

Making sense of three Ts in the Eucharist

Source: catholicculture.org

In pairs try to explain these three words to each other and then draw up a table which sums up the difference between them. Note: transubstantiation is the traditional view of what happens to the bread and wine at the Eucharist, following writers such as Thomas Aquinas – the first two views are modern interpretations favoured by a minority in the Catholic Church.

TRANSIGNIFICATION

The view of Christ's presence in the Eucharist which holds that the meaning or significance of the bread and wine is changed by the words of consecration. The consecrated elements are said to signify all that Christians associate with the Last Supper; they have a higher value than merely food for the body. The theory of transignification was condemned by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical *Mysterium Fedei* (1965), if it is understood as denying transubstantiation. (Etym. Latin trans-, so as to change + significatio, meaning, sense: transignificatio.)

TRANSFINALISATION

The view of Christ's presence in the Eucharist that the purpose or finality of the bread and wine is changed by the words of consecration. They are said to serve a new function, as sacred elements that arouse the faith of the people in the mystery of Christ's redemptive love. Like transignification, this theory was condemned by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical *Mysterium Fedei* (1965) if transfinalization is taken to deny the substantial change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. (Etym. Latin trans-, so as to change + finis, end; purpose.)

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

The miraculous change by which, according to Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox teaching, the eucharistic elements at their consecration become the body and blood of Christ while keeping only the appearances of bread and wine. Pope Paul VI states: "the Eucharist is the flesh of Our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins and which the Father in His loving kindness raised again." To these words of St. Ignatius, we may well add those which Theodore of Mopsuestia, who is a faithful witness to the faith of the Church on this point, addressed to the people: "The Lord did not say: This is symbol of my body, and this is a symbol of my blood, but rather: This is my body and my blood.



He teaches us not to look to the nature of what lies before us and is perceived by the senses, because the giving of thanks and the words spoken over it have changed it into flesh and blood."(Mysterium Fidei, 1965)