



The Dream of Mary: Christoforo Simone dei Crocefissi c AD 1350. (Campbell 1988) Sacrificial blood streams from her tree of Calvary -The Place of the Skull. Tree of the Middle Place: The Blood Mother of the Corn from Place of Skulls. At the crown of each is a bird - a Christian pelican picking its flesh for blood and a quetzal.

The Agape of the Eucharist and the Sacramental Tradition

Rosemary Radford Ruether in *Gaia and God* contrasts and complements the covenantal tradition of the Hebrew prophets and the sacramental tradition of Christianity.

Yeshua converted the bread and wine of *kiddush*, which was a celebration of thanksgiving for the life giving abundance of fruit and grain into a frankly carnivorous commemoration of his life blood and death, the bread becoming flesh or *soma* and the wine his blood or *sangre*. Throughout Christian history, holy communion has remained the central rite of participation, a peculiarly physical holy of holies in the midst of a religion of transcendent dominion.

Yeshua's invocation "except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you" is not merely a metaphorical allusion to drinking the word of God, for it is drunk in the bread and wine of flesh and blood in the shadow of the last supper. Moreover this very passage invokes immortal life "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. ... he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." John Spong has astutely noted that the visions of the risen Christ are consistently "at meat" classing them as sacramental experiences in which 'their eyes were opened' to the kingdom just as Adam and Eve's were in eating the fruit of the tree.

Tree of Knowledge 14th cent (Allegro)

Despite the Essene-like diffidence of the Ebionites for this blood fest, traditional Christianity claims “without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin.” The Aztecs recognized in the crucifixion and Christian communion a reflection of their own sacrificial bent, to the horror and revulsion of the Conquistadors. Why is it the destiny of the Christian church to have such a Dionysian rite of eating the flesh of the Son of God? What meaning does this have for planetary redemption?



The Delaware have an instructive answer here:

*[God] sent Christ to the whites who killed him ...
God made Peyote It is His power.
It is the power of Jesus.
Jesus came afterwards on this earth, after peyote.*

Maria Sabina likewise attests to the holy power of *teonanactl*. During her *veladas* she communed with Christ and Mary as well as the Mazatec deities and “knew and saw God”. She was a member of the Catholic sisterhood and at the same time a doctress of the sacred mushroom.

*“Mother Patroness
Jesus Christ
I have your staff of support, your staff of the dew ...
I am known in the house of heaven ...
You know me my Mother
God, my Father knows me ...
I bring your medicinal herbs in my hands
I always have your sacred herbs in my hands
It is freshness and clarity
Life and well-being
That is what I ask for, for buds and offshoots Jesus Christ
Days of life are what I ask you for my Father”*

Maria Sabina had a vision on the ‘little things’ that a white man would come to partake the ‘little saints’ and Gordon Wasson arrived. The very existence of the mushroom had been kept a closely guarded secret since the time of the conquistadores. Wasson happened to be the son of a Dionysian Episcopalian priest who had written “Religion and Drink”. When Wasson experienced the agape of the mushroom he declared it to be holy communion in the true manner of Pentecost

*“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy
your old men shall dream dreams your young men shall see visions” (Joel)*

This is not a mere speaking in tongues but a time when the holy spirit will pour in visions, dreams and prophecy in the young and old and among women and men alike, not filtered through a priesthood, or only in a membership of the elect, or spiritually accomplished but on all flesh. This is precisely the destiny of the sacramental path.

“[we] ... shared ... a celebration of 'holy communion' where 'divine' mushrooms were first adored and then consumed. ... The orthodox Christian must accept on faith the miracle of the conversion of the bread and wine into God's flesh and blood: that is what is meant by the Doc-

trine of Transubstantiation. By contrast the sacred mushroom of the Aztecs carries its own conviction: every communicant will testify to the miracle that he has experienced" (Furst)

Maria Sabina with Gordon Wasson partaking the sacrament (Riedlinger)

Since time immemorial holy sacraments have been partaken to discover the divinity underlying everyday existence. Dionysus was the god of altered states and presided also over the epoptea, the sacred repast of the Eleusian mysteries. Leah gave Rachel mandrakes conceive. The ancient soma of the Aryans referred to by Zoroaster is suggested among other things to be Syrian rue which exists around Jebel Musa. The early experiences of the prophets such as the burning bush of Moses may also have accompanied the use of sacred plants.

*"We have drunk the Soma,
we are become Immortals,
We arrived at the light,*

It is said that when Buddha preached, dew or raindrops fell from heaven on datura. In "The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross" John Allegro suggested that Yeshua himself was the symbol for an agaric mushroom cult. These illustrations bring us to the fundamental question - whence the origin and meaning of the sacramental path?



Yurt mushroom temple Olympia. The roof manifests as the gills of a giant mushroom.

To many people the taking of mind-altering substances is an antithesis of true spiritual knowledge, believing no chemical intoxication could possibly give access to the divine truth, which dependsonly on god and the faith and level of realization of the seeker. They are perceived as a short-circuit which even if not outright toxic and delusional, is

at best a prop, a temporary glimpse of a mystery which can only be truly understood through discipline and meditation - since only true spiritual knowledge is sustainable..

Part of the reason for this perspective is the male mind-sky view, debasing of the sap and dew of the physical and part is a cultural accident.. The world's great visionary 'power species' even when frankly toxic have been almost without exception revered as sacred by each culture which has come upon them. However truly visionary psychedelic species, with the partial exception of cannabis, source primarily in the 'new world' outside the cradles of civilization in the Near and Far East.

Altar, Yurt mushroom temple, Olympia. Tassili, and Aztec deity holding mushrooms with Mayan mushroom stones.

Despite some exceptions in the soma of the Aryans and of Dionysus, the patriarchal rejection of the natural has led to a patronizing attitude towards sacraments in traditional religions - an attitude which is manifestly contradictory in Christianity. The mind-sky arguments against the sacramental path do not hold good. Although the practices of meditation, desert retreat, ascetic privation, dream divination, prayer, mandala and mantra and even love itself can also lead us to peak mystical experience, these methods themselves generally induce frankly altered states often through privation, sleep loss and trance induction. These heightened states of vision are often as transient as sacramental ones. Power plants are immortal just as the fruit of the tree of life. Entering into relationship with a living sacrament is thus as renewing an experience as a well spring - an ongoing relationship, not simply a transient false vision caused by toxic derangement.



The idea that separating oneself from nature leads to a discovery of the truest experience of the divine is fundamentally flawed. While renunciation can bring an equanimity, freeing us from bondage to the dynamics of the ego, it can also bring a separation and an incompleteness which leads to dangerously false and destructive visions such as the rapture and destruction of the "late planet earth" in the judgemental and destructive 'end of days' which all three apocalyptic paths impress on their followers.

Many people embark from a life of gratification on a journey of seeking fulfillment in God or the void. They seek the inner knowledge which will make them whole and heal their mortal anguish in the face of death. This seeking is however a limited *hinayana* path of personal salvation. Beyond this lies the *mahayana* of the *bodhisattva*, to redeem reality. The redemption of reality comes in interdependent relationship with all beings. Thus while the living sacraments do bring us to the reality beyond the doors of perception, they are also the sap and dew of the living world. Their great gift lies in teaching us interdependent spirituality - that we can all become seers and healers in a

world in which the sacraments are the spiritual food of interdependence just as living species are food for our physical survival.

None of this is to suggest that the sacramental path is the only valid route to illumination or gnosis. All the paths of realization are facets of the tao. There are many types of meditative practice, including silent vigil, *pranayama* yogic breathing, stopping the internal dialog, dreaming, and vigils in the wilderness. The sacramental path may integrate with many of these but is just one of many routes, albeit one which may be essential for our well being as a culture. To repress the sacramental path is a folly and mortal danger, both for our survival and for the violence that flows in its place.

Although many young people celebrate sacramentally at music festivals and the Union Vegetale in Brazil holds large *ayahuasca* meetings in which the participants partake together, it is natural for the sacred repast to be taken within a personal circle of protection to guarantee the participants have safe passage on the voyage. Most *ayahuasceros* work in smaller intensive vigils. The Native American Church has very firm rituals of engagement which keep all the participants in a sacred circle inside the tepee which is maintained from sunset to the morning of the following day. This serves to permit a genuine vision quest of enduring intensity and to protect any supplicants from becoming lost or deranged.

The inclusion of true sacramental worship in mainstream religion thus requires a reevaluation of ceremonies and practices, to allow for mystery vigils much as in the gnostic tradition and to provide for many diverse forms of meditation and worship, rather than the one round of catechisms and services we find in orthodox Christianity.

Velada - forest outside Amsterdam 1999



My own experiences with visionary substances began with psychedelics as a student in Britain in the late sixties. Although I had many profound experiences, these were always on the edge of an enormous reality I couldn't quite encompass. After scores of sessions fencing with 'white light' illumination, I came upon the sacred mushroom and began a relationship with the living sacraments. This showed me a different kind of awareness of reality, more subtle in its visions but more potent in its evocation of synchronicities and the woven fabric of sentient existence.

I communed with the sacraments as living species in the wilderness in all night vigils combining intensive meditation, yogic breathing and resonance with the winds and the songs of life. I witnessed the totality of existence in space-time and the interconnectedness of all living beings, incarnate and the disincarnate *bardo*, infinitely compassionate of the journey through the mortal coil, *seeing* incarnation from outside the bundle of incarnate will. Over many years, I have lived with the mushroom as an ally and as a co-eval living entity. For a seven year period I forsook the sacraments but had many intense dreams of new kinds of very potent mushrooms springing up in bizarre places. I returned to the sacraments as a voyager from far away realms returning to the path of heart. During our millennial vigil we journeyed to Amsterdam to pay our respects to *teonanactl* flesh of the gods by partaking an open velada in the woods to celebrate the

legitimacy of the sacramental path.

My experiences led me to a new understanding of karma in the physical world. Gradually, instead of accessing the mushroom to know the inner nature of reality I came to understand that I was always in this reality, this mystery of mysteries. Nevertheless the sacraments stand as the navigating point of reference in my incarnate journey, as a sailing boat turns to tack upwind, in which life becomes a series of nodes between psychic 'rebirth through the bardo.



Magic Mushroom Gallery Amsterdam. One of the few places where flesh of the gods can be openly purchased without threat of incarceration. Legitimate use of the living sacraments is consistent with social maturity. Tabus against the sacraments as 'drugs' are a futile attempt by society to repress natural realization.

I likewise made the journey to experience first hand the other great visionary power species such as *ayahuasca* and *peyote* through the traditions which have revered them among the shamans and practitioners of their traditional use and, where possible, communing with them in their natural habitat, as noted in the "Twelve Fruit" chapter. I hold all these in sacramental reverence.

I generally travel on the sacraments alone, or *solitario*, as the *ayahuasca* shamans say in deep meditation, but on occasion hold a partnership or group *velada* as an all night wilderness vigil, taken together in a circle of protection under the guidance of careful guardians, acting as roadman and/or mother waters. These vigils combine many forms of creative ritual and meditation, alternating between active chants, music, sacred readings and oracles and contemplative nature vigils in meditation and shamanic trance.



Three species of psychoactive magic mushroom found in New Zealand, characterized by myself jointly with Gaston Guzman. *Ps. aucklandii* is regarded as a native species.