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Hymns on the Lord's Supper
250 Years

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“Finding Echoes”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*

Teresa Berger*

1. Introduction

In a 1994 New York Times/CBS News poll, almost two-thirds of American Roman Catholics insisted that during Mass the bread and wine can best be understood as “symbolic reminders” of Christ rather than as actually being changed into Christ’s body and blood.¹ When asked to provide a “Roman Catholic perspective” on the Wesleyan *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*,² this kind of statistic creates a problem: where is a Roman Catholic perspective to be located? In an ecclesial communion almost one billion believers strong, who is the bearer of this communion’s particular way of construing (eucharistic) reality? Since 1992, there is a relatively easy way out of this fundamental theological question. With the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, we have a clear attempt to speak authoritatively and normatively on matters of faith in the Roman Catholic Church in the 1990s. I will, therefore, use this catechism (rather than, for example, the opinions of American Catholics) to provide a Roman Catholic perspective on the eucharistic hymns of Charles Wesley.

Before I begin, two preliminary remarks are necessary:

First of all: in this paper, I will not deal with the status of Roman Catholic eucharistic faith and practice in the eighteenth century, *i.e.*, with the immediate Catholic context in which the *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* have to be seen. Suffice it to say here that Roman Catholic eucharistic theology in the eighteenth century was dominated by the Tridentine dogmatic formulations and liturgical reforms of the sixteenth century. That is to say that we find decided emphases on the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, on a eucharistically concentrated interpretation of priesthood, on the importance of rubrics and ceremonies, and on Latin as the sole liturgical language. The practical-liturgical consequences were a deepened divide between priests and laity, an individualistic-privatistic eucharistic devotion, an emphasis on “seeing” the sacrament, rather than receiving it, and a split between the liturgical celebration and private devotions of the laity during the Mass.³ The Enlightenment indeed brought some attempts at liturgical reform

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¹See Nathan Mitchell, “Eucharistic Theology in the New Catechism,” *Worship* 68 (1994), 536–544, here p. 536.

²For simplicity’s sake, I will assume that Charles Wesley is the sole author of the hymn texts of the *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper*.

³Cf. Hans Bernhard Meyer, *Eucharistie: Geschichte, Theologie, Pastoral* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1989), 275–279.

within the Roman Catholic Church in continental Europe (for example, attempts at simplification of the rites, the insistence on the vernacular as the liturgical language, the emphasis on preaching) but on the whole, these never materialized into actual, sustained eucharistic practice. In England, where Roman Catholics were a small minority (roughly 80,000 in the year 1767) and still discriminated against at the time of the Wesleys, eucharistic theology and practice seem to have been that of post-Tridentine Catholicism as described above, minus some of its elements which could not be displayed due to the status of the church (e.g., florid eucharistic processions on the feast day of Corpus Christi).⁴ But enough of this: in my paper, I will simply assume the basics I have here outlined of eighteenth-century Roman Catholic eucharistic faith and practice, but will not pay any more sustained attention to them.

My second preliminary remark concerns this: some words of caution are necessary on the differences between the two bodies of text I will be comparing. Not only were the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* written nearly 250 years apart and in very different ecclesial traditions, but they also are different in kind. The *Catechism* is essentially *lex credendi*, that is, a dogmatic statement. The *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (at least in the hymnic part of that collection, which is the one I will concentrate on) are essentially *lex orandi*, that is, hymnic-doxological confessions of faith. If both are to be brought into dialogue, these differences will have to be respected.⁵ I will try and do this by asking for corresponding themes in both texts while leaving room for the fact that hymnic-doxological traditions might express these themes differently from the way a dogmatic text would formulate them.

2. The Eucharistic Theology of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*⁶ and its Echoes in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*

In what follows, I will take the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as my primary text and try to find echoes of it in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. I begin with a quick glance at the structure of both.

⁴For more on this, see John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 121–132, 369–377. For Charles Wesley, see Teresa Berger, "Charles Wesley and Roman Catholicism," *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, edited by S T Kimbrough, Jr. (Nashville: Kingswood/Abingdon, 1992) 205–221.

⁵For more on this, see Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns? A Study of the Relationship of Doxology and Theology according to A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780), trans. by Timothy E. Kimbrough (Nashville: Kingswood/Abingdon, 1995).

⁶See: Franz Kohlschein, "Feststellung eines Defizits—Zur Gestaltbeschreibung der Eucharistie im 'Katechismus der Katholischen Kirche,'" *Heiliger Dienst* 49 (1995), 111–116; Raymond Moloney, "The Doctrine on the Eucharist," *Commentary on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ed. by Michael J. Walsh (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 259–273; Frieder Schulz, "Die Eucharistiefeyer im Katholischen Weltkatechismus. Katholische *lex credendi* und evangelische *lex orandi*: Konvergenz und Differenz," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 44 (1994), 131–145.

(a) *The Structure of the Catechism’s Chapter on the Eucharist*

The *Catechism’s* theology of the Eucharist is presented in seven sections (1322–1419):

- I. The Eucharist—Source and Summit of Ecclesial Life (1324–1327)
- II. What is this Sacrament called? (1328–1332)
- III. The Eucharist in the Economy of Salvation (1333–1344)
 - The Signs of Bread and Wine (1333–1336)
 - The Institution of the Eucharist (1337–1340)
 - “Do This in Memory of me” (1341–1344)
- IV. The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist (1345–1355)
 - The Mass of all Ages (1345–1347)
 - The Movement of the Celebration (1348–1355)
- V. The Sacramental Sacrifice: Thanksgiving, Memorial, Presence (1356–1381)
 - Thanksgiving and Praise to the Father (1359–1361)
 - The Sacrificial Memorial of Christ and of his Body, the Church (1362–1372)
 - The Presence of Christ by the Power of his Word and the Holy Spirit (1373–81)
- VI. The Paschal Banquet (1382–1401)
 - “Take this and eat it, all of you”: Communion (1384–1390)
 - The Fruits of Holy Communion (1391–1401)
- VII. The Eucharist—“Pledge of the Glory to Come” (1402–1405)

In comparison, the *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* (mostly following Daniel Brevint) are divided into six sections:

- I. As it is a Memorial of the Sufferings and Death of Christ (1–27)
- II. As it is a Sign and a Means of Grace (28–92)
- III. The Sacrament a Pledge of Heaven (93–115)
- IV. The Holy Eucharist as it implies a Sacrifice (116–127)
- V. Concerning the Sacrifice of our Persons (128–157)
- VI. After the Sacrament (158–166)

Even a quick glance at the outline of both texts already yields some preliminary results: the *Catechism* begins with ecclesiology, that is, by looking at the Eucharist in the context of the life of the Church. The *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* begin with soteriology, that is, by seeing the Lord’s Supper primarily through the suffering and death of Christ (Hymn 1 paraphrases the narrative of institution). At two points, however, both texts show very similar concerns: they both devote a separate section to eschatology, and they both emphasize the notion of sacrifice (I will return to the latter later).

(b) *A Glance at Terminology*

The *Catechism*, in a section especially devoted to the different names for this sacrament, gives no fewer than sixteen of them, but itself uses the term "Eucharist" most often. Other names mentioned are: the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread, the eucharistic assembly (synaxis), the memorial of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection, the Holy Sacrifice, the Holy and Divine Liturgy, the Most Blessed Sacrament, Holy Communion, the bread of angels, bread from heaven, the medicine of immortality, viaticum, and Holy Mass (1328–1332). The *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, at least in the title of the collection, seem to give preference to the term "Lord's Supper." A closer look at the hymns themselves, however, does not bear this first impression out. On the contrary: although Charles Wesley uses a poetic plethora of images—far more so than the dogmatic text of the *Catechism* is able to do—"Lord's Supper" is not one of Wesley's key terms. Neither is Eucharist. Wesley's preferred terms for this sacrament center around the notion of food. A rough count yields over 50 occurrences of food-related terms, such as: the "Bread of Life" (2:5,6); the "heavenly, everlasting Meat" (3:1,2); "the living Bread Divine" (3:1,4); "the Sacrificial Food" (3:4,4); "the Bread that came from Heaven" (11:3,6); "this Mysterious Bread" (29:1,1); "the Hidden Manna" (30:6,4); "Mystick Wine" (40:1,3); "everlasting Bread" (40:1,4); the "Manna of thy quick'ning Love" (44:3,5); "Immortal Food" (54:2,3); "the Salutory Meat" (56:2,5); "this Sacramental Bread" (61:3,7)—to name just a very few. The frequency of these terms is followed by words emphasizing the sign-character of the Eucharist: "the sacred Sign" (3:1); "the Symbols" (58:7); "the Tokens" (72:2); "the awful Types" (73:3); etc., by those describing it as a sacrifice (I will return to these later), and by the term "ordinance," as in, to name just one example, "ordinance Divine" (11:4). The preference for the term "ordinance" in Wesley's hymns is an obvious indication of the importance he attached to obeying Christ's command to "do this in memory of Me."

What is gained through a look at the terminology? It is obvious, first of all, that Wesley, through his use of the *genus poeticum*, is able to draw on a much broader linguistic field than the dogmatic text of the *Catechism*. It is obvious, secondly, that the linguistic world of the *Catechism* is not that of the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* as far as the term Eucharist is concerned, but that both meet in their consistent use of the language of sacrifice.

With these preliminary observations, let me move into a more thorough analysis of some theological themes. I will take the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as my primary text and bring the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* into dialogue with it.

(c) *Theological Emphases*

1. One of the most noticeable emphases in the *Catechism's* section on the Eucharist, when compared to the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, is its ecclesiocentric nature. The *Catechism* depicts the eucharistic assembly as the visible expres-

sion of the Church. One could say: wherever there is Eucharist, there is Church. The Church—to give just a few examples—is the one who has been faithful to Christ's command to "do this in memory of me;" the Church has continued to celebrate the Eucharist with the same fundamental structure everywhere; the Church offers the pure oblation to the Creator; the Church gives thanks to the Father; the Church asks the Father for the Holy Spirit; the Church sings the glory of God in the name of all creation; the Church offers the eucharistic sacrifice. In short: the Church makes the Eucharist, just as surely as the Eucharist makes the Church. In the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, this ecclesiocentric reading of the Eucharist finds relatively few echoes. The real actors in the eucharistic celebration are the three persons of the Holy Trinity and the individual believers. The term "Church" occurs in only a few isolated places and rarely as the acting subject in a sentence (cf. hymns 96; 114; 129), although there are a good number of "communal" hymns in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (e.g., Hymn 165).

2. Where the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* do echo each other is in their Trinitarian and in their pneumatological emphases. The *Catechism*—attempting to correct a Western forgetfulness of the third person of the Holy Trinity—refers to the Holy Spirit several times as the One who, together with the Word of Christ, effects the presence of Christ under the eucharistic elements (cf. 1333, 1353, 1357, 1375). For the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, only hymns 16 and 72—*epicleses* both—need to be pointed to here. I quote the first stanzas of both:

Come, Thou everlasting Spirit,
 Bring to every thankful Mind
 All the Saviour's dying Merit
 All his Suffering for Mankind:
 True Recorder of his Passion,
 Now the living Faith impart,
 Now reveal his great Salvation,
 Preach his Gospel to our Heart.

(Hymn 16:1)

Come, Holy Ghost, thine Influence shed,
 And realize the Sign,
 Thy Life infuse into the Bread,
 Thy Power into the Wine.

(Hymn 72:1)

3. I have already referred to the strong presence of the language of sacrifice in both the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. In the *Catechism*, the language of sacrifice permeates the whole section on the Eucharist, but it also becomes the central and guiding category for section V entitled "The Sacramental Sacrifice" (this emphasis has supposedly been chosen to counterbalance tenden-

cies within contemporary Roman Catholic theology to downplay the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist). The *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (following Daniel Brevint) devote equal if not more space to this: section IV is given to "The Holy Eucharist as it implies a Sacrifice," and section V is devoted to "the Sacrifice of our Persons." As with the *Catechism*, the language of sacrifice also permeates the other sections. Both bodies of texts show amazing convergence at this point. The *Catechism* interprets the Eucharist (a) as a sacrifice of praise, (b) as the "sacrificial memorial of Christ" (*i.e.*, a making present of the sacrifice of the cross), and (c) as a sacrifice of the Church by uniting the lives of the faithful with Christ's self-offering. All these themes are also present in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, although the last point is usually not couched in overtly ecclesiological language (in fact, Hymn 128:2 in all likelihood speaks against it). But other than that, the Wesleyan eucharistic hymns echo in many ways the affirmations of the *Catechism*. To give but one example, and this of a traditionally much contested point between Catholic and Protestant eucharistic thinking: the *Catechism* maintains that the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice (1367). Quoting the Council of Trent, the *Catechism* emphasizes: "In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner" (1367). These dogmatic distinctions are not necessarily appealing for the poet Charles Wesley, and so he forgoes them to insist on the re-presentation, or better: actualization of the sacrifice of the cross in the Eucharist:

Still the Wounds are open wide,
 The Blood doth freely flow,
 As when first his sacred Side
 Receiv'd the deadly Blow:
 Still, O God, the Blood is warm,
 Cover'd with the Blood we are;
 Find a Part it doth not arm,
 And strike the Sinner there!

(Hymn 122:3)

Calling these and similar stanzas a "Protestant Crucifix"⁷ is certainly not far from the mark. Wesley also frequently imagines the believer/s interacting directly with Christ's blood shed on Calvary. To quote but one example:

⁷J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley, to which is appended Wesley's Preface extracted from Brevint's Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice together with Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), 20–30.

Him ev'n now by Faith we see:
 Before our Eyes he stands!
 On the suffering Deity
 We lay our trembling Hands,
 Lay our Sins upon his Head,
 Wait on the dread Sacrifice,
 Feel the lovely Victim bleed,
 And die while Jesus dies!

(Hymn 131:2)

It is worth noting at this point that Wesley emphasizes—much more strongly and insistently than does the *Catechism*—the connection between Christ's death on the cross and the Eucharist. The poet therefore also comes to a certain preference for wine/blood as the key eucharistic element and image. The *Catechism's* matter-of-fact statement that "communion under the species of bread alone . . . has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite" (1390) would have been, and rightly so, deeply problematic for Wesley.

4. Besides the notion of sacrifice, there has been another notion historically contested in Catholic and Protestant eucharistic theology, namely the concept of the presence of Christ. The *Catechism* is very clear at that point. Quoting the Council of Trent again, it has this to say about "the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist": "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained*" (1374). Rather than going into elaborate detail here about the notion of presence in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, let me simply say that the language of real presence is clearly found in them (cf. Hymn 116). This does not, of course, mean, that this presence of Christ is tied to the eucharistic elements in the same way Roman Catholic theology would have it. However this may be, there is one very clear and sharp divergence between the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* as far as Christ's presence in the eucharistic elements is concerned: the *Catechism*, again quoting at length the Council of Trent, insists on transubstantiation as the way to explain the change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (1376). Hymns 57 and 59 of the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* speak clearly against any human attempt to make sense out of "How the Bread his Flesh imparts, How the Wine transmits his Blood" (Hymn 57:1). There is no echo here, except a negative one, between the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*.

5. The *Catechism* is permeated by the doctrine of creation interwoven in the section on the Eucharist. The signs of bread and wine are said to signify the goodness of creation (1333). With them, the Church offers the Creator what comes forth from creation (1350, 1357) and gives thanks for it (1352, 1359, 1360). This is a subject hardly mentioned at all in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*.

6. I have already pointed out that both the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* devote a section to the eschatological reality of the Eucharist. They echo each other at this point, and one can almost read section III of the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, "The Sacrament a Pledge of Heaven," alongside section VII of the *Catechism*, "The Eucharist—'Pledge of the Glory to Come'." The hymns with their poetic language, of course are able to celebrate much more intensely the Eucharist as a "Sure Pledge of Extacies unknown" (101:4), and as a "Title to Eternal Bliss" (103:2) than the (mostly) dogmatic-theological language of the *Catechism* is.

7. Both the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* know of what can be called an "unworthy reception" of the Eucharist. The *Catechism* warns—with reference to 1 Corinthians 11:27–29—that: "Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion" (1385). And again: "The Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins—that is proper to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church" (1395). For Wesley, an unworthy reception of the Eucharist is not that specifically defined, but seems to be connected to receiving the sacrament without a living faith:

How dreadful is the Mystery,
Which instituted, Lord, by Thee
Or Life or Death conveys!
Death to the Impious and Profane;
Nor shall our Faith in Thee be vain,
Who here expect thy Grace.

(Hymn 56:1)

Let me end this section on theological themes by looking at two curious points. The first one concerns the Eucharist and the poor. The *Catechism* speaks rather pointedly about a connection between the two: "The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To recognize in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren [*sic*]" (1397, cf. also 1351, 1373). There is no equivalent to this in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, although there are a number of hymns of personal consecration (*e.g.*, 155), and in light of the social concerns of early Methodism one could have easily imagined hymns centered on that subject.

The second point has to do with the time of eucharistic celebration. The *Catechism*—probably to the surprise of some—focuses on Sunday as the key time for the celebration of the Eucharist (1343). A daily celebration is mentioned only once, and that almost as a rare occurrence: "the Church strongly encourages the faithful to receive the holy Eucharist on Sundays and feast days, or more often still, even daily" (1389). Given that the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* end with a

long and impassioned plea for the "daily Sacrifice" (166:11), it is fair to assume that Wesley would have been disappointed with this.

There are, of course, other themes that are prevalent in one of the two bodies of text, and not in the other, but they are what one would expect. No one will be surprised not to find echoes of the *Catechism's* insistence on the role of the pope, the Virgin Mary, the departed faithful, or on the importance of the tabernacle and the worship of the reserved eucharistic elements in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. No one should be surprised, either, that the poetic emphasis on the individual's experience of salvation which marks the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* is not a dominant feature of the *Catechism's* section on the Eucharist. Again, we have at this point to take account of the different bodies of text I have been comparing: the *Catechism* wants to state authoritatively the content of Roman Catholic eucharistic doctrine. The *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* want to be a devotional guide in the hands of followers of a movement that thrived on the celebration of evangelical experience.

(d) *Theological Sources*

It has been noted with appreciation how biblically oriented the *Catechism* on the whole is, and this biblical orientation is certainly to be applauded. But "biblical orientation" is too general a concept to be helpful in comparing the *Catechism* to the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. How is this biblical orientation spelled out in both? In the *Catechism*, one actually has to wait until section III ("The Eucharist in the Economy of Salvation") to come to the first clear biblical reference. It is the institution narrative. Wesley's collection of eucharistic hymns, on the other hand, begins with a paraphrase of this institution narrative (as did, by the way, the *Roman Catechism* of the Council of Trent). When looking at the Eucharist as it is seen prefigured in the Older Testament, the *Catechism* of 1992 mentions in particular the offering of Melchisedek (1333, 1350), the sacrifice of the firstfruits, the Passover-Exodus, and the manna in the desert (1333f). One particular image of great importance in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, however, does not appear at all in the *Catechism*: the image of Christ as prefigured in Aaron and the high-priests of the older covenant (e.g., hymns 46, 117, 118). As far as the New Testament is concerned, a corresponding observation can be made for the *Catechism*: the Letter to the Hebrews is nowhere referenced in a key passage in the section on the Eucharist. It appears only in passing—while it figures quite prominently in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*.

On the whole, in the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, the Scriptures are the primary and most substantial reference. In the *Catechism*, the Scriptures co-exist peacefully with the Council of Trent, Thomas Aquinas, Pope Paul VI, and the *Didache* (to name just a few). But at least one pointer to "tradition" both the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* share: the *Catechism* is marked by numerous references to patristic texts and figures, from a lengthy quote from

St. Justin Martyr (who provides us with the earliest description of the eucharistic celebration, cf. 1345) to St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine (1371). Wesley's eucharistic hymns also show the influence of patristic writings, particularly the *Apostolic Constitutions*.⁸ In other words: both texts witness an appreciation for the first centuries of the Church's life. One other pointer to "tradition" can be found: the *Catechism's* section on the sacraments has been applauded for the way the liturgical celebration itself has been taken account of in the theological reflection. Not only is the structure of the rite—in this case the Eucharist—attended to carefully, but the *Catechism* also quotes different liturgical sources throughout, particularly the Roman Missal, but also the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and the Syriac Office of Antioch. In Wesley's hymns we likewise find traces of liturgical materials, particularly of course from the *Book of Common Prayer*⁹ (hymns 43 and 161 are very obvious examples, the first one paraphrasing the *Domine, non sum dignus*, the second one the *Sanctus*).

3. The *Catechism* and the *Hymns*: Shared Weaknesses

I have so far looked only at what the two bodies of texts I am working with actually do present. Before drawing to a close, however, let me mention a few things to which neither the *Catechism* nor the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* make any reference. I see these as shared weaknesses of the two texts. There are, first of all, no pointers to women's visions as they have shaped the eucharistic tradition of the Church. The patristic image, for example, of the Eucharist as the moment of Jesus' breast-feeding of the believers is unknown to the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. There is secondly, no real account of the "dangerous memory" (Johann Baptist Metz) that the Eucharist represents, in other words, of its subversive and prophetic character. We are confronted, in both the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, mostly with a eucharistic theology "from above." This becomes obvious when one compares both, for example, with the section on the Eucharist in *Vamos Caminando*, a base ecclesial catechism from the Peruvian Andes. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as it stands certainly would not speak (and is not intended to speak) to that context. The *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* with their emphasis on the concrete experience of the believers might fare slightly better. However that may be, it should be obvious that both the *Catechism* and the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* are "unspoiled" by contact with a feminist rereading of the Christian tradition and with the newly emerging consciously contextual theologies. For the *Hymns on*

⁸For more on this, see Geoffrey Wainwright, "'Our Elder Brethren Join': The Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* and the Patristic Revival in England" *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 1(1994), 5–34.

⁹For more on this, see Kathryn Nichols, "Charles Wesley's Eucharistic Hymns: Their Relationship To The *Book of Common Prayer*," *The Hymn* 39 (1988), 13–21.

the Lord's Supper there is an obvious excuse: they precede these theologies by over 200 years. For the *Catechism*, this excuse does not apply.

4. Conclusion

Let me draw to a close: I entitled this paper "Finding Echoes" because of the use of that phrase in the 1971 Report of the Methodist-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialog. The dialogue partners state in this report:

If a Methodist ideal was expressed in the phrase 'a theology that can be sung', it was appreciated on the Roman Catholic side that the hymns of Charles Wesley, a rich source of Methodist spirituality, find echoes and recognition in the Catholic soul. This is not least true of the eucharistic hymns.¹⁰

I hope to have shown in this presentation that the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* do, indeed, "find echoes and recognition in the Catholic soul," even as **Roman Catholic** a soul as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has it.

¹⁰Quoted in: *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, ed. by Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer (New York: Paulist Press / Geneva: WCC, 1984), 309 (there is an obvious spelling mistake in the text which I have corrected).

