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THE RESURRECTION AND THE EMPTY TOMB

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Since the time of the Enlightenment (end of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century), the question whether the tomb of Jesus was empty has been hotly debated, and a theologian's answer to this question was most often evaluated as an indication of his affirmation or denial of the real resurrection of Jesus. In recent decades, a great change has taken place. Some Catholic theologians, who firmly believe the real resurrection of Jesus, affirm that Jesus' tomb was probably not empty or at least not known to be empty.[1] They arrive at this conclusion on the basis of their analysis and interpretation of the New Testament witness. But their conclusion is conditioned by the modern horizon of understanding according to which "the

[1]For example, Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 366: "Faith in the risen Christ is independent of the empty tomb. The empty tomb is not a condition, but at best an illustration, of the Easter event.... Today ... historical criticism has made the empty tomb a dubious factor and the conclusions of natural science have rendered it suspect. To maintain the identity (of the risen person with the crucified Jesus of Nazareth) God does not need the relics of Jesus' earthly existence. We are not tied to physiological ideas of the resurrection. There can be identity of the person even without continuity between the earthly and the 'heavenly', 'spiritual' body."

empty tomb is not an unconditional presupposition for the truth of the Easter message, since the existence of the resurrection body does not depend on its material identity with the bio-chemical substratum of the earthly body."[2]

The chemical components of the human body change continually within a person's lifetime. "For example, of the sixty million million cells which compose the human organism, five hundred million are renewed every day."[3] Consequently, as far as its chemical components are concerned, the earthly body's identity is only apparent because continual change takes place within a more or less fixed and perceptible structure. A greater identity than that which the earthly body has with itself will not be necessary for the relation between the resurrection body and the earthly body whose remains are placed in the tomb. In other words, "only a similarity in numerical difference need be postulated,"[4] not numerical identity. "The truth of the resurrection of Jesus is manifestly not indissolubly connected with an empty tomb of Jesus or the dependability of the tradition of the empty tomb."[5]

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[2]Jacob Kremer, *Die Osterevangelien - Geschichten um Geschichte*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981), 49 (hereafter cited as *Osterevangelien*), all translations from this source are the author's own.

[3]Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection and the Message of Easter* (London: G. Chapman, 1974), 239 (hereafter cited as *Resurrection*).

[4]Engelbert Gutwenger, "Auferstehung und Auferstehungsleib Jesu," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 91 (1969), 46-47 (author's own translation). "In the Catholic tradition no theological opinion has imposed itself in the question concerning the bond which unites the resurrection body to its earthly body. Alongside of those who have maintained the necessity of a material link with the corpse (Scheeben, Lepicier, d'Ales, Piolanti, de Broglie), others following Durand of Saint Pourcain, believe that in order to ensure the continuity of the resurrected person with him who was alive, the identity of the substantial form, i.e. the soul is sufficient" (cf. Luigi Ciappi, "La risurrezione dei morti secondo la dottrina cattolica," *Gregorianum* 39 [1958], 216-220). Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 320, n. 38.

[5]Jacob Kremer, "Zur Diskussion über 'das leere Grab'," in *Resurrexit*, ed. Édouard Dhanis (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1974), 140 (hereafter cited as "Zur Diskussion"), all translations from this source are the author's own.

And so, some Catholic scholars propose that in his resurrection Jesus became a new creation clothed in a new heaven-made body which has no continuity with the dead body placed in the tomb after the crucifixion. "God raises the person in a new, different, unimaginable 'spiritual corporality'."[6]

Other Catholic theologians concede that in the abstract an empty tomb is not the unconditional presupposition for the existence of a risen body. But on the basis of their analysis and interpretation of the New Testament witness, they maintain that in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, shortly after his death and burial the tomb was found to be empty. However, they admit that this can only be affirmed with high probability and cannot count as a compelling proof of the resurrection. They admit that by itself an empty tomb proves nothing, since it is open to a variety of possible explanations (theft of the body, transfer to another grave, visit to the wrong tomb, etc.). In the context of the appearances of the risen Jesus, however, the empty tomb is a sign given by God which points to the resurrection. In fact, in the gospel narratives, contrary to a widespread assumption, "the reference to the opened, empty tomb never has the function of a compelling proof but of a sign calling for faith or confirming it."[7]

The fundamental difference between these two groups of theologians lies in the different historical conclusions drawn from their respective analyses and interpretations of the narratives concerning the opened and empty tomb. There is widespread agreement that, at least for the first witnesses to the resurrection, faith in Jesus as the risen one implied the idea that Jesus' corpse was not to be found in the tomb. "Considering the Jewish anthropological conceptions of that time, the message of the resurrection implied ... *ipso facto* the emptiness of the tomb of Jesus."[8] However, a distinction must be made between 1) the

[6]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 366.

[7]Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 18.

[8]Kurt Schubert, "'Auferstehung Jesu' im Lichte der Religionsgeschichte des Judentums," in Dhanis, *Resurrexit*, 218; cf. Lorenz Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung

belief that the tomb was empty based on Jewish anthropology and the idea of resurrection in the Palestinian milieu and 2) the actual knowledge that the tomb was empty based on the discovery and verification of its emptiness. The first does not imply the second. It is the second alternative which is the object of disagreement. What are the arguments pro and con? The following survey of the arguments will provide an introduction to the problematic of an historical reconstruction of the historical antecedents of the Easter message.

THE ABSENCE OF THE "EMPTY TOMB" IN THE OLDEST TRADITION

The oldest traditions concerning the resurrection (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:3b-5) do not mention the opened and empty tomb. An analysis of the semantic structure of the traditional, pre-Pauline formula that Paul makes use of in 1 Cor. 15:3b-5 ("Christ ... died ... was buried ... was raised ... appeared") shows that the church of the beginning "understood the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as the resurrection of the crucified and buried body of Jesus."[9] Therefore, the Easter faith presupposed the disappearance of Jesus' dead body from the tomb. "But it cannot be said that the formula attests and intends to attest the empty tomb as empirical fact.... The same is true also for Paul himself."[10]

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der Auferweckung Jesu im geöffneten und leeren Grab," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 73 (1982), 165 (hereafter cited as "Die Verkündigung"), all translations from this source are the author's own.

[9]Franz Mussner, "Zur stylistischen und semantischen Struktur der Formel von 1 Kor 15:3-5," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs*, eds. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Joseph Ernst, and Joachim Wanke (Freiburg: Herder, 1978), 415; cf. 412-415 (hereafter cited as "Struktur"), author's own translation.

[10]Anton Vögtle and Rudolf Pesch, *Wie kam es zum Osterglauben?* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1975), 87 (hereafter cited as *Osterglauben*), all translations from this source are the author's own. J. Kremer has corrected his earlier statement (*Das älteste Zeugnis von der Auferstehung Jesu* [Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk,

A. Vögtle goes further and affirms that there are good reasons for saying that "Paul in any case knew nothing of the discovery of the empty tomb."[11] J. Kremer comes to a more nuanced conclusion. "It can neither be proven that Paul did not know the traditions about the empty tomb, nor that he knew them. However more speaks for the latter."[12] W. L. Craig attempts to show why. He points out that we know from Paul's letters that Paul was in Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and that he stayed with Peter two weeks and also spoke with James (Gal. 1:18-19). Fourteen years later, Paul was again in Jerusalem and ministered with Barnabas in Antioch (Gal. 2:1.11). We know that he also knew the context of the traditions he delivered (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Craig's conclusion is that if Mark's narrative of the empty tomb contains an old tradition coming out of the Jerusalem community, "it is unthinkable that Paul would not have known it."[13] The crucial question, of course, is whether Mark's narrative of the empty tomb is based on an old tradition of the discovery of the empty tomb. The arguments for and against will be surveyed in the next section.

But if it is presupposed that Paul knew the tradition of the discovery of the empty tomb, the question becomes unavoidable: Why did Paul

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1967], 38-39) that though 1 Cor. 15:3-4 does not thematically treat the gospel tradition of the empty tomb, it "presupposes and thus implicitly attests" it. He now admits that "of 1 Cor. 15:3-4 it can only be said with certainty that there an empty tomb is presupposed and implicitly attested, but not the gospel tradition concerning the empty tomb" (Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 145, n. 27).

[11]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 87, with reference to Werner G. Kümmel, *Die Theologie des neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 97f., 90.

[12]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 145; cf. 141-145.

[13]William L. Craig, "The Historicity of the Empty Tomb of Jesus," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985), 50; cf. 49-50 (hereafter cited as "Historicity"). For reasons why Mark's narrative may not contain an old tradition, cf. Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 85-98.

make no use of this tradition in 1 Cor. 15:4-5 or 1 Cor. 15:35-57—as would be expected? J. Kremer suggests that since in 1 Cor. 15:3-11 Paul is listing witnesses confirming the credibility of the resurrection, a reference to women, whose testimony at that time possessed no probative force, would be out of place.[14] L. Oberlinner, on the other hand, thinks that the most obvious explanation is that for Paul the tradition of the opened and empty tomb "would have meant nothing more than an illustrative elaboration of the confession 'God raised Jesus (from the dead)'."[15] X. Leon-Dufour comments that we can give our imagination a free rein, but "in the eyes of Paul, this recollection (of the discovery of the empty tomb) did not appear to be either indispensable or even useful in confirming the fact of the resurrection of Jesus."[16] He did not incorporate it into his apologetic of the resurrection. In any case, J. Delorme and E. Schillebeeckx maintain that the silence of the apostolic kerygma and catechesis regarding the "empty tomb" tradition need not in any way rule out the existence of an old local Jerusalem tradition on the subject of Jesus' tomb.[17]

THE GOSPEL TRADITION OF THE "EMPTY TOMB"

Since the oldest traditions concerning the resurrection do not mention the opened and empty tomb, the primary sources for an investigation of the historical credibility of the discovery of the empty tomb are the gospel narratives of the opened and empty tomb. Most exegetes begin their analysis with the text of Mark,

[14]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 142.

[15]Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung," 164.

[16]Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 123.

[17]Jean Delorme, "The Resurrection and Jesus' Tomb," in Paul de Surgy, et al., *The Resurrection and Modern Biblical Thought* (New York: Corpus Books, 1970), 98-99 (hereafter cited as "Jesus' Tomb"). Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 332.

"since this is certainly the oldest and can most easily provide access to the events themselves."[18]

The Burial: Mk. 15:42-47

R. Bultmann conceded that, abstraction made from vv. 44-45.47, this historical notice does not give the impression of a legend. It would be difficult to show that it was introduced afterwards in view of the story of Easter.[19] R. Pesch includes among the important historical information that the old narrative hands on "the report that the respected member of the council, Joseph of Arimathea ... took Jesus down from the cross and buried him after he had obtained from Pilate the release of the body of Jesus."[20] X. Leon-Dufour concludes that the "high degree of probability" that Joseph of Arimathea carried out the burial of Jesus "makes it possible to state that the disciples of Jesus could have known the place of his tomb."[21] In 1975, A. Vögtle affirmed that according to the state of the discussion at that time, much

[18]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 146. R. Pesch considers the recent efforts to revive the Griesbach hypothesis, which proposes the gospel of Mark as the most recent gospel, as a failure (Rudolf Pesch, "Das 'leere Grab' und der Glaube an Jesu Auferstehung," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 11 [1982], 13, n. 9 [hereafter cited as "Das 'leere Grab'"], all translations from this source are the author's own). On the approach of Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 103-124, cf. Beda Rigaux, *Dieu l'a resuscité* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1973), 198-200.

[19]Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 7th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 296. Against Bultmann and Ingo Broer, *Die Urgemeinde und das Grab Jesu* (Munich, 1972). L. Schenke argues convincingly that there is no good reason for eliminating vv. 44-45 and 47 as secondary (Ludger Schenke, *Der gekreuzigte Christus* [Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974], 80-83).

[20]Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, II Teil (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 517 (hereafter cited as *Markusevangelium*), all translations from this source are the author's own.

[21]Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 210.

speaks for the fact that the primitive community knew the tomb of Jesus, although that cannot be affirmed with certitude.[22]

The Empty Tomb: Mk. 16:1-8

In the 1960's, A. Vögtle, P. Benoit, E. Gutwenger, and others held that the oldest stratum of the tradition of the empty tomb told of women coming to the tomb and finding it empty. At this level, the story knew nothing of their encounter with the angel and his proclamation of the resurrection.[23] In criticism of a similar proposal of E. Hirsch, E. Haenchen commented that the hypothesis of a traditional narrative without the angel and his message "yields a sequence (*Zusammenhang*) which the community would never have handed on. Precisely the message of the angel 'He is risen' is indispensable for the early Christian story about the women,"[24] for without it, as K.M. Fischer explains, "it would be a story without any preaching content whose transmission in the Christian community would hardly be understandable."[25] This criticism was taken up by L. Schenke (with reference to the proposal of A. Vögtle)[26] and by J. Delorme and X. Leon-Dufour (with reference to the proposal of P. Benoit).[27]

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[22]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 85.

[23]Anton Vögtle, "Growth and Nature of the Gospels," in *The Bible in a New Age*, ed. Ludwig Klein (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1965), 95; Pierre Benoit, *Passion et Resurrection du Seigneur* (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 294-295; Engelbert Gutwenger, "Zur Geschichtlichkeit der Auferstehung Jesu," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 88 (1966), 273-274.

[24]Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1966), 545 (author's own translation).

[25]Karl M. Fischer, *Das Ostergeschehen*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 59 (author's own translation).

[26]Ludger Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung und leeres Grab* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1968), 67-71 (hereafter cited as *Auferstehungsverkündigung*).

[27]Delorme, "Jesus' Tomb," 98: "In a community such as that of the Christian beginnings, is it conceivable that there existed traditional formulated *narratives*

In 1975, A. Vögtle acknowledged the validity of this criticism. "Today the idea has rightly gained acceptance that from the beginning the narrative lying at the basis of Mark 16 contained the proclamation of the accomplished resurrection of Jesus who lay in the tomb and was in its details consequently oriented to this message of the angel as central content of the narrative."[28] F. Neirynck observes that this is a rather general tendency among recent authors.[29]

There is, then, general agreement that Mk. 16:1-8 is not a historical report in the modern sense,[30] but a kerygmatic presentation of the church's resurrection faith in narrative form. J. Kremer observes, however, that none of the hypotheses proposed thus far are able to explain the origin and formation of the text or of its conjectured primitive form in a satisfying manner.[31] But the exegete can affirm with certitude that the narrator of the tomb story made use of certain pre-given facts of history. Among these belong, as 1 Cor. 15:3-5 bears witness, the death and burial of Jesus, as well as the primitive church's preaching of the resurrection of Jesus and its reference to the first witnesses (Peter; the twelve).[32] The question is: does the discovery of the empty tomb count as one of these facts of history? Is this the historical nucleus of the tomb tradition?

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limited to the neutral statement of a material fact? Was there ever a *narrative* concerning Jesus' tomb which was not in some way illuminated by faith in the resurrection?"; quoted by Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 114-115.

[28]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 94, with reference to Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung*, 95.

[29]Frans Neirynck, "Marc 16:1-8: Tradition et Redaction," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980), 76; as examples he refers to the recent commentaries of Pesch, *Markusevangelium* and Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Zurich: Benziger, 1979).

[30]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 147-148; also idem, *Osterevangelien*, 42.

[31]For a survey of the hypotheses, cf. Neirynck, "Marc 16:1-8: Tradition et Redaction," 56-88.

[32]Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 48-49.

THE MAJORITY POSITION

In 1981, J. Kremer listed a large number of exegetes who maintain that the discovery of the empty tomb is probably historical.[33] The arguments supporting the actuality of the discovery of the empty tomb are drawn from indications within the narrative itself (literary genre, the semitism τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ["on the first day of the week"], the visit to the tomb, women as the discoverers) and from the context of the events (the resurrection preaching, the Jewish polemic).

1. Literary genre. According to genre, the narrative (Mk. 16:1-8) may be classified as "primitive christian preaching in the manner of haggadah and apocalyptic literature." But in apocalyptic literature, revelations and interpretations are most often related to and connected with historical events. Therefore, from the literary genre one has to reckon with a historical kernel to the tradition.[34]

2. The semitism τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων. The time notation in v. 2, τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ("on the first day of the week"), "clearly goes back to a hebrew or aramaic original and betrays the great age of the tradition, originating most probably in a Palestinian setting." J. Kremer suggests that it "should hardly have been formulated otherwise than in remembrance of a historical occurrence."[35]

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[33]Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 50, n. 57: Blank, Blinzler, Bode, von Campenhausen, Delorme, Dhanis, Grundmann, Hengel, Lehmann, Leon-Dufour, Lichtenstein, Manek, Martini, Mussner, Nauck, Rengstorff, Rückstuhl, Schenke, Schmitt, K. Schubert, Schwank, Schweizer, Seidensticker, Strobel, Stuhlmacher, Trilling, Wilckens. We may add: Benoit, R.E. Brown, S. Brown, Clark, Craig, Dillon, Dunn, Ellis, Fuller, Gnilka, Goppelt, Gundry, Hooke, Jeremias, Klappert, Ladd, Lane, Marshall, Moule, Perry, J.A.T. Robinson, Schlier, Schnackenburg, Stein, and the Jewish scholars, Lapide and Vermes.

[34]Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 44, 50; also idem, "Zur Diskussion," 156.

[35]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 152, 157; Robert Stein, "Was the tomb really empty?" *Themelios* 5 (1979), 10.

3. The visit to the tomb. As we have seen, the high degree of probability that Joseph of Arimathea carried out the burial of Jesus (Mk. 15:42-46) indicates that the tomb in which Jesus was buried could have been known to Jesus' followers, and it corresponded to the customs of the time that women visit the graves of the dead and take up again the lamentations interrupted by the sabbath.[36]

4. Women as the discoverers. In view of the fact that in Jewish society women did not count as valid witnesses,[37] the presence of women in the tradition of the opened and empty tomb is a solid argument for historical reliability. "The only good reason for attributing the report of the empty tomb to women is that this was the way it was remembered as having actually happened."[38] The community would hardly have "manufactured" a tradition which made its preaching more difficult. Lk. 24:11 appears to be an attempt to invalidate an objection drawn precisely from this point.[39]

5. The preaching of the resurrection in Jerusalem. The Jews in Jerusalem, especially the Pharisees and those influenced by Pharisaic teaching, would associate the idea of the resurrection with the physical

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[36]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 157, referring to Josef Blinzler, *Der Prozess Jesu*, 4th ed. (Regensburg: Pustet, 1969), 400-404; Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* I (München: Oscar Beck, 1926), 1047-1048; Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 50. The actual motivation given—to anoint him (v.1)—is explained by some as a redactional addition of Mark (Schenke, *Auferstehungsverkündigung*, 31-37; Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 46).

[37]Cf. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* II (München: Oscar Beck, 1924), 441; idem, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* III (München: Oscar Beck, 1926), 217, 251, 559.

[38]James D.G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 65 (hereafter cited as *The Evidence*).

[39]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 157. Also cf. Stein, "Was the tomb really empty?", 10; Edward Bode, *The First Easter Morning* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 160-161 (hereafter cited as *Easter Morning*); Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 210.

resurrection of the body.[40] Consequently, the apostolic preaching of the resurrection of Jesus "could not have continued in Jerusalem one day ... if the emptiness of the tomb was not firmly established as a fact for all involved."[41] J. Kremer observes that "it is difficult to conceive that the resurrection of Jesus was proclaimed in Jerusalem without thinking of the obviously known tomb of Jesus."[42]

6. The Jewish polemic. Jewish polemic did not deny that the tomb was empty. It rather presupposed that the tomb was empty and explained it differently than the Christians did, charging that "his disciples came by night and stole him away"—a charge that "has been spread among the Jews to this day" (Mt. 28:13.15). "The opened and empty tomb is ... a fact which, at the time when a verification was

[40]Stein, "Was the tomb really empty?", 10. J.D.G. Dunn points out that archaeology has now provided evidence that at the time of Jesus a popular understanding of resurrection in Palestine would have involved some "re-use" of the dead body. "It had become customary to return to the tomb where a loved one had laid, after a sufficient period has elapsed (a year), to gather up the bones and put them in a box (ossuary). The reasoning was straightforward: the bones should be kept together so that in the resurrection God could use them to (re)construct the body of the resurrection.... That this was indeed a popular view at the period with which we are concerned is confirmed by two passages in the New Testament which seem to reflect the same popular view—Matthew 27:52-53 and John 5:28-29. In both cases the talk is of resurrection as the dead or the bodies of the dead 'coming out of the tombs'." See Dunn, *The Evidence*, 66-67.

[41]Paul Althaus, *Die Wahrheit des kirchlichen Osterglaubens* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1940), 25 (author's own translation). Cf. Bode, *Easter Morning*, 162-163; Gerald O'Collins, *The Easter Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 43 (hereafter cited as *Easter Jesus*); Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 211; Kurt Schubert, "Die 'Auferstehung Jesu' im Lichte der Religionsgeschichte des Judentums," in Dhanis, *Resurrexit*, 218-219; Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 50; Craig, "Historicity," 59.

[42]Jacob Kremer, "Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi," in *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie*, Bd. 2: *Traktat Offenbarung*, eds. Walter Kern, Hermann Pottmeyer, and Max Seckler (Freiburg: Herder, 1985), 188 (hereafter cited as "Auferstehung"), all translations from this source are the author's own.

possible, was contested by no one."[43] To the objection that the Jewish polemic against the tomb was a late development, E. Bode responds that this is unlikely because later there would not have been much point in arguing against this "legend" of an empty tomb, since in the intervening years "too many things could have happened to explain its being empty." Bode concludes that since the polemic did develop, it must have developed early.[44] To the objection that the controversy reflected in Mt. 28:13-15 was a late development, J. Kremer attributes no weight, since Matthew indicates that this charge of theft by the disciples had been circulating for a long time.[45]

Conclusion. On the basis of these arguments, J. Kremer concludes that the judgement of the historian H. von Campenhausen is still valid today: "In all probability they really discovered and pointed to an empty tomb.... If one tests what can be tested, we cannot avoid allowing to stand the report of the empty tomb itself and of its early discovery. Much speaks for it and nothing decisive and definite against it; it is, therefore, probably historical."[46]

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[43]Franz Mussner, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Munich: Kösel, 1969), 131 (author's own translation); cf. O'Collins, *Easter Jesus*, 43; Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 50; Craig, "Historicity," 59-60; Dunn, *The Evidence*, 66.

[44]Bode, *Easter Morning*, 163.

[45]Kremer, "Zur Diskussion," 157; cf. Jacob Kremer, *Theologische Revue* 69 (1973), 460-461.

[46]Hans von Campenhausen, *Der Ablauf der Osterereignisse und das leere Grab*, 3rd ed. (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 1966), 42 (author's own translation); cf. Kremer, *Osterevangelien*, 50. On pp. 17-18, Kremer observes that by far most Catholic and Evangelical scholars maintain that the tomb of Jesus was found to be empty, "yet in their opinion this can only be affirmed with a degree of probability bordering on certitude...." Leon-Dufour speaks of "the very considerable probability, if not historical certainty, concerning the discovery of the absence of the body of Jesus in the tomb. A historian can go thus far" (Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 211). Gerald O'Collins concludes: "There is a reasonable but not coercive case to be made for the tomb having been discovered empty." See Gerald O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus* (London: Chapman, 1983), 127 (hereafter cited as *Interpreting*

However, there is no consensus among Catholic scholars on this point. A. Vögtle has come to the conclusion that "all things considered, under the presupposition that the tomb of Jesus was found to be empty ... greater difficulties result for the historical posing of the question than with the presupposition of the opposite."[47] K. Lehmann has agreed with this evaluation and R. Pesch affirms that the discovery of the empty tomb cannot be considered historically assured or even probable.[48] In particular, the arguments proposed in favor of the actual discovery of the empty tomb are not left unchallenged.

1. The argument from literary genre only concludes to the possibility of a historical kernel at the basis of the tomb-narrative. R. Pesch agrees that Mk. 16:1-8 is "endebted to an apocalyptic form-tradition" but finds that it was influenced by other genres as well, especially the genre of narratives which portray the search for and non-discoverability of "translated" ("*entrücketen*") persons (e.g., 2 Kgs. 2:16-18 concerning Elijah). In this genre, either there was no grave or the grave was empty. The presence of influence of this genre complicates the question concerning a historical kernel. In the light of this literary background, the narrative is to be understood as an illustration of the resurrection message in narrative form in the manner of the translation narratives (*Entrückungserzählungen*) of antiquity.[49] The decisive historical datum which led to the formation of the narrative is the primitive community's faith in the bodily resurrection of Jesus which excluded the idea that

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Jesus). Leonhard Goppelt affirms: "According to all indications, it is historically probable that, on the third day, women out of Jesus' company found his tomb, or a tomb they thought to be his, empty." Cf. Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 246.

[47]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 98.

[48]Karl Lehmann, "Zur theologischen Rede über Tod und Auferstehung Jesu Christi," in *Christologische Schwerpunkte*, ed. Walter Kasper (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1980), 119; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 537, n. 36.

[49]Paul Hoffmann, "Auferstehung," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* IV, eds. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979), 499.

his body was still in the tomb. This faith is expressed here in narrative form as a revelation of heavenly origin. The revelation message of the resurrection forms the structural core to which the whole narrative is ordered, from which it is to be interpreted and of which it is the illustration. Some elements of the narrative were "prescribed" by the well-known patterns of the genres imitated, e.g., the seeking of the corpse and its non-discoverability, the angel as messenger. Other elements were furnished by the preceding passion narrative: the names of the women (v.1; cf. Mk. 15:40), the burial of Jesus in a tomb hewn in rock (cf. Mk. 15:42-46), the death of Jesus on the cross (v.6) as the presupposition of his burial (cf. Mk. 15:21-45). Other details were freely created to carry along the movement of the narrative, e.g., the intention to anoint Jesus which motivates the going to the tomb and the entrance into it (necessary elements for the genre "search and non-discoverability").[50] There is no need for an actual discovery of the empty tomb as historical kernel. Though the possibility cannot be excluded, its probability has not been demonstrated. R. Pesch contends that Mk. 16:1-8 is a "constructed" narrative whose goal is to portray the resurrection message, not to report concerning an event.[51]

2. That the semitism τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ("on the first day of the week") points to the great age of the tradition, originating most probably in a Palestinian setting, may be conceded. But that it was formulated "in remembrance of a historical occurrence" is possible but unproven.

3. The argument from the burial customs of the time shows that a visit of women to the tomb is verisimilar. But the text of Mark says that the women came to the tomb not to take up again the lamentations interrupted by the sabbath, but in order to anoint the body (Mk. 16:1). R. Pesch observes that the intention of anointing a dead body buried a day and a half previously is most extraordinary and that it is most

[50]Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 519-528; 536-538; idem, "Das 'leere Grab'," 14-18; Hoffmann, "Auferstehung," 498-499.

[51]Pesch, "Das 'leere Grab'," 14.

often judged by exegetes to be historically incredible. But he denies that it can be eliminated from the original text as a secondary editorial addition (as J. Kremer and others propose),[52] for "this unusual intention of a delayed anointing of the dead proves to be a necessary narrative feature for the presentation, insofar as it requires the *entrance into the tomb* (vv. 3-5) which is indispensable for the staging of the genre 'search for and non-discoverability' (here: of the crucified and *buried* Jesus of Nazareth)."[53] The motif of the visit of women to the tomb of Jesus need not be based on historical tradition.

4. L. Oberlinner and R. Pesch deny the validity of the argument that the discovery of the opened and empty tomb by women cannot be explained as an invention of the primitive church since women were not regarded as valid witnesses, for the role of the women in the narrative does not consist in having to bear witness to anything but in providing the angel the possibility of announcing his resurrection message before a (representative) circle. Furthermore, if a narrative expression of the Easter kerygma was to be formulated in connection with the tomb of Jesus, after the flight of the disciples (Mk. 14:50) and against the background of the contemporary idea that the anointing of the dead pertained to the role of women, only the Galilean women who had been mentioned in connection with the crucifixion (Mk. 15:40) and burial (Mk. 15:47) came into question for the staging of the visit to the tomb and the proclamation of the Easter message.[54]

Moreover, it is pointed out that the narrative (Mk. 16:1-8) does *not* treat of the *discovery* of the empty tomb by the women. The pointer to the emptiness of the tomb is first found in the word of the angel in connection with the proclamation of the resurrection.[55] R. Pesch emphasizes that the "empty tomb" is not spoken of in the narrative

[52]Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 529.

[53]Pesch, "Das 'leere Grab'," 15.

[54]Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung," 177; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 538.

[55]Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung," 170.

part (*"erzählten Welt"*) of the text in which the narrator himself is speaking. Rather, the "empty tomb" is contained in the discourse part (*"besprochenen Welt"*) of the text in which the angel announces by means of a formula of "non-discoverability": "He is not here" (Mk. 16:6; cf. Gen. 5:24; Ev. Pt. XXIII:56). This corresponds as a topical motif to the description of the "search" of the women who came to anoint Jesus (Mk. 16:1-4).

> The narrator avoids allowing the women to substantiate the "empty tomb"; they are only referred to it ("See the place where they laid him") by the angel who affirmed the resurrection message, after he first (with a formula) has established the "non-discoverability" of the sought "Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified": "He is not here."[56]

Pesch concedes that the hearer and reader of the narrative and the announcement of the angel logically imagine that the women had seen that Jesus was no longer there where they had placed him. "Yet the narrator himself does not explicitly formulate this 'representation'; he does not report an occurrence represented in this way."[57] Pesch concludes that precisely by the fact that the narrator has the women enter into the tomb but does not allow them to verify there the undiscoverability of the corpse of Jesus, the "empty tomb," and by the fact that he has the angel mention the "empty tomb" as confirmation of his message of the resurrection, he withdraws the "empty tomb" from historical verifiability and leaves it in the sphere of representations necessary for faith in Jesus' bodily resurrection.[58]

5. and 6. X. Leon-Dufour, who considers the discovery of the empty tomb by the women to possess "considerable probability," classifies the fifth and sixth arguments among the arguments of more doubtful value.[59] A. Vögtle concedes that they should be taken

[56]Pesch, "Das 'leere Grab'," 17.

[57]Pesch, "Das 'leere Grab'," 7.

[58]Pesch, "Das 'leere Grab'," 17.

[59]Leon-Dufour, *Resurrection*, 211.

seriously but concludes that on closer analysis they are seen to be at least inconclusive.

In relation to the sixth argument, the question arises: If the emptiness of the tomb was contested by no one, but from the beginning only explained differently by Christians and Jews, why are the conflicting explanations not mirrored in the older Easter preaching, but only in the later gospels? Presupposing that the Jewish opponents could contest neither that the disciples knew the true location of the tomb nor that the tomb was empty, "would it not be expected that the authorities would have sought to refute the followers of Jesus by the affirmation of the theft of the body by the disciples or of a transferral to another tomb, or through some other attempt to explain the emptiness of the tomb of Jesus in a natural way?" But under the presupposition that the opponents attempted to give a natural explanation, would it not have been necessary for the disciples to categorically reject this attempt and explicitly combine their affirmation of the resurrection of Jesus with a reference to the empty tomb? But in fact, the confession-tradition possesses no clear combination of the appearances with a reference to the uncontested fact of the empty tomb. Vögtle affirms that the idea of a theft of the corpse only appears for the first time in the "certainly not primitive" story of the guards at the tomb in the gospel of Matthew written toward the end of the first century.[60] He concludes that the New Testament data speak decidedly against, rather than for, the assumption that the emptiness of the tomb of Jesus was an uncontested fact.[61] L. Oberlinner agrees that reserve is recommended with regard to the argument that in Jewish polemic the "empty tomb" was not contested but only interpreted differently. It postulates an

[60]Oberlinner affirms that the apologetic of Matthew has as its necessary presupposition only the tradition of the "empty tomb" (Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung," 170).

[61]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 87-89.

early interest of the Jewish opponents in the tomb of Jesus for which we have no documentation and which, therefore, is doubtful.[62]

The fifth argument that the resurrection of Jesus could not have been proclaimed publicly in Jerusalem without being able to point to the fact of the empty tomb is rejected by R. Pesch as an unprovable postulate.[63] A. Vögtle suggests that it rests upon unclarified presuppositions and assumes answers to questions which the sources do not settle.

a) First, would the Jewish authorities have had any interest in investigating whether Jesus' corpse was still in the tomb? "Why should the Jewish teachers and leaders have taken the affirmation of the resurrection of Jesus seriously?" For the Jews, resurrection meant the end-time resurrection for judgement and final salvation. But there was no evidence that either the resurrection of all or the resurrection of the just had yet occurred. Therefore, the claim that Jesus had been raised could only be understood as the affirmation of the anticipation of the end-time resurrection for an individual. But there was no reason to take this claim seriously. The idea of such an anticipation of the end-time resurrection was completely unknown among the Jews of Palestine. Above all, for Jesus' opponents, the question concerning the validity of the claim of Jesus of Nazareth had been settled once and for all by his death on the cross. Vögtle asks whether the circumstance that the confession-tradition and the older tradition in general reflect no interest of the opponents in the fate of the corpse of Jesus can be explained by the fact that the question of his "Messiahship" was absolutely decided and settled for the Jewish leaders by his execution and that what the followers of Jesus affirmed as the action of God on

[62]Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung," 170.

[63]Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 538. Adolf Kolping agrees (see Adolf Kolping, *Fundamentaltheologie*, Bd. III/1 (Münster: Verlag Regensberg, 1981), 521.

Jesus was in their eyes so absurd that it was at first not taken seriously by them at all.[64]

Vögtle concedes that an interest of the Jerusalem authorities in the fate of the corpse of Jesus would be understandable from the moment they perceived that the faith in the risen Jesus was a serious danger and temptation for the general public. But we can no longer determine how much time passed between Good Friday and this point of time. "The longer it lasted, all the more problematic appears the assumption that the Sanhedrin could and must have clarified whether the corpse of Jesus was still there or had disappeared."[65]

b) But independently of the interest of the Jerusalem authorities in the corpse of Jesus, was identification of the corpse of Jesus possible at all? Hans Küng points out that the disciples did not begin proclaiming the risen Christ immediately after Easter. In fact, "the time of the first resurrection-preaching (before what audience, how publicly?) in Jerusalem after the death of Jesus is not exactly known to us."[66] Even presupposing the accuracy of the information in the Acts of the Apostles, this proclamation only began on Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection. "All this made verification very difficult, particularly since the preaching can hardly have created much of a stir at the beginning or called for public control in a city of perhaps twenty-five to thirty thousand inhabitants."[67] G. O'Collins observes that any remains of someone buried weeks before at the time of the passover would hardly have been identifiable. "Producing a corpse in a more or less advanced state of decomposition would not have worked."[68]

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[64]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 89-91; cf. Oberlinner, "Die Verkündigung," 172.

[65]Vögtle and Pesch, *Osterglauben*, 92.

[66]Rudolf Pesch, "Die Entstehung des Auferstehungsglaubens," *Theologische Quartelschrift* 153 (1973), 206 (author's own translation).

[67]H. Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 364.

[68]O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, 127.

HISTORICAL CONCLUSION

This survey of arguments for and against the historicity of the discovery of the empty tomb of Jesus illustrates the inconclusiveness of the arguments on the historical level. To the article of L. Oberlinner, who based himself in part upon the positions of A. Vögtle and R. Pesch, J. Kremer recently commented: "The arguments of Oberlinner are worth consideration but are not probative enough."[69] It is true that the arguments of Oberlinner, Pesch and Vögtle do not prove that the tomb was not discovered to be empty, but they do undermine the presuppositions and the force of the arguments that the tomb was discovered to be empty. They show that it is unrealistic to continue to speak of "a degree of probability bordering on certitude" or "the very considerable probability if not historical certainty" in reference to these arguments.[70] It appears that R. Pesch is correct in concluding that the discovery of the empty tomb of Jesus by women on the first day of the week after Jesus' death and burial cannot count as historically assured. At the same time, he rightly observes that this judgement does not allow the conclusion that the factuality of the discovery of the empty tomb is disproved, nor does it exclude a future change in this historical judgement on the basis of new material or of more reliable historical analyses using better criteriology.[71]

On the other hand, the arguments of Oberlinner, Pesch and Vögtle are not sufficiently probative to deprive the arguments in favor of the actual discovery of the empty tomb of all probability. In particular, they cannot eliminate a certain probability for the historicity of the discovery of the empty tomb by women deriving from the combination of arguments 2), 3), 4): 2) the semitism τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ("on the first day of the week"), 3) the verisimilitude of

[69]Kremer, "Auferstehung," 188.

[70]Cf. n. 46 above.

[71]Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 536-537, n. 36.

the visit to the tomb, and 4) women as the discoverers. Furthermore, in underlining the influence of the "search and non-discoverability" genre on the formulation of Mk. 16:1-8, R. Pesch affirmed, "On the basis of the faith in Jesus' resurrection—under the influence of door-opening-miracle traditions and epiphany traditions—the search for and non-discoverability of his (Jesus') corpse is narrated, however in a very independent form."[72] This raises the question concerning the basis for this independence and the reason for the modification of the literary genre.[73] A likely explanation is that a tradition of an actual visit of women to the tomb and their discovery of its emptiness was an influential factor in the formulation of the narrative and set limits to the influence of the genre. It is to be noted also that the women's visit to the tomb is a "search" only in a very weak sense, since they know where the body of Jesus should be found (unlike the disciples of Elijah in 2 Kgs. 2:16-18). The alternative: kerygmatic proclamation of the Easter faith or history is a false alternative in view of the Christian-Jewish mode of narration.

THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSION

Even though the actual discovery of the empty tomb of Jesus is not historically assured, theology has reason to affirm that the tomb was actually empty. "Many 'factual' assertions concerning sacred history, no doubt, rest not on direct recollections coming from eye witnesses, but rather on inferences made in the light of faith, from truths of the doctrinal order," e.g., the sinlessness of Christ and his Mother, the perpetual virginity of Mary. For as the Church contemplates the mysteries of faith in their organic relationship, the sense of faith, kept constantly alive under the action of the Holy Spirit, communicates a sense of the inner quality of the persons and events in which she has encountered God, and "this qualitative sense in turn gives rise to

[72]Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, II Teil, 527.

[73]Kolping, *Fundamentaltheologie*, Bd. III/1, 518.

intimations and assurances concerning what could have, could not have or must have happened."[74]

The Church has not made an explicit definition concerning whether the empty tomb is an implication of the mystery of Jesus' resurrection. But it is the function of the theologian to explicitate what is implied in the mystery of the resurrection in its organic interconnection with the other mysteries of faith. He thus contributes to the growth in understanding of what is contained in the Church's consciousness of faith in its lived contact with the mystery of Christ witnessed in Scripture and present in the Church's life.

1. A starting point for theological reflection on the mystery of the resurrection is the traditional, pre-Pauline formula that Paul made use of in 1 Cor. 15:3-5:

> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

How did the men to whom it owes its origin understand the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? On the basis of an analysis of the semantic structure of the formula which explicitates the semantic relations present in the figure of style used (the enumerative mode of speech), F. Mussner answers: "They understood the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as the resurrection of the crucified and buried body of Jesus." As a consequence, his tomb was empty. "That is not a theological postulate but the result of an analysis of the semantic relations of the formula used." It is a biblical interpretation of the resurrection which deserves to be taken seriously.[75]

2. More is involved here than a time-conditioned presupposition of Palestinian Jewish Christians due to a particular anthropology.

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[74]Avery Dulles, *Unpublished Treatise on Revelation*, chap. IV, 17-18.

[75]Mussner, "Struktur," 414-415.

Reflection on the mystery of the resurrection in the context of the mysteries of incarnation and redemption confirms this. The mystery of the resurrection is the mystery of the definitive and total self-communication of God to the total reality of Jesus of Nazareth as the revelation and initiation of the definitive self-communication of God to the world as its salvation.[76] Precisely for this reason, it was necessary that the resurrection of Jesus be a bodily resurrection from the tomb. Because Jesus' corporeal humanity is a permanent part of the one world with its single dynamic tendency, the resurrection of *this* bodily humanity, and therefore of *this* dead body "is objectively the beginning of the transfiguration of the world as an ontologically unified event, because in this event the fate of the world has been decided in principle and has already begun."[77] K. Rahner affirms that there is a real ontological unity of the material universe, a basic oneness of the world by which all things in the world are related and communicate before any mutual influence upon each other.[78] By the incarnation, the Logos has united to Himself once and for all a portion of this world, and indeed a portion of its material reality. In view of the unity of the material universe, it is important that the dead body of Jesus, a portion of the material reality of this one world, should have been transformed and glorified, for the actual transformation of this material world, which will be perfected one day in the Parousia, "must have a beginning somewhere in this world, if the new heaven and the new earth is to be a reality which is not an absolutely new beginning but—despite all discontinuity with the present cosmos—the

[76]Karl Rahner, "Auferstehung Christi, IV," in Karl Rahner, et al., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Bd. I (Freiburg: Herder, 1957), col. 1038 (all translations from this source are the author's own).

[77]Rahner, "Auferstehung Christi, IV," col. 1040; Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Concise Theological Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (London: Burns & Oates, 1983), 442.

[78]Karl Rahner, *On the Theology of Death* (London: Nelson, 1961), 27.

continuation of the original creation."[79] The transformation of the dead body of Jesus in the resurrection from the tomb was the beginning of the transformation of this material cosmos through which it is actually in process of attaining in and through the risen Jesus that final state in which God will be all in all.[80] The empty tomb is necessary because of the unity of creation and salvation in God's plan of salvation. The risen body of Christ, that part of the material universe in which the future salvation, for which "the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now" (Rom. 8:22), already exists, is the physical center for mankind and the whole material world,[81] drawing the remainder of its unity toward the final goal.

3. Furthermore, that the resurrection of Jesus necessarily involves the empty tomb follows from the New Testament witness to Jesus' resurrection as his victory over death. "For we know," says Saint Paul, "that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Rom. 6:9). The resurrection relates to a human existence which has been divinely transformed by the abolition of the dominion of death. Jesus has totally escaped death.

The body of Jesus placed in the tomb was, with his spirit, an integrating part of the proper being of Jesus of Nazareth which death had divided in itself. But E. Pousset points out that one cannot maintain simultaneously that Jesus has totally escaped death (resurrection and exaltation) and that the body placed in the tomb was dissolved in the

[79]Béla Weissmahr, "Kann Gott die Auferstehung Jesu durch innerweltliche Kräfte bewirkt haben?" *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 100 (1978), 467 (author's own translation).

[80]Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* I (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 165.

[81]Cf. Christopher Mooney, "The Body of Christ in the Writings of Teilhard de Chardin," *Theological Studies* 25 (1964), 576-578.

universe.[82] As forming part of his proper being, this body placed in the tomb had to be recovered and transformed in the resurrection and integrated in the undivided unity of the risen Christ if the dominion of death over him has really been destroyed. "To claim that Christ has been removed from death forever, presupposes that this victory has been won *on the battlefield itself*, and that it is in the actual *body* itself, in which death at first won its victory, that life in turn is to win its own everlasting victory."[83] It was necessary that death be conquered on the field of its own triumph, i.e., in this very body which had been subjected to suffering and death.[84] "The only resurrection to which the Gospel bears witness affects Jesus Christ in the *fullness of his body*, just as death did. By transfiguring his body without destroying it, it removes from it all relationship with the world of death."[85]

What happened to Jesus in his resurrection cannot be reduced to what will happen to us in ours. The resurrection of Jesus is unique and belongs to the particularity of the person and destiny of the Son of God. G. O'Collins underlines two things which could be said about the corpse of Jesus which could never be said about any other corpse in human history. "*First*, this corpse had been the body which suffered on the cross once and for all to save all."[86] It was fitting, therefore, that what was the instrument of universal salvation should be raised in a transformed existence and participate in the continuing redemptive activity of the risen Christ as principle and source of divine life.

"*Second*, this lifeless corpse had been the body of the Son of God

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[82]Edouard Pousset, "Resurrection de Jesus et message pascal," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 94 (1972), 105.

[83]Gustave Martelet, *The Risen Christ and the Eucharistic World* (London: Collins, 1976), 75 (hereafter cited as *The Risen Christ*).

[84]Yves Congar, "Bulletin de Theologie," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 59 (1975), 467.

[85]Martelet, *The Risen Christ*, 76.

[86]O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, 128.

during his earthly life."[87] It was fitting, therefore, that it be speedily integrated into the transfiguring resurrection which constituted the son of David as Son of God in power (Rom. 1:3-4).

CONCLUSION

The early Christians who expressed their faith in the old traditional formula quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:3-5 understood the resurrection of Jesus as the resurrection of the crucified and buried body of Jesus. Can we understand it any differently? Reflection on the mystery of the resurrection in the context of the total mystery of Christ suggests that we cannot.

[87]O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, 128.