Nadver, nærvær og medialitet

Temanummer om "digital nadver"

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I 2020 forandrede Covid-19 alle aspekter af samfundslivet, således også kirkers og folks måde at fejre gudstjeneste på. Flere steder, begyndte man hurtigt at live-streame gudstjenester og andagter digitalt. Mange blev efterfølgende lagt på nettet, så det var muligt at afspille dem, når og hvor man ville. Det kom også til at gælde gudstjenester med nadver – eller i nogle tilfælde blot nadveren.

Online nadver rejser en række liturgisk-teologiske, dogmatiske og økumeniske spørgsmål, som det er værd at diskutere. Derfor arrangerede post.doc. Jette Bendixen Rønkilde, professor mso. Bo Kristian Holm og lektor Jakob Egeris Thorsen henholdsvis en skandinavisk og en international workshop om "Nadver, nærvær og medialitet" i foråret 2021. Rønkilde og Holm er begge fra *LUMEN: Center for the Study of Lutheran Theology and Confessional Society* og de to workshops kunne afholdes som en del af det kollektive forskningsprojekt "An Economy of Reception? The Relation Between Sacrament and Sociality in Lutheran Protestant Society" støttet af AUFF. Thorsen er tilknyttet *Center for Samtidsreligion*, som i samme periode arbejdede intensivt med Covid-19-pandemiens konsekvenser for trossamfund i Danmark og globalt.[1]

Variationer i synet på online nadver, dvs. indtagelse nadverelementerne hjemme, fulgte i vid udstrækning konfessionsgrænser, omend ikke fuldstændigt. Kirker med en mere symbolsk nadverforståelse havde lettere ved at forvalte sakramenter online, men kirker som traditionelt betonede realnærværet i nadveren var mere tilbageholdende. Således var digital eller online nadverdeltagelse ikke muligt i Den romersk-katolske Kirke. Også Det lutherske Verdensforbund frarådede digital nadver, og de lutherske kirker i Sverige og Norge forbød

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1. Marie Vejrup Nielsen & Henrik Reintoft Christensen (red), *Religion i Danmark 2020*, Aarhus: Aarhus Universitet 2021 open access: https://tidsskrift.dk/rid/issue/view/9016 (set 25.05.2022).

det. På det svenske bispemøde blev det formuleret således, at nadver ikke kan fejres "på distance". I Danmark tegnede der sig et andet billede. I Den danske Folkekirke blev det hurtigt muligt at deltage i en online nadver. Dels opfordrede præster i radiogudstjenester på P1 folk til at finde brød og vin frem hjemme og dels optog både biskop over Lolland-Falster stift Marianne Gaarden en online nadverfejring, som kunne tilgås på stiftets hjemmeside med henblik på hjemmefejring når og hvor folk ville. Det korte ritual blev delt på Facebook og er stadig at finde på YouTube. Kort efter fulgte Viborg Stifts biskop Henrik Stubkjær i sin kollegas fodspor og indstiftede nadver under optagelsen af en gudstjeneste, som efterfølgende blev sendt på DR. Disse online nadverfejringer satte snart gang i en debat både i dagspressen og på de sociale medier. *Johanne Stubbe Teglbjærg Kristensen* og *Nete Enggaard* gennemgår i temanummerets første artikel variationerne både internationalt og inden for Den danske Folkekirke og ikke mindst den diskussion, der udfoldede sig i danske medier. Selv lægger de to forfattere sig i forlængelse af hovedtendensen inden for de lutherske kirker. De anbefaler ud fra en luthersk nadverforståelse, der under inddragelse af Konkordieformlens tale om den "mundtlige spisen" betoner forsoning og Kristi nærvær i det splittede fællesskab, en betydelig tilbageholdenhed med hensyn til online nadver. Således kan "digital nadver" på de nuværende betingelser ikke ske uden at kompromittere såvel ekklesiologi, nadver- og embedsteologi som den grundlæggende sjælesørgeriske nerve i nadveren.

Teologi og sjælesorg og nadveren som kompleks virkelighed

På de to workshops blev det tydeligt, at de primære argumenter for online nadver er af sjælesørgerisk karakter og trækker på teologiske argumenter om, at Covid-19 er en nødsituation, som berettiger til en sådan praksis. Det væves sammen med argumenter om, at internettet ligesom trykpressen på Luthers tid, giver nye muligheder og med argumenter om Kristi allestedsnærvær er muligt på tværs af tid og rum. Målet med de to workshops var at udvide perspektiverne og bl.a. inddrage det forhold, at nadveren er en liturgisk-teologisk kompleks virkelighed, hvor nadverens særlige kommunikative medium er brød og vin. Det er et ritual, som fejres i et konkret fællesskab, hvor den treenige Gud viser sig utvetydigt og gør sig selv håndgribeligt tilstedeværende for mennesket. Nadveren er liturgisk-teologisk en udveksling mellem Kristus og modtageren og i mange nadverforståelser også en inddragelse af menigheden i Kristi legemes virkelighed.

Spørgsmålet om, hvordan og hvorvidt nadverens håndgribelige udveksling skal stemme overens med den måde, som nadveren fejres på, og om den udveksling bliver utydelig i en online nadver, besvares forskelligt af de forskellige bidragydere i nærværende temanummer.

Modstanden mod online nadver er således stærkest i samlingens romersk-katolske bidrag. Jan-Heiner Tück og Dorothee Bauer analyserer problemer i online nadver ud fra katolsk nadverforståelse, hvor intet kan træde i stedet for nadverdeltagelsen i et konkret kirkerum på et bestemt tidspunkt. Ud fra en analyse af nadverens terapeutiske funktion, der sammenvæver fortid, nutid og fremtid, fremhæver de den analoge nadvers uudskiftelighed og muligheden for åndelig deltagelse i en overværet eukaristifejring samt tilbedelsen af det udstillede nadverbrød i monstransen som alternativer til kommunionsmodtagelse i henhold til katolsk tradition.

Internetmediets ambivalens

Når de to workshops inddrog medialitet som perspektiv, skyldtes det, at spørgsmålet om virtuel nadver udspringer af brugen af nye medier. Mange har kaldt internettet en medierevolution og sammenlignet det med den medierevolution, som opfindelsen af trykpressen medførte i 1500-tallet. Den var som bekendt både medvirkende til kirkesplittelsen i Vesteuropa og til udbruddet af trediveårskrigen. Om der vil ske tilsvarende forandringer i det religiøse landskab i kølvandet på internettets udbredelse, er endnu for tidligt at sige. Men det er dog tydeligt, at internettet har ændret både mediebilledet og den politiske virkelighed. Ingen tror i dag på, at internettet i sig selv vil medvirke til øget frihed og demokratisering, sådan som det lød i de første optimistiske år. Tværtimod har internettet vist sig at kunne understøtte populistiske og sågar voldelige bevægelser. Der er altså al mulig grund til at overveje, hvordan man kan udnytte mediers positive sider og dæmpe deres negative. Hvad internettet betyder for kirke og kristendom ved vi endnu ikke, men vi kan kun være sikre på, at det kommer til at skabe forandring. Diskussionen omkring online nadver er kun en lille, men dog afgørende del af hele dette billede.

Som nævnt, så følger synet på online nadver i vid udstrækning de konfessionelle grænser, men *Alexander Deeg* viser, at der er tydelige bevægelser inden for konfessionerne. Således har et års "nadverfaste" i Tyskland fået nogle modstandere til at blive tilhængere. Deeg, der tidligere forholdt sig skeptisk over for online nadver, ændrede i løbet af pandemien sin opfattelse. I sin artikel undersøger han forholdet

mellem nærvær og fravær og mellem teologi og liturgi. Ud fra to liturgiske og teologiske hovedakser "Gave" og "Fællesskab" tegner Deeg et mulighedsrum for mangfoldige måder at fejre nadver på. Blandt disse er også de digitale. Især fremhæver Deeg de muligheder, som konferenceplatformen Zoom giver for at udvide mulighedsrummet for nadverfejringer ud fra præmissen, at nadveren altid har forandret sig og altid forblevet den samme.

En tilsvarende fremhævelse af de interaktive digitale platformes muligheder finder vi i den sidste artikel. *Katrin Kusmierz* er ud fra et reformert perspektiv overordnet positiv over for online nadver og inddrager, hvad hun ser som en nødvendig skelnen mellem forskellige former for digital nadver: "hybrid-nadver", hvor der både er fysisk tilstedeværende og digitalt nærværende deltagere og ren "online nadver", hvor nadverfejringen er optaget på forhånd og efterfølgende streames og endelig "konference-nadver", hvor der bruges Zoom eller andre konference-platforme for at underbygge deltagernes aktive deltagelse. Diskussionen omkring online nadver savner i vid udstrækning en sådan præcis skelnen.

Kusmierz lægger sit fokus på "gentagelsen" af den sidste nadver frem for på Jesu korsdød. Med dette fokus bliver menigheden en væsentlig del af den liturgiske iscenesættelse, og der lægges op til en kropslig erfaring, som vanskeligt, men ifølge Kusmierz ikke umuligt, lader sig formidle digitalt. Kusmierz er således den af temanummerets forfattere, der ser færrest principielle problemer ved online nadver, men dog en del praktiske.

Vi håber, at nærværende temanummer kan bidrag med afgørende nuanceringer i den debat, der rejste sig under pandemien, både i den teologiske vurdering af de mange former for virtuelt gudstjenesteliv og i forhold til det økumeniske perspektiv.

Litteratur

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Dansk nadverpraksis 2020-21

En systematisk-teologisk analyse af diskussionen om "digital nadver"

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Abstract: In this article, we describe and analyze the discussion of the celebration of the Lords Supper in the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church during the pandemic 2020-21. We notice that the Lutheran World Federation as well the Swedish and Norwegian bishops expressed or recommended a no to any attempts at a digital celebration of the Lords Supper. We also emphasize that most Danish pastors were spontaneously careful in their practice and hesitated towards the attempt at a digital celebration. Nonetheless, some Danish bishops seemed to assume that this was possible and their assumption became the beginning of a discussion in a few Danish media, primarily in *Kristeligt Dagblad*. In the article, we analyze this Danish discussion in the context of the confessional writings of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church and argue for a hesitating position that calls for more research. This presupposes that the confessional writings were written in a different, non-digitalized, context, and it takes into account knowledge that already exist on Lutheran understandings of the Lords Supper e.g. in the Book of Concord.

Key words: Lords Supper – Eucharist – pandemic – liturgy – digitalization.

Indledning

Den 12. marts 2020 blev begyndelsen på en historisk nedlukning af Den Danske Folkekirke. For første gang i dansk efterreformatorisk historie blev den faste gudstjenestes kontinuitet brudt, og kirkebygningen var kun åben for kirkelige handlinger. I løbet af kirkens ni uger lange nedlukning var præst og menighed henvist til at fejre gudstjeneste sammen virtuelt, hvis det altså blev vurderet, at den skulle fejres.

Nedlukningen var også historisk i en anden forstand. Allerede søndag d. 15. marts vågnede kirken op til en ny begivenhed: Opfordring til digital fejring af nadver. Den "digitale nadver" indfandt sig mere

eller mindre *over night* i dansk gudstjenesteliv og uden en forudgå-ende teologisk diskussion. Den nye form opstod simultant med de digitale gudstjenester, og begge forsvandt også stort set lige så hurtigt, som de var kommet. Da folkekirken – med restriktioner – åbnede igen d. 18. maj kunne man se tilbage på et noget tumultarisk og forvirret forløb, hvor dele af Den Danske Folkekirke i spørgsmålet om "digital nadver" gik enegang. Forløbet vidnede om et højt tempo og et stort ønske om at gøre noget for folkekirkemedlemmerne, der nu stod uden adgang til den sædvanlige gudstjeneste. Modsat Det Lutherske Verdensforbund og situationen i folkekirkens søsterkir-ker i Sverige, Norge og Finland forholdt det danske bispekollegie sig forbløffende tavst, og der kom ingen officiel vejledning eller udmel-ding om mulige måder at forholde sig til nedlukningen på i forhold til forkyndelse, forvaltning og liturgi.[1] Ydermere havde biskopperne øjensynligt forskelige holdninger til spørgsmålet om "digital nadver". Den efterfølgende mediedebat, der i kølvandet på den nye digitale begivenhed strakte sig over mere end to måneder, afslørede en intern folkekirkelig uenighed om kirkelig praksis under særlige betingelser og om sakramentets forvaltning, herunder også om forståelsen af sa-kramenterne. Den afdækkede således, at der hersker forskellige opfat-telser af, hvordan Gud formidler sin nåde gennem kirken og dermed af begreber som formidling og virkelighed.[2] I forhold til sakramen-terne kom dette særligt til udtryk i diskussioner om troens betydning for nadverens karakter af sakramente og forståelsen af Kristi nærvær i brød og vin, mere specifikt forholdet mellem ord, tegn og tro. Dis-kussionerne har også implikationer for forståelsen af Kristi nærvær i Helligånden og kirken som fællesskab.

I det følgende beskriver vi indledningsvist den danske diskussion med afsæt i de væsentligste bidrag i medierne for derefter at komme med en systematisk teologisk analyse.[3] Baggrunden for analysen er

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1. Professor Dirk Lange lagde på vegne af Det Lutherske Verdensforbund afstand til digitale fejringer; dette inspirerede bl.a. biskoppernes afvisninger af samme prak-sis i Norge og Sverige. Se Dirk Lange. "Digital Worship and Sacramental Life in a Time of Pandemic". *Blog, The Lutheran World Federation* 24. marts 2020. https://www.lutheranworld.org/blog/digital-worship-and-sacramental-life-time-pandemic (tilgået 31.10.2020).

2. Se fx Bo Kristian Holm. "Er digital nadver nadver?". *Kritisk Forum for Praktisk Teologi* 159 (2020): 91-105 (94), der her beskriver internettet som "et nyt revolutio-nerede medie med potentiale til at forandre historie og politiske forhold"; det er dog ikke ensbetydende med, at "virkeligheden er blevet en radikalt anden". Vi vender tilbage til denne sondring senere i artiklen.

3. Diskussionen i Danmark blev i overvejende grad ført i form af kronikker, debat-indlæg, interviews m.m. i kirkelige medier. Der er altså – med få undtagelser – ikke tale om videnskabelige eller akademiske indlæg. I nærværende artikel løfter vi de systematisk teologiske problemstillinger, der underligger flere af bidragene, frem ud

folkekirkens bekendelsesskrifter læst i dag og dvs. i en nutidig lu-
thersk systematisk teologisk sammenhæng med særlig opmærksom-
hed på sakramenteteologien.[4] Den vil derfor strukturere analysen ef-
ter fire nadverteologiske hovedbegreber i den lutherske tradition: tro,
nærvær, ånd og fællesskab.

Nadverpraksis under nedlukningen

De første såkaldt digitale nadveruddelinger fulgte efter nedlukningen
i marts 2020. Danmarks statsminister Mette Frederiksen meddelte
på et online transmitteret pressemøde i Statsministeriet onsdag den
11. marts 2020 kl. 20.30, at mange institutioner i landet lukkede ned
eller måtte ændre praksis. Foreløbigt for to uger. Den 12. marts ud-
sendte henholdsvis bispekollegiet og Kirkeministeriet en pressemed-
delelse om situationen for Den Danske Folkekirke. Pressemeddelel-
sen fra biskopperne bekendtgjorde, at "gudstjenesterne aflyses overalt

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fra et ønske om at belyse de potentielt vidtrækkende implikationer af såvel den nye
nadverpraksis som af selve diskussionen.
4. Med nutidig systematisk-teologisk sammenhæng forstår vi en tilgang, der forud-
sætter den efter-dialektiske teologi og formulerer sig aktuelt. Ifølge Gunther Wenz
er begrebet "efter-dialektisk teologi" et forlegenhedsbegreb, dvs. et begreb i mangel
af bedre, der beskriver den toneangivende teologi i Tyskland siden 60erne. Wenz
hævder, at denne udvikling begyndes af Karl Barth (selv) i hans sene værk, og at den
derfor ikke blot er en udvikling væk fra, men også en udvikling, der ligger i forlæn-
gelse af den dialektiske teologi. Betegnelsen er *ikke* udtryk for en homogen position,
men rummer fx Gerhard Sauter, Eberhard Jüngel, Wolfhart Pannenberg og Jürgen
Moltmann, dvs. en generation af teologer, der var uddannet dialektisk-teologisk,
men af historiske og kontekstuelle grunde måtte gå nye veje. For denne teologi
gjaldt det ikke kun om at afklare forholdet til den dialektiske teologi og i særdeles-
hed til Barth, men om at afklare Barths protestantisme og herunder også forholdet
til Schleiermacher og bag ham frem for alt Luther. Denne generation af teologer er
derfor også Luther-læsere, som forudsætter og fortsætter diskussionen om recep-
tionen af Luther. Denne teologi er blevet tiltagende fragmenteret og tværfagligt
udfordret, og det kan diskuteres, om vi stadig befinder os i den efter-dialektiske te-
ologiske periode med dens særlige problemstillinger, men uanset om man mener, at
vi gør dette, så kan man ikke komme uden om dennes problemstillinger, der ifølge
Wenz bl.a. tæller etikkens emancipation fra dogmatikken, re-historisering af den
teologiske bevidsthed, nybesindelse på antropologiske temaer, nyvurdering af reli-
gionstematikken og opdagelse af økumeniske perspektiver. Vores analyse og tilgang
til bekendelsesskrifterne forudsætter denne problemsituation. Vi læser skrifterne
historisk, kontekstuelt og som tekster, der angår vores tid og situation i dag. Se
Gunther Wenz. *Offenbarung. Studium Systematische Theologie Band 2.* Göttingen:
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2005.

i folkekirken".[5] Sognene kunne fortsat gennemføre kirkelige handlinger under de gældende restriktioner og i overensstemmelse med det daværende forsamlingsforbud. Den 12. marts udsendte biskopperne ligeledes en "Vejledning", der i løbet af den ni uger lange nedlukning blev opdateret flere gange. Det fremgår af vejledningen, at biskopperne – og Kirkeministeriet – anbefalede, at dåb på linje med vielse og konfirmation blev udskudt. Vejledningen nævner ikke nadveren, der måtte forventes aflyst sammen med den faste gudstjeneste.[6] Vejledningen skelnede altså ikke mellem gudstjeneste og nadver og bevæger sig derfor heller ikke ind på de mulige problemstillinger vedrørende eventuel digital nadver.

Allerede den første søndag efter nedlukningen, søndag den 15. marts, var flere kirker online med tilbud om digital gudstjeneste. Ifølge rapporten *Når folkekirken skal spille efter reglerne – men uden for banen* blev i alt 26.660 planlagte gudstjenester aflyst i perioden 26. februar til 4. juni 2020. 1805 gudstjenester blev i denne periode gennemført i digital form; antallet af digitale gudstjenester toppede påskedag med omtrent 277 digitale tilbud (Blichfelt m.fl. 2020, 167). Den 20. marts 2020 kunne man på Den Danske Folkekirkes hjemmeside, folkekirken.dk, læse: "Tag plads på den digitale kirkebænk".[7] På forskellige kirkelige hjemmesider blev sognene nu tilbudt råd og vejledning i forbindelse med omlægningen til det digitale. Nadverfejring blev heller ikke her nævnt. Den første gang, man fra officielt kirkeligt hold hører noget om nadveren, var i biskoppernes "Vejledning om nadver" i forbindelse med kirkernes genåbning i maj. Vejlednin-

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5. Se Kitty Blichfelt m.fl. *Når folkekirken skal spille efter reglerne – men uden for banen*. Folkekirkens Uddannelses- og Videnscenter 2020, 38. Rapporten er udarbejdet af Folkekirkens Uddannelses- og Videnscenter og havde til formål at undersøge folkekirkens håndtering af coronaperioden i foråret 2020. Den indeholder bl.a. en afdækning af det tumultariske forløb omkring kirkernes nedlukning, kommunikation under krisen m.m.

6. Se TREDJE OPDATEREDE VEJLEDNING FRA BISKOPPERNE onsdag den 18.03 https://kobenhavnsstift.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/opdateret-vejledning-fra-biskopperne (set 30-11-21). I Folkekirkens Coronatiltag 1. OPDATEREDE VEJLEDNING 12. marts (samme sted) figurerer "Sjælesorg/samtale, herunder hjemme-altergang" under samme punkt, efter de kirkelige handlinger, hvad der understøtter den fortolkning, at nadveren i kirken er aflyst, mens nadver fortsat kan finde sted som hjemme-altergang i tilfælde af sygdom el.lign. Se også Blichfelt m. fl. 2020, 236. Teologisk set er det tankevækkende, at dåben, jf. forståelsen af dåben som nødvendig til frelse, blev anbefalet udskudt under pandemien, hvad der gik mere eller mindre ubemærket hen i de kirkelige medier, mens nadverens 'nødvendighed' blev genstand for omfattende diskussion (se f.eks. Reinholt Rasmussens bidrag i Blichfelt m.fl. 2020, 235 f.)

7. https://www.folkekirken.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/tag-plads-paa-den-digitale-kirkebaenk (set 01-11-21).

gen koncentrerer sig alene om smitterisiko og hygiejne i forbindelse med uddeling og modtagelse af nadverelementerne.[8] Når vi i Danmark alligevel fik en diskussion om "digital nadver" og gyldigheden af samme, så skyldes det først og fremmest enkelte biskoppers egen nye nadverpraksis og deres efterfølgende indlæg i de kirkelige medier.

Den første søndag efter nedlukningen, søndag den 15. marts, uploadede Lolland Falster Stift en kort video på knap fire minutter på stiftets hjemmeside. Her ser man stiftets biskop, Marianne Gaarden, i messeklæder gennemføre nadver i en tom kirke uden menighed.[9] Efterfølgende kan man den 21. marts på folkekirken.dk's og Københavns Stifts hjemmeside læse, at Københavns biskop, Peter Skov-Jakobsen, søndag den 22. marts fejrer radiogudstjeneste med nadver. Som noget nyt opfordrede biskoppen lytterne til at have brød og vin klar i stuerne.[10] Omtrent samtidig bliver en række "Gudstjeneste i en coronatid" annonceret af Danmarks Radio: Sognepræst og debattør, Katrine Lilleør, og senere biskop Henrik Stubkjær, fejrer gudstjeneste med nadver i på forhånd optagede gudstjenester.[11] Det nye i forhold til tidligere transmissioner – og diskussioner – er, at lytterne blev opfordret til at have brød og vin parat i stuerne, og at deres spise og drikke tilsyneladende (nu med biskoppeligt mandat) blev opfattet som en nadver.[12] Gudstjenesten fra Viborg Domkirke har en enkelt altergæst

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8. Se f.eks. https://www.xn--helsingrstift-hnb.dk/_Resources/Persistent/e/6/f/c/ e6fcddecb988c2e7a42dd0e1be0778db7775b767/Nadver%20i%20forbindelse%20 med%20a%CC%8Abningen%20af%20kirkerummet_18.05.20.pdf (set 01-11-21).
9. Videoen, der var optaget på forhånd og efterfølgende lagt op, er fortsat tilgængelig på youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo5yWqiPMEk (set 04-11-21). Der er som nævnt tale om en ganske kort video, hvori nadveren, inkl. uddeling af brød og vin, bliver gennemført efter Ritual for Nadver i hjemmet (eller ritual A uden indledende tiltale). Biskoppen kommunikerer den "fiktive" nadvergæst og sig selv og afslutter med fredsønsket.
10. https://www.folkekirken.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/modtag-nadveren-ved-din-radio (set 31.10.20).
11. https://koebenhavnsstift.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/dr-gudstjenester-mens-kirkerne-er-lukkede (set 31.10.20).
12. Debatten vedr. TV-/radiogudstjeneste og nadverdeltagelse er ikke ny i dansk sammenhæng; den fandt også sted i 1970'erne, hvor f.eks. Regin Prenter – mod enkelte præsters praksis – erklærede, at "den såkaldte radio/TV-nadver ikke eksisterer". Præster, der opfordrer lyttere til "denne form for surrogatnadver" bør "ikke fortie, at de ved deres alter kun kan indvi det brød og den vin, de selv uddeler". Alt andet er i "klar og uimodsigelig modstrid med Jesu indstiftelse af nadveren, som de har lovet i forvaltningen af det hellige sakramente at holde sig til" (Regin Prenter. "Derfor nej til radio/TV nadver". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 14.08.1978). Prenter åbner for en "åndelig" form for semi-nadver mellem mennesker, man gennem radioen "åndeligt" kan "føle et fællesskab med, men ikke legemlig være sammen med", men tilføjer den nadverteologiske pointe, at "'radionadveren' [er] den billigste måde at slippe for ved alterbordet at knæle synligt sammen med dem, vi ikke kan lide" (Regin

i form af DR-vært og journalist Anders Laugesen – og kan som sådan betegnes som en transmitteret analog nadver – ellers foregår gudstjenesterne uden menighed i og med nedlukning og restriktioner.

Gaardens og Skov Jakobsens praksis blev startskuddet til den danske nadverdiskussion, der i de kirkelige medier og på Facebook udspillede sig mellem biskopper, forskere, præster og ganske få lægfolk: Kan man fejre nadveren virtuelt hjemme, og er denne spise og drikke virkelig nadver evangelisk luthersk set? Ifølge Folkekirkens Uddannelses- og Videnscenters rapport *Når folkekirken skal spille efter reglerne – men uden for banen* var nedlukningen ikke generelt præget af forsøg på digital nadverfejring. Fx var der ud af de i alt 85 digitale gudstjenester, der blev analyseret i undersøgelsen, kun to eller tre, som indeholdt nadver; det indikerer en generel tilbageholdenhed over for den nye praksis i den danske præstestand.

De to fronter i diskussionen om nadveren

Der tegnede sig hurtigt to fronter i nadverdiskussionen, som – med forskelligt afsæt – argumenterede henholdsvis for og imod "digital" eller den "nye nadver". Fortalerne for en egentlig digital nadver lagde først og fremmest vægt på troens betydning for nadveren: Når indstiftelsesordene bliver modtaget i tro, er elementerne, uanset hvor de – og nadvergæsterne – opholder sig, Kristi legeme og blod. Så længe indstiftelsesordene lyder, er Kristi nærvær ikke afhængigt af formidlingens øvrige form eller med andre ord ikke afhængigt af mediet.[13] Fortalerne for digital nadverpraksis, som også forsvarede dette i pressen, var bl.a. Marianne Gaarden, Peter Skov Jakobsen, Anders-Christian Jacobsen og Niels Henrik Gregersen.[14]

Prenter. "Fællesskabet om nadveren er væsentligt". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 24.02.1975). Nadveren kan ikke transmitteres af den grund, at den er et "måltid og ikke blot en 'forkyndelse'", hvorfor radioaltergang højst er en "privat husaltergang uden præst og menighed" (Regin Prenter. "Randbemærkning. Teknikkens grænse". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 11.03.1975).

13. Den senere teologiske diskussion af digital nadver afslørede en stigende opmærksomhed på forskellen mellem medier, analoge og digitale. Det vidnede f.eks. konferencen "Nadver, nærvær og medialitet", der blev afholdt online på Aarhus Universitet den 15. december 2020, om. Kan man fx uddele via en bog (selv læse) eller en film (selv se)? Hvad er forskellen på kanaler som YouTube, Twitch, FaceBook, SnapChat osv.? Nogle fortalere for digital nadver indkredser medier, der virker til formålet, og fordrer af liturgien, at der fx er samtidighed og gensidighed mellem præst og menighed.

14. De enkelte positioner blandt såvel fortalere som modstandere bliver i det følgende gennemgået mere udførligt. Her blot et udvalg af de forskellige debatindlæg for

Modstanderne lagde i stedet vægten på nadveren som et konkret formidlet fællesskab: Kristi nærvær i nadveren er ikke kun bundet til indstiftelsesordene og modtagelse af de enkelte elementer i tro, men troen er bundet til formidlingen gennem kirken, dvs. til den samlede handling. Blandt modstanderne af den digitale nadver finder man bl.a. Bo Kristian Holm, Thomas Reinholt Rasmussen og Morten Thaysen, Bent Flemming Nielsen og Mikkel Christoffersen samt Rasmussen og Johanne S. T. Kristensen. Under nedlukningen opstod således en diskussion om, hvad nadver luthersk betragtet overhovedet vil sige eller er.

Debatten om den digitale nadvers gyldighed hang bl.a. sammen med synet på og definitionen af krise og nedlukning kirkeligt og sakramentalt set. Betød Covid-19 nedlukningen en nød- eller en undtagelsessituation for kirken? Fortalerne for den "digitale nadver" var i hovedsagen enige om, at nedlukningen betød en nødsituation, fordi det var umuligt at samles og fejre nadver som sædvanligt. Kristine Garde og Mogens Mogensen indtog i den sammenhæng en mellemposition, idet begge i og med sammenstillingen mellem "nødnadver" og "nøddåb" argumenterer for hjemmenadver ud fra det almene præstedømme – eller embedsteologisk: I en nødsituation kan alle døbte udføre embedshandlinger i betydningen uddele nadver til hinanden i hjemmene. Sakramentets gyldighed afhænger ikke af præstens embede, men af ritualets ord og modtagelse i tro.[15]

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at anskueliggøre de divergerende holdninger: Jesper Bacher, "Coronagudstjenester med tvivlsom nadverfejring". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 23. marts 2020; Marianne Christiansen, "Samtalen om virtuel nadver er vigtig under coronasmitten". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 24. marts 2020; Philip Christoffersen, "Præster: Derfor vil vi ikke uddele nadver digitalt". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 26. marts 2020; Marianne Gaarden, "Digital gudstjeneste med nadver kan binde os sammen". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 1. april 2020; Kristine Garde, "Nadver under coronakrisen. Jeg foreslår hjemmets altergang, som de døbte selv udfører uden en præst". *Kristeligt Dagblad* d. 30. marts 2020; Mogens Hansen, "Med coronaen har kirkerne endelig opdaget radio og tv". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 2. april 2020; Anders-Christian Jacobsen, "Nadver i hjemmet er fuldt ud gyldig. Det bekymrer mig, at gyldigheden betvivles". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 1. april 2020; Niels Jørgen Kobbersmed, "Nej tak til nadver online". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 31. marts 2020; Mogens Mogensen, "Nødnadver. I den aktuelle situation kan alle døbte forestå nadver i hjemmet". Kristeligt Dagblad 28. marts 2020; Thomas Reinholdt Rasmussen og Morten Fester Thaysen, "Kirken findes ikke lige nu, som vi kender den". Kristeligt Dagblad 31. marts 2020; Johanne Stubbe Teglbjærg Kristensen og Søren Schultz Hansen, "Digitalisering stiller krav til kirker og teologisk forskning". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 19. maj 2020; Elisabeth Yskes, "Nadver uden menighed undergraver ritualet". *Kristeligt Dagblad* d. 23. marts 2020 m.fl.

15. Se Kristine Garde. "Nadver under coronakrisen. Jeg foreslår hjemmets altergang, som de døbte selv udfører uden en præst". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 30. marts 2020: "Derfor ligger der indbygget i det almindelige præstedømme en mulighed for, at de døbte selv kan udføre embedshandlinger […] Det kan kun ske i nødsituationer",

Fortalerne for digital fejring var, som også Garde og Mogensen, enige om, at den sædvanlige nadverfejring helt klart er at foretrække. Dette blev der givet mange og vidt forskellige argumenter for, fx fællesskab, interaktion mellem præst og menighed samt rum og krop, herunder sakramentets fysisk-taktile dimension.[16] Det var også påfaldende, at denne præference af mange af fortalerne for digital fejring blev betragtet som selvfølgelig: "Selvfølgelig er det fysiske samvær at foretrække, også under altergangen" (Gaarden 2020).[17] Den digitale nadver var altså ifølge fortalerne grundet den særlige situation en slags foreløbig eller midlertidig nadver, der – særligt med sjælesørgerisk fortegn – gælder, indtil man igen kan vende tilbage til kirkens sædvanlige fejring: "[V]i må håbe, at vi inden alt for længe igen kan samles til gudstjeneste i vore kirker og under ledelse af præsten holde nadver sammen. Men indtil da, er der ingen grund til, at vi forholder hinanden nadveren" (Mogensen 2020).

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se også M. Mogensen. "Nødnadver. I den aktuelle situation kan alle døbte forestå nadver i hjemmet". Kristeligt Dagblad 28. marts 2020.

16. Se f.eks. Niels Henrik Gregersen i Malene Fenger Grøndahl. "Er det problematisk, at nadveren modtages senere, end den gives?" *Kristeligt Dagblad* 27. april 2020 eller Marianne Gaarden. "Digital gudstjeneste med nadver kan binde os sammen". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 31. marts 2020. Mens Garde og Mogensen forudsætter en fælles nadverfejring i hjemmene, hvor de døbte selv indstifter nadver for og til hinanden – og dermed en vis fysisk samtidighed – foreslår fx Gaarden og Anders-Christian Jacobsen, at man ude i stuerne "selv siger med på indstiftelsesordene […] Så er nadveren retteligt indstiftet, og man kan stole fuldt og fast på, at Kristus er til stede for os i det brød og den vin, der nu er Kristi legeme og blod"; se A.C. Jacobsen. "Nadver i hjemmet er fuldt ud gyldig. Det bekymrer mig, at gyldigheden betvivles". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 1. april 2020.

17. Positionen er påfaldende, fordi digitaliseringen i resten af samfundet jo ubestrideligt har medført en tiltagende udryddelse af analoge formidlingsformer som fx breve, der bliver til mails eller snaps, eller butikker, der omlægges til nethandel. Det er interessant at overveje, om selvfølgelighed i forhold til præferencen for analog fejring primært tilhører en ældre analog, kirkelig generation, der ikke kan forestille sig, at den analoge fejring skulle ophøre (hvis den ligeså godt kan være digital), mens de yngre godt kan forestille sig dette. De yngre tager ikke den analoge for givet og er derfor mere kritiske over for udviklingen og nuancerede i deres opfattelse. Strengt taget må man sige, at hvis man kan fejre nadveren digitalt, kan også dåb og enhver forkyndelse foregå digitalt, og så er det vel i yderste konsekvens økonomisk og etisk uansvarligt at holde kirkebygninger osv. i gang? Hvilken betydning har i den forbindelse forholdet mellem fx liturgi og diakoni? Man kan se det som udtryk for en selvmodsigelse at sige, at nadver kan fejres digitalt, men analog er bedst. Det giver to nadvere, en første- og en andenrangs.

Systematisk-teologisk analyse af praksis og diskussion under nedlukningen

Som så mange andre tiltag i Covid-19 perioden var "den digitale nadver" altså født med en vis solnedgangsklausul. Men spørgsmålet er, om også sakramentale nyskabelser og nye liturgiske praksisser udløber automatisk på linje med øvrigt "nødberedskab", især hvis man med afsæt i Luther argumenterer teologisk for, at digital nadver "er fuldt ud gyldig" (Jacobsen 2020). Vi skildrer og analyserer i det følgende diskussionens mest markante syn på troens rolle i nadveren og vender os dernæst mod de tre øvrige temaer, som vi har valgt at strukturere analysen efter, nemlig nærvær, ånd og fællesskab.

Tro

Teologisk interesserede Gaarden og Jacobsen sig i deres indlæg fortrinsvist for indstiftelsesordenes og troens betydning for det, som bl.a. Jacobsen refererede til som "nadverens gyldighed".[18] Det er ikke afgørende, hvordan nadveren formidles, og hvor menigheden inklusiv præst befinder sig. Det afgørende er ordet og troen, der tager imod: "Når indstiftelsesordene lyder, og mennesket i tro modtager brød og vin, ja, så er Kristus selv til stede i brødet og vinen" (Gaarden 2020).[19] Formidlingsformen, dvs. hvordan ordene lyder og elementerne rækkes, herunder også, hvornår det sker, og hvor menigheden befinder sig, har ikke betydning for, om en fejring er et sakramente,

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18. Se Jacobsen 2020, der i *Kristeligt Dagblad* udtrykker bekymring for, at der i kirkelige medier sås tvivl "om gyldigheden af den nadver, som mange nyder hjemme". Jacobsen slår her fast, at "nadver fejret hjemme i forbindelse med en transmitteret gudstjeneste ifølge luthersk teologi er fuldt ud gyldig".
19. Gaarden, der modsat Jacobsen fremhæver den digitale nadvers sjælesørgeriske pointe, argumenterer bl.a. teologisk utraditionelt med afsæt i erfaringer fra empiriske studier gjort under hendes ph.d.-forløb. Hun beskriver i den forbindelse, hvordan mange radiolyttere, der pga. sygdom el.lign. ikke kunne deltage i den sædvanlige nadvergang, spiste brød og vin hjemme foran radioen: "For radiolytterne var der ingen tvivl: De var en del af de troendes fællesskab, når de deltog i altergangen foran radioen" (Gaarden 2020). Gaarden nærmer sig hermed, som Peter Skov-Jakobsen, en position, hvor modtagerens subjektive oplevelse af mening bliver konstituerende for begivenheden (se også Skov-Jakobsen. "Debat. Min tro står i år foran en prøve som aldrig tidligere". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 11. april 2020). Dette bygger på en subjektivering af trosbegrebet, der ikke hører den reformatoriske tid, kontekst og tekster til, men først muliggøres efterfølgende. Det er der selvfølgelig mere at sige til, men vigtigt er, at Luthers opfattelse af disse forhold bliver katalysator for den moderne forståelse af Gud, selv og verden, og det betyder foreløbigt, at man ikke kan debatte digitaliseringen af nadveren uden kritisk sans for vores nuværende erfarings- og erkendelsesbetingelser, hvor forestillingen om en løsrevet tro eller endda et løsrevet subjekt lever godt, skønt der ikke findes belæg for denne i den tidligere teologi.

og et måltid kan kaldes nadver. En "kortere eller længere afstand" mellem præst og menighed, indstiftelse og modtagelse, betyder "ikke noget i denne sammenhæng" (Jacobsen 2020). Indstiftelsesordene kan "med samtidens teknologi gå igennem lukkede kirkedøre" og stadig skabe, hvad de nævner, når blot troen er tilstede (Gaarden 2020). "Nadverens brød og vin bliver ikke til Kristi legeme og blod, blot ved at præsten siger indstiftelsesordene, men ved, at de mennesker, der deltager i nadverhandlingen, tror på og har tillid til, at Kristus er til stede for dem i nadverens brød og vin" (Jacobsen 2020). Gaarden og Jacobsen gør således begivenheden til et spørgsmål om indstiftelsesord og tro. Dermed fremstår tro som noget, vi har, og ikke noget, vi får gennem ord og sakramente: "Vi har syndernes forladelse, fordi Jesus har givet sit legeme og blod for os" (Gaarden 2020). Tro kan med andre ord ses som noget allerede og entydigt givet. De begrunder begge deres udlægning med henvisning til luthersk sakramenteteologi og argumenterer derfor med nadveren som eskatologisk måltid, der udtrykker fællesskabet mellem levende og døde i Kristus: I nadveren spiser man ikke blot med de andre, der i situationen også rækkes brød og vin, men med alle troende før, nu og efter. Nadveren er – skriver Jacobsen med henvisning til Luther – et "fællesskab med Kristus og med alle kristne", idet "nadveren manifesterer Kristi åndelige krop i verden".[20] Der er altså ikke noget nyt i at fejre nadver med mennesker, der ikke er fysisk-geografisk til stede sammen med en selv: "Alle, der fejrer nadver, er derfor en del af Kristi åndelige krop, ligegyldigt hvor man fysisk befinder sig" (Jacobsen 2021). Fællesskab er – kristologisk og eskatologisk – andet end tidslig og rumlig samværen.[21]

Vi vender tilbage til, hvad ordet "ånd" betyder luthersk, men vil foreløbigt blot bemærke, at Gaarden og Jacobsen synes at orientere sig i forhold til den tidlige Luthers sakramenteteologi.[22] Luthers tidlige sakramenteteologi er formuleret i opgør med den skolastiske transsubstantiationslære og forståelsen af sakramentets virkning som *ex*

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20. Anders-Christian Jacobsen. "Professor i dogmatik: Digital nadver er ikke svær-meri og truer ikke det kristne fællesskab". Kristeligt Dagblad 13. januar 2021. Se også Gaarden 2020, der bl.a. med afsæt i Paulus fremhæver nadveren som eskato-logisk "åndsfællesskab": "'Vi er alle blevet døbt med én ånd til at være ét legeme,' som Paulus skriver. Det legeme er fællesskabet med alle troende i Kristus, og det forbinder os med hinanden, også selvom vi ikke er sammen fysisk".
21. En eskatologisk position findes også – dog med et andet dogmatisk indhold – hos Bent Flemming Nielsen & Mikkel Christoffersen. "Liturgical Struggles in the Corona Crisis". *Cursor_ Zeitschrift für explorative Theologie. Viral, Special Issue* 8. april 2020. https://cursor.pubpub.org/pub/nielsen-christoffersen-liturgy/release/2 2020 (set 13.10.2021).
22. Se f.eks. Jakobsen 2021: "således som Luther beskriver det i sit første skrift om nadveren, En sermon om nadveren".

opere operato, hvilket indebærer vægt på troen og det indre – snarere end det ydre, der omvendt spiller en afgørende rolle i den senere argumentation mod sværmerne.[23] I modsætning til Luther forstår ovennævnte dog som antydet ikke troen ud fra forkyndelsen og sakramentet, men begrunder sakramentet med troen og tolker med en enkelt påfaldende variation troen som åndelig i modsætning til fysisk: "Det er selvsagt kun det brød og vin, som den troende har til formålet, mens ordene lyder, der er indstiftede" (Gaarden 2020). Begreberne "åndelig" og "fysisk" defineres gennemgående ikke i debatten, men modstilles af fortalerne. Det påfaldende ord er "mens", der indikerer en eller anden form for fysisk samtidighed som betingelse. Betyder det, at de "digitale nadvere" kun er indstiftede, da de blev afspillet første gang, eller indstiftes der nu permanent på f.eks. YouTube, hvor flere videoer ligger?

Modstillingen mellem det fysiske og det åndelige dukker op i flere af indlæggene i debatten uden udførlige definitioner. Det kan, hvis man medtænker Luthers tekster, som flere indlæg gerne vil, og sakramenteopfattelsen i de reformatoriske bekendelsesskrifter, som vi har som kontekst her, undre, for her er tro og ånd ikke rent modsatte begreber af det såkaldt fysiske. De er tværtimod relationelle begreber, der indebærer et differentieret forhold til det fysiske, som i øvrigt er et vanskeligt begreb at indkredse, fordi det betyder noget forskelligt på forskellige tidspunkter i historien.[24] Tro og ånd, som er nærmest synonyme begreber, betegner konkret overvindelse af modsætningen til Gud, mellem mennesker og i menneskets selv (synd, død og djæ-

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23. Man taler traditionelt om tre faser i Luthers sakramenteteologi, hvoraf de første to (1519-25) er repræsenteret ved tekster som *De captivitate Babylonica* (1520) og *Vom Anbeten des Sakraments des heiligen Leibnams Christi* (1523). Disse er viet opgøret med den skolastiske filosofis transsubstantiationslære og forståelse af messeofferet. Da sværmerne i 1524 blander sig i diskussionen, betyder det et fokusskifte i Luthers sakramentsteologi, jf. ovenfor. Forholdet mellem elementet og ordet får derfor en markant plads i diskussionen med sværmerne. De sene nadvertekster, *Dass diese Worte Christi 'Das ist mein leib' noch fest stehen* (1527) og *Vom Abendmahl Christi* (1528), der repræsenterer den tredje nadverteologiske fase, er således præget af opgøret med den repræsentative forståelse af sakramentet som henvisende tegn, jf sværmerne. Det er nu Luther om at gøre at fastholde indstiftelsesordene, "dette er mit legeme", og Kristi legemlige nærvær i de ydre tegn, brød og vin. Se for en oversigt over de forskellige faser i Luthers nadverlære samt en introduktion til de sene nadvertekster Nete Helene Enggaard. *Nærvær som refiguration, begivenhed og materialitet*. Publikationer Fra Det Teologiske Fakultet 32, Det Teologiske Fakultet, Københavns Universitet, 2012
24. Det såkaldt fysiske har forskellig betydning i forskellige kontekster og forbindes i dag ofte med naturalistiske, fysikalistiske opfattelser af mennesket og dets krop. Dermed trækker f.eks. Jacobsens modstilling mellem ånd og fysik hans indlæg i en supernaturalistisk retning, selvom det måske ikke er hans intention.

vel) – og herunder altså også overvindelsen af den modsætning, der i tidlig teologi kaldes en modsætning mellem legeme og sjæl og senere i historien er dukket op igen som en modsætning mellem fysisk og psykisk ('åndelig'). Sakramentet er derfor for dem, der erfarer denne modsætning, dvs. ikke for de uanfægtede eller uanfægtet troende (hvilket ville være anakronistisk at tilskrive Luther), men

> Daran er unss leret, das diss sacrament eyn sterck und trost sey der, die sund und ubell betruben und engisten, Das auch sanct Augustin spricht: Diss speyss sucht nur eynn hungerige seel und fleugt nichts sso fast, als eyn volle satte seel, dye seyn nit darff.[25]

Gregersen, der hører til de lidt mere tilbageholdende fortalere for den digitale praksis, er tilsyneladende opmærksom på, at troen ikke kan forudsættes uproblematisk (som en 'ting', man kan have, der gør spise og drikke til nadver). Han argumenterer derfor i første omgang ud fra den sene Luthers nadverlære, herunder forestillingen om Kristi legemlige allestedsnærvær, som Luther sideløbende med sin understregning af Kristi virkelige nærvær i elementerne udviklede i polemikken mod sværmerne.[26] Gregersen fremhæver Guds almagt, evighed og allestedsnærvær, der sakramentalt set har tidslige og rumlige implikationer hinsides det geografiske og fysiske samvær. Gør man sted og samtidighed "til et teologisk problem, tænker man for småt om Guds mulighed for at flytte sig i tid og rum og for stort om kirken som fysisk sted" (Fenger Grøndal 2020). Kristus har, påpeger Gregersen, ifølge Luthers store nadverskrift *Vom Abendmahl Christi* tre nærværsmåder, og han kan være "allestedsnærværende og realt til stede igennem alt brød og al vin, også i en kropslig, materiel

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25. Martin Luther. "Ein Sermon von dem hochwürdigen Sakrament des heiligen wahren Leichnams Christi und von den Brüderschaften. 1519", i WA 2, 746, 29-32. Se også Luther, "En Sermon om Kristi legeme og om broderskaberne", i *Teologiske tekster*, Aarhus Universitetsforlag 199: "[D]ette sakramente er en styrkelse og trøst for dem, som synden og det onde bedrøver og ængster, som også Augustin siger: Denne mad spørger kun efter en sulten sjæl og flygter bort fra en fyldt, mættet sjæl, der ikke trænger til den".
26. Der er i Lutherforskningen ikke enighed om, hvordan allesteds- og realnærværet forholder sig til hinanden: Mens en position ser ubikvitetslæren som realnærværets forudsætning (f.eks. Erwin Metzke, Vilmos Vatja, Regin Prenter og Reinhold Seeberg), ser en anden allestedsnærværet som en hjælpekonstruktion eller et spekulativt overflodsbevis (f.eks. Ernst Sommerlath, Tom Hardt og Theodor Mahlmann): Allestedsnærværet udgør en mulighed (multipræsens), der ikke begrunder det reale nærvær (jf. Enggaard 2012, 70). Se for en nyere tolkning af forholdet Enggaard 2012, der betragter allestedsnærværet som en dekonstruktiv – metafysikkritisk – tankefigur eller retorisk strategi med henblik på at understrege Kristi virkelige nærvær i elementerne brød og vin.

dimension" (ibid.). Guds evighed betyder "samtidighed med alle tider"; han er ikke til stede på ét bestemt sted på ét specifikt tidspunkt og ikke alle andre steder på alle andre tidspunkter: "Så selvfølgelig kan Kristus være fuldt og realt nærværende i brød og vin, der står to forskellige steder på to forskellige tidspunkter" (ibid.).[27] Kristi reale nærvær i sakramentet forekommer således ifølge Gregersen mere eller mindre synonymt med Guds ubikvitære nærvær, så man med kristologisk fortegn næsten kan tale om en slags pansakramentalisme, eller sakramental realisme: Gud er i Kristus realt nærværende i alt det skabte; det kan vi tro eller lade være med, og nadveren kan styrke troen. Mens Gaarden og Jacobsen synes at afskrive formidlingens og elementernes betydning – eller degradere denne til den umiddelbare identitet mellem ord og tro – betoner Gregersen elementernes pansakramentalitet, så indstiftelsesordene i stedet får en mere tydende og fortolkende karakter.

Når man ser på disse to vidt forskellige forsvar for den digitale fejring, springer flere forhold i øjnene. Det forekommer oplagt at fokusere på troens afgørende rolle i nadveren i luthersk sammenhæng og dernæst på forholdet mellem tro og ord. Udfordringen er, at tro og ord i den lutherske bekendelsestradition ikke er abstrakte – løsrevne eller isolerede – begreber, men betyder noget bestemt i og med den ganske bestemte sammenhæng, hvor de får deres mening. I første omgang er tro forstået som et forhold til Kristus, dernæst som udtryk for Helligånd og således som noget, vi får. Den lutherske bekendelsestradition – og Luther selv – forudsætter med andre ord, at mennesket er et væsen, der ikke af sig selv kan tro og derfor kun kan modtage troen fra Gud, nemlig konkret som Helligåndens gerning i mennesket. Det er det, der sker i sakramentet. Det er det, et sakramente er: Guds handling med og i os. Troen er ikke givet i betydningen selvfølgelig, og den er ikke menneskets egen præstation.

Tro er ifølge Luther og senere luthersk teologi et forhold til Kristus og dermed udtryk for menneskets (nye) forhold til Gud, sig selv og verden. Menneskets gudsforhold, selvforhold og verdensforhold er sammenhængende, og denne sammenhæng, som er mennesket, erfares ifølge Luther af alle mennesker som uerkendt eller erkendt fortvivlet; undtagen i forholdet til Kristus, hvor den erfares fri og erkendes

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27. Den pointe har Gregersen naturligvis ret i, eftersom flere menigheder fejrer nadver på flere forskellige steder og tider, men spørgsmålet er, om forholdet mellem analogt og digitalt dermed er fyldestgørende behandlet. For at drive positionen til det yderste, kunne man spørge, om det strengt taget ville være tilstrækkeligt med én eneste stor global digital fejring? En enkelt søndagsvideo, som alle kunne se efter behov? Det åbner så det videre – sakramenteteologiske spørgsmål – hvorvidt det afgørende i det enkelte menneskes liv i så fald vil være, at det afspiller denne video?

som sådan.[28] Afgørende er, at troen altid er et konkret forhold mellem mennesket og Kristus. Som konkret forhold udtrykker og angår den hele mennesket og lader sig ikke objektivere og verdsliggøre, psykologisere og mystificere, eller socialisere (gøre rent kirkelig eller religiøs), dvs. opløse og reducere til en af disse moderne kategorier. Tro – og vantro, som er den umiddelbare fortvivlelse i forhold til Gud – udtrykker hele mennesket i dets konkrete sammenhæng. "Fysisk" og "åndeligt" hører som modsatte moderne kategorier egentlig ikke Luther til på anden måde end som udtryk for synd, nemlig som en ikke erkendt splittelse i mennesket. Ifølge Luther er mennesket skabt helt, men født splittet, og forekommer således som en splittet helhed. Denne helhed kommer på forskellige måde til udtryk i gudsforholdet (og brydes derfor også på forskellig måde i forhold til selv og verden), så tro og Gud hører sammen: I troen fremstår Gud god, verden skabt og mennesket gudbilledligt, hvilket vil sige, at uden evangeliet fremstår Gud vred, verden tilfældig og mennesket ondt.

At troen hverken er selvfølgelig, givet fra fødsel, eller er en præstation er for Luther nødvendigt at understrege, fordi mennesket selv almindeligvis tror, at den er det, og derfor fra fødsel selv skaber sig afguder – om end med døden til følge – sådan som det fx beskrives i udlægningen af det første bud i *Den Store Katekismus.*[29] Menneskets tro på, at det selv har tro eller selv kan skabe den, er ifølge luthersk tænkning netop udtryk for, at det ikke forholder sig sådan. Derfor er mennesket ifølge luthersk opfattelse ikke blot et væsen, der ikke selv kan frembringe sin tro, men også et væsen, der ikke kan skelne sin

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28. Dette forhold udtrykkes fx i Danz' Luthertolkning, jf. Christian Danz. *Indføring i den evangeliske dogmatik.* København: Eksistensen 2020, 42-43: "For den enkelte opstår troen ikke med den enkeltes egen handling, men er ene og alene Guds værk i mennesket. At det kan blive til en grundlæggende livsbærende vished for det enkelte menneske, der ganske vist artikuleres i menneskets billede af sig selv, af verden og af dets gudsforhold, skyldes ikke dets egen handling eller dets egen formåen. Faktisk er ens egen tro opstået ved et brud […] Når tro og Gud hører sammen, som Luther betoner, så må opkomsten af ens egen tro komme til udtryk i gudsbilledet […] Det viser dybden og den livsgivende kraft i Luthers gudsbillede, at han har indoptaget denne antinomi i sin gudsopfattelse." En lignende relationel forståelse af mennesket som konkret forhold – til sig selv, Gud og verden – findes også, om end med terminologiske forskelle, i fx Holms eller Simons Lutherstudier, inkl. den social-etiske dimension, der kendetegner den nyere Lutherforskning (se nedenfor).
29. Se Luthers udlægning af det første bud i Martin Luther. *Skrifter i udvalg. Den Store Katekismus.* København: Credo 1996, 42-50. Danz skriver om Luther: "Den vished, som troserfaringen giver det enkelte menneske, spejler sig i gudsbilledet. Gudsbilledet bliver på den måde udtryk for menneskets vished om, at det er anerkendt af Gud på trods af den vedvarende brudthed […] Det er Luthers berømte formel fra *Store Katekismus,* at tro og Gud 'hører sammen'. 'Det dit hjerte hænger ved og det, du stoler på, det er egentlig din Gud'" (Danz 2020, 42).

egen tro fra vantro. Det er en afgørende forudsætning for det tros-begreb, som er impliceret i den lutherske sakramenteopfattelse, for kunne det skelne, så ville det kunne kende forskel på sig selv og Gud, og det er netop det, som troen – modsat vantro – består i; mennesket ville således selv være sakramentalt (og ikke trænge til et sakramente). Vantro kaldes i *Den Augsburgske Bekendelse* for synd og beskrives som det at være uden gudsfrygt, uden tillid til Gud og med begær.[30] Det indebærer ifølge nyere luthersk systematisk-teologi, at menneskets forhold til Gud, sig selv og verden hænger sammen i forskellighed (hvilket blot vil sige, at de forskellige forhold ikke kan reduceres til hinanden og heller ikke adskilles, fordi mennesket er ét), og at det ene forhold viser sig i det andet, uden mennesket dog dermed ved, hvad der er hvad.[31] Det er også en af de indsigter, som kommer til udtryk i det lutherske syndsbegreb, nemlig at menneskets medfødte besvær med at skelne mellem sig selv og Gud blandt andet viser sig i, at det heller ikke kan skelne mellem Gud og verden, så det fejlagtigt venter sig frelse fra verden, ligesom det ikke kan skelne sig selv fra verden.[32] Vigtigt i forhold til troen er, at mennesket, luthersk forstået, ikke er født kompetent i den henseende, men skabt til at blive det: Frit og myndigt, men født vantroende og uden evne til at skelne tro fra vantro.[33] I *Den Augsburgske Bekendelse* tages dette som et faktum, en forudsætning, uden hvilken Kristus-bekendelsen slet ikke ville give mening. Dette beskrives ikke kun principielt i artikel to, men gennemgående i flere andre artikler, hvor mennesket betegnes som forskrækket samvittighed. Bekendelsen er således optaget af evange-

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30. Irene Dingel m.fl. *Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelish-Lutherischen Kirche.* Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2014, 95-96: "[V]on mutter leibe an voller böser lust und neigung sind und keine ware Gottes forcht, keine ware Gottes lieb, kein waren glauben an Gott von natur haben können".

31. Se fx Wolfhart Pannenberg. *Systematische Theologie Band 2*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1991, 266ff.

32. Danz sammenfatter den moderne forandring af vores betingelser som erkendelseskritik og historisk kritik, der implicerer det metafysiske gudsbegrebs- og skriftprincippets krise (Danz 2020, 144ff). Der er blandt de efter-dialektiske teologer konsensus om, at gudsbegreb og skriftprincip ikke kan "reddes" uden gennem krisen og dvs. radikal kritik. Dette, som altså ifølge disse receptioner har sine rødder i reformationen, har betydning for nadverdiskussionen. Det betyder nemlig, at man ikke kan splitte nadveren ad i moderne dele (jf. fysik og ånd) og fx lade indstiftelsesord, elementer eller tro alene konstituere nadveren. Nadveren er i stedet en begivenhed, der med moderne ord kriticistisk, hermeneutisk og cirkulært både forudsætter og vækker tro. Den har hverken troen som subjekt eller objekt, men drejer sig med moderne terminologi om, hvordan disse aspekter brydes og forbindes intersubjektivt og åbent.

33. Sådan udlægges forholdet fx hos Wolfhart Pannenberg. *Systematische Theologie Band 2*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1992.

lieforkyndelse og sakramenteforvaltning til trøst af den forskrækkede samvittighed, som altså bliver en fast term for alle mennesker. Når Gaarden og mere perifert Jacobsen lægger så stor vægt på nadver-teologiens sjælesørgeriske dimension, så er der god dækning for dette i den lutherske betoning af trøsten, men i det omfang, de gør troen til abstrakt kriterium for nadveren, bliver det problematisk. Samlet må man sige, at Gaardens og Jacobsens fremhævelse af troen forekommer at være et forsøg på at tage Luthers indsigt i tro som udtryk for det en-kelte menneskes frihed og dømmekraft alvorligt, men selvom Luthers nadveropfattelse ganske rigtigt i sidste ende fører til en opfattelse af mennesket som frit og i den henseende myndigt, så er dette netop på betingelse af sakramenterne og herunder nadveren. Tolkninger, der eksplicit refererer til Luther også i forbindelse med 'digital nadver', kan derfor ikke se bort fra, at Luther selv tænkte nadveren som for-udsætning for frihed; han tog ikke troen som en selvfølge34 og var derfor heller ikke moderne i den forstand, som Gaarden og Jacobsen synes at forudsætte[34] Troen blev tværtimod kaldt for gave, fordi den gives gennem sakramenterne som instrumenter for Helligånden.[35]

Derfor var Luther, hans samtidige og den tidlige lutherreception optaget af, hvordan denne gave (med en terminologi, der efter mo-derniteten ofte fejlagtigt er blevet objektiveret) "gives", dvs. de var op-taget af, *hvordan* Helligånden gør det arbejde i mennesket, der kaldes tro. For at forstå deres svar på dette, er det vigtigt med en vis distance til vores moderne erkendelsesbetingelser, der stadig i dag gør, at der ofte tales om relationer eller erfaringer, som om de var substanser eller "ting": isolerede og adskilte størrelser. Tro er ikke en ting, men en relation og tilmed selve den relation, som et menneske *er* eller snarere kan forekomme som.[36] Derfor er denne relations konkrete karakter

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34. Hvilket den kan siges at blive med den moderne naturalisme, der uproblema-tisk forudsætter naturens natur og den moderne humanisme, der uproblematisk forudsætter menneskets menneskelighed.

35. Det fremgår særligt af sammenhængen mellem *Den Augsburgske Bekendelses* artikel fire om retfærdiggørelse ved tro og artikel fem om kirken, der begynder med "Solchen glauben zuerlangen, hat Gott das predigt ampt eingesatzt, Evangelium und Sacramenta geben"; Dinkel m.fl. 2014, 100. Denne sammenhæng mellem em-bede og forvaltning bliver der vendt op og ned på i det omfang, man skiller ord fra tro, jf. fx Jacobsen.

36. Tro er ifølge f.eks. Danz' udlægning af Luther den individuelle tilegnelse af sandhed. Den er et forhold til sandheden, herunder til menneskets eget brudte for-hold til den. Denne tilegnelse kan mennesket derfor ikke selv præstere (for det er jo netop på afstand af sandheden), og den erfaring indgår efterfølgende i troens forståelse af sig selv og beskrivelse af Gud. Trosindholdet fungerer på denne måde som selvbeskrivelser, der først opstår med troshændelsen og altså refleksivt beskriver denne som et brud – hvilket ikke betyder, at troen "kun" er selvbeskrivelser (og reduceret subjektivt); den er tværtimod et forhold til sandheden (Danz 2020).

og formidling helt afgørende for de tidlige lutheranere.[37] Reducerer man relationens konkrete karakter, dvs. dens formidling, historie og kontekst, og gør nadver til et spørgsmål om forholdet mellem indstiftelsesord og tro alene, reducerer man således den kompleksitet – eller kontekstuelle konkretion – der er på færde i luthersk nadverteologi.

Dette åbner igen spørgsmålet om den lutherske traditions svar på, *hvordan* Helligånden virker tro i mennesket? Bemærk i den forbindelse, at Luther og lutheranerne ikke interesserer sig for, "hvornår nadver er gyldig". De interesserer sig derimod for, hvordan det forskrækkede menneske, der er alle mennesker, bliver trøstet, for heri ligger nadverens gyldighed. Det drejer sig om, hvordan vantro bliver ophævet, forandret eller åbnet (her kan man diskutere ordvalg) i tillid, angst i håb og begær i kærlighed. Det drejer sig med andre ord om, hvordan Kristus i nadveren bliver nærværende i mennesket, så det lever i hans ånd. De er optaget af, hvordan den forskrækkede samvittighed får sin synd forladt og opstår i frihed. Det bringer os til det næste tema, nemlig tro som udtryk for Kristi nærvær: Kristus for mennesket og i mennesket.

Nærvær

Som følge af de forskellige forsvar for digital nadverfejring har flere udtrykt sig kritisk. Blandt de mest kritiske er Holm, der i debatten udmærker sig ved at have Luther som sit forskningsfelt. Han finder det dels problematisk, at der ved digitale uddelinger ikke er fysisk-geografisk sammenfald mellem uddeling og modtagelse og modtagerne imellem, dels at der er tale om en tidslig forskydning i mange såkaldt digitale nadveruddelinger (Holm 2020). Det betyder noget for den interaktion mellem Gud og menneske, der ifølge Holm ken-

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37. Det ses ikke blot i de tidlige skrifter som fx Luthers *Sermon om Kristi legemes sakramente* og i øvrigt i de reformatoriske bekendelsesskrifter, men også i den efterfølgende bekendelsesudvikling og formuleringerne i Konkordieformlen fra 1577. Fx er det påfaldende, at Luther i sin tidlige nadvertekst lægger vægt på kollekten som en del af nadverbegivenheden, altså indsamlingen af midler til de fattige, så nadveren dermed ikke kan reduceres til diskussion om forholdet mellem ord, elementer og tro alene eller mellem gudsforhold og selvforhold. Den inkluderer også verdensforholdet. Luther beskriver en god forvaltning og brug af sakramentet som: "Da nam sich eyn Christen des andernn an, stund eyn dem andernn bey, hatt eyn mit dem andern mit leyden, trug eyner des andern purd und unfall, das ist nu vorplichen unnd seynd nur vill messen und vill diss sacraments empfahung an alle seyner bedeutung vorstand und ubunde" (Luther 1519, 747, 21-25; se også Luther 1994: 245: "Dengang tog den ene kristne sig af den anden, de stod hinanden bi, havde medlidenhed med hinanden og bar hinandens byrde og nød. Dette er nu sygnet hen; der er kun mange messer og megen altergang, men der er ingen som helst forståelse eller indøvelse af, hvad sakramentet betyder".

detegner nadveren. Således mener han, at den digitale uddeling trækker nadveren i en tvivlsom individualiserende retning: "noget, vi bare kan modtage, når det passer os hver især" (Fenger Grøndahl 2020).[38] Den digitale uddeling tenderer dermed lukkede broderskaber og privatmesser (ibid.). I lyset af bekendelsestraditionens udsagn om tro og vantro forekommer dette at være en væsentlig pointe. Spørgsmålet er, hvordan den nærmere kan udfoldes og dermed bidrage til en afklaring af, hvordan Kristus er nærværende i nadveren for og i mennesket, dvs. både i det ydre og det indre – så disse aspekter i overensstemmelse med luthersk systematisk teologi ikke falder fra hinanden.

Ifølge Holm har nadver en fysisk dimension og forudsætter derfor fysisk-geografisk samtidighed og samvær. Ligesom Gregersen, der er optaget af Kristi tilstedeværelse i elementerne, er Holm optaget af samtidighed og samvær som et fysisk fællesskab. Fysisk samtidighed og deltagelse – eller interaktion – hører ifølge Holm til nadverens formidlingsmæssige kerne og derfor til dens sakramentalitet. I tidsskriftartiklen, "Er digital nadver nadver?", understreger han derfor, at spørgsmålet om digitalisering af nadveren drejer sig om nadverens karakter af nadver og altså sakramente:[39] "[N]adverens mening er så tæt forbundet med dens medium, at digital nadver truer nadverens betydning" (Holm 2020). Til forskel fra de øvrige indlæg i pressen fra såvel fortalere som modstandere af den nye nadver argumenterer Holm i tidsskriftet mere udførligt og understreger sammenhængen mellem den kommunikation, der sker i nadveren, og nadverens eget medium, nemlig dens liturgiske form: Nadverens "kommunikationsform er ikke envejskommunikationens, for kommunikation er mere kompleks og involverer interaktion mellem parterne" (ibid. 95).[40] Den særlige kommunikation i nadveren finder ifølge Holm sted som en gensidig udveksling. I sakramentet "giver Gud sig selv *til* og *for* det syndige menneske, idet han samtidig tager imod det" (ibid. 99).

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38. Bo K. Holm er ligesom Niels Henrik Gregersen en del af artiklen af Fenger Grøndahl: "Er det problematisk, at nadveren modtages senere, end den gives" fra 2020. Når der nedenfor refereres til Grøndahl, drejer det sig således om Holms position i mediedebatten, der ikke skal forveksles med hans bidrag i KFPT 2020.

39. Heller ikke for Holm er nadveren en ting, der kan være mere eller mindre gyldig, men spørgsmålet er derimod, hvad nadver er, og hvordan den fejres.

40. Holm refererer i den forbindelse til den tyske Lutherforsker Wolfgang Simon, der i sit arbejde med offermotivet i Luthers nadverlære argumenterer for, at nadverfejringen ikke kan presses ned i et aktiv-passiv skema, herunder de tilhørende forståelser af subjektiv intentionalitet. Holm 2020, 98. Se også Wolfgang Simon. *Die Messopfertheologie Martin Luthers*. Neue Reihe 22. Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen 2003. For begge spiller Luthers intime forståelse af *communicatio idiomatum* (egenskabernes udveksling) en afgørende rolle. Se også Enggaard 2012 for nyere tilgange til Luthers forståelse af den idiomkommunikative udveksling i Kristi person og nadverelementer.

Holm forstår denne udveksling med reference til bryllupsbilledet, som Luther bruger om "retfærdiggørelsens nyetablerede fællesskab mellem Kristus og den kristne" (ibid. 98): Kristus giver i kærlighed sig selv til mennesket, og mennesket giver i tro sig selv tilbage. Mennesket kan således i nadveren selv blive giver, "ikke på eget initiativ, men fordi Gud deler sin given med mennesket" (ibid. 98). Nadverens kommunikation modsvares af dens *medium*, som jf. inkarnationen er den liturgiske "konkrete, kommunikative legemlighed" (ibid. 96). Det er ifølge Holm i den fælles liturgiske handling mellem Gud og mennesker, at deltagerne "modtager" det fællesskab, "som er Kristus, og hvormed Kristus med alle sine hellige bliver et åndeligt legeme" (ibid. 98). Også liturgien er, som en "fysisk forkyndelse" af nadverens løfte, "en del af nadverens indhold, ikke bare dens form". Den menneskelige selvgiven manifesterer sig fysisk liturgisk i og med den knælende positur ved alterskranken, der instituerer selvhengivelsen. Den "kropslige modtagelse" er således afgørende for det forsonende fællesskab med Kristus i brød og vin, der ifølge Holm som fælles, fysisk *og* social handling peger ud i verden i livet med de andre (ibid. 99). Holm mener derfor også, at fortalerne for den digitale nadver overser nadverens særlige medium, dvs. den liturgiske situation – den gensidige given, herunder også dens sociale aspekter – og reducerer nadverfejringen til en rent individuel og passiv modtagelse af elementerne.

Det er Holms fortjeneste at have løftet nadverens historicitet og kontekstualitet frem som afgørende for forståelsen af den som konkret fællesskab og dermed for dens sakramentalitet. Hermed danner Holm en frugtbar modvægt til subjektiverende og åndeliggørende tilgange til nadveren i debatten om digitalisering. Han bidrager således yderligere til at understrege, at gensidigheden i forholdet mellem Gud og menneske er en følge af Guds forsoning af sig med os i Kristus. Den er derfor helt afhængigt af, at den ånd, der rejste Kristus fra døden, også rejser os ud af vantro og død – hvilket gøres gennem ord og sakramenter. Gensidigheden bliver først til i kraft af nadveren, hvor (kun) Gud handler med os, og det sker helt bogstaveligt "i kraft af", fordi gensidigheden beror på det nærvær af Kristus, der er Kristi Ånd, jf. også Holm. Det bringer os til spørgsmålet, hvad vi skal forstå ved Kristi nærvær, som i sakramentet gives til os for at virke i os, dvs. som Helligånd? For Kristi nærvær er det, der normalt kaldes Helligånd. Det er sådan, dette erfares. I nærværende diskussion om digitalisering synes Holm at lægge vægt på nadverens fysisk-geografiske dimension for forståelsen af Helligåndens rolle i luthersk nadverteologi, men her er der mere at sige. For begrebet "fysisk" er ikke enkelt eller entydigt i nadverteologisk sammenhæng og derfor, så vidt vi kan se, ikke et

ubetinget oplagt udgangspunkt for forståelsen af Helligåndens rolle. I hvert fald ikke, hvis denne fysik defineres rent positivt, som en moderne naturalisme vil være tilbøjelig til, eller negativt, som en antik platonisme ville gøre det. Begge dele forekommer problematisk, og begrebet "fysisk" ikke entydigt.

Ånd

Artikel fem i *Den Augsburgske Bekendelse* forklarer, at Helligånden gives ved ord og sakramenter – dvs. troen, som er et forhold til Gud, nemlig det forhold som Kristus er – gives ved sakramenterne. Forkyndelse og sakramenter fremkalder tro: den tro, "at Gud ikke for vores fortjenesters skyld, men for Kristi skyld retfærdiggør dem, der tror, at de tages til nåde for Kristi skyld" (Dingel m.fl. 2014, 99). I *Den Augsburgske Bekendelse* beskrives Åndens gerning således efter artikel fire om retfærdiggørelsen i artiklen om det kirkelige embede, og det uddybes i den efterfølgende artikel om den nye lydighed. Troen *er* Kristi nærvær som Ånd, hvilket *er* den nye lydighed. Dvs. at troen er den tillid, det håb og den kærlighed, som erfares i gensidigheden; dette beskrives i artiklen som gode gerninger og gode frugter og *præciseres* som syndernes forladelse og retfærdiggørelse (Dingel m.fl. 2014, 101).[41] Det, der ofte i lutherske diskussioner er blevet kaldt "helliggørelse" og diskuteret som et spørgsmål om forholdet mellem retfærdiggørelse og helliggørelse, forekommer her altså beskrevet som to sider af samme sag. Det kan fx forstås sådan, at retfærdiggørelse beskriver troens nye gudsforhold, mens ordet helliggørelse beskriver verdensforholdet som en side af dette. Følger man denne udlægning, kan man sige, at den hellige også er den kærlige, den forvissede også den håbende, og den tillidsfulde også den troende; forstået sådan forekommer kærlighed, tro og håb som manifestation af hellighed (Helligånd), vished og tillid. I denne sammenhæng vil det sige, at troen, der gives i nadveren, ikke er tro *på* dette. Den er heller ikke tro på Kristus, på Ordet eller på evangeliet udlagt som en ting eller en

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41. Dette svarer til, hvad Luther siger i den tidligere nævnte Sermon fra 1519, nemlig, at frugten af sakramentet er fællesskab og kærlighed. Fælleskab er et andet ord for tilgivelse: Fællesskabet opstår, når det, der splitter, overvindes, nemlig synd i form af skyld. Kærlighed er et andet ord for opstandelse, nemlig det, der overvinder død. Det bør her nævnes, at en afgørende dimension ved Holms Luthertolkning netop er frugtbargørelsen af de tidlige nadverteksters fællesskabsmotiv også for Luthers senere sakramenteteologi. Modsat dele af den finske Lutherforskning, herunder dens fokus på helliggørelsesmotivet, evner Holm at undgå de substantielle faldgruber ved en *unio cum Christo* tænkning, idet han, jf. også Danz, ser tillid – i betydningen relationalitet eller gensidighed – som hermeneutisk nøgle i Luthers teologi.

substans, et grundlag, man kan stille sig på. Troen er tværtimod et nyt af Kristus bestemt forhold til den synd, død og djævel, som allerede er. Dette nye forhold er tilgivelsen af synden og et nyt forhold til uretten, nemlig retfærdigheden. Troen er et forhold til døden, nemlig opstandelse som et nyt forhold til døden. Som et forhold til *denne død* er troen Helligånd – eller konkret Helligånd. Dette nye er det modsatte af splittelse, nemlig sammenhæng; Ånd er sammenhæng og i princippet enhed.

Derfor forudsætter *Den Augsburgske Bekendelse* også de oldkirkelige bekendelsers forståelse af Helligånden som det bestemte forhold til den korsfæstede Kristus, der ser ham som frelser. Det er dette forhold til Kristus, som sakramenterne formidler. De formidler et nyt syn på Gud og derfor også på mennesket selv. Derved giver de samtidig et nyt syn på synd, død og djævel som det, der konkret splitter mennesker, og det, de lider under. Helligånd er altså et ganske bestemt forhold til Kristi person, dvs. det forhold, der på en gang ser *og* erfarer og evt. forkynder ham, den korsfæstede, som frelser. Dette skal ikke forstås som en reduktion af Helligåndens personalitet i treenigheden, men tværtimod udtryk for den og årsagen til bekendelsen af den. Troen ser i den korsfæstede verdens frelse og egen synd som tilgivet og går til egen død i forventning om opstandelse. Kristusnærvær er dermed et spørgsmål om Helligånd, og Helligånd i sidste ende et udtryk for menneskets af sakramenterne formidlede og i Kristus erfarede forhold til synd, døden og djævel i eget liv. Helligånden udgør forholdet mellem Faderen og Sønnen, hvilket, hvis det forstås konkret, åbent, ikke betyder en reduktion eller underordning af Ånden under Fader og Søn. Derfor udgår Ånden også fra Sønnen (korset), og derfor kan mennesket kun frelses fra den konkrete synd og død, som det selv lider. Ånden kan altså ikke erfares uden om synd og død uden dermed at kunne identificeres med eller reduceres til disse. Det vil sige, at det kun er den konkrete historiske synder, der kan tilgives, og kun den konkrete (kontekstuelle, dvs. i forhold til verden og andre mennesker) døde, der kan opstå. Som tilgivelse og oprejsning er Ånden hverken abstrakt eller flyvsk, men noget som mennesker hver især kan erfare i forholdet til al synd og død i deres egne liv. Ånden er foreningen af de adskillelser, som synd og død er, og som mennesket lider under. Tilsvarende udtrykker den en forskel, der hvor synden og døden sammenblander vores relationer til tilsvarende lidelse. Derfor betyder nadveren som åndelig forening ikke en sammenblanding af distinktioner, ophævelse af medier eller af personers, kroppes og sansers forskellighed, tværtimod nærer ånden en kvalificeret og reflekteret omgang med forskelle.

Vender vi tilbage til nadveren, betyder dette, at Kristi reale nærvær i nadveren er den korsfæstedes nærvær, der med Åndens arbejde i ord og sakramenter bliver til hans opstandelse i mennesket. Derfor beskrives kirken også helt konkret som Kristi krop, hvor krop netop er den i forskel – gennem synds og døds adskillelse – forenede og forenende krop, dvs. den opstandne krop, der bærer mærkerne fra korset som vedvarende udtryk for forskel *som* forsonet adskillelse. Mærker eller sår vil sige, at det kirkelige fælleskab er erfaret som splittet i synd (også efter dåb og nadver), men forsonet netop som sådan, ligesom de enkelte mennesker i sig selv også erfarer syndens splittelse og kun forenes ved Helligåndens kraft. Nadveren hører således hjemme i en større krop end det enkelte menneskes, nemlig i første omgang i kirken som helhed: I menigheder, hvori der er indstiftet et funktionelt embede, som kan give Ånden videre i ord og sakramenter. Denne kirke, Kristi krop, kan ikke adskilles i fysisk, psykisk eller social; den udtrykker altid allerede alle sider af den enkelte, og den er en krop, hvor splittelse af både relationer og dimensioner overvindes igen og igen. Ordet krop kaldes i den danske bekendelsestradition legeme; det kan hverken forstås eller oversættes til moderne eller postmoderne kropsbegreber og kropsopfattelser. Det har sin helt egen betydning, som indeholder et syn på Gud, verden og selv.[42] Krop er her hverken en fysisk kategori, som (klassisk dualistisk) er underordnet noget ikke-fysisk eller en (monistisk tænkt) positiv fysik og interaktion, men er en konkret splittet sammenhæng, der gennem forkyndelse og sakramenter erfares forsonet og på vej til fuldendelse. Alt er – som det hedder i den lutherske teologi – tilgivet, men endnu ikke helbredt.[43] Den ovennævnte position, der således forudsætter et begreb om krop som både negativt brudt og positivt forsonet har Reinholdt Ramussen og (undertegnede) Kristensen tidligere forsøgt at skitsere i en kronik.[44]

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42. De kropsbeskrivelser, der i de kontinentale filosofiske traditioner er blevet til gennem erkendelseskritik og historisk kritik, kommer tættest på dette forhold. Det drejer sig om det 20. århundredes hermeneutik og fænomenologi, der dog også her internt rummer store forskelle eller ligefrem modsætninger (jf. fx inden for kropsfænomenologien).

43. "Remissa sunt omnia per gratiam, sed nondum omnia sanata per donum", som det hedder i Luthers Latomusskrift, se Martin Luther. *Rationis Latomianae confutatio*. 1521. WA 8, 107, 21.

44. "Til forskel fra det, som man forsigtigt kan kalde sværmeriske eller katolske tilgange til nadveren, må en luthersk kirke fastholde, at den nadvernydende menighed ikke indebærer et så forsimplet begreb om det fysiske, at det enten er ligegyldigt, negativt eller fuldgyldigt, rent positivt. Tværtimod er nadveren netop forsoningen af den splittelse, som indebærer faktisk – men ikke nødvendig – lidelse ved vores fysik". Se Johanne Stubbe Teglbjærg Kristensen og Thomas Reinholdt Rasmussen. "Lad os debattere om nadveren kan formidles digitalt". Kristeligt Dagblad 10. januar 2021.

Fælleskab

Et sådant – som ovenfor beskrevet – helhedssyn på nadveren findes netop i Luthers tidlige nadverteologi, der i forlængelse af Augustin forudsætter, at sakramentet er en samlet formidlingsbegivenhed. Det formidler forsoningen af de relationer, der er præget af synd og død, dvs. forholdet til Gud, selv og verden, og det formidler fremfor alt også disse relationer indbyrdes. Når Luther taler om sakramentet som et tegn, så henviser han til den samlede ydre begivenhed som et synligt udtryk for det usynlige indhold, nemlig fællesskabets nydelse af brød og vin, mens betydningen er indholdet af denne konkrete indtagelse: Fællesskabet med den korsfæstede, idet brødet indtages som det legeme og blod, som det i situationen er. Og den vantroende-troende gør dette, altså nyder det. Hvem ville nyde legeme og blod andre end den tvivlende troende? Den tilgivne synder? Den opstandne døende og sørgende? Normalt ville død krop og blod fungere som påmindelse om og bekræftelse af lidelse, men i sammenhængen med synd og død, som er Luthers erfarede præmis for nadverteologien, er der liv i forholdet til Kristi døde krop, liv i lig og blod. Når de troendes forsamling er Kristi krop, så er forsamlingen dette som den brudte og gennem dette brud opstandne krop. Denne krops fuldendelse er ikke blot et eskatologisk løfte, men en eskatologisk betingelse for forsoningserfaringen. Det kommer særligt til udtryk i forestillingen om Kristi genkomst til dom, hvilket ifølge bekendelsens kirkesyn betyder fuldendelsen af kirken som Kristi krop, dvs. det fuldendte fællesskab mellem levende og døde. I folkemunde kaldes dette fuldendte fællesskab for "gensyn", og eftersom det består i foreningen af det uforenelige, er det netop Åndens værk. Sakramenterne er som sagt begivenhederne, hvor denne forening og heling begynder og fortsætter. Forsoningen i den enkelte kan ikke splittes fra den enkeltes forsoning med den anden og de andre, og derfor er forvaltningen af dette sakramente hele menighedens sag. Det er menigheden, der som almindelige præster har myndigheden til at forvalte dette, som de vel at mærke selv har modtaget gennem det indstiftede embede og giver videre gennem samme.

I forbindelse med nadverdiskussionen gjorde Marianne Christiansen, der selv har undladt at forholde sig eksplicit til sine kollegaers praksis, også opmærksom på forskellige pro et contra – eller "at lade forskellige synspunkter stå klart" – vedr. "digital nadver".[45] Hun pegede bl.a. på det "contra", at nadveren drejer sig om det kirkelige fællesskab, hvor en kaldet og ordineret præst i menighedens midte

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45. Marianne Christiansen. "Samtalen om virtuel nadver er vigtig under coronasmitten". *Kristeligt Dagblad* 24. marts 2020.

rækker sakramentet, jf. "folkekirkens orden". At række sig selv sakramentet eller "holde nadver uden en præst" kan derfor opfattes som "en splittelse af fællesskabet" (Christiansen 2020). Dette synspunkt er væsentligt, fordi det forener en række allerede nævnte udprægede lutherske motiver: Mennesket kan ikke selv skabe sin tro, kun i Kristus (nærvær) findes der gensidighed, kun Kristi Ånd forsoner, og kun i den Ånd er tilgivelse og opstandelse. For så vidt må man overveje, om nadveren er noget, der rækkes til mennesket som fællesskab og kun derigennem til den enkelte. Kan nadveren rækkes til én alene? Eller kan den ene række sig selv den?

For at svare mere udførligt på dette spørgsmål skal man længere frem i *Den Augsburgske Bekendelse*, nærmere bestemt til udfoldelsen af, hvad kirken er i artikel 7: Den er de helliges og sandt troendes forsamling (Dingel m.fl. 2014, 102). Dette skal ikke udlægges sådan, at der er to forsamlinger i én, men sådan, at de hellige er de sandt troende, nemlig dem, der har Helligånden – eller mere præcist: Har Helligånden som dét forhold til Kristi kors, der udtrykker Sønnens forhold til Gud, nemlig forholdet Gud som Fader. Uden Helligånd er Gud ikke Sønnens Fader og ikke Fader til andre, dvs. ikke en kærlig, men en vilkårlig Gud. Kirken er fælleskabet af de forsonede, for så vidt som den udtrykker denne forsoning. Den udtrykker sig gennem dåb, nadver og skriftemål, som formidler troen, herunder konkret som bod (omvendelse), hvilket vil sige syndserkendelse i form af anger og troen, der tror, at synderne forlades (artikel 12). Artikel 7 kan altså forstås som en slags varslende sammenfatning af indholdet i sakramenterne, hvorfor sakramenterne da også både skal vække troen (i den, der angrer) og styrke troen (i den, der tror) (artikel 13); de skal i øvrigt kun forvaltes af dem, der er kaldet (artikel 14). Bekendelsens første del ender med en lang beskrivelse af tro og gode gerninger samt helgendyrkelse, som kan forstås i forlængelse af boden. Den tro, der har korset som sit omdrejningspunkt, både er og viser sig således i opfyldelsen af loven (gode gerninger) som et bestemt forhold mellem mennesker, nemlig fællesskab. Derfor bliver også betydningen af helgener som gode forbilleder bekræftet. Nadveren er i lyset af dette netop medium, dvs. formidling af menneskets indbyrdes forhold – og bekendelsen beskriver sig selv som en bekendelse, der bør prises, fordi den lærer mennesket, *hvordan* det gør gode gerninger, netop ved troen. I forhold til diskussionen om den digitale nadver er dette interessant, fordi det forhindrer, at nadveren bliver reduceret til et spørgsmål om gudsforhold og selvforhold uden verdensforhold. Ligesom Luther ser nadveren udfolde sig i kollekten, ser bekendelsen den udfolde sig i gode gerninger og forbilleder. Spørgsmålet er, om man heraf også kan slutte, at det er gennem verdensforholdet i fællesskabet, at nadve-

ren gives? Således at fællesskabet som gudsforhold og selvforhold kun findes konkret historisk og kontekstuelt i verden på bestemte tider og bestemte steder? Forstået sådan, at fælleskabet fungerer gennem den kaldede præst, men altid på vegne af hele kirken og med henblik på denne. Den nadverdiskussion, der historisk fulgte efter Augsburg, og hvor spørgsmålet om fortolkningen af Kristi reale nærvær var blevet kontroversielt, peger i den retning.

Konkordieformlen har en udførlig artikel om nadveren, der er vendt mod – eller snarere skal beskrive – dem, der ikke kan anerkendes som lærende Kristi reale nærvær i brød og vin, realpræsensen; det gælder bl.a. nadversymbolister og krypto-calvinister (Dingel m.fl. 2014, 1256ff). Ifølge Konkordieformlens artikel syv findes der to slags nadversymbolister. Den første slags hævder, at det er almindeligt brød og vin, der modtages i nadveren, men at disse i troen symboliserer legeme og blod. De er nemme at afvise. Den anden slags, som kaldes snedige og de allerfarligste, hævder, at de lærer Kristi nærvær i brød og vin, men at Kristi nærvær sker ved troen: Brød og vin spises og drikkes med munden for derefter ved troen som svar på indstiftelsesordene at blive til legeme og blod. Artiklen forklarer, at den slags symbolister vender forholdet mellem tro og Kristus på hovedet, for det bliver den enkeltes tro, der skaber Kristi nærvær, og ikke Kristus, der i sin Ånd giver troen. Over for disse symbolister bruger artiklen gentagne gange formuleringen, at vi modtager legeme og blod "mündlich" og ikke kun åndeligt gennem troen (Dingel mfl. 2014, 1260). At legeme og blod modtages med munden betyder, at realnærværet er knyttet til indstiftelsesord og uddeling.[46] At legeme og blod spises "med munden" på en måde, der ifølge artiklen ikke er kannibalsk, kan forstås som en intim alimentær begivenhed, der først og fremmest drejer sig om forholdet mellem Kristus og den modtagende, men knytter dette forhold til den konkrete kontekst, som er det større fællesskabs fejring.[47] Realpræsenslæren reflekterer således det forhold,

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46. Derfor kan nadveren ifølge Konkordieformlen også blive de vantro til dom, hvis de ikke omvender sig, eller nærmere bestemt, hvis nadveren ikke fører til tro. Det er på en (særegen) måde logisk, for når den, der spiser nadveren, som udgangspunkt må være synderen, kan nadveren enten vække troen, der indebærer tilgivelse eller bekræfte synderens identitet som synder uden tro, dvs. uden tilgivelse – hvad der netop er til dom. Som bekendt er den lutherske lære om *manducatio oralis* og *manducatio impiorii* et særledes omstridt punkt i Lutherforskningen. Det vil i nærværende sammenhæng føre for vidt at komme ind på de forskellige positioner. Vigtigt er, at præmissen for denne opfattelse er, at mennesket er skabt uden synd, men født med synd.

47. Se for en lignende tolkning af bl.a. *manducatio oralis* motivet hos Luther Nete Helene Enggaard. "Realnærvær og refiguration. Det liturgiske potentiale i Luthers sakramentale nærværs- og begivenhedsfigurer". *Kritisk Forum for Praktisk Teolo-*

at troen, der gives og fornyes i nadveren, ikke kan føres tilbage til andet end det konkrete mellemmenneskeligt formidlede forhold til Kristus i Ånden. Troen er konkret og formidlet, *og* formidlingen har sin grænse i dette fællesskab. Den hører hjemme i det mellemmenneskelige forholds kors og krise.

Måske var det – på baggrund af ovennævnte refleksioner – ikke mærkeligt, at en stor del af diskussionen om den digitale nadver i Danmark på sin egen bagvendte måde kom til at dreje sig om opfattelsen af den krisesituation, der opstod, da man ikke at kunne fejre nadver på almindelig vis. Dermed flyttede diskussionen sig fra den sjælesørgeriske omsorg, som Gaarden udtrykte, i en embedsteologisk retning. Modstanderne af den digitale nadver var ikke enige i, at Covid-19 kirkeligt set udgjorde en nødsituation, men så krisen som en undtagelsessituation. I betragtning af, at menigheden fortsat havde adgang til præsten og ordets forkyndelse i og med kirkernes online tilbud, blev der argumenteret for, at nød ikke var det rigtige ord.[48] Derfor argumenterede nogle også for, at nadveren som netop en fælles fejring, der undtagelsesvist måtte undværes i menigheden, var noget, man kunne længes efter og forventningsfuldt se frem til, indtil det igen var muligt at samles.[49] F.eks. bemærkede Christiansen, at det også under Covid-19 og nedlukningen fortsat var muligt at tilkalde præsten med henblik på hjemmealtergang (Christiansen 2020).[50] For

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gi 159, marts 2020. Artiklen tilstræber at bringe den overvejende sprogfilosofisk orienterede reception af Luthers *nova lingua* i samtale med nyere liturgividenskab.

48. Ud fra et sakramentalt perspektiv kan man som nævnt overveje, hvorvidt den pludselige insisteren på nadverens (også virtuelle) nødvendighed egentlig er holdbar taget i betragtning at dåbens sakramente, herunder dåben som nødvendig til frelse, blev anbefalet udskudt af både biskopper og Kirkeministerium. Rent historisk er det i den forbindelse værd at bemærke, at nadveren først i 1992 blev fast inventar i højmessen – før Ritualbogen 1992 foregik nadveren lejlighedsvist.

49. Se f.eks. Nielsen og Christoffersen 2020 samt Morten Thaysen og Thomas Reinholdt Rasmussen. "Kirken findes ikke lige nu, som vi kender den". Kristeligt Dagblad 31. marts 2020.

50. En lignende pointe findes hos Nielsen og Christoffersen 2020, der også knyttede embedet til sakramentets og troens *extra nos* karakter. Nielsen og Christoffersen understreger også nadveren som legemliggørelse af fællesskabet i Kristus og fandt ikke den digitale nadver gyldig med henvisning til nadveren som netop kropsligt fællesskab. Manglen på geografisk og fysisk samtidighed ("geographical corporeality") er dog ifølge forfatterne ikke nødvendigvis et problem "from the perspective of corporeality", jf. ovenfor om det eskatologiske måltid. Det er der derimod i forhold til nadverens indstiftelse ("from the perspective of the institution"): Det er dette specifikke brød og vin på dette specifikke alter, der indstiftes og uddeles til nadverdeltagerne. Splitter man begivenhedens egen enhed af ord og tegn i forskellige ukendte mængder brød og vin på forskellige steder, kompromitterer man nadveren som legemliggørelsen ("embodiment") – eller inkarnation – af den fælles enhed i Kristi legeme og blod (eet brød, eet legeme).

så vidt er der meget, der tyder på, at diskussionen om nadveren under nedlukningen trækker i embedsteologisk retning og kan føres som en samtale om, hvordan forkyndelses- og forvaltningskriser kan omgås. For at de kommer, bør ikke overraske: Jo stærkere splittelse i den troende, jo mere forventeligt, at der kan komme perioder med ringere muligheder for nadverfejring.

Konklusion

Konklusionen på denne systematisk teologiske analyse af den danske diskussion om "digital nadver" i lyset af bekendelsesskrifterne i sammenhæng med nyere luthersk systematisk teologi er først og fremmest, at denne praksis såvel som forsvaret for den var mere begrænset, end mediebilledet til tider syntes at udtrykke. Dernæst indikerer analysen, at nadveren under de nuværende omstændigheder ikke kan fejres digitalt, uden at både ekklesiologi, nadver- og embedsteologi på linje med den sjælesørgeriske nerve, der angår den anfægtede samvittighed, kompromitteres. Skal "digital nadver" være en fremtidig kirkelig mulighed, vil det teologisk og liturgisk set kræve en videreudvikling eller i det mindste langt mere uddybende gennemtænkning af bekendelsesskrifterne og den lutherske teologi i en specifik digital kontekst. Det kan indebære undersøgelse af uudfoldede potentialer og faldgruber i medier generelt og de digitale medier i særdeleshed. Specielt i forhold til krop, fællesskab og frihed vil der formentlig være meget at hente i sådanne undersøgelser. I betragtning af, at diskussionen historisk og indtil for nyligt primært er blevet ført på analoge betingelser, peger et eventuelt videre forløb på, at nadveren som formidling af forsoning af menneskelige relationer til Gud, verden og selv fremover også fortsat må gennemreflekteres på nyere formidlingsmæssige betingelser. De menneskelige betingelser for nadveren er ifølge bekendelsestraditionen fra fødsel præget af synd og død, der netop ikke er abstrakte begreber, men begreber, som hører til i og mellem mennesker. Derfor er det også i dag mellem mennesker, at de findes og forkyndes overvundet, og mellem disse, at nadveren forvaltes. I dette fælleskab rækkes, gribes og spises den korsfæstede og opstandne Kristus med munden, så mennesket forbindes og forsones med hinanden og således også med sig selv. Det betyder ikke, at der ikke findes fragmentariske eller relative forsoninger mange andre steder, som fx i de mange former for digital formidling af kirkelig forkyndelse. Tværtimod. Men det betyder, at forkyndelse og forsoning lever gennem noget andet, nemlig gennem den menighed, der som

Kristi krop bærer ordet om korset og giver det til hinanden, så det kan spises med munden til opstandelse og gensyn.

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Real presence under digital conditions?

Gift of presence – transformation of time – real community

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The "otherness" that enters into us changes us to become 'another'.*G eorge Steiner*

The future sometimes already lives within us without our knowing it. *Marcel Proust*

Abstract: During the Covid-19 pandemic, Christians were prevented from receiving the Eucharist for the first time in history due to the suspension of public church services. Various digital liturgical offers such as live-stream services were developed and improved to compensate for this loss. Discussing the pastoral chances and theological limits of digitalization in religious contexts, the authors conclude that physical participation in the Eucharistic liturgy cannot be substituted by virtual offers. Regarding the often-distorted perception of time during the pandemic, they highlight the therapeutic dimension of the Eucharist, in which the past, present, and future are interwoven (*signum rememorativum, signum demonstrativum*, and signum prognosticum). To realize the gift of the Eucharist and to gain a new awareness of the salutary and transforming presence of Christ, the authors point to the practice of Eucharistic adoration, which nevertheless remains oriented towards the communal celebration of the Eucharist and the real encounter with Christ in Communion.

Keywords: Eucharist – Communion – digitalization – real presence – Thomas Aquinas – Eucharistic adoration.

I

The Covid-19 crisis has confronted us with an incisive experience. Eating and drinking together in restaurants suddenly became impossible already during the first lockdown. Areas of social exchange, which

are important to humans as *animalia socialia*, instantly became inaccessible. The imperative of keeping one's distance and wearing masks made it very hard to remain spontaneous when meeting others. Real, face-to-face communication was limited to the absolutely necessary, or was relocated to the digital realm. These measures towards containment of the pandemic also influenced the sacramental life of the Church. At the onset of the second lockdown in Austria in November 2020, the faithful were denied access to the public celebration of the Eucharist, the "sacrament of sacraments", by the bishops themselves.[1] For the first time ever, the Church leadership was obliged to suspend the Eucharistic liturgy, which the Second Vatican Council had called the "fount and apex of the whole Christian life" (LG 11). Such a measure has never before been taken in the history of the Church. We would therefore describe it as "epochal".

Digital alternatives were developed to compensate for the suspension of public church services. Many parishes began to optimise their internet presence, to try out new liturgical alternatives, and to offer livestream transmissions of their services. Locally streamed services began to appear, additional to those that had previously been officially transmitted via radio and television to enable elderly and infirm persons to partake in Sunday celebrations. These new locally streamed options were meant to help the faithful maintain contact with their local parishes. Overall, these offers were received surprisingly well, even though they often displayed technical deficits and although their camerawork sometimes conveyed a cleric-centred understanding of liturgy. Digital formats may connect people who are physically separated from each other and thus create a virtual community with according possibilities of participation. Through these formats, people may participate in spiritual and liturgical events, irrespective of place and time. They may choose from a whole range of possibilities according to their own individual wishes. That is the strength of digital formats that they offer manifold pastoral opportunities towards the communication and spreading of the Gospel.

The expansion of digital formats did not take place merely as a reaction to the cancellation of public services of worship due to the pandemic. It can also be accounted to the increasing digitalisation of all areas of life, a process that also affects people's spiritual lives. Even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, prayer apps, online prayer chapels,

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1. Thomas Aquinas sees the difference between the Eucharist and the other sacraments in the fact that it is the only sacrament that contains Christ Himself, cf. *S.th.* III, q. 73, a. 1 ad 3: *Haec est autem differentia inter Eucharistiam et alia sacramenta habentia materiam sensibilem, quod Eucharistia continet aliquid sacrum absolute, scilicet ipsum Christum.* Cf. *S. th.* III, q. 75, a. 2 ad 2.

religious chatrooms, live-stream worshipping services from brick-and-mortar congregations, and sanctuaries in virtual rooms had conquered the market niche of online religious offers. The Church has come to acknowledge the need of developing the relevant "language proficiency" in the digital age and of responding to the realities particularly of the lives of younger people through online offers.[2] Pope Francis, who encourages us to use digital media, had already decreed plenary indulgence for participation at the 28th World Youth Day in 2013 for those who participated via television, radio or the new means of social communication if they were legitimately prevented from attending in person.

It cannot be denied that religious online offers may enrich the spiritual lives of individuals and create the possibility of encountering the divine mystery, which communicates itself in manifold ways. However, the strengths of virtual impartation are also countered by reservations and limitations that become particularly clear with reference to the Eucharist. Technical advancements allow digital formats to increasingly become oriented towards interaction and active participation.[3] Furthermore, the bodily reality of participants is not dismissed, but rather taken into account.[4] Yet, the question remains whether the principle of "active and conscious participation" (*actuosa participatio*) can truly be realised effectively in digital services of worship, which virtually connect two completely separated localities.[5]

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2. Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, Address to participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, February 28, 2011: "The digital culture presents new challenges to our ability to speak and listen to a symbolic language that talks about transcendence. (…) Today we are called to discover also in the digital culture symbols and metaphors which are meaningful to people and can be of help in talking about the Kingdom of God to contemporary man".

3. Cf. Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, "Virtual Presence as Real Presence? Sacramental Theology and Digital Culture in Dialogue." *Worship* 89 (2015): 526-542, here 527: "Digital presence is experienced in interaction, in some form of synchronous or asynchronous act of communication with another; it is a relational experience". Teresa Berger points out that even the questionable practice of online Eucharistic adoration does not reduce the worshiper to a mere passive beholder of the monstrance on a screen, but that, on the condition of the availability of suitable technical equipment, means of active liturgical participation are available here, too; cf. Teresa Berger, "*Participatio Actuosa* in Cyberspace? Vatican II's Liturgical Vision in a Digital World." *Worship* 87 (2013): 533-547, here 536.

4. Berger 2013, 536. Cf. ibid., 535: "online worship is neither accessible nor inhabitable as an entirely disembodied, dematerialized world. Like offline worship, online worship relies on and cannot do without the actual bodies of worshippers." Cf., similarly, Teresa Berger, @*Worship. Liturgical Practices in Digital Worlds*, New York: Routledge 2017, 21-23.

5. Cf. Winfried Haunerland, "Participatio actuosa. Programmwort liturgischer Erneuerung". *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 38 (2009): 585–595.

Even if one takes part in digital church services "with devotion and full collaboration", which doubtlessly is possible during broadcasts over the radio and television, these services lack the bodily co-presence of participants as well as the possibility of physically receiving Communion. Digital services may offer beautiful rites to see and edifying words to hear, but one cannot smell, touch, or taste anything. *Visus* and *auditus* are served well, but *tactus, odor*, and *gustus* are lost in cyberspace. There is no Baptism without water, no Confirmation without chrism, no Eucharist without bread and wine. Virtual formats display a tendency towards disincarnation. Of course there are real people behind the screens, who react to that which is heard and seen, not only cognitively, but also emotionally and physically. And of course it is correct not to draw a strict line between that which is "analogue" and that which is "digital", because the transition between the two concepts is fluid.[6] However, the option of digital church services is devoid of the physical co-presence of the faithful within the same sacral space. That which is called "intercorporeality" in French phenomenology, is absent.[7] The spectrum of phenomena of resonance that are grounded in the responsivity of the body is completely obliterated in digital formats.[8] Additionally, this deficiency may encourage an overly individualised, user-generated form of piety. It also is of ecclesiological importance.[9]

The liturgical constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has maintained, with a view to the Eucharist, that the faithful, "when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves" (SC 48). According to Martin Stuflesser, participants in services that are broadcasted through television or the internet, are arguably forced into the role of "strangers or silent spectators", which is exactly what the Fathers of the Council wished to avoid (cf. Martin Stuflesser, "…nicht wie Außenstehende und stumme Zuschauer" [SC 48]. Die Feier der Eucharistie 50 Jahre nach der Promulgierung des Missale Romanum 1970 unter den besonderen Bedingungen der Corona-Pandemie. In *Eucharistie und Erneuerung. Aufbruch aus der Mitte des Glaubens*, ed. George Augustin, 146-172. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag 2021, here 164).
6. Cf. Thomas Söding, "Sakramente virtuell?" *HerKorr* 75 (8/2021): 40-43.
7. Maurice Merleau-Ponty speaks of "intercorporéité" regarding the relation between human bodies, cf. id., Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung, Berlin: de Gruyter 1976.
8. Cf. Helmut Hoping, *Mein Leib für euch gegeben. Geschichte und Theologie der Eucharistie*, Freiburg i. Br. Herder ³2022, 495.
9. Cf. Antonio Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet*, Translated by Maria Way, New York: Fordham University 2014, 76: "The

One may compensate for the deficiency of the lack of the co-presence of the faithful through the virtual administration of the sacraments, for instance by having digital Avatars consummate the Eucharistic gifts representing the participant of a service that is streamed online, as was suggested in the Church of Fools (2004, re-established as St Pixels 2006), in virtual churches in the world game "Second Life", or by the British Baptist Paul S. Fiddes, who has propagated the option of a "Cyber Eucharist".[10] This solution might convey the experience of community, but it would not be free of the aftertaste of Gnostic hostility towards the body. Not only would the corporeality of the faithful lose its real meaning, its material relevance, but so would the bread and wine.[11] From the viewpoint of Catholic theology, the suggestion of "do-it-yourself" worship at home, as it was expressed at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, is problematic. Instead of receiving the gifts that are handed out at the Communion (*Abendmahl*) or Eucharistic service, one autonomously takes whatever is needed to still the own spiritual needs.[12] The celebration of Communion or the Eucharist needs an ordained minister who pronounces the *verba testamenti* over bread and wine, not in his own name but in the name of Jesus Christ.[13] The compromise that bread and wine are sanctified at home to become the body and blood of Christ synchronically to the liturgical celebration on-screen again contains theologically questionable elements. Here too, the materiality of what happens at Communion is faded out and the physical co-presence of the faithful is omitted, while the greater context of the

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Church cannot be reduced to the 'ultimate social network', a sort of definitive social web, because it is not just a web of immanent relationships."

10. Cf. Randolph Kluver & Yanli Chen, "The Church of Fools. Virtual Ritual and Material Faith." *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 3.1 (2008): 116-143; cf. Paul Fiddes, *Sacraments in a Virtual World* (2009), Online ressource: https://www.frsimon.uk/paul-fiddes-sacraments-in-a-virtual-world/ (accessed 4.4.2022).

11. Cf. Spadaro 2014, 75.

12. Cf. Veronika Hoffmann, *Christus – die Gabe. Zugänge zur Eucharistie*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder 2016, 140f: "Both the act of giving between God and man, and that of giving and receiving between humans are enacted at the celebration of the Eucharist. … Without a priest, the celebration of the Eucharist is impossible. Without someone who hands out the Eucharist, be it the priest or a minister of Holy Communion (or of Communion to the sick), its addressees cannot be reached." Originally: "Ohne Priester kann keine Eucharistie gefeiert werden. Ohne jemanden, der die Eucharistie austeilt, sei es der Priester, sei es ein (Kranken-)Kommunionspender, erreicht sie ihre Adressaten nicht". On the Eucharist as a gift, cf. id., *Skizzen zu einer Theologie der Gabe. Rechtfertigung – Opfer – Eucharistie – Gottes- und Nächstenliebe*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder 2013.

13. Translator's note: The masculine singular pronoun is used in a generic sense throughout.

presentation of the offerings at the altar (the Offertory), the prayer of thanksgiving, and of Communion itself is distorted.

The limitations of digital worship described here:

> concern the real, digitally irreproducible presence of God in the "here and now" of the sacramental elements as well as the bodily, tangible dimension of the co-presence of all who partake in the service. Blurring these dividing lines through a new set of liturgical and medial dynamics (for instance, by assuming that virtual sacraments exist at all) might lead to the denial of the *incarnatory* profile of the Christian faith in future. Likewise, it might lead to the virtualisation of the mediality of Christ.[14]

As mentioned, virtual services of worship therefore display a tendency towards de-incarnation.

> In reality, the liturgical event is never technologically reproducible, because it incorporates in its *hic et nunc* – in which is celebrated in an unreproducible way the action of the Holy Spirit – which makes the Mystery of Christ present and actualizes it (Spadaro 2014, 79).

In accordance with the logic of the incarnation, liturgy needs "a precarious and transient context, a spatio-temporal situation, a corporal tangibility."[15] Therefore, the Vatican has already precluded the idea of cyber communion in 2002. "Virtual reality is no substitute for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacramental reality of the other sacraments, and shared worship in a flesh-and-blood human community. There are no sacraments on the Internet".[16]

If digital spaces therefore will never be able to attain the full form and content of the celebration of the Eucharist, the following ques-

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14. Bernd Irlenborn & Stefan Kopp, "Der Media-Turn als Herausforderung für die Liturgie." *Theologie und Glaube* 108 (2018): 356-373, here 371. Original German: "betrifft die reale, digital nicht reproduzierbare Präsenz Gottes im Hier und Jetzt sakramentaler Zeichen und auch die leiblich-konkrete Dimension der Kopräsenz der Mitfeiernden. Die Verwischung dieser Grenze im Rahmen einer liturgisch-medialen Eigendynamik (etwa in der Annahme, es gebe *virtual sacraments*) könnte in Zukunft zur Verkennung des *inkarnatorischen* Profils des christlichen Glaubens und zur Virtualisierung der Medialität Christi führen".
15. Spadaro 2014, 80. Cf., similiarly, Zsupan-Jerome 2015, 529: "The corporeal/physical is intimately bound with the spiritual, psychological, communal, and relational dimensions of the event, taking place at a certain time and location."
16. Pontifical Council for Social Communications, "The Church and Internet", 9. (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html; accessed 29.3.2022).

tions arise: What – or more precisely, *who* – is absent when the Eucharist is absent? What can be recognised anew during times in which physical, public services of worship are suspended? What constitutes the therapeutic dimension of the Eucharist in times of crisis, when isolation and resignation are generally on the rise?

II

Enquiring about the therapeutic dimension of the Eucharist presupposes that many forms of human suffering are associated with the fact that our human perception of time tends to become distorted. It is our thesis that the Eucharist can assist in opening up perspectives that have grown narrow as a consequence of shifts in temporal awareness, which darken and burden people's lives.

People's experience of time has changed in an ambivalent way under the conditions caused by Covid-19 and its consequent lockdowns.[17] Important events took place less frequently and it was difficult to set positive or significant markers for the passing of time. Many people reported a loss of their sense of time. They felt torn between tedious boredom, the excruciatingly slow passing of long, empty days and weeks, and simultaneously, in hindsight, a contracted, swiftly passing "lost year". People however have also recorded positive effects: the experience of suddenly having more time at hand and of being able to structure and use the freedom that they had gained autonomously. The questioning of previous experiences of time as well as new ways of dealing with time and with our own transience can be counted as one of the side effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

When *future* perspectives are clouded and shattered, the *present*, too, is shrouded in resignation and lethargy. Furthermore, when people can no longer catch up with lost chances, when they cannot reverse earlier wrong decisions and pay their moral debts of the *past*, when their fixation on that which used to be causes their lives to turn into a pillar of salt (cf. Gen 19:26), their consciousness of the present becomes impaired. Our human awareness of time must reconfigure each of the dimensions of that which was, which is, and which is to come. People each stand in relation to their personal history, to that which they encounter in the present, and to that which they antici-

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17. Cf. the survey conducted by the German weekly *DIE ZEIT* of 3 April 2021: Tülay Karakus & Janis Dietz, "Das vergangene Jahr fühlt sich wie 12 Jahre an", Online resource: https://www.zeit.de/zeit-magazin/2021-04/zeitgefuehl-corona-pandemie-orientierung-zeitrechnung-psychologie (accessed: 30.3.2022).

pate. In the eleventh book of his *Confessions*, Augustine had already enquired after the essence of time and stated that there are neither times past (referring to that which *no more* exists) nor times future (referring to that which does *not yet* exist). Nevertheless, humans are conscious of the presence of things past in the form of memories (*memoria*) as well as of the presence of things to come in the form of expectations (*expectatio*). In human consciousness of time, the dimensions of past, present, and future are interwoven. The presence of present things, which is determined by things immediately past as well as by things immediately to come, is attentiveness (*contuitus*),[18] which Malebranche once called "the natural prayer of the soul".[19] Compared to cosmic time, human consciousness of time follows its own course, in which there are protractions and accelerations, phases of boredom and of intensified experience. Marcel Proust arguably provided us with a better and more nuanced description of these in his novel *In Search of Lost Time* than did Edmund Husserl in his *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. Husserl, however, had modified Augustine in conceiving of the immediate point of the present as a "continuity of expiredness". Like the tail of a comet, a whole continuum of retentions stretches into the consciousness of the continuous present.[20] If this had not been the case, we would have been able to grasp individual notes, but not the meaningful structure of a melody. Furthermore, there are often fluctuations in the consciousness of time, in which the retentions and protentions, that is, images of the memory or future cares, superimpose themselves upon human attention.[21] It may happen that human consciousness of time loses itself in memories, becoming so deeply occupied with an attempt to regain events of the past for the present, that it can hardly observe the chances offered by the present. It may also happen that diffuse fears of or cares about the future take control of the consciousness of time, causing the present to be passed over in a frantic race towards tomorrow and the day after. Thus, again, the chances lying at hand in the present are missed. Finally, there is the obsessive search for immediacy, which wishes to seize the moment at all costs in order to

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18. Cf. Kurt Flasch, *Was ist Zeit? Augustinus von Hippo. Das XI. Buch der Confessiones. Historisch-philosophische Studie*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1993.
19. Quoted in Paul Celan, *Der Meridian und andere Prosa*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1988, 52.
20. Originally: "Kometenschweif von Retentionen", Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck ³2000, 125.
21. Cf. Michael Theunissen, *Negative Theologie der Zeit*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1991.

experience more and yet more. This is illustrative of a pathological disturbance of the consciousness of time, which adopts features either of forgetfulness of tradition or of hopelessness in its continuous hunt for new opportunities. "People living 'in attendance' are a rarity".[22] Such people would be able to continuously readjust the three temporal dimensions that permeate human consciousness. They would succeed in balancing the presence of that which is past in memory as well as the presence of that which is to come in expectation, while remaining conscious of that which is happening in the present. It is no coincidence that Peter Handke, whose works display a Eucharistic, poetical quality marked by heightened attentiveness, reminds us to "practise the present".[23]

How though, may this distraction be overcome in order to pay better attention to the present? How may our clinging to lost Covid-19 years, devoid of memories, as well as our resignation about lost opportunities and our blurred vision of the future be wholesomely refocussed onto the present? Could the Eucharistic *memoria* be helpful to enter into the *time of Christ*? We know of Jesus that he was *the* person who lived completely in the presence of God and unconditionally allowed the will of the Father to determine his life. "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me" (John 6:38).[24]

III

Catholic and Lutheran theologies agree that the real presence that is celebrated in the Eucharist is not the product of a human feat of memory.[25] If a community gathered to call a deceased person into

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22. Originally: "Gegenwärtige Menschen sind selten", Botho Strauß, *Der Untenstehende auf Zehenspitzen*, München: Hanser 2004, 54.

23. Originally: "Über die Gegenwart", Peter Handke, *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht. Ein Märchen aus den neuen Zeiten*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp ²1994, 444. Cf. Jan-Heiner Tück, "Wandlung – Urform der Wirklichkeit". Spuren einer eucharistischen Poetik in Peter Handkes Werk." In *Verwandeln allein durch Erzählen". Peter Handke im Spannungsfeld von Theologie und Literaturwissenschaft*, eds. Tück & Andreas Bieringer, 29-51. Freiburg i. Br.: Herder 2019.

24. Hans Urs von Balthasar has developed the fact that Jesus has radically declined securing his own future, as well as his centring his awareness on the will of his Father as the proprium of his awareness of time. Cf. von Balthasar, *Theologie der Geschichte. Kerygma der Gegenwart*, Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag 2004, 24-26.

25. Martin Luther, who has upheld the idea of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist as long as he lived, emphasizes the efficacy of the divine Word that bestows the real presence of Christ in bread and wine. It is not a feast of memory on

mind for a short while through an act of communal commemoration, it would be an act of anamnetic solidarity, saving the deceased person from the second death of falling into oblivion. In such a case, the presence of that which had passed would be dependent on the degree of heedfulness practised by the bearers of remembrance. Such a form of presence would be temporally limited. The presence of Christ in bread and wine is different. It distinguishes itself from acts of collective commemoration. Regardless of human achievement, his presence is a gift of the Other. It derives from the Pneumatic self-representation in the gifts of bread and wine of him who was crucified and is risen. It guarantees that which humans could not bring forth: *his* presence, which, according to Thomas Aquinas, lingers even when no-one thinks of it anymore[26] – and the encounter with *his* presence transforms the present. Doubtlessly, those who partake of Communion or who, as it is practised in Catholic Eucharistic piety, behold the Most Blessed Sacrament contemplatively, must be actively willing to receive the gift of his presence or to expose themselves to the same. It is not sovereign agents, who act and bring about, that are required here, but much rather receptive people who allow the presence of the Other to affect and change them. To receive Communion during the liturgy of the Eucharist or to venerate the Most Blessed Sacrament in a sanctuary implies that they step into the time of the Other and allow their own reality to be determined by that of Christ. Consciously centring one's personal awareness on the hidden real pres-

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the side of the congregation, but the divine promise, which can be understood as the *promissio* of Christ and which is anchored in the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, that guarantees his real presence at communion. In his work "*Von Anbeten des Sakraments*" (On the veneration of the Sacrament) (1523) Luther declares that the "living, everlasting, almighty Word" (*das lebendig ewig almechtig wort*) contains "everything that it refers to, namely Christ with his flesh and blood and everything that he is and has. For it is such a Word that can do all such things. Therefore it wishes to be understood as such" (*alles, was es deuttet, nemlich Christum mit seym fleysch und blutt und alles was er ist und hatt. Denn es ist eyn solch Wort, das solchs alles vermag unnd thutt, darumb wills auch dafür gehalten seyn*) (WA 11, 433, 25-30). Cf. furthermore Luther's catechetical sermon of 1528: "Certe homo non facit corpus et sanguinem etc. Non sunt humanum opus. Vide, quis instituat, faciat" – Certainly, it is not man that makes body and blood, etc. Those are not human works. See, He who institutes it, accomplishes it (WA 30/1, 24, 7-8).

26. Cf. *S. th.* III, q. 80, a. 3, where Thomas Aquinas emphasizes that the body of Christ does not cease to be present in the elements as long as they exist. Here we may observe a distinction from Martin Luther's Eucharistic Theology. As the Marburg Colloquy with Ulrich Zwingli has made clear in 1529, Luther does emphasize the real presence of Christ in bread and wine ("est"), but limits this to the duration of the church service. He thus implicitly rejects the form of Eucharistic piety that provides for the veneration of the Most Blessed Sacrament beyond the celebration of the liturgy.

ence of Christ may help a person to find a way out of the isolation and into community and regain one's own presence in and through the presence of Christ.

<div align="center">IV</div>

Uniquely, the sacraments interweave the three dimensions of time: past, present, and future.[27] According to Thomas Aquinas, the celebration of the Eucharist first constitutes a sign of remembrance, a *signum rememorativum*. The Eucharistic rite, which corresponds to Jesus' bequeathal to "do this in remembrance of me", is reminiscent of a specific event of the *past*: Jesus Christ's gift of himself, which reaches unto death and is the reason for our salvation (*sacrificium*). The sacramental representation of the *Christus passus* in the gifts of bread and wine can be beneficial for our dealing with the burdensome dimensions of the past such as suffering, guilt, and grief. The person who believes that the Eucharist leads to a sacramental contemporaneity with Christ does not need to suppress the *guilt and failure* that might burden the course of his life, or to shove these onto others. Such a person can transcend the "provoking climate of having to have the last word" (Martin Walser) and concede to the painful truth about himself.[28] This is possible, for in the presence of the crucified, resurrected One, who has redemptively associated himself with all sinners, he encounters the grace of God, which invites him to repent. "In Christ Jesus, the sinner (…) can stand with God against himself, because God has already taken a stand with him".[29] That which is true in the event of grievous sin for the sacrament of penance likewise is generally true of the Eucharistic encounter with Christ: his presence can help one to come to terms with the oppressive aspects of one's own past. For intersubjective relations, this includes being determined by Christ's attitude of willingness to forgive: "In Christ Jesus, man however also is able to stand with his sinful brother – and this is

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27. Cf. *S. th.* III, q. 60, a. 3 as well as q. 73, a. 4. For further background information, cf. Hoping ³2022, 465-491; Jan-Heiner Tück, *A gift of presence: the theology and poetry of the Eucharist in Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Scott G. Hefelfinger, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press 2018, 23-54, 155-159.
28. Originally "Reizklima des Rechthabenmüssens".
29. Cf. Peter Hünermann, "'Erlöse uns von dem Bösen'. Theologische Reflexion auf das Böse und die Erlösung vom Bösen. *Theologische Quartalsschrift* 162 (1982): 317–329, here 325: "*In Jesus Christus vermag der Sünder [...] mit Gott gegen sich selbst zu stehen, weil Gott sich schon zu ihm gestellt hat*".

the other side of the relation – because in Christ and with Christ, he is able to bear the sin of the brother".[30]

The salutary power of the hidden presence of Christ also touches upon our dealing with the open *wounds of the past*. The *Christus passus* becomes evident in the *memoriale passionis* of the Eucharist. He is the one who, in his suffering, gave the utmost from his own, free will and thus knows pain, powerlessness, and forlornness from within. Calling to mind the *Christus passus* sacramentally may also help to deal with painful experiences of death and grieving, which often have had to take place quietly during the pandemic. Due to quarantines and lockdowns, it was often impossible to say farewell to terminally ill close relatives or to find consolation in the company of others who have gathered to pay their last respects to the deceased at a funeral.[31] Whoever has furthermore experienced traumatic injuries at the hands of others and finds himself unable to forget and incapable of forgiving, encounters the crucified and risen one in the Eucharistic *communio*. He, in turn, had himself been betrayed and denied. He had suffered mockery, scorn, injustice, and torture and through his passion has identified with all who suffer. Standing before Christ, the victims of exclusion, discrimination, torture, and violence do not need to fight for acknowledgement. He knows about their suffering and can restore their injured dignity from within, leading to their being accepted and strengthened in their active agency. The person who believes and thus experiences being recognised and acknowledged, even in his hidden suffering, can change his perspective to see fellow humans in need of forgiveness in those who have sinned against him. Stepping into the presence of Christ here means encountering that paradigmatic victim of violence who, already dying, still prayed for those who tortured him (cf. Lk 23:34). This encounter may become a gift of transformation for the person who experiences the hidden

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30. Ibid: "*In Jesus Christus vermag der Mensch aber auch, und dies ist die andere Seite des Verhältnisses, sich zu seinem sündigen Bruder zu stellen – weil er in Jesus Christus und mit ihm die Sünde des Bruders zu tragen vermag*".

31. Cf. furthermore Stuflesser 2021, 161: "The brokenness of our earthly existence, our continuously being confronted with global danger looming from an invisible virus, the numerous deaths being mourned across the globe, shocking images of coffins mounting up and of anonymous mass graves, certainly have contributed to a renewed consideration of the aspect of the passion of Christ and his vicarious suffering and death 'for us', which is theologically engrained into every Eucharistic celebration." ("*Die Gebrochenheit irdischer Existenz, das ständige Konfrontiertsein mit der weltumspannenden Gefährdung durch einen nicht sichtbaren Virus, die vielen zu beklagenden Toten auf der ganzen Welt, einprägsame Bilder von sich stapelnden Särgen und anonymen Massengräbern haben hier sicher dazu beigetragen, auch den Aspekt der Passion Christi, seines stellvertretenden Leidens und Sterbens 'für uns', das jeder Eucharistiefeier theologisch in den Kern eingeschrieben ist, noch einmal neu zu bedenken*").

presence of Christ in the transformed gifts of bread and wine. Such a gift, in turn, may lead him to refrain from looking with unforgiving eyes at those who harass and torture him. This may be a long and painful process, but it can ultimately lead to the "transubstantiation" of his own view of the past.

<div align="center">V</div>

The healing of memories through a transformed and reconciled view of the past may lead to a new, deeper insight into the *present*. According to Thomas Aquinas, the Eucharist is a *signum demonstrativum*, that is, the telling sign of a community (*communio*) that did not constitute itself but that makes recourse to Christ in gratitude. In the act of partaking in Communion, the person is *reincorporated* into the Body of Christ, which is pluriform and has many members. Far from limiting the Eucharist to the somatic real presence of Christ, Thomas thus characterised it as the sacrament of church unity (*sacramentum ecclesiasticae unitatis*).[32]

   Scholastic theology moreover was alert to the sensory-corporeal dimension of the sacramental signs and has pointed out that the Eucharist is the only sacrament that involves the sense of taste (*gustus*).[33] Because it does not merely convey itself externally, the latter distinguishes itself from the other senses – *visus, auditus, odor, tactus*. The sense of taste much rather accomplishes direct unification with its object. It is this act of unification through incorporation (*incorporatio*) of the consecrated gifts that is essential. In contrast to the satisfaction of the basic physical need for food, expressed in the stilling of hunger, the ingestion of the consecrated gifts does not remain within the horizon of the self. The ingestion of the "spiritual nourishment" (*cibus spirituale*), which was suspended under the conditions of lockdowns, brings about a significant inversion, which has repeatedly been referred to in Eucharistic theology since Augustine: when we receive Communion, it is not we who assimilate the body of Christ into the biochemical processes of our organism. It is much rather Christ and his Spirit who incorporate us into the mystical organism of his

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32. *S. th.* III, q. 73, a. 2 sed contra as well as a. 4, which interrelates the vertical participation in the body of Christ (*participatio*) and the horizontal community among the faithful (*communio* or *unio*). *S. th.* III, q. 82, a. 2 ad 3.
33. Tück 2018, 331f.

body.[34] Thus we are enabled to become the embodied "medium of
God's presence" (Eckhard Nordhofen). We however must take note
of a further difference. In the Eucharist, Christ does not approach
in his own form, but in a sacramental form. His presence is hidden
and is communicated through the sacramental sign. The accusation
raised occasionally by ecumenically rather insensitive voices against
the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist that "sarcophagy" or
cannibalism would take place, fails to acknowledge that *sacramental*
presence should not be confused with *physical*, face-to-face encoun-
ter.[35] In the era of the Church, that interim of salvation history situ-
ated between the Ascension of Christ and his Parousia, Jesus Christ
is absent as far as his physical presence is concerned. This absence
is the precondition for a new and different presence: the pneumatic
presence in us and with us.

During the pandemic, when spontaneous encounters in pub-
lic spaces were sharply reduced though the requirement of wearing
masks and keeping distance and in which, consequently, the expe-
rience of loneliness became a burden for many people, the dimen-
sion of *communio* illustrates what it is that we lose when we lose the
Eucharist. This dimension of community is already ingrained into the
materiality of the signs: as the single piece of bread has been ground
from many grains of wheat and the wine has been gained from many
grapes, the individual partaking in Communion is not isolated but is
a member of the pluriform Body of Christ, which is the Church (cf.
I Cor 12: 12–31). It is, however, not the commemorating community
of the faithful that brings forth the presence of Christ through a col-
lective act of commemoration. Had that been the case, Christ's real
presence would be no more than a self-fabricated idol. No, it is the
exalted Christ himself who grants his pneumatically bestowed pres-
ence through the words of Holy Scripture and the gifts of bread and
wine. The proclamation of his Word cuts through the many words of
everyday life. It calls the hearers of this Word away from the mani-

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34. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *S. th.* III, q. 73, a. 3 ad 2: "Corporeal food is changed
into the substance of the person nourished … but spiritual food changes man into
itself". Similarly: Bonaventura, *Breviloquium*, VI, 9,6, übertragen und eingeleitet
von Marianne Schlosser, Freiburg: Johannes Verlag 2002, 266. Cf. Augustine,
Conf. VII, 10, 16: *Cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me, nec tu me mutabis
sicut cibum tuae carnis, sed tu mutaberis in me.* For further texts, cf. Henri de Lubac,
Corpus mysticum. Kirche und Eucharistie im Mittelalter, übers. von Hans Urs von
Balthasar, Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag ²1995, 219-222.

35. *S. th.* III, q. 75, a. 1: *In hoc sacramento carnem suam nobis exhibet invisibili modo.*
S. th. III, q. 75, a. 5, which expressly states, with reference to the accidents of bread
and wine, that it would be *horribile, carnem hominis comedere et sanguinem bibere.*
Vgl. auch *S. th.* III, q. 82, a. 4 ob. 3.

fold distractions of life and assembles them anew, centred around the Gospel. The Eucharistic gifts, in which the *Christus passus* bestows himself, should likewise not be partaken of by each individual either, but much rather should be taken in hospitably by the celebrating community. Instead of attempting to correct the supposed contemporary loss of a Eucharistic culture of discernment and the practice of thoughtless participation in the Eucharist through admonishing words of threat or judgement (cf. 1 Cor 11:27-29), it seems more fitting to propagate a culture of *cortesía* and self-examination. The person who realises that he is indisposed or prepared insufficiently can partake of spiritual Communion.[36] That, too, is a means of participation that leads into the presence of Christ. Moreover, it is ecumenically advisable, should non-Catholic Christians hold partial reservations against the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist. Whoever prepares himself in a spirit of *cortesía* and then realises that Christ, who hosts the meal, does not come with a gift but bestows Himself, should accept the invitation and draw close to the table of the Lord. Other than is the case with fast-food options, which undermine the communal dimension of the meal and are aimed at hasty consumption, the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy can re-awaken our attentiveness to others, to those who share in Communion. Letting another person go first or waiting patiently are small gestures belonging to a Eucharistic culture of diligence. These should not only determine the worship service, but life as a whole. Other, furthermore, than is the case with finely selected culinary delights that address the palate, the simple, unleavened wafer reduces the palatal experience to zero. The host thus becomes the conveyor of meaning, carrying a "nimbus of alterity".[37] Here, we have the heavenly bread before us, spiritual nourishment that distinguishes itself from everyday fare: *Per Eucharistiam manducamus Christum*.[38]

Whoever engages in an attentive and thankful manner with this gift, which is characterised by its alterity, and thus invests time for Christ, the hidden Other, will experience that time itself starts to change. When daily cares cause difficulties – as is the case during the Covid-19 pandemic – and obscure the present, community with the hidden, present Christ may provide strength, encouragement, and consolation. This, in turn, may grant him greater ability to deal with the troubled present. Peter Handke asks: "What is essentially

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36. Cf. George Augustin, "Geistliche Kommunion. Zur Wiederentdeckung eines verlorenen Glaubensschatzes." In Augustin 2021, 75-96.

37. Eckhard Nordhofen, *Corpora. Die anarchische Kraft des Monotheismus*, Freiburg i. Br: Herder ³2020.

38. Cf. *S. th.* III, q. 73, a. 5 ad 1.

Christian? Friendly attentiveness?"[39] In contrast to forms of ecstatic religiosity that promise a momentary escape from the burdensome present; in contrast, furthermore, to pious practices of "the mysticism of closed eyes", which wishes to push the world away in order to approach the divine One, participation in the Eucharistic gifts invites us to comprehend the incarnatory movement of Christ, the Giver of the gifts. This movement leads us more deeply into the presence of others. Therefore, it is appropriate when participation in the body of Christ is conjoined with a "mysticism of opened eyes",[40] which does not shy away from commitment to others that expresses itself in the sharing of bread. Thanking the Giver here means acknowledging his presence in the gift. It also means, however, handing down the legacy of his love, which empties itself for others, and testifying to this very love with one's own life. This expressly includes practical solidarity with the poor, the lonely, the sick, and the outcast, which became particularly necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic. A Eucharistic way of life that supposes that it is possible to do without caritative engagement, betrays the *communio* with Christ, who has committed himself to others unreservedly.

VI

Finally, the Eucharist is the *signum prognosticum* and a pledge of future glory (*viaticum*). It opens a horizon that transcends the anxiety that is associated with bare survival and teaches the art of living that helps us deal with vulnerability, illness, and mortality. Whenever we lose our view on the ultimate, our perspective on the penultimate likewise becomes narrowed down. Doubtlessly, medical advancements have caused life expectancy to rise. Many diseases can now be warded off effectively, which is something that we can only be grateful for. Nonetheless, excessive concern about the sustenance of good health quickly causes us to forget that illness and death ultimately belong to life itself. If the constant hum of death, which becomes louder as age increases, is quieted artificially or suppressed systemically, life itself starts to suffer. The Eucharist, however, holds a supera-

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39. Peter Handke, *Am Felsfenster morgens (und andere Ortszeiten 1982–1987)*, München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verlag 2000, 335. Originally: "*Was ist das Christliche? Die freundliche Aufmerksamkeit?*".
40. Cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *Mystik der offenen Augen. Wenn Spiritualität aufbricht*, ed. Johann Reikerstorfer, Freiburg i. Br.: Herder2011.

bundance of promise that arouses "longing after glory".[41] It reminds us that the future of the *homo viator* does not lie in the past, but in the culmination with God – *in patria*. The Eucharist as "being raised for a new day", as "feasting over to YOU" [42] may therefore aid the process of finding a healthy relationship towards illness and death. It furthermore aids the process of realising that human life is subject to creatureliness. "Where is the Life / we have lost in living?" T. S. Eliot asks in one of his poems.[43] Instead of trying frantically to procure life and prolong it through artificial measures taken in the phase when the horizon of time starts to recede in old age, the Eucharistic *viaticum* can release man into a relaxed relationship with his own mortality. Although the *homo viator* yet must face death, the "medicine of immortality" (Ignatius of Antioch) places his future within him. This future is still unknown to him, but he is already connected to that life that knows no death. The Eucharist, as the foretaste of coming glory, promises nothing less than that the seemingly lost lifetime of each human will be found again in the memory of God: "All forgotten thoughts emerge, at the other end of the world".[44] Regarding the consoling and promising dimension of the Eucharistic *viaticum*, it was a crucial loss that many of the patients hospitalized worldwide with Covid 19 were prevented from receiving pastoral care and the sacraments: the Eucharist, Confession, and the Anointing of the Sick. For the first time in modern history, many Catholics died in hospitals without access to these rites.

VII

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Eucharist could be celebrated either with sharp restrictions or not at all. This experience of want may draw our attention back to an old discipline of piety, of which Karl Rahner once said that the Church of tomorrow would lose some-

41. Cf. Erik Varden, *Heimweh nach Herrlichkeit. Ein Trappist über die Fülle des Lebens*, Freiburg i. Br.: Herder 2021.
42. Peter Handke, *Wie ein Gewecktwerden für einen neuen Tag*, in: Tück & Bieringer 2019, 17. Original German phrasing: "*Gewecktwerden für einen neuen Tag*" and "*Hinübermahlzeiten zu DIR*".
43. T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909–1962*, New York: Harcourt, Brace 1963, 147.
44. Elias Canetti, *Nachträge aus Hampstead. Aufzeichnungen*, München: Hanser 1994, 50. German original: "*Alle vergessenen Gedanken tauchen empor, am anderen Ende der Welt*".

thing crucial if it was to abandon the practice: Eucharistic adoration.[45] This practice currently plays a secondary role, if any, in ecumenical discourse, because it is reminiscent of a confessional difference that one would gladly see removed. And yet, many religious orders and spiritual communities are experiencing a renaissance of the practice of Eucharistic adoration.

The practice of Eucharistic contemplation however is suspected of veiling the character of the Eucharist as a meal and of promoting an idolatrous practice of pious escapism. Is this not a case of objectifying a person and advising the faithful to venerate lifeless matter? Are these not idolatrous pious practices – conserving the body of Christ in a tabernacle, which is moreover marked with an eternal light as a sign of alterity; the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance on the altar, solemnly accompanied by the burning of incense; the public presentation of the consecrated host at processions of the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi? Were these practices not sustained during the Contra-Reformation as markers of Catholic identity and have they not been made obsolete today in favour of ecumenical accord?[46]

We do not think that this is the case, and we wish to plead against unfairly comparing the practices of Eucharistic adoration and the celebration of the Eucharistic meal. Let us rather see them as complementary expressions of piety that both are to be observed abidingly and contemplatively. This can hardly be attained in the few short moments of communal participation: that Christ wishes to come close to us and be really present in the *transformed gifts* of bread and wine and thus personally become *the Gift of transformation* for us. Hegel already saw himself obliged to criticise Catholicism:

> And, first of all, God is in the 'host' presented to religious adoration as an external thing. (In the Lutheran Church, on the contrary, the host as such is not at first consecrated, but in the moment of enjoyment, i.e. in the annihilation of its externality, and in the act of faith, i.e. in the

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45. Karl Rahner, "Eucharistische Anbetung". In Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie* 16, 300-304. Zürich: Benzinger 1984). Here, Rahner describes "quiet individual prayer before the tabernacle" as something that "must not be lost in future. Although this belongs to the past, it must be recaptured for the future, if the latter wishes to be great." German original: "… das stille Gebet des einzelnen vor dem Tabernakel … [ist ein Gut] was auch in Zukunft nicht untergehen sollte, was *zu der Vergangenheit gehört, welche die Zukunft, soll sie groß sein, sich neu erwerben muss*" (302).
46. Jean-Luc Marion, *Gott ohne Sein*. Aus dem Französischen von Alwin Letztkus, Paderborn: Schöningh 2014, 252.

free self-certain spirit: only then is it consecrated and exalted to be the present God).[47]

In contrast to Luther, who had qualified the real presence of Christ as a gift – "*Certe homo non facit corpus et sanguinem etc. Non sunt humanum opus*"[48] – Hegel seems to believe that it is the free spirit of the congregation that produces the presence of Christ in communal prayer. This presence can "no longer be distinguished from the collective consciousness. To be precise, the two are identical as long as this presence lingers in the collective consciousness".[49] Jean-Luc Marion, in contrast, has identified a definite advantage in the very *externality* of the gift, in its "irreducible exteriority". The advantage lies in the fact that the presence of the Blessed Sacrament cannot be confused with the achievement of collective consciousness by the congregation. The alterity of the Other, who draws near and is presented in the consecrated bread, is marked in the form of a sign, and guarded through distance. Eucharistic presence simply is not the product of shared mindfulness. Eucharistic presence is the gift of Christ, the Other, who gives himself so that we in turn may become a gift to others: a gift that affixes and gathers the attention of the imitating consciousness; a gift that invites others amid their accelerated life situations to linger and to contemplate – *adoro te devote* …[50]

In our present, digitalised world, which captures our attention and increasingly fragments it, the Most Blessed Sacrament, in its exteriority, may arouse a transcending form of attentiveness, which can lead

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47. Georg W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, § 552, in: Händel, *Sämtliche Werke* (Jubiläumsausgabe in zwanzig Bänden), ed. by H. Glockner, Stuttgart: Frommann 1927-1940, Bd. 10, 436. English translation: [Hegel's Philosophy of Mind (sfu.ca)](sfu.ca) (accessed 22.09.2021).
48. Cf. n. 26.
49. Marion 2014, 256. German original: "*Die Gegenwart ist hier 'nicht länger mehr vom kollektiven Bewusstsein zu unterscheiden, sondern fällt genau genommen mit diesem zusammen, und zwar genau solange, wie in diesem Bewusstsein die Gegenwart andauert'*". Transignification as reinterpretation or transfinalisation as "changed objectification" of the signs of bread and wine by the congregation in celebration are in danger of failing to appreciate the mystery of the Eucharistic presence if carried out along this line. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is based on the substantial transfiguration of the gifts of bread and wine. On the reformulation of the dogma of transubstantiation in light of a relational ontology, cf. Hoping ³2022; Tück 2018, 286-300.
50. The power towards cultural production generated by the Eucharistic hymns may be illustrated against many examples from literature and musicology. Cf., e.g., Dorothee Bauer, *Olivier Messiaens Livre du Saint Sacrement. Mysterium eucharistischer Gegenwart: Dank – Freude – Herrlichkeit*, Paderborn: Schöningh 2016.

us back into the present of the existing world. In her book *Digitale Theologie*, Johanna Haberer asks:

> What is to become of people who never experience transcending won-
> der, but rather remain captured by the strategical dramaturgy of the
> digital world, every day, for hours on end? What is to become of mind-
> fulness and respect for the person of the other and for their feelings?
> How do digital aesthetics influence the ethics of our human commu-
> nication?[51]

Contemplative Eucharistic piety may interrupt an overly intense con-
nection to digital worlds and revive our attention to the real world.
But do we realise the real presence of Christ? Do we truly do justice
to the Gift of the Ultimate, which is presented to us to contemplate
and to abide in? Surely only incompletely and fragmentarily. Whene-
ver we however truly engage with this presence of Christ in Euchari-
stic contemplation, we may rediscover ourselves in the presence of the
Other and become attentive to others.[52]

   In the situation of suspended Eucharistic celebrations and of a
blurred sense of time, spending time in the presence of the Most
Blessed Sacrament is a precious way of gaining a new awareness of the
salutary and transforming presence of Christ. During lockdowns, the
Eucharist was exposed in the side chapels of many parish churches
for individual prayer, and parishes furthermore maintained offers of
online Eucharistic adoration. In the Roman-Catholic Archdiocese

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51. Johanna Haberer, *Digitale Theologie. Gott und die Medienrevolution der Ge-
genwart*, München: Kösel 2015, 162. Somewhat later she writes: "For people who
disappear into virtual worlds, there is no celebration of the real presence of their
bodies. They begin to despise the corporeal world when they are forced by the need
for sleep or by other bodily needs to leave their virtual spaces. The body becomes
a hindrance (…), real experiences of the senses recede behind virtual experiences"
(165).
52. Furthermore, cf. Jean-Luc Marion, "Realisieren wir die Realpräsenz? Vom Sinn
der eucharistischen Anbetung." *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 46
(2017), 33-40. With reference to Jean-Luc Marion, Daniella Zsupan-Jerome points
out that a deepened understanding of sacramental presence in digital contexts may
sharpen our attentiveness to the other person behind the screen. When understood
as an icon, the Eucharistic gifts lead our attentive beyond the material signs of bread
and wine towards the mystery of the Eucharistic presence. Accordingly, the whole
person behind the screen, whose presence is conveyed medially and in the form of
a sign, should be observed. The digital encounter remains oriented towards the true
encounter: "For digital communication, then, the screen must remain an icon that
creates space for such a true encounter: an inexhaustible sense of the other whom
we behold in love, offering ourselves for encounter while extending hospitality to
the other in their otherness" (Zsupan-Jerome 2015, 541).

of Vienna, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn for instance pleaded in favour of open churches for individual prayer during lockdowns. In this context, he explicitly encouraged priests to offer Eucharistic adoration. Yet, a contemplative Eucharistic piety remains oriented towards the communal celebration of the Eucharist as the "fount and apex" (cf. LG 11), towards the real encounter with Christ on partaking in Communion. "Gazing upon" the elements remains connected to "partaking in"[53] them. The character of the Eucharist as a gift only begins to reveal itself completely in the act of partaking.[54]

Social distancing, together with the numerous screen-locked, digital events and meetings that took place during the Covid-19 pandemic have heightened the human need of bodily closeness, physical co-presence, and mutual eating and drinking in restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs, and inns. Likewise, Eucharistic adoration may re-awaken our longing after participation in Communion, in the celebration of the Eucharist. It calls forth our spiritual hunger after real, direct encounters with Christ, who is hidden in the signs of bread and wine. The communal celebration of the Eucharist remains a centrepiece of Christian existence. It facilitates that which transforms us: the encounter with Christ.

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53. Cf. Marianne Schlosser, "In dem Glauben, der Augen verleiht. Zur Theologie der eucharistischen Anbetung." *Geist und Leben* 86/4 (2013): 374-384, here 378: There is a deep inward connection between 'partaking' and 'gazing upon', that is, between the liturgy as a celebration of the Church and the spiritual appropriation in personal prayer of the mystery that is celebrated. ("*Zwischen der Liturgie als Feier der Kirche und der geistlichen Aneignung des gefeierten Mysteriums im persönlichen Gebet, also zwischen ‚Essen' und ‚Schauen', besteht ein tiefer innerer Zusammenhang*"); cf. furthermore Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 25.

54. Christ gives himself, thus Jean-Luc Marion, as "sustanance of the community, in order to call forth in her the fruits of love, not to be venerated sterilely and magically as a living relic, but rather to be stripped of its own gift-like quality" (Jean-Luc Marion, "Splendeur de la contemplation eucharistique". *La politique de la mystique. Hommage à Mgr Maxime Charles*, eds. Société nouvelle Firmin-Didot. Limoges: Edtion Critérion 1984, 17-28, here 17).

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This is my Body …

A Lutheran perspective on the Eucharist, digitalization, mediality, and presence[1]

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Abstract: In times of the Covid-19 pandemic, many congregations had to stop celebrating the Eucharist or find new ways to do so – one of these being online Eucharist services in synchronous and diachronous settings. The article describes developments in the Protestant Churches of Germany and shows that the interplay of theology and church practices is essential. On the background of the fundamental dialectics of absence and presence in (Christian) liturgy and Luther's writings on the Lord's Supper, the article proposes two axes that open up a 'field' of diverse ritual practices: *community* and *gift*. Many different ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper seem to be possible in this field – also celebrations in synchronous digital settings (video conferences). The Covid-19 crisis seen as a chance to rethink sacramental theology *and* ways of celebration – in the context of a permanent change of liturgical practices.

Keywords: Eucharist – Lord's Supper – Digital Eucharist Services – absence/presence – German Protestant Churches – Luther – Liturgical Theology.

1. In the Midst of the Crisis – Some Reflections on Where We Are

Three times in his life, Karl Barth was asked to write an article for the journal *Christian Century* on the question: "How my mind has changed?". They were published in 1938, 1948, and 1958.[2] More than half a century ago, it seemed enough to ask theologians every ten years how their minds had changed. Today, in the context of

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1. The following article is a slightly revised version of a lecture delivered at the LUMEN-workshop "Eucharist – presence – mediality" on March 24, 2021. I am very grateful for the invitation and the chance to deliver a lecture and publish it here.
2. Karl Barth. "How my mind has changed?". *Evangelische Theologie* 20 (1960): 97–106.

an ongoing crisis theologians' minds might change in much shorter intervals.[3]

This is, at least, what I can say personally. My mind has changed in many ways in the past months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Early in 2020, I wouldn't have thought that *liturgical presence* could be experienced digitally; today, I am absolutely convinced that we can celebrate online worship *in real presence.* In the first weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic and the first lockdown in Germany in March and April 2020, I was one of those who argued for Eucharistic fasting in times of crisis. Today, I do not only think that we should not continue to fast any longer, but that there are excellent theological arguments for celebrating the Eucharist/the Holy Communion in a digital video-conference format, and that these online celebrations are practically an inspiring possibility to rediscover the Sacrament. My mind has undoubtedly changed, and I am sure it will continue to do so in the weeks and months to come.[4]

In what follows, I will methodologically combine an analysis of practices and theology, and I will share many open questions that I have as a Lutheran Practical Theologian, who is at the same time the director of the Institute for Liturgical Studies of the United Lutheran Church of German[5] and the head of the Liturgical Council of the Lutheran Church of Germany.[5] What I write, is not an official church position. And it would be very difficult to formulate such a position in the context of Lutheran Churches in Germany today: There is a wide range of theological arguments and practices in German Lutheranism concerning the question, whether Holy Communion is possible via digital media or not. I mention two extreme possibilities: the Lutheran churches of Hannover and Saxony.

In early March 2021, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Saxony published advice for celebrating Holy Supper.[6] The plea was to continue to celebrate or to restart the celebration of the Eucharist as soon

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3. The article was – as mentioned in note 1 – presented in March 2021. I finished the written version of it on November 27, 2021 – in a time, in which the number of infections raised drastically in many European countries.

4. Cf. Alexander Deeg. "Es wird nicht mehr sein wie vorher. Überlegungen zum Gottesdienstfeiern in Zeiten der Corona-Pandemie und danach." *Pastoraltheologie* 109 (2021): 417–435; Alexander Deeg."Solches tut … "– Sieben Thesen zur Abendmahlfeier in Corona-Zeiten." *Pastoraltheologie* 110 (2021): 123–138; Alexander Deeg. "Gottesdienst in ‚Corona-Zeiten' oder: Drei Variationen zum Thema Präsenz." *Evangelische Theologie* 81 (2021): 136–151.

5. Cf. www.velkd.de/ liturgiewissenschaftliches-institut-leipzig.php (seen 26.11.2021).

6. An updated version (May 2021) can still be found on the church's website (seen 27.11.2021).

as possible. The Church of Saxony does not even mention digital possibilities – and the main idea is to return to the practices before the pandemic if possible in the context of our hygiene regulations. Especially the single and communal chalice (Gemeinschaftskelch) plays a central role – as the Church declares that only with a single chalice the Sacrament is celebrated "stiftungsgemäß" (according to Jesus' institution). In July 2021, the Synod of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Saxony affirmed this position and declared explicitly:

> Die Feier im Gottesdienst der Gemeinde bleibt insbesondere aufgrund der wichtigen leiblichen Dimension die Regelform. Einer digitalen Abendmahlsfeier fehlen demgegenüber wesentliche Elemente einer stiftungsgemäßen Abendmahlsfeier, so dass wir zu dieser Form nicht raten können.[7]

What is astonishing here is – in my view – not primarily the hesitation towards digital Eucharist services, but (a) the repeated argument with Jesus' institution and (b) the lack of differentiation and perception: The Covid-19 pandemic showed impressively that 'Sunday services of the congregation' exist in manifold and also digital ways; and at the same time there has never been 'the' digital way of celebrating Holy Communion, but different ways of doing so: e.g., in video-conferences or services broadcast via *YouTube*.

On the other hand, the Bishop of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Hannover, Ralf Meister, declared already in November 2020 that celebrating the Eucharist digitally seems very well possible for him.[8] The Church discussed this question again in its council of Bishops and published the far-reaching paper *Der Schatz der Christusgegenwart in digitalen Formen des Abendmahls*!? in March 2021 declaring digital Eucharist services as possible (even when they are celebrated via YouTube, that is to say: in individual contexts and not at the same time).[9]

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7. *Wort der Landessynode zu Verständnis und Praxis des Abendmahls*, Dresden, 10. Juli 2021, https://engagiert.evlks.de/fileadmin/userfiles/EVLKS_engagiert/B._Landeskirche/Landessynode/2021-Fruehjahr/Wort-der-Landessynode-zu-Verstaendnis-und-Praxis-des-Abendmahls.pdf (seen 26.11.2021). My own translation: The celebration [of the Holy Supper] in Sunday services of the congregation remains the rule because of the important bodily dimension. In digital Holy Supper celebrations, essential elements of a celebration according to its institution are lacking, so that we can't advise this practice.
8. Cf. *Evangelische Zeitung*. 27.10.2021. https://www.evangelische-zeitung.de/bischof-meister-haelt-digital-gefeiertes-abendmahl-fuer-moeglich/ (seen 26.11.2021).
9. Cf. Evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche Hannovers. 2021. https://www.michaeliskloster.de/damfiles/default/michaeliskloster2-0/arbeitsbereiche-

Saxony and Hannover are both *Lutheran* Churches and mark the poles of an intensive liturgical and theological discussion in German Protestantism.

Liturgical Fluidity – or: Somewhere in the Desert

In January 2021, the Lutheran pastor in Hamburg Matthias Lemme used a metaphor during an online conference on liturgical digitalization and saw all of us "*in the desert*" – as we, according to Lemme, have left Egypt but are not yet in the Promised Land. We are somewhere in between. There is something we left behind – and, of course, it is a good question whether it is correct and fair to compare what we left behind to 'Egypt'. There were many good things we had and did in our worship services before the Covid-19 crisis. For example did we celebrate Holy Communion with a big shared cup ("Gemeinschaftskelch") for all participants, a single chalice – surely a great symbol for the unity of sisters and brothers in Christ (from the days of John Chrysostom and Gregor the Great until March 2020, although there were discussions again and again about communion cups – especially in the so-called "Kelchbewegung", a Communion Cup Movement around 120 years ago).[10]

The other side of Lemme's metaphor: We are on our way and have not reached the Promised Land yet. And – as we read in the Torah – it is not easy to live in the desert and to remain moving with all the obstacles and detours. Some wish to go back to Egypt as soon as possible, back to where we were. On the other side, some celebrate the new liturgical freedom we have and clearly say: "Die Agende ist tot!" ("Our Book of Worship is dead!"). And: "After having experienced the freedom of online worship and the inclusiveness I experience in a Zoom service, I never want to sit in a church in rows (like in a bus) listening to one pastor standing in the front, many meters away from me."[11]

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themen/abendmahl/pdfs-abendmahl/Grundsaetzliches/Digitales-Abendmahl-Impulspapier-2021-03-12-V2.pdf-59f65b8641a1fc57996f4e339beb0a95.pdf (seen 26.11.2021).

10. Cf. Friedric Spitta. *Die Kelchbewegung in Deutschland und die Reform der Abendmahlsfeier.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1904. Friedrich Spitta's main argument against *one* chalice for all participants is that the hygiene is problematic and that good disinfection of the chalice would be necessary, but is not possible. But as a New Testament scholar, there is another argument: Spitta is convinced that historically Jesus and his disciples used individual chalices when they drank together at the last meal in Jerusalem – as is the common practice in Jewish Passover-meals until this very day.

11. This is what a participating pastor said in an online consultation.

The desert is a threshold, an in-between-space.[12] We had to leave former security and break open somehow stable theologies. In my view, we should not try to leave this unsettling zone too soon but productively use this time of *liturgical fluidity*.

The Interplay of Theology and Church Practices

In these fluid and dynamic times, there are chances for worship and liturgical reflections (in the midst of a pandemic, which is terrible and should never be whitewashed by trying to see its chances and the interesting reflections it provokes). We have the opportunity to discover the theology of worship and Eucharist anew and to gain experiences with different forms and practices of worship. Theology and church practices are always interconnected, and our task as theologians is to work on this relationship and to reflect on the interplay of theology and church practices.[13]

There were times in Church History in which theological reflections and ideas preceded practical innovations. In many aspects, the Reformation can be seen as such a time. The theological (and spiritual!) discoveries of Martin Luther and the other reformers resulted in vast liturgical transformations – and some of them appeared years after the interruption of theological thoughts – e.g., Luther's reform of the Latin and German Mass in 1523 and 1526.

In the context of the Eucharist/the Holy Communion, the 1970s were – at least in my German context – a period in which new theological insights resulted in a vast transformation of the practices of celebrating the Eucharist. Holy Supper was rediscovered in an ecumenical context and seen anew as Eucharistic celebration and prolepsis of God's Kingdom. The communion of all people celebrating and the political dimension of Eucharist was freshly taken into account, thus overcoming a typical Protestant reduction of Holy Supper to an individual soteriological event. New forms of celebrating the Eucharist were established following these theological insights. Especially the *Kirchentag* in Nürnberg (in 1979) was a starting point; in the years to come the kneeling banks used for Holy Communion were removed in most Protestant churches in Germany. People nowadays stand in a circle or half-circle around the altar; they feel free to touch the chalice and take the wafers or the bread in their hands. Some-

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12. Cf. especially Victor Turner's famous descriptions of "liminality" in Victor Turner. *Das Ritual. Struktur und Anti-Struktur*. Frankfurt/Main/New York: Campus Verlag 2000.

13. Cf. Alexander Deeg & David Plüss. *Liturgik*. Lehrbuch Praktische Theologie 5. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 2021, 164–166.

times (before the Covid-19), they shook hands after the Eucharist, thus trying to stress the relevance of 'horizontal' communion as the result of the vertical communion with Jesus Christ and in the body of Christ. In some contexts, the combination of satiation meal and ritual meal was rediscovered (Feierabendmahl). Theological and practical transformations went hand in hand.[14]

My impression is that in these days of crisis, it is the other way round: We start with *practical* transformations – and it is important that *theological* reflections follow. It is possible to enter the circle (or the spiral) of theology and practice from any side, but it is essential to enter it and realize that celebrating the Eucharist *in a different form* also means *celebrating a different Eucharist.*

In Germany, there were not many Protestant congregations which celebrated Eucharist at all in the first months of the pandemic. A spontaneous survey during the above-mentioned online conference with pastors in January 2021 showed that 45% of the pastors said that they had not celebrated Holy Communion since March 2020 in their congregations, 25% stated that they celebrated sometimes, 8% regularly in physical co-presence; only 8% said that they sometimes celebrated digitally, none of the pastors declared that they had regular digital Holy Supper celebrations in their congregations.

A study published in June 2020 entitled *Digitale Verkündigungs-formate während der Corona-Krise. Eine ad-hoc-Studie im Auftrag der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* based on four regional churches in Germany asked if there were digital Holy Supper-celebrations during the Covid-19 crisis. 12% of the participants said "yes", 63% "no", and 25% did not answer – a strikingly high number, which may point to the insecurity of many pastors and congregations about the (im-)possibility of celebrating Eucharist online.[15] In a follow-up study including the second lockdown and the time between the first and the second lockdown, the result was that a little less than 20% of the congregations stated that they celebrated Eucharist digitally.[16]

For many Protestants in Germany, the Covid-19 pandemic went hand in hand with Eucharistic abstinence. The congregations which

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14. Cf. Alexander Deeg. "Essen, was wir sind. Oder: Die Politik des Abendmahls." *Kerygma und Dogma* 66 (2020): 140–156.

15. Daniel Hörsch. *Digitale Verkündigungsformate während der Corona-Krise. Eine ad-hoc-Studie im Auftrag der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, https://www.mi-di.de/materialien/digitale-verkuendigungsformate-waehrend-der-corona-krise, 2021, 36. (seen 27.11.2021).

16. Cf. Daniel Hörsch. 2021. *Gottesdienstliches Leben während der Pandemie. Verkündigungsformate und ausgewählte Handlungsfelder kirchlicher Praxis. Ergebnisse einer midi-Vergleichsstudie*, https://www.mi-di.de/materialien/gottesdienstliches-leben-waehrend-der-pandemie, 17. (seen 27.11.2021).

celebrate Holy Communion in physical co-presence are bound to the hygiene regulations. In many Catholic congregations in Germany Eucharist was and is celebrated *sub una*, and the wafer is sometimes distributed with forceps. This practice can be found in some Protestant congregations as well. Of course, a practice like this is undoubtedly *not* fitting to the theological insights, which shaped the transformation of Holy Communion in the 1970s stressing the communion and the celebration. There is a new fixation on the materiality of a holy substance distributed to individuals – which (in my eyes) looks like distribution of medicine, but surely not like a meal we share and enjoy together.

Just one more example: In Southern Saxony, a Lutheran pastor 'invented' a form of celebration, in which he celebrates the Eucharistic liturgy *alone* in the sacristy – with open doors to the congregation, who may be present in small numbers in the Church. After having finished the celebration, congregants are invited to come separately to the sacristy door to receive wafer and wine individually. This is also a radical shift not only in the practice of Holy Communion, but also in its theology.

In my view, liturgical theology should be done in an *abductive way*, in a permanent interrelation of describing practices phenomenologically *and* reflecting on them theologically. The term 'abduction' was coined by Charles Sanders Peirce to describe a form of logical argument that overcomes the duality of either inductive or deductive epistemologies. Inductive ways of arguing would start with concrete cases and find general principles; deductive epistemologies would start with theoretical principles and adapt them to practical cases. The idea of abduction is that new, daring, provocative ideas may be formulated, which should then be tried out empirically and thoroughly thought through at the same time. Abduction is thus a way of dynamizing the duality of induction and deduction.[17] Applying this to liturgical theology is exactly the constant combination of phenomenological perception of liturgical celebrations *and* theological reflection of their underlying logic.

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17. Cf. Alexander Deeg. *Das äußere Wort und seine liturgische Gestalt. Überlegungen zu einer evangelischen Fundamentalliturgik*. APTLH 68. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2012, 61–71.

2. Presence and Absence in Analogue and Digital Contexts

It is all about presence … A Lutheran perspective on Worship and Holy Communion

Lutheran liturgical theology stresses the importance of *presence*. Lutheran worship is all about *presence*: the presence of Christ and the active and participative presence of the congregation; every Worship service is celebrated expecting the salvific presence of Christ amid the congregation.

It is essential for Luther and the other Reformers not to try to relate presence with problematic practices. The presence of Christ cannot be located in any form of *cultus exterior*, of the exterior worship cult stabilized by Church's hierarchy. It cannot be found in outward materializations of the consecrated bread, but only in the interaction, participation, and involvement of every congregant, in the interrelation of word and sign and faith, in which the living voice of the Gospel, the *viva vox Evangelii*, can be heard anew. The body of Christ becomes alive amid the words of institution *and* the congregation's participation – and the body of Christ is never alive without the celebrating congregation, but only amid the congregation and *as* the celebrating congregation.

In Luther's *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528)[18] he differentiates three forms of presence: physical, spiritual, and heavenly.[18] The sacramental presence of Christ in the elements can only be understood as a heavenly presence, which remains a mystery, but is 'real' at the same time. For Luther, it is essential that this 'real presence' does not mean a local inclusion of the body of Christ 'in' the materiality of the elements, but is and remains connected with Jesus Christ himself, more precisely with His word of promise. Luther differentiates "thettel wort" and "heisselwort", words describing an 'action' and words connecting this with God's promise (Verheißung).[19] The words of Jesus Christ "This is my body" are for Luther clearly "heisselwort", words which become 'real' in the presence of the one, who did not only speak them in the past, but continues to speak them whenever the congregation does what he commanded them to do. This is (in my view) a critical aspect arguing for the possibility of a mediated presence in digital contexts. Christ's presence is not connected with

18.   Luther, Martin. 1528. *Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis*. WA 26, 261–509.
19. Luther, Martin. WA 26, 283f.

the practice of sharing the '*same*' food, but with the practice of hearing His words of promise, eating, and drinking together.

There is maybe no one in Protestant Theology who formulated this interrelation of congregation and Christ's presence more pointedly than Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his dissertation *Sanctorum Communio* using the formula: "Christus als Gemeinde existierend", "Christ existing as a community".[20] The Reformers never wanted to stress the medium (or the outward form), but wanted to emphasize the main question, if communion/community (with God and with the others who celebrate) can be experienced and if participation is possible.

If it is all about *presence*, we should be very careful in our discussion in order not to confuse two meanings of presence.

Presence – in analogue and digital contexts

When we speak about "Präsenzgottesdienste" in Germany, we usually mean worship services celebrated in physical co-presence in a church building. And sometimes the discussion seems as if the Reformers' concentration on *presence* and the celebration in physical co-presence go hand in hand – with the consequence that some people think that only "Präsenzgottesdienste" are 'real' services in a theologically grounded sense of the word. What we have here is an equivocation in our use of 'presence'.

But when we reduce Präsenzgottesdienste to physical co-presence, we neglect that there is presence also in digital contexts. Yes, it is a different presence, but it is, in my view, presence! And the task of Practical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Liturgical Studies should be to describe as precisely as possible different aspects of presence in digital and analog settings.

Worship services in physical co-presence are just one form of worship services celebrating God's and the congregation's presence in a multimedia reality. Nathan Jurgenson speaks about "digital dualism", the separation of online- and offline-worlds. According to Jurgenson, this dualism refers to the perception, especially of older people, but it does not fit the experience especially of younger people, who do not separate their world in two, but live in a "reality-virtuality-continuum" and in a constant mixed reality.[21] Using a smartphone, e.g., is

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20. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Sanctorum Communio. Eine dogmatische Untersuchung zur Soziologie der Kirche*. hg. v. Joachim von Soosten. DBW 1, Gütersloh/München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 2005, 87.
21. Cf. Bernd Irlenborn. "Die Liturgie im Zeitalter ihrer medialen Reproduzierbarkeit. Systematisch-theologische Überlegungen zu Online-Gottesdiensten." In: *Online zu Gott!? Liturgische Ausdrucksformen und Erfahrungen im Medienzeitalter*,

not leaving one world (the analog world) and entering another world (the digital one), but is an extension of the reduced possibilities of the own body.[22]

At the same time, the digital world is not a *disembodied* world, as some argue. Helmuth Plessner's famous sentence: "Wir sind unser Leib und haben unseren Körper differentiates between body as the material dimension (Körper) and body as the starting point of all human perception (Leib).[23] *As* bodies (Leib) we are also part of digital communication, we sense and feel our body. We feel pain or feel tired, we are happy or even excited sitting or standing there and being part of online communication.

Of course, it is correct to say that the way we participate is different – and especially the olfactory and the sensory element of human perception is reduced or impossible. But still: It is a bodily experience – also in digital worship. We may even be 'closer' to what happens in worship in a bodily dimension – an aspect which was discussed quite often in the last months in homiletic contexts. The preacher may be much 'closer' in digital worship services, as the camera approaches him or her in a way congregants would never dare in a physical co-present setting; thus, the question of authenticity is a different one.

The primary reduction of online communication might be that we do not experience the 'space of worship' as we would in a church building. The experience of entering a 'space' is lost or at least different. The atmospheres connected with spaces and especially 'holy spaces' are at least not the same.[24] I still think that Walter Benjamin's essay from 1935/36 "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" is an exciting starting point to describe what Benjamin

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eds. Stefan Kopp & Benjamin Krysmann, 105-129. Kirche in Zeiten der Veränderung 5, Freiburg i. Br.: Herder 2020, here 109-112. The term "Reality-Virtuality-Continuum" comes from Paul Milgram and Fumio Kushino cf. Berger, Teresa. 2018. *@Worship. Liturgical practices in digital worlds.* London/New York: Routledge, 16.

22. Cf. Antonio Sparado (SJ). *Cybertheology. Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet.* New York: Fordham University Press 2014, 72f.. These reflections are based on Marshall McLuhan who studied e.g. the influence of the use of microphones in liturgical settings. Sparado is convinced that the bodily dimension of the use of the internet changed rapidly since the invention of touch screens.

23. Quoted in: Emmanuel Alloa, Thomas Bedorf, Christian Grüny & Tobias Nikolaus Klaus. "Einleitung." In *Leiblichkeit. Geschichte und Aktualität eines Konzepts*, eds. Alloa et al. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2019, 2.

24. Cf. Hermann Schmitz. *Der Leib, der Raum und die Gefühle*. Bielefeld/Locarno: Edition Sirius 2019, 46–80; Gernot Böhme. *Leib. Die Natur, die wir selbst sind*. Berlin: Suhrkamp 2019, esp. 50–60.

calls the "aura", which is connected with "truth", "uniqueness", "authority", and especially with the "here and now".[25]

To summarize this point: Yes, it is all about presence in Protestant worship, but presence should not be restricted to physical co-presence, but can be experienced in digital spaces (digitalen Räumen) as well (although the term 'digital space' is a bit problematic, as one of the things which are lost is – as shown – especially the experience of 'space'!).

One side-note: Even presence in a shared meal is possible in a mediatized digital form. I admit that I learned this from a McDonald's advertisement broadcast in the weeks before Christmas 2020.[26] McDonald's wanted to surprise one of the workers of the company, who came from abroad and was not able to celebrate Christmas together with his family and loved ones in South-East Europe because of the Covid-19 restrictions. So, McDonald's invested, rebuilt his mother's living room in a van, asked her to share the recipe of her usual Christmas meal, cooked it – and invited the worker to a shared meal in the truck *with* the family abroad who was digitally present and ate mother's Christmas meal ᴀt the same moment. It is, in my view, a very touching video and it is somehow eye-opening for the discussion about Eucharist: Shared co-presence is possible, even if we are not physically co-located (Berger 2018, 38f.).

3. Eucharist/Holy Communion in German Protestantism 2020/2021 – Some Observations

The combination of two logics in the past 40 years: individual soteriology and celebration of communion

The traditional Protestant logic of the Eucharist, which was dominant for almost 400 years (although it may not have been Luther's first idea, as I will argue), was the logic of *individual soteriology*. The Holy Communion was part of a practice of repentance and a penitential liturgy; it was predominantly connected with a confession of sins,

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25. Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". In *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, 166-195. Boston/New York: Mariner Books/ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2019.
26. McDonald's 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ks3DvonVVs (seen 26.11.2021).

and the tasting of bread and wine was the absolution not just heard, but eaten and drunk.

The Eucharistic movement, which started in the 1970s, did not remove this logic altogether or replace it with a totally different one. It is still there in German Protestantism, but at the same time, a new logic was discovered (or better: rediscovered, as it is an old logic!): the celebration of Communion and community. Somehow both logics are combined today, which works quite well for some participants, but not for others – for those who miss their traditional penitential meal and for those who have their problems with a soteriological coined celebration of the Holy Communion. In practice, it is this combination of two different logics which leads to uncertainties: How joyful should the celebration of the Holy Communion be? What is the attitude and tune of the celebration? Do people receive wavers or 'real bread'?

A Short Rereading of Luther's "Treatise concerning the blessed sacrament of the holy and true body of Christ and concerning the brotherhoods" (1519)

With the recombination of two logics, we are somehow back at the point where Luther started to rethink the Eucharist in his 1519 text: *A Treatise Concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and concerning the Brotherhoods*. In this treatise, Luther points out:

> The significance or purpose of this sacrament is the fellowship of all saints, whence it derives its common name *synaxis* or *communion*, that is fellowship; and *communicare* means to take part in this fellowship, or as we say, to go to the sacrament, because Christ and all saints are one spiritual body; just as the inhabitants of a city are one community and body. [27]

Those who receive the sacrament are Christ's spiritual body – together with "all saints" transcending any borders of time and space, but also breaking down all walls and fences between the congregants. The *synaxis* is the communion of all the citizens of Christ's city. Partaking of the sacrament means being connected with Christ, his suf-

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27. Quoted according to: Luther, Martin. 1519. A Treatise Concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and Concerning the Brotherhoods (translated by J.J. Schindel). https://www.checkluther.com/wp-content/uploads/1519-A-Treatise-Concerning-the-Blessed-Sacrament-of-the-Holy-and-True-Body-of-Christ-and-Concerning-the-Brotherhoods.pdf (seen 25.11.2021).

ferings, and his resurrection, but also with the sufferings of the whole congregation, the whole body of Christ. The *communion* is about our sin and God's grace, yes, but it is at the same time about our way of living together as the body of Christ:

> There your heart must go out in love and devotion and learn that this sacrament is a sacrament of love, and that love and service are given you, and you again must render love and service to Christ and His needy ones.[28]

What happens in the sacrament is – according to Luther 1519 – that "we are changed into one another and are brought into fellowship with one another by love, without which there can be no such change".[29] Luther describes the dynamics of the sacrament in a theological *and* sociological context.[30] And he even ridicules those who ask themselves strange questions about the when and how and why the materiality of bread and wine changes.

It is part of the problem of the developments of the 1520s that this interrelation of theology and sociology somehow got lost – and the theological question about the way to describe the presence of Christ correctly became the main focus of the Eucharistic controversy between Luther and Zwingli (and others). Luther focused on the combination of hermeneutics and soteriology – especially in his 1527 work *That These Words of Christ, "This is my Body, etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics*. We are not informed in detail about Luther's practices of celebrating Holy Communion in these years, but it may be the case that this theological shift caused a change in practices again – reducing the aspect of community and concentrating on the words of institution and their performative dimension.

Celebration Today in German Protestantism: A new Differentiation of the two logics?

The recombination of two logics – this is where Luther started in 1519, and this is (in my view) where we were (at least somehow) in our Protestant rediscovery of the Eucharist since the 1970s. And it is my fear that this is what we might lose today. The two logics – community and soteriology – seem to be separated again, and especially the 'old', individualized soteriological model becomes influential due

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28. Ibid., 9.
29. Ibid., 14.
30. I tried to work out the political dimension of Luther's 1519 reflections cf. Alexander Deeg. 2020.

to the necessary reduction of celebrating the Eucharist in physical co-presence in times of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Holy Communion may again look like an individual distribution of medicine. As practice and theology are interrelated, the shift of practices also changes theology – and we should be careful what we do. Is what we see in some contexts the re-invention of a salvific material instead of the interrelation of faith, community, and Christ's presence in personal faith and communal practice?

But digital ways of celebrating Holy Communion may also be problematic in this sense. Already during the first lockdown in March/April 2020, some congregations uploaded *YouTube* videos showing a pastor saying the words of institution and suggested that people at home prepare bread and wine and use these videos in order to celebrate the Eucharist.

I see this as a problematic way of celebration. The "here and now" is lost completely; there is no congregation – but you may be all alone with the video (or in a small group sitting at home). What is even more problematic in my view: It is each and every individual who decides if they want to celebrate now – and does so. Eucharist may somehow be transformed into a 'self-service'-event. In addition: the words of institution spoken by the pastor are removed from their context and transformed into some almost magical words, which are thought to become 'effective' in a mediated way. The problem is not that it is digital – but the problem is that it loses the dimension of gift and donation and the dimension of communion/community.

Another problematic logic some share in our Protestant churches in Germany would be: We continue our Eucharistic fasting. The argument behind this plea for fasting might be that Protestants do not really 'need' the sacrament as they have all they need in the *word*. Holy Supper would then be something like a ritual redundancy. I do not want to ridicule this position, which is quite popular in German Protestantism. Many Protestants in Germany do not miss the celebration of the Holy Supper.

Thus, the question should be asked again: Why do we celebrate the Eucharist? It was Peter Brunner who gave a strikingly simple answer around 70 years ago: We celebrate, because Jesus commanded us to do so. In Brunner's own words:

> Ich weiß nicht, warum ich gerade diese Gabe des Abendmahls brauche. Jesus Christus weiß es allein. Nur aus seiner Stiftung weiß ich, daß ich

diese Gabe brauche, aber aus diesem Grunde weiß ich es mit absoluter Gewißheit."[31]

Brunner's answer is circular. I do not have to find good reasons for celebrating; I do not even have to say how much it means for me; I do not have to stress my faith experiences connected with the Holy Supper; I do not have to argue why it is more than a lecture of a Biblical text or a sermon. It is simply to do what Jesus commanded us to do.[32]

In my view, Brunner's argument stands for the externality of our faith as a gift connected with the Holy Supper. Celebrating the Holy Supper interrupts our logics – and even our logics of explaining why the Eucharist should be celebrated. It interrupts the life of the congregants and their permanent circles of self-relatedness, their existence as *homines incurvati* in themselves.

What I described so far are problematic ways of celebrating the Eucharist in times of the Covid-19 pandemic in my German context. But there are, of course, many other forms of celebrating which try not to lose the theological insights of the past decades.

Just two examples:

(1) There are services where the congregants receive an arrangement with a little bit of wine and some bread. The congregation remains seated – with enough distance from one another. They eat and drink together and are reminded of a 'real meal' they share with others. The Bavarian pastor who regularly celebrates in this form says: "Well, people somehow like and enjoy it, although it is a bit like receiving food in an airplane."

(2) In some congregations, people celebrate with little bags they receive – looking like bags for a snack on the way (which might be quite a fitting metaphor for Holy Supper!). In this bag, people find a little

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31. Peter Brunner. "Zur Lehre vom Gottesdienst der im Namen Jesu versammelten Gemeinde." In *Leiturgia Bd. 1: Geschichte und Lehre des evangelischen Gottesdienstes*, 83-361. Kassel: Joh. Stauda Verlag, 186. My own translation: I do not know why I should need this particular gift of the Holy Supper. Jesus Christ alone knows it. It is only his institution through which I know that I need this gift, but for this reason, I know it with absolute certainty.
32. Actually, this argumentation can be compared to Karl Barth's circular way of stating why the Biblical canon is the canon. He writes in KD I/1: "[…] die Bibel macht sich selbst zum Kanon. Sie ist Kanon, weil sie sich als solcher der Kirche imponiert hat und immer wieder imponiert" (Karl Barth. *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes. Prolegomena zur Kirchlichen Dogmatik*, KD I/1. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich 1975, 110).

bit of bread and a single grape – which they can take to their seats and enjoy together.

From my perspective, celebrating the Eucharist in online video conferences is an excellent possibility: 'Zoom-Eucharists'. People prepare wine and bread before the service. In the liturgy, it seems essential that the congregation sees one another (which means that there should not be too many participants, and their videos should be on). The participants are gathered at the same time in one digital room and are able to interact. Liturgically it is important – in my view – to stress the offering of bread and wine and to give thanks for them (actually stressing one aspect which was central to Eucharist liturgies in the times of the Old Church of the first centuries – and was only reduced when the sacrificial logic became more and more dominant).[33] The words of institution are spoken by an ordained pastor, the congregation prays the Lord´s Prayer together – and then the eating and drinking is opened by a word of invitation, e.g.: "Und jetzt nehmt Euch Zeit, esst und trinkt: Christi Leib für dich gegeben. Christi Blut für dich vergossen."[34]

  This way of celebrating stresses the role of the congregation and the words of institution. In a Lutheran context, it is never the 'material' alone which is relevant, the 'one' bread and wine which is there in the hands of the ordained pastor, but it is the 'est' of the *verba testamenti* (This *is* my body; this *is* my blood!) connected with the elements. It is God him- or herself, who acts in his:her spirit when people hear the words of institution and receive the body and blood of Christ. It is all about what God does – as the Formula Concordia says:[35]

> Das die ware gegenwertigkeit des Leibes und Bluts Christi im Abend-
> mahl nicht schaffe einiges menschen wort oder werck, es sey das ver-
> dienst oder sprechen des Dieners oder das essen und trincken oder glaub
> der Communicanten, sondern solches alles solle allein des Allmechtigen

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33. Cf. Anselm Schubert. 2018. *Gott essen. Eine kulinarische Geschichte des Abend-mahls*. München: C.H. Beck, 31–50. 89–94.
34. This is the wording of an "Orientierungshilfe" of the Evangelical Church of Hessen and Nassau.
35. The Formula Concordiae (Formula of Concord) was written in 1577 and belongs to the symbolic books of the Lutheran Churches in Germany (and other countries), but not to the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church of Denmark. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche: Vollständige Neuedition¸*ed. Irene Dingel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2014 (= BSELK), vol. 2.

Gottes krafft und unsers Herrn Jesu Christi wort, einsetzung und ord-
nung zugeschrieben werden.[36]

Community (Gemeinschaft) and Gift (Gabe) as the two Criteria for a Lutheran Understanding of Holy Communion/Eucharist
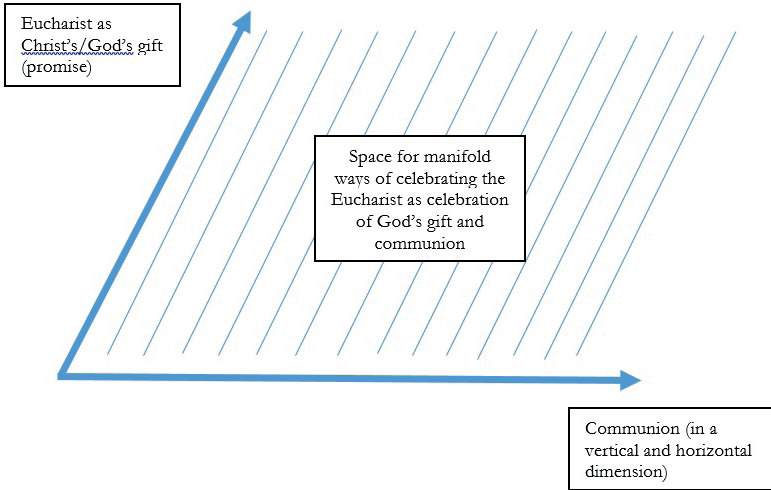
In the discussions I have had with a lot of people in the last weeks and
months on online Eucharist services, I experienced that the question
is relevant, if what they do online is 'really' Eucharist, is 'really' the
sacrament – or is just some eating and drinking. Especially when it
comes to Eucharist, the question of *certainty* is there. Do we just eat
and drink together – or is it *really* Christ's gift we receive? Especially
if I am at home, take the everyday bread I have and drink from the
bottle of wine I opened yesterday, the question of authenticity and
certainty is relevant – and this is a striking analogy to the questions
which struck Luther in the 1520s connecting questions of pastoral
care with theological questions.

Are there theological criteria which help us to discern if different
practices are practices of the Eucharist or not? In my view, we should
not define strict borders but offer orientation. My suggestion would
be to define two axes, which open up a space for many different forms
and practices – but also a space that questions some forms and might
help us to say that they are 'outside'.

The two axes I suggest are: (1) the Eucharist as Christ's/God's gift;
(2) simultaneous communion in a vertical (with Jesus Christ) and
horizontal (with the other congregants) dimension. In the space
opened by these two axes, a lot seems possible, but e.g., the self-ser-
vice online Eucharist would be out of the field – as well as the way of
'distributing holy material' to individual congregants.

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36. Formula of Concord – Solida Declaratio
VII.73 (Vom heiligen Abendmahl). My own translation in English: "[…] that not
the word or work of any man produces the true presence of the body and blood of
Christ in the Supper, whether it be the merit or recitation of the minister, or the
eating and drinking or faith of the communicants; but all this should be ascribed
alone to the power of Almighty God and the word, institution, and ordination of
our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eucharist as Christ's/God's gift (promise)

Space for manifold ways of celebrating the Eucharist as celebration of God's gift and communion

Communion (in a vertical and horizontal dimension)

5. It always changes – and remains the same …

Instead of summarizing the theses of this article, I want to offer a possibility of reflecting the plurality of different forms of Eucharist through the centuries. The altar of the Lutheran Church in Olbernhau, Saxony, shows a painting which belongs to a type called "Konfessionsbilder", works of art demonstrating the specificity of Protestantism by usually showing the Holy Communion. These paintings give us an exciting insight into sacramental practices in 16th and 17th centuries. The Olbernhau painting of 1648 combines the 'scene of institution' with the practice in the current congregation. Both differ a lot: a shared meal of Jesus and his disciples on the top of the painting and a highly symbolic ritual meal shown below.[37]

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37. The following picture is from Kristian Hahn (Olbernhau) – and I thank him for his permission to print it here. Cf. also Helmut Schatz, *Historische Bilder zum evangelisch-lutherischen Gottesdienst. Eine Dokumentation*, Ansbach: Helmut Schatz 2004, 76.

When Jesus commanded: "Do this in remembrance of me …", he started a history of the transformation of the Eucharist. There are many good descriptions of this story of permanent change. One of the best may be the book of German Church Historian Anselm Schubert *Gott essen* (Cf. Schubert 2018). He describes the developments of the Eucharist from a culinary perspective – showing, e.g., that in the first centuries, Eucharist could be celebrated with milk and honey, bread and fish, bread and water, etc.

We could say: The practice of the Eucharist constantly changes, but the Eucharist somehow remains the same. This could be read as a Eucharistic adaptation of Gilles Deleuzes' view on *Difference and Repetition*.[38] For Deleuze, it is precisely the ongoing difference that makes the repetition of the 'same' possible. In this line, new forms of celebration could be cherished, but should, of course, be reflected theologically. We will never have the 'real' form of celebration – at least until we celebrate in whole and no longer mediated presence at God's table.

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38. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press 1994.

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Celebrating the Last Supper Online:
A (Swiss) Reformed Perspective

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Abstract: Can the Last Supper be celebrated online? In German-speaking Reformed Switzerland this question has not been debated widely or even controversially. There are several reasons to explain this – among others, the article suggests, the Reformed understanding of the Last Supper. So what are its liturgical and theological core characteristics? The article explores five central aspects: the Last Supper as an act of commemoration; of building and sustaining community; the importance of the Holy Spirit; the idea that the congregation should take an active role in the celebration; and the symbolic understanding of the elements of bread and wine. Can an online celebration give expression to these aspects and what are the consequences with regard to the way such a celebration is put into practice?

Key words: Reformed theology – Switzerland – Last Supper – digital religion – rituals – liturgy.

Introduction

When in early 2020 the lockdown due to Covid-19 forced churches into the digital realm, a considerable number of congregations in Switzerland ventured out to celebrate their worship services online, and – occasionally – also the Last Supper. Some congregations were streaming entire worship services, in more or less the same form they were usually celebrated. Others looked for decidedly different formats of a digital presence, formats which in their view would be more adaptable to this specific medium (see also Plüss 2021).

The results of the Contoc-Study (Churches in Times of Corona) for Switzerland have shown, that 13.62% of those who sent back the questionnaire did celebrate the Last Supper during the first months of the 2020 lockdown (Neuenschwander 2021, 10).[1] This seems to be a relatively low percentage. But in Reformed, German-speaking Swit-

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1. In Switzerland, 743 persons answered the questionnaire (both from the Reformed and the Catholic Church). It focused on the early phase of the pandemic from Easter 2020 to Pentecost 2020. Reasons given for the reluctance to celebrate the Last Supper online are: to reenact commemoration – bodily, socially and mentally – would be difficult online. I will come back to that point later.

zerland the Last Supper is not celebrated very frequently – often only at high feasts, in some congregations once per month. Apart from Easter Sunday or Good Friday (sometimes Palm Sunday), which fell in the period examined by the study, there might not have been further occasions. As the Eucharist is not part of the liturgy of every Sunday, I suspect that many congregations decided against celebrating the Lord's Supper on more practical grounds. Those congregations who did celebrate it, chose various ways of organising it. Be it that the pastor would stand alone in the church and "perform" the respective rites and words, be it that a small group of people would be present in the church and partake in the meal with wine and bread already lying in front of them individually. Some pastors invited congregants at home to fetch wine and bread in order to participate in the ritual from home – a form that is not new as it is also practiced in worship services broadcast by the Swiss Radio and Television company SRF (Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen) for several years now. Last but not least, some congregations consciously decided for a *Abendmahls-Fasten,* i.e. they decided against celebrating the Last Supper, until it would become possible again in the presence of the congregation.

In Switzerland, there has hardly been any wider public debate whether, from a theological point of view, it would be legitimate to celebrate the Eucharist online or not. This stands in contrast to Germany, where almost immediately a lively debate unfolded, with academics as well as church leaders issuing recommendations. Up to date there is – if I am correct – no academic publication addressing the issues concerning a digital Eucharist from a Reformed perspective in Switzerland. The exception was an elaborate seminar paper by Claudia Daniel Siebenmann (2020), which was published online and which reverberated in a few articles in the press.

Neither have there been any official statements by church leaders or by the Evangelical Church of Switzerland. This is not surprising, since the *ius liturgicum* lies with the 26 cantonal churches or, more precisely, with the congregations themselves. The autonomy of these congregations is held high, as well as the liturgical competence of the pastors and the trust in their ability to deal with liturgical questions responsibly. Therefore, statements by the church leadership would at best be read with interest, but would not be considered as binding. The relative freedom and flexibility in questions of liturgy has a certain tradition in Switzerland. Many cherish this tradition, because it precisely allows for an adaptation of liturgical forms to special situations, such as the Corona-Pandemic. Some, however, lament the great diversity of forms resulting from this tradition, especially when it comes to the liturgy of the Last Supper.

All these factors might have contributed to the fact that the celebration of the Lord's Supper online has hardly been discussed controversially in Switzerland. While from a Roman-Catholic or even a Lutheran point of view, some theological core issues concerning the understanding of the Eucharist might be put forward in arguing against celebrating online, I suggest that a Reformed position would rather open up the possibility of doing so. In a short article in "Zeitzeichen. Evangelische Kommentare zu Religion und Gesellschaft" Horst Gorski also points to a difference between the Reformed and the Lutheran tradition in dealing with the questions pertaining to celebrating online, and links it to different understandings of the presence of Christ (*Realpräsenz*): "For some [the Reformed, K.K.], a digitally mediated celebration of the Eucharist, with participants in different locations can be compatible with the promised and believed presence of the risen Christ, because his presence is imagined spiritually. For others such an idea bears some difficulty, since the question of the bodily presence of Christ remains unclear" (Gorski 2020).[2] It must be noted, however, that some Lutheran theologians recently have argued in favour of the possibility to celebrate the Lord's Supper online (e.g. Winter 2021 and Schrodt 2021).

Therefore, what are the theological and liturgical core characteristics of the Lord's Supper from a Reformed point of view? And can online celebrations give expression to these? Or does digitalization bear the danger of giving away what is essential to a Reformed understanding of the Eucharist? In order to probe deeper into these questions, I ventured out to explore some of the core characteristics of a Reformed theology of the Last Supper by going back to the Reformers: Huldrych Zwinglich, Heinrich Bullinger and Jean Calvin. The context which informs my reflections is the specific context of (German-speaking) Reformed Switzerland, which is not only shaped by the theologies of these founding figures (and other prominent theologians), but by many other parameters, such as the democratic, federal political system, which also influenced the organisational structures and the identity of the church. Of course, the liturgies of German-speaking churches in Switzerland have not entirely preserved the liturgies of the reformers, but have also undergone substantial changes

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2. My translation. The original wording is: "Für die einen (die Reformierten, K.K.) lässt sich eine digital vermittelte Abendmahlsfeier von Teilnehmenden an unterschiedlichen Orten durchaus mit der verheissenen und geglaubten Gegenwart des Auferstandenen vereinbaren, weil die Gegenwart geistlich vorgestellt wird. Anderen bereitet eine solche Vorstellung Schwierigkeiten, weil die Frage nach der leiblichen Gegenwart Christi dabei unklar bleibt."

in the course of five hundred years, especially in the last century (see for example Kusmierz 2018 and Kusmierz and Marti 2017).

Whether the Lord's Supper can be truly and fully celebrated and experienced by a spatially separated community of course also depends on how it is put into practice. The digital liturgical setting asks for a specific liturgical design and awareness. So, if for example – as outlined in more detail below – *commemoration* is a central feature of a Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper, what implications does this have for the actual liturgical setting? Of course these reflections must take into consideration the fact that it makes a difference whether we speak of a worship service that is streamed live including the celebration of the Lord's Supper, where the participants at home are invited to participate (in Christoph Schrodt's terms a "hybrid Eucharist" or "Hybrid-Abendmahl", Schrodt 2021, 498), whether the service is recorded in advance and streamed at the usual time for worship (Schrodt: an "online-Eucharist"), or whether we look at a celebration of the Lord's Supper via Zoom or other conference-tools (Schrodt: conference-Eucharist).

A Reformed perspective on the Last Supper: some insights for the debate

1: The Last Supper as an act of commemoration: restaging and reliving the "original" scene.

Carrie Euler (2013) offers a concise description of Zwinglis' view on the Last Supper as an act of commemoration, a view passionately shared by Johannes Oekolampadius (Wendebourg 2009, 101–138). Euler writes: "Also behind Zwingli's conception of the Supper was his emphasis on the communal and commemorative function of the sacraments. The word 'commemoration' *(commemoratio)* appears over and over again in his writings on the sacrament, because for Zwingli, the sacrament was a re-enactment of a historical event, Christ's final supper with his disciples" (Euler 2013, 62). The congregation is reminded of God's devotion and God's grace towards humankind in Jesus Christ; it is reminded of Christ's suffering, his death and his resurrection. The sacrament, in this sense, serves to make something *visible* and *tangible.* In celebrating the Last Supper, the congregation gets deeply immersed into the original scene of Jesus' meal on the eve

of his death, into the drama that unfolds and that marks the beginning of something new (Jenny 1968, 48 and 51).

In order for the congregation to be able to do so, Zwingli stages the drama, the scene, in his version of the liturgy for the Last Supper "Action oder Bruch des Nachtmals/ Gedechtnus/ oder Dancksagung Christi" (Zurich 1525).[3] It is "a re-enactment of the Last Supper, not Christ's death on the cross" (Euler 2013, 63). The table where the Supper is celebrated is placed before the choir in the church, within the space of the congregation (Ehrensperger 2003a, 17; Jenny 1968, 49). There are wooden vessels, unleavened bread. Bread and wine are taken to the congregation by deacons, and they pass "the bread and cup amongst themselves" (Euler 2013, 63). Bearing in mind that in the middle ages, the Eucharist used to be staged far from the congregation and was celebrated to a greater part without the congregation, this is quite revolutionary.

The point of this dramatic staging of the Last Supper is, that by immersing itself into the narrative of Jesus sharing this last meal with his disciples, the congregation becomes part of the scene. Vice versa, the original historic scene is turned into something the congregants share in in the present, so that the ancient narrative comes to life today. Commemoration is a basic element of religious practices such as worship in general and the Eucharist in particular.[4] Thus, it does not just mean to call something in mind and let it fade back into the past. Rather, the act of commemoration brings to life something that happened in the past and thereby unlocks its relevance for the present. It means that in this very moment something happens to the congregation and with the congregation. In the case of the Lord's Supper, this not only involves mind or soul, but becomes an embodied experience by eating bread and drinking wine. This is a notion of commemoration that can be linked back to the ritual of Passover itself, where the liberation from slavery in Egypt is re-enacted and lived-through year after year.

If for Zwingli commemoration is a main feature of the Last Supper and if he intended the congregants to unlock its meaning by offering them signs and elements within the liturgy that would facilitate such an appropriation, we might ask whether such an immersion into the original scene is possible in a digital setting. Or does it seem to constitute a "performative contradiction" as David Plüss asks (Plüss 2021, 202–203)? How can I become part of the "drama" of the story, sitting on my own in my living room? If I am lacking the bodily

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3. Also Jenny 1968, 48.
4. For a more detailed discussion see for example Ehrensperger 2003b and, with special emphasis on the Last Supper, Ehrensperger 2003c.

experience of sharing a room with others, or of hearing the voices of others while singing the hymns? How can I experience the communion with others, especially if we cannot share in the act of breaking the bread together?

Commemoration is ignited by several elements in the celebration: there is, on the one hand, the narrative that brings the story to life, condensed in the words of institution (or "Abendmahlsbericht" as it is called in the latest version of the liturgy for the Reformed churches in German-speaking Switzerland).[5] Added to that are visual and haptic signs: the elements on the table, the sound of the breaking of the bread, the feeling of the bread in one's hands and mouth, the taste of the wine or juice, the coolness of the metal chalice or the rough surface of the clay cup, the proximity of the congregation assembled around or before the table. While narrative and visual elements can more easily be transmitted digitally, the digital experience of the Lord's Supper certainly lacks an important dimension, which would enable the immersion in the drama, namely that of being close to other bodies and of resonating – positively and negatively – with those bodies. There is no scent reminding me where I am, I only see the part of the room, which the camera shows (but maybe I see even more – the organ player's hands, the painting at the ceiling, etc.).

This does not mean, that an online celebration is deprived of the bodily dimension at all, which seems so important to Zwingli. While sitting on my own in my apartment, celebrating the Last Supper online, I still am mind *and* body (Deeg 2021, 141). I see things, I feel, I taste something. A central element for strengthening this bodily dimension while celebrating online would be that congregants actually have a piece of bread and a glass of wine or juice in front of them. Drinking and eating, as very tangible actions involving various other senses, help participants to embody the narrative and meaning of the Supper – of being nursed and strengthened by it, in body, mind and soul.

Even if the aspect of commemoration is hampered by the lack of a shared bodily experience and by the separation of the communicants, it is possible online. There is nothing that fundamentally stands against it, albeit it makes the online celebration a different experience. Whether participating at home is possible depends, however, on a careful liturgical design, which pays attention to the way the

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5. "Abendmahlsbericht" could be roughly translated as "account of the Last Supper"; the liturgical commission wanted to stress the fact that there is no effect connected with these words, but that it is only an account, calling in mind what happended the night before Jesus died, see: Liturgie- und Gesangbuchkonferenz der evangelisch-reformierten Kirchen der deutschsprachigen Schweiz 2011.

"story" is communicated and mediated. An online celebration probably needs some more narrative elements, which paint the picture of the scene and invite congregants with words to become part of the story.[6] In any case, it would demand a raised sensibility of those, who are responsible for the liturgical design of the Last Supper, to the special characteristics and logics of online communication, be it in a streamed worship service or in a Zoom-version of it (Deeg 2020, 434).

Of course, the ability to get immersed into an online celebration of the Last Supper, also strongly depends on those who participate – on their current mood and motivation and on their willingness to engage in the drama and narrative of the liturgy. As a participant, I might also be distracted, I might become impatient and switch the computer off. It might feel awkward to celebrate on a sofa, or with my family members watching closely. There is no room and special atmosphere that helps me to join the celebration.

To enable people to become part of the story is, of course, already a challenging enough goal in an *analogue* celebration of the Last Supper and much more difficult to "achieve" *online*. I will come back to this point below, because it is strongly linked to a second characteristic of Zwingli's conception of the Supper.

2: By celebrating the Last Supper, the congregation is moulded into the body of Christ

Both Zwingli and Bullinger stressed the fact that by celebrating the Eucharist, the congregants grow together as a community. Thereby they are shaped or moulded into the body of Christ. The community of believers turns into the body of Christ, not the bread. The participants are – so to say – tightened to the body of Christ through the ritual, they are reassured that they form part of this one body. Markus Jenny writes: "Crucial is not the transformation of bread and wine into body and blood of Christ before the communion, but the transformation of the congregation into the body of Christ, which should find its expression in a shared act of breaking the bread within this community" (Jenny 1968, 60).[7]

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6. In the sense of Martin Nicol and Alexander Deeg, who describe the task of the preacher as to "put one another in the picture" ("Einander ins Bild setzen") with words, see Nicol and Deeg 2005.
7. My translation. The original wording is: "Das Entscheidende ist aber nicht die Wandlung von Brot und Wein in Leib und Blut Christi vor der Kommunion, sondern die Wandlung der Gemeinde zum Leib Christi, was während der Kom-

If forming and building a community is so crucial to the celebration of the Last Supper, then of course, it is necessary to ask whether and how this can be experienced online. How can people sitting in front of their computer screens come together to form a community? In the German-speaking protestant debate on digital forms of the Eucharist, some have questioned whether community can be truly experienced in these formats because they lack the element of the physical co-presence of the congregation. Subsequently they argue for abstaining from celebrating the Eucharist online (most pointedly Kristian Fechtner – Fechtner 2020).

The digital realm has certainly challenged our understanding of what constitutes a community quite profoundly. For younger generations it is probably rather self-evident that community can be experienced in social media or in the world wide web. This kind of community is not based on face to face encounters, but on communication in words and images. It is, of course, mediated communication where self-expression must not cohere completely with the person behind it. Online communities might be tainted with the uncertainty of not knowing whether the person I am connected with is the person she or he pretends to be. On the other hand, digital modes of communication enable their users to stay in close contact with others, even across larger distances, thus strengthening togetherness.

Theological and liturgical concepts of community often work with quite idealised notions of what a community should be. In worship, a community is formed – a community that should exceed the worshipping community and form the congregation as a whole. But even in worship, the way community is experienced and lived out can be very diverse. Worship might indeed harbour the possibility of nurturing relatively close relationships, where people support each other and share life. But community in worship can also be quite transient and temporary, rather symbolically expressed by singing, by praying together in one voice or by celebrating the Eucharist, while congregants are not necessarily getting into closer contact. For some, the proximity of sharing bread and wine in a half-circle, visible for all others present, does not feel comfortable at all. Worshippers also consciously choose the degree of proximity they want to allow. All these various modes of participation are legitimate. Even if liturgies are celebrated in co-presence, the sense of community can be severely hampered by subtle or even more obvious modes of exclusion, be it that I do not know the hymns that are sung or the codes that are used, be it that I

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munion im gemeinsamen Handeln des Brotbrechens innerhalb dieser Gemeinde Ausdruck finden soll." See also Ehrensperger 2003a, 28 and Schweizer [1954], 104.

feel excluded by a certain kind of language (see also Springhart 2021, 132–133; Schrodt 2021, 508).

The community that is built in digital celebrations of the Lord's Supper might just be taken as another variant of togetherness that is indeed markedly different to a physical co-presence (Wabel 2021, 11; Deeg 2021, 138), but is neither more nor less wanting than other forms of community. Online liturgies might even be perceived more intense, or even more personal, e.g. in the case of Zoom-liturgies (Schrodt 2021, 510). Schrodt points to Teresa Berger's notion of a "perceived co-presence", which defines online community more than "physical co-location" (Schrodt 2021, 59).[8] Or as Roman Winter puts it: "Even in a real-space encounter community does not depend on a mere co-presence, but on certain experiences" (Winter 2021, 251).[9]

This kind of community is not bound to a concrete physical room, but nevertheless shares a common space, which is not defined by walls, but constituted by acts of communication, time, relationships, or specific signs. This specific understanding of space – put forward by the proponents of the so called spatial turn – might help to probe more deeply into the characteristics of a digitally mediated space.

Thus, our notion of space can and must be expanded. In the context of digital religious lifeworlds and practices such as the Eucharist or the Last Supper the notion of shared time probably becomes more relevant. If participants online are not able to physically share a *room*, it might be important for them to share *time* when celebrating the Last Supper. Digital media open up the possibilities of celebrating simultaneously (hybrid or online worships in the terminology of Schrodt), but also the possibility of re-viewing a worship service that has been streamed, but is still available online. Viewers could of course also decide to participate in the recorded version of the Lord's Supper. This might not only feel a bit awkward, but probably hampers the experience of community. As we have seen above, the notion of community, of the congregation being moulded into the body of Christ, was very important to the Reformed reformers. Celebrating simultaneously enhances the sense of community, a community which harbours the presence of Christ. It is more apt to give expression to the original intentions of Zwingli and the other reformers. Of course this does not exclude the possibility that someone celebrating by him- or herself could nevertheless be drawn into the narrative of the Lord's Supper and be strengthened and comforted in doing so.

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8. For the whole argument see Berger 2018.
9. My translation. The original wording is: "Der Gemeinschaftscharakter hängt auch bei einer real-räumlichen Begegnung nicht an der blossen Kopräsenz, sondern an bestimmten Erfahrungen."

It does also not exclude the possibility of Christ revealing himself in this situation, since his presence in the spirit is not limited to the ritual or to worship in general.

Again, fostering community and participation is also part of the task of those who lead the liturgy and depends on the respective liturgical design. They must, for example, be willing to communicate and to connect with those "behind" the camera, and involve them by directly inviting them to take part. They must find liturgical forms that open up the possibility of a digitally mediated participation. This can be achieved, for example, by the way everything is put into scene, and by small visual signs. In a worship service celebrated on Easter Sunday 2020 a small (Covid-19-conform) group of people is standing in a wide half-circle behind the pastor while he is leading through the liturgy of the Last Supper. The participants at home, by virtue of their position in front of the screen, visually form part of that circle, completing it.[10] In another celebration of the Last Supper on Easter Sunday six persons who participate in the performance of the liturgy (pastor, lector, warden…) form a circle, each has a plate with a piece of bread and a small cup of wine standing before him or her on the floor. There are six additional plates in the circle symbolically marking a space the members of the congregation, sitting at home, could occupy.[11]

Even if those responsible for an online liturgy can prepare the ground for a rich experience of the Lord's Supper, not everything lies in their hands. But this leads to another characteristic of a Reformed understanding of the Last Supper: the working of the Holy Spirit.

3: The Holy Spirit: Source and ferment.

It was Heinrich Bullinger who took up a thought that already Zwingli – in his later years – had begun to consider: The latter, Zwingli, had conceded some form of *spiritual* presence of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist through the Spirit (Euler 2013, 64). Bullinger put even more emphasis on the workings of the Holy Spirit and, in doing so, managed to address two issues: the question of the form of presence of Christ on the one hand and the question of how the congregation would be constituted as the body of Christ on the other hand. Strengthening the role of the Spirit helped him to find an agreement with Calvin in the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549. Still, not bound to

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10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Qakq5Zj0Jg, minute: 51:54. Accessed January 6, 2022.
11. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lxk_WCnoWc&t=2854s, minute 44:00. Accessed January 6, 2022.

the elements of bread and wine, but effective in the whole process and in the interplay between all elements and acts important to the Supper. In addition, the people participating in the communion are connected, strengthened and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit they are in communion with the risen Christ, writes the German Theologian Michael Welker and continues to describe the Holy Spirit as a *source* and *ferment*, endowing community between human beings and God, and among themselves. It is the Holy Spirit that assembles the Church in the Last Supper (Welker 2012, 170). He or she assembles the congregation present on-site, but puts the congregation into the wider context of the church worldwide, transcending time and space. The congregation present never celebrates on its own, but is always connected to the wider Christian community, by singing old hymns for example, by praying the "Our Father" and by sitting at the common table, with Christ being the host. The motive of the Holy Spirit transcending time and space, weaving together people and places that are kept apart – for example by a pandemic – and leading them into the presence of Christ is indeed not a new idea. It could be strengthened in the context of online liturgies, through epiclesis, prayers, etc., thus invoking a community that anyway exceeds the local congregation by far.

A fourth element of a Reformed perspective on the Last supper needs to be mentioned:

4: The Last Supper as a collective act of the congregation.

Zwingli's liturgy for the Last Supper stands out in another perspective: the whole congregation should actively be involved in celebrating the liturgy. The liturgy was not the responsibility of the Pastor alone. Zwingli intended different parts of the liturgy to be read by men and women respectively (Credo und Ps 113), and he placed the words of institution into the hands – or better the mouth – of a deacon (Ehrensperger 2003a, 21, 25). I have already mentioned that bread and wine were carried right into the congregation. The ritual of the Lord's Supper is an act *of* the congregation, not something that is performed "on" the congregation by the minister or pastor (Jenny 1968, 50).

Thus the liturgy is – to a certain extent – detached from the function of the minister or pastor. He/she should be the guardian (Wächter) of the liturgy. But the effect and outcome of the liturgy does not depend on him or later her, or on their ministry. Raymond Mentzer writes: "The Reformed liturgy for the Supper effectively dissolved the traditional barrier between clergy and laity. It witnessed,

[...] the emergence of a 'non-clerical' Christianity. The cup or even its administration was no longer the exclusive privilege of the priest or ordained pastor" (Mentzner 2013, 248).

Christ is present in the celebration, but not represented by the priest. It is the former, who is the host of the community assembled at the table. This might be read as an echo of Zwingli's intention to strongly root the liturgy in the narrative of the Last Supper. This relativizes the role of the pastor. It also accounts for a reluctance to blend the role of the pastor with the figure of Jesus while staging the "drama" (see also Jenny 1968, 61).

With this participative approach, Zwingli was ahead of his time and at the same time ahead of our time. In spite of his intentions, the pastoral role is still quite dominant, even if many church constitutions explicitly mention the possibility that others should and can be involved in the liturgy. Responsorial readings, for example, have hardly been put into practice and are still a quite alien element in the Swiss German-speaking context.

From a Reformed perspective the above could pave the way to acknowledge the position and role of those who celebrate at home as participants who are actively taking responsibility for the liturgy. This special situation could then be seen as one that offers the opportunity of fostering the liturgical maturity of the believers. The situation at home demands a considerable amount of motivation, dedication and liturgical competence since the person must decide upon and create his or her liturgical setting: Where am I sitting? What cup do I take, which bread? Do I light a candle? How do I create an environment that fosters a suitable atmosphere? Are the children allowed to play while the celebration is going on? There is no room, atmosphere or environment that helps him or her into the liturgy. The room of the church is certainly important in helping people to focus, to concentrate, and to get into a specific mood.

One could, of course, ask whether this demands too much of the individual believer. Maybe. The ability of the individual congregant to delve into the liturgy does highly depend on the degree of his or her previous familiarity with celebrating the liturgy on-site. In case there is some bodily memory of the liturgy and this memory can be activated or triggered, the online experience is likely to be more intense. In this sense, the analogue and the digital worlds are closely intertwined and the digitally mediated celebration depends on the analogue model (see Wabel 2021, 111).

A last but, of course, not less important point arising from my fragmentary probing into some Reformed characteristics of the Lords

Supper and their possible implications for celebrating the Eucharist online, is the question of how the elements are understood:

5: The elements: "earthly and visible things to represent and set before our eyes the deep mysteries of God".[12]

For Zwingli, Bullinger, Oekolampadius and Calvin it was unthinkable that bread and wine should turn into the flesh and blood of Christ. "This is my body" meant to them "this *signifies* my body". Consequently, this led to a figurative understanding of the elements as symbols and signs – or seals in the words used in the *consensus tigurinus* (Euler 2013, 67ff).

   Nevertheless, as Carrie Euler points out, Zwingli and his followers did not believe "the Supper to be an 'empty' ritual, devoid of emotions or spiritual impact" (Euler 2013, 58), even if they "interpreted the words 'this is my body' figuratively … and denied all possibility of a corporeal presence in the bread and the wine." They also denied that the participation in the Lord's Supper would ignite faith or convey grace (Euler 2013, 60; Ehrensperger 2003a, 17), but later on Zwingli and even more so Bullinger conceded that believers would be strengthened in their faith by partaking in the process of breaking and sharing the bread through the workings of the Holy Spirit. The later Zwingli was even "inclined towards accepting Christ's spiritual presence in the bread and wine" (Euler 2013, 63). According to Bullinger bread and wine – although not being able to convey grace – could, as symbols of grace, strengthen faith (Euler 2013, 64). And of course this had implications for his understanding of what a sacrament is. Later in his life he defined a sacrament as "a sign of a holy or sacred thing, a visible form of invisible grace, and a public testimony" (Euler 2013, 64).

   The symbolic meaning of the Eucharist detaches or at least loosens the connection between the elements and the salutary properties or effects of the celebration as a whole, assigning the latter more to the combination of the different liturgical acts and words. All that matters, happens in the process of celebrating together and does not depend on the elements alone. Schrodt argues that also from a Lutheran point of view, the presence of Christ can be understood not only to be bound to the elements, but to the combination of all parts and acts pertaining to the Last Supper (Schrodt 2021, 502).[13]

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12. Heinrich Bullinger, quoted in Euler 2013, 71.
13. See also Deeg 2021, 137–8.

The interpretation of bread and wine being "mere symbols" that are not assigned any special properties by themselves, of course makes it easier to allow for people celebrating at home by providing themselves with a piece of bread and a glass of wine or juice when celebrating the Last Supper online.

In the Lutheran context, one argument against celebrating online is that the bread must be given to the congregants as an external gift and that they themselves must receive it, according to Mk 14.22 and parallels.[14] This is a question, which is secondary to Calvin and which he once answered quite nonchalantly: "Whether or not the believers take it [the bread, K.K.] in their hands, or divide it among themselves […] whether they hand the cup back to the deacon or give it to the next person […] – it makes no difference" (from the Institutes of Christian Religion 1536, quoted in Mentzer 2013: 232).

Still, since the symbolic understanding of the elements is so important, there might be a price to pay. Normally – for the sake of the coherence of the symbol – it does make sense that it is one bread and one cup (or rather, one bottle) which is shared in the celebration of the Last Supper. It visualizes the body of Christ consisting of all believers, in the same way the bread is made from different grains. This is one reason why many congregations in Switzerland make use of a whole loaf of bread. If there are many breads or several cups, the symbolic correlation between the bread and the congregation that is joined in the body of Christ is loosened, but only the symbolic coherence. For the essence, Calvin reminds us, it makes no difference. Circumstances can make it necessary to use several loafs of bread, or pre-cut pieces, or multiple cups, be it that the congregation is simply too numerous, or be it that rules of hygiene have become more important or even mandatory, as was the case in recent times. In that case several pieces of bread, or loafs are representative for the idea that bread in general is constituted of single grains.

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14. See Winter 2021, 246–251 und Schrodt 2021, 504–506 for the more detailed argument. Both, however, argue that in order to experience the Eucharist as an external gift ("Gabe") it is not necessary to actually receive it from someone else. Christ is not bound to the actual bread on the altar but conveyed symbolically in bread and wine through the Holy Spirit. Everything else would come close to a magical understanding of bread and wine. (Winter 2021, 247). The bread in general, but not the loaf of bread itself gives expression to the notion, that we receive it as a gift (Schrodt 2021, 118): "Wie schon schöpfungstheologisch das eigene Leben der Kinder [...] als Gabe empfangen werden [...] so kann analog die Abendmahlsgabe als *extern* empfangen werden, obwohl sie selbst bereitgestellt wurde."

A worst-case-scenario? A preliminary conclusion

In his seminal book on the Lord's Supper (originally published in 1999), Michael Welker critically engages with the fact that some congregations are way too considerate when it comes to dealing with their members' restraints concerning hygiene, fears of infection or sense of shame, when having to eat and drink in front of other communicants. The result is a kind of worst-case-scenario, which he describes and which has – at least in a certain sense – become a reality in the corona situation. He writes that being too considerate of all these things could "dissolve the celebration of the meal into unworthiness up to a stage of perversion. … A total liberation from all fears of contamination and of all problems regarding communication would, in the end, lead to a form of self-service with bread sealed in plastic and wine in front of the screen showing a video of a Eucharist. But if that were the case, it would not be a celebration of the Last Supper" (Welker [4]2012, 85).[15] Although Welker considers it important to address the restraints mentioned above, he also pleads for a dignified form that remains true to the purpose and intentions of the Eucharist. He is certainly right to caution against an unmindful or careless handling of long-lived and time-tested liturgical traditions and forms. Therefore, my starting point, too, was to ask, whether and in what form online celebrations can give expression to some of the theological and liturgical core characteristics of the Last Supper in a Reformed perspective.

   Nevertheless, it has also been my intention to carefully explore the possibilities of celebrating online, since the digital realm becomes more and more part of our reality, also of the reality of the churches. It is a territory they must inhabit, too, since it has become a land that is inhabited (albeit virtually) by human beings and forms part of their reality. Or in the words of Ralph Kunz: to look for forms of celebrating and worshipping for today means to bridge the concerns of the reformers and – taking measure at love – the needs of contemporary men and women (Kunz 2006, 212). What helps people to master the pandemic, lockdowns, fear and loneliness? Does not the ritual of the Last Supper have the potential to provide some of the things that might be needed in view of the pandemic: a sense of community that

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15. My translation. The orignal wording is: "Aber auch eine Inflation sensibler Rücksichtnahmen kann die Mahlfeier bis zur Perversion ins Unwürdige auflösen. [...] Eine vollkommene Befreiung von Ansteckungsängsten und Kommunikationsproblemen böte am Ende die Selbstbedienung mit plastikversiegeltem Brot und Wein vor dem Bildschirm mit Abendmahlsgottesdienst-Video! Nur würde hier nicht mehr das Abendmahl Christi gefeiert."

spans across physical social distancing and renews strength in faith in order to be able to deal with life's hardship, even if celebrated online? These pastoral considerations seem important to me, too, and need to be balanced against "ritualistic correctness" (Welker [4]2012, 85).

Keeping liturgies alive always means to balance the endeavour to exercise care with regard to their origins on the one hand, with the aim of making it relevant and accessible for people living in a specific time and context, of inculturating it, on the other hand. One challenge for the churches of today is to find ways of co-inhabiting the digital universe and to search for appropriate forms of doing so. For theology it offers the chance of rethinking and refining some core themes, as is the case in the debate on celebrating the Eucharist or the Last Supper online. As I have ventured out to show, Reformed theology of the Last Supper does open up possibilities for the transition into the digital realm. There is, in a Reformed perspective, probably no essential theological impediment to celebrating online (as the Roman-Catholic understanding of the elements might be). The issues that must be discussed evolve around the liturgical design or form and the question how the characteristic features of the Last Supper can be transported or mediated, "how *communio* can be experienced and how *participatio* can be enabled" (Deeg 2021, 140).[16] Certainly, the online version has to grapple with some serious restraints compared to analogue celebrations. The latter are so rich in textual, sensual and bodily experiences that they probably represent the more ideal form. Analogue celebrations form the deep ground online celebrations are anchored in. Still, I do not think online liturgies to be an absolute worst-case-scenario, but just a new reality we face and need to explore. It is important and extremely fruitful to ponder and discuss these questions in an ecumenical conversation, such as the colloquy, which gave rise to some of the articles in this issue.

The debate on the possibilities of celebrating online points to some issues that definitely deserve more scholarly attention. Many of these issues I have touched upon in this article. They are, of course, already discussed vividly. There is, for example, the role of bodily experiences in liturgy and the question of how we theorize the body in relation to online liturgies. Especially in the Reformed context we have only recently come about to pay more attention to the liturgy as not only involving mind and soul, but the body as a whole and we should not easily forgo the insights gained. The debate on online liturgies will also focus our attention on the role of space and how people experi-

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16. My translation. The original wording is: "[...] wie *communio* zu erleben und *participatio* zu gestalten ist".

ence space, especially shared spaces in the digital realm, and thus also community. By comparison, it might also generate new insights into the specific quality of the room that a church-building provides for the liturgy. Interesting is also the issue of how digital and analogue experiences of rituals and liturgies are interrelated and whether the digital experience depends on the analogue. To explore all this, more empirical research needs to be done on the recipients' side. How do people who partake in online liturgies experience participation, community, liturgy? And with regard to those who are responsible for the execution and performance of liturgies: what are the practical implications for shaping online-liturgies, which allow for an intense and deep experience of the Last Supper? Online liturgies need to pay special attention to the conditions of digital communication and the liturgical design must take this into account.

Time will tell how the digital adventures of churches and congregations unfold in the future. An observation made by David Plüss, might prove true: He observes that – already in the earlier stages of the pandemic – online formats are to a greater extend homiletic or word-based formats: short sermons, podcast formats, discussions, blogs and vlogs, because – among other reasons – these are easier to implement (Plüss 2021, 210–211; see also Deeg 2020, 428–429). Rituals are indeed more complex to celebrate online, and especially with regard to the Last Supper congregations might gladly (and with some relief?) revert to the analogue ideal. Or maybe they are tempted to explore hybrid or digital forms more extensively? As I said: time will tell.

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