. The pivotal role of the Holy Spirit throughout salvation history, and poured out upon the Church at Easter and Pentecost, has also been retrieved. It is this Spirit who acts in bringing about the Real Presence, and deepening the unity of the faithful gathered around the table who will share the Bread and the Cup of Life. The *communio* of the faithful, united around the Lord’s Table, commits the Church to fellowship with the wider world, to practical assistance for all in need, to revitalize the social order, and to care for the environment.\(^{824}\) This *communio* also commits the Church to Ecumenical activity. Some of these themes are not prominent in Knox’s sermons, because they were only re-emerging, but many are present, particularly the social and the universal dimensions of the Eucharist, and many of these themes are there by implication, and are consonant with his thought. The references to the two most recent magisterial statements on the Eucharist have shown this.

Though now largely unknown, the sermons are a remarkable testament to a man who enriched the English Catholic Church, and through his publications indeed the English speaking world. The sermons demonstrate the centrality of the Eucharist within Knox’s own life and spirituality, and this from a young age. They show his grasp and understandings of Catholic doctrine. The sermons of Maiden Lane remain a rich resource for Eucharistic devotion, and a eloquent elucidation of the wonder and limitless self-giving love of that divine condescension by which humanity is saved, and which, in Holy Communion, is given as Food and Companion for the journey.

\(^{824}\) see Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, pars. 84-92
It will be said here that the whole purpose of the sermons might be summarised by his conclusion to *God And The Atom*. The call to holiness was at the centre of all of his priestly work and writing. It resounded through the Eucharistic sermons, because in the Eucharist, the All-Holy is present as Food, and as the access to the Father, in the Spirit.

Knox’s saw that the effect of the atom and the bomb would have a 'snowball effect' on every aspect of human thought and development. He prayed for Christians, whose holiness would likewise, but more powerfully, infiltrate and renew humanity:

> No harm in besieging heaven for the canonization of such and such holy persons now dead. But should we not do well to vary these petitions of ours by asking for more Saints to canonize?\(^{825}\)

This, surely, is the fruit of true Eucharistic participation and devotion.

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\(^{825}\) Knox, *God And The Atom*, 143
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