body of Christ to be really present in the Host. If I had to explain on behalf of the Archdiocese of Boston why the Host must be made of wheat flour, I would not suffice with appeals to Scripture and prayer. These are true but too general, not specific to the case.

Rather, I would seize upon the substance of the issue. It is in two parts.

First, the Host is explicitly unleavened bread, because that is how Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The definitive trait of unleavened bread, broken "in memory of Me," is that it derives from wheat, which can have leavened but has not leavened.

And, second comes the theological reason: the Host is made of wheat because wheat ferments and contains the mystery of life, represented in the here and now by the working of the enzyme on the flour and water. From there, the lesson follows: the Host is source of life not in a symbolic way but in a real way, as the Catholic Church has always maintained. The Halakhah of Judaism in its context and for its reasons concurs on the logic that requires for the dough-offering given to the priests, and for the matzah eaten at the Passover Seder, bread made of a grain that participates in the processes of fermentation, that is to say, life.

Two Unresolved Issues for the Third Millennium

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A number of important theological issues remain controverted and unresolved as we begin the third millennium; two particularly crucial ones will be the focus of this essay. The first has been of special concern to Roman Catholic theologians, but has wider religious and cultural implications for the 21st century as well. The second is rooted more deeply in the last centuries of the second millennium, and certainly crosses denominational lines; it will, I think, be of continuing importance for faith and theology in the new millennium.

The first topic concerns an issue in fundamental moral theology which has serious implications in the context of what technology in the 21st century is and will be capable of achieving in terms of the manipulation of our world, others, and ourselves. Its dilemma is succinctly stated by James

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Keenan, a Jesuit moral theologian: "Can we measure acts as objects, that is, not according to their effects, but according to their meaning? Can we measure acts, not according to what we want to happen, but according to what we do?"[1]

Narrowly considered, the debate over the last several decades has been between "proportionalist" theologians (sometimes called "revisionists") and "traditionalists" (which include a diverse group of thinkers, from the Roman Catholic magisterium, Germain Grisez, John Finnis, William May, some disciples of Thomas Aquinas, and those who are often labelled "physicalists"—those who would define the moral act in terms of its physical structure alone). This divide *very* roughly corresponds to the modern distinction between "teleological" (acting for an end) and "deontological" (acting out of duty) ethics, although it becomes relativized by the fact that the "teleological" can embrace everything from pure consequentialism to the virtue theories of Aristotle and Aquinas.

At its root, the debate is about how to define the "object"—the core moral meaning—of a human action. Should it be defined in terms of *all* the circumstances that are involved in the act, including *all* of the effects (consequences) that the act probably will or may bring about (which also includes the longer term intentions or motives of the actor beyond the immediate or *per se* intended effects of the action itself)? Or should it be defined without regard to its circumstances or consequences, "in itself" as it were, and apart from the subjective motivations of the actor? Or should it be defined only in relation to certain, particularly relevant circumstances or effects that can be pretty well circumscribed in advance?

There are two interrelated issues in this debate. The first (which concerns the relation between the good and evil aspects of a human action) may be illuminated by the example of lying. In general, proportionalist theologians hold that, although any lie involves an evil (the lie itself, apart from its circumstances and motivation), this evil can be counterbalanced or outweighed by good things that result from the lie.[2] Hence, the moral *object* of the act would include outcomes that go beyond the act of lying itself in the narrow sense. Thus lying, as a *moral* reality or object, might be morally good, although involving some pre-moral or ontic evil which is outweighed by the *pre-moral* or *ontic* goods that are brought about by the lie. "Traditionalist" theologians would hold that the good effects of a lie rest outside of the *object* of lying—they belong, not to the object, but rather to the remote (extrinsic or subjective) ends of the *agent*, or are circumstances that are morally *accidental* to the object. In this view, an "objective" evil (the lie) would be perpetrated to realize a *further* morally good object—but this is morally illegitimate, because "the end does not justify the means." "Traditionalists" accuse "proportionalists" of using the pre-moral/moral

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distinction to avoid this consequence. We do not have an obligation to do all good, the former would say, but we must abstain from directly doing that which is evil. This aspect of the issue focuses on the relation between the good and evil in the actions that we do, and the relation of the will to the evils we sometimes perpetrate in the pursuit of good. Much the same analysis would be made of artificial contraception.

The second, more foundational aspect of the debate focuses on just how a moral object is to be defined in the first place, that is, on how narrowly or broadly the object is to be conceived. Put more technically, what, if any, circumstances belong to the definition of any given moral object? One oft-used example is that of male self-stimulation. What of "masturbation" to obtain semen for the morally legitimate purpose of diagnosing and correcting infertility? Proportionalists would generally say that the physical act of self-stimulation is morally *defined* or *specified* by the circumstance of fertility testing, and thus that the *object* of the action is good, and its intention, upright. Traditionalists tend to hold that the object is defined by what is *done*, here and now, and that in this case what is directly done is a morally illegitimate use of the human sexual power outside of marital intercourse, and thus morally evil, *from the object*. The further good motive or circumstance of fertility testing does not change the moral character of, or *specify*, the object.

Although to some this debate seems fruitless—it does to the main proponent of proportionalism, the late Richard McCormick, S.J.—to others, including myself, it is of perennial importance, and raises crucial questions concerning moral limits to human actions, and the ultimate meaning of the traditional maxim that "the *end* (our motives and the longer range results of our actions) does not *justify* (make *right*, specify as *good*) the *means*" (what we concretely do, here and now).

As we enter the new millennium with its already-being-realized technologies that will empower us and our heirs to do nearly anything we please, the question of the moral limits to that power will become acute. Should lines be drawn such that moral "objects" can be defined in a way that they and their human actors will not be subject to serious abuse in the service of the "greater good?" If so, *where* should those lines be drawn, and what criteria are to be applied—"deontological" or "teleological" ones? Even from a teleological viewpoint (*not* a "physicalist" one), are there certain kinds of human actions that are intrinsically evil, evil from their object, regardless of any good things that may result from them? Are there acts that are more than just "*virtually* exceptionless" (a proportionalist term, referring to acts that would *seem* always to be morally evil, but that we can't specify as such until we know all of the circumstances and outcomes of the concrete act)? Are there lines (materially, rather than formally defined, that

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is, defined in view of their intrinsic or *per se* consequences) that we can never step over without violating a turf that is not ours to violate? This debate and dialogue should and must continue. (I consider myself neither a "proportionalist" nor a "traditionalist", and would approach the issue somewhat differently based upon the concept of justice in Aquinas).

The second area for continuing reflection is one with deep roots in the latter part of the old millennium. In spite of the years of debates and developments that were set off by Lessing's broad, ugly ditch between accidental truths of history and necessary truths of reason, that ditch, in one form or another, still yawns before us as we begin the new millennium. To be sure, the parameters of the problem surrounding the relationship of faith to history have shifted considerably as a result of the labours of the "Old" Quest of the Historical Jesus and liberal theology, of Bultmann and the dialectical theologians, of the "New" and "Third" Quests. But at least two aspects of the old ditch remain—what Gordon Michelson calls the "metaphysical" and "epistemological" ditches,[3] and what Troeltsch was getting at with his principles of correlation and criticism. Many Christian theologians still struggle with the problem of the relationship of historical events in the life of Jesus to the faith of contemporary Christians: are the "whats" of the life of Jesus (what Jesus actually thought and said and did) relevant to Christian faith, or only the "that" of his crucifixion, and what contemporary Christians *experience* of the revelation of God in the Christian kerygma? Are the "whats" an essential ingredient to the truth of the revelation itself, or only handy ciphers for them? And even for those theologians who have bridged the "metaphysical" ditch by an affirmation of the revelatory character of the events of the life and death of Jesus, how can they be sure that those events actually took place in the way kerygmatically described in the canonical New Testament? How can they recover those events in a way that can speak relevantly to contemporary Christians? Granted that the *history* of Jesus may be essential to Christian faith, what about the *historiography* of Jesus?

In particular, the controversies concerning the work of the Jesus Seminar over the past decade have brought wide-ranging popular attention to the problem of the relationship to faith to history, especially that between faith and historiography. Although faith may indeed be dependent upon certain factual occurrences in the life of Jesus, is it also dependent upon the historiographical attempts to establish and interpret them? That this is not a moot question at the end of the 20th century is witnessed by the interest shown in the 1996 e-mail debate between John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and Luke Timothy Johnson, and the seeming inability of the participants to find much common ground (particularly Crossan and Johnson). Does Johnson accept a variation of Lessing's ditch between the

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realms of faith and historiography? Does the "quest" have real theological relevance? For Crossan, are the results of critical historiography (his, for example) to be equated with reality, and thus determinative of faith? Who is the "real" Jesus? The Jesus of faith, the Jesus of the historian, or a Jesus that emerges in some manner from the interaction between faith and historiography? And if the latter, what principles characterize that interaction? Do some contemporary scholars implicitly hold a "double truth" theory of Christianity—the faith of their church is true, but, on another level, so are certain reconstructed facts of the life of Jesus that are seemingly incompatible with that faith? Where does that leave the Christian conscience?

Certain truisms can be agreed upon by many at the end of the 20th century: historiographical reconstruction of the life of Jesus can be used to ground, in a certain sense, faith's historical credibility; it can help us to better understand the early development of Christian doctrine; it can illuminate the cultural, socio-political and religious settings in which Jesus lived, thus giving context to his words and deeds. But what of the relation of historical reconstruction to the very content of faith? Can it appropriately control projections of contemporary religious experience back onto Jesus? Can it legitimately determine how Jesus is imagined and remembered, thus providing the concrete mediation of faith's content? Can it display the falsity of certain of faith's claims for Jesus and for God, including gospel claims? Cogent answers to these questions are essential for the integrity of the Christian conscience in an age when facts, rather than faith, may well continue to dominate the cultural rhetoric.

1 James F. Keenan, S.J., *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae* (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 1992), p. 25.

2 Timothy O'Connell gives a good definition of proportionalism: "Morality is a matter of maximizing the premoral goods that we encounter and of minimizing the premoral evils. . . . Rightness is constituted by doing as much good as possible and as little evil as necessary." and "It is the proportional prevalence of premoral good over premoral evil that in fact characterizes the reality of moral action for the Christian person." Timothy E. O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality, Second revised edition* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990), pp 176-7 and 199.

3 Gordon Michelson, *Lessing's Ugly Ditch: A Study of Theology and History* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985). In essence, Michelson holds that Lessing's ditch had three interrelated aspects: *epistemological* (I don't know for sure what happened in the past; metaphysical (even if I did know for sure, events don't produce truths); *existential* (events in the past are often irrelevant to me in the present, even if I could be sure of them and they did produce a certain kind of truth). I note that these three aspects of the ditch roughly correspond to Troeltsch's three principles of criticism, correlation, and analogy.

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