The Absurdity and Sublimity of Christ: Christology in the Films of Ingmar Bergman

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Introduction

Archbishop Rowan Williams argues that Christian theology needs necessarily to engage in collaborative conversation with the arts, in an effort to communicate the material message of the gospel *via* a discourse that transcends the confines of disciplinary and communal enclaves: theology must be translated in a new forum through an unique idiom that becomes accessible outside of itself in a public context.[1] The arts, in variegated modes, however fragmentarily, engage often in similar inquests and discourses as theology; theology, in attending to the arts, can find her sister, and even her muse, from which a new grammar and visualization may emerge. The present essay will undertake such a conversation with the artistic form of film,[2] particularly the films of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman; our conversation will focus in upon the films of Bergman's 'middle period' (1957-1968), which is his decade of existential crisis. We discover, in these films, that Bergman descends into the territory of the theologian, asking (and attempting to answer visually) the question 'who is Jesus Christ?'[3] From Bergman,

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[1] Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 36-37. Williams' concern, centrally, is for Christian theology to overcome idiomatic self-enclosure through the deployment of its resources in communion with *something other* in order to create a genuine, fresh, and imaginative discourse that truly engages the world in a summons to transformation.

[2] For an extended analysis of the role of film in theological construction and imagination, see my unpublished essay "Beyond the Infinite: the Apophatic Vision of God in the Cinematic Art of Stanley Kubrick" (Vanderbilt University, 2006). The present essay assumes that film is only one of many art forms with which theology should converse; it is the intention of the author that this essay should represent a limited contribution to a further, wider discussion.

[3] On this as the central question of Christian theology, see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, trans. Eberhard Bethge (London: SCM, 1976), 24-56. My contention is not that any of Bergman's films can be

theology may perceive its own questions and concepts given visual representation and new light projected upon its answers and constructions, thus finding its central question deployed in an imaginative, open, and arresting language.

Bergman, Theology and Film

We may ask, at the beginning, why Bergman? What makes Bergman an apposite dialogue partner for theology? I do not surmise that Bergman himself was a trained theologian, or that he read theology. In fact, Bergman is not known to be religious himself or ecclesially affiliated, but rather openly agnostic;[4] yet, his films are suffused with a religious pathos which amounts to a personal and critical inquiry to the foundational questions of the existence of God, the suffering and uniqueness of Christ, and the alienated identity of the human being in the modern world.[5] I account for this on the following two bases: 1) Bergman's personal biography, and 2) the social and political context of early-mid twentieth century Sweden.

Bergman was the child of a Swedish Lutheran vicar, and spent his childhood in a parish in a cold, rural village in the North of Sweden. Bergman identifies this setting as one of the central formative elements of his upbringing, recalling the austerity of the type of strict, moralist Lutheranism of his father and the bitter severity of polar Sweden as impetii for his decision, upon reaching university age, to enter the field of dramatic arts in

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reduced to this particular query, but that the imagery, themes, and subtext of his body of work accrues to an asking of this question.

[4] Cf. Richard Blake, "Ingmar Bergman's Post-Christian God," *Religion and the Arts* 1.3 (1997): 27-45; William Mishler, "The Virgin Spirit and The Seventh Seal: a Girardian Reading," *Comparative Drama* 30.1 (Spring 1996): 106-134. See also 'Interview with Ingmar Bergman: On The Seventh Seal and The Trilogy,' *Journal of Aesthetics and Arts* 24 (Winter 1965): 263-272.

[5] H. L. Abraham, "Alienation in Ingmar Bergman," *Commonweal* 80 (1964): 290-292; Terence Davies, "The Cries and Whispers of Ingmar Bergman," *Sight and Sound* 13.1 (2003): 26f. See also, Arthur Gibson, *The Silence of God: Creative Response to the Films of Ingmar Bergman* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 117-133.

the thriving, secular capitol city of Stockholm.[6] The rigid, Reformed religiosity of Bergman's father left ghostly fingerprints upon Bergman's artistic psyche, in which Bergman, throughout his directorial career, constantly returns to many of the existential questions impressed upon him in his earliest experiences in the wintry parish.[7] The iconic image of the tortured, crucified Christ, encountered in the study of his father (likely a replica of the Grünewald altarpiece), according to Bergman, would play in his visual imagination throughout his life, and is itself a continual leitmotif in his cinematic work.

Bergman's immersion in the artistic world of Stockholm, as an actor-director in the theatre, and later a film writer-director, coincided with the significant social and political shifts occurring in Swedish culture, and represented a seismic upheaval in Bergman's own intellectual milieu. The urban centers of Sweden, at this time, underwent rapid progressive political change, due to the enormous influence of Marxist and socialist intellectualism, which, in turn, triggered a wholesale 'secularization' of Swedish society; Bergman's strict religious background encountered a newly 'post-Christian' culture. The early pieces of Bergman's work reflect a youthful felicity in exploring the widened boundaries of sexuality, morality, and intellectual freedom. The new political context

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[6] See the 1970 interview with Ingmar Bergman and Josef Erland in the special features contained on the Criterion Collection edition of *Persona* (1968).

[7] Vilgot Sjöman, "From 'L 136': Ingmar Bergman's Diary from 'A Winter Light,'" *Cinema Journal* 13.2 (Spring 1974): 34f. The influence of Bergman's father upon his own career is reflected most centrally in his films, "A Winter Light" (or "The Communicants") and "Fanny and Alexander". The latter film, one of Bergman's final theatrical releases, is virtually autobiographical in its portrayal of the family life of a strict Protestant minister in the Swedish tundra. 'A Winter Light,' which is an adaptation of Unamuno's 'The Unbelieving Priest,' served as a vehicle for representing Bergman's own existential struggles projected onto a clerical figure that functioned as a stand-in for his father. Cf. the interviews contained on the Criterion Collection editions of 'A Winter Light' (1962) and 'Fanny and Alexander' (1980). Bergman's Lutheran Reformed background will provide the theological paradigm for our analysis of his films, as an attempt to treat the material from within the theological milieu in which Bergman himself would have been immersed.

eventually gave rise to a startling set of existential questions, for Bergman, in light of the liberation of human society from her religious and moral austerity; in fact, the attempt to query the challenges posed from this would, in Bergman's middle period, result in the Swedish artistic community turning against Bergman as rejecting secularity.[8] For Bergman, the religious alienation instantiated by progressive secularity, the dawn of the nuclear age, and his own existential crisis, proved a fecund ground for cinematic exploration, in which he could appropriate his camera as a tool for his own Kierkegaardian critique of the human condition.

In 1957, Bergman unveiled his *magnum opus*, 'The Seventh Seal,' which would begin a series of films that brought into dialectical tension these two worlds, through which he would explore the burning question of his conscience: 'who are you?', directed at that central, enigmatic figure of the crucified.

Deus Absconditus: Christ as the Exegete of the Hidden God

'The Seventh Seal' is the tale of a 14th century knight, Antonius Bloch, who returns home to Sweden, after a decade of exploits in the Crusades, to find his village decimated by the Plague. Bloch, having survived successfully the deadly battles in the Holy Land, finds himself now engaged in a struggle with death; one of Bergman's iconic images unfolds here, in which Bloch challenges the figure of Death in a game of chess. Bloch maneuvers to gain for himself time in order to find his wife, with the hope that she has not succumbed to the Plague. Bloch's temporary escape from Death becomes a pilgrimage to find his faith, which has been stricken by the violence of battle and the apparent absence of God in the midst of the abject suffering of the victims of disease; this

[8] This is reflected especially well in the icy reception Bergman received in Sweden for 'The Virgin Spring,' which would earn him an Academy Award for Best Foreign Picture in the US (1961).

becomes, for Bloch, a quest out of the depths of his own despair for God to reveal God's self.

God, in this film, is hidden in the widespread presence of disease, despair and death. Bergman does not allow religion to play the role of opiate to the suffering masses, but rather it is a fundamental irritant, which exposes the open wound of God's absence. The religious figures pawn 'God' as a tool for suppression and control, in which the living victims are coerced into ritualized penance and pecuniary contribution in order to halt the pestilence, which the clerics use to terrorize the villagers as an outpouring of apocalyptic wrath. One may detect in this depiction from Bergman a Lutheresque critique of medieval religion, which he unfolds with somber visuals of flagellating parades, 'morality plays,' weeping communal penitents, mass exorcisms, and witch burnings. Bergman's knight finds nothing but a God-shaped lacuna in the form of religion.[9]

The pivotal question of God is opened at two points in the film. The first centers upon two successive images of the crucified Christ: when Bloch prays in an abandoned parish, and his squire inspects a mosaic of the last judgment, which features a wounded Christ on the throne. The second comes at the climax of the film at a communal meal at the knight's home, in which the band of travelers, who have joined Bloch, share a last supper.[10] The decisive importance of the image of the crucified is its significance as the singular symbol of a hopeful answer that God can be uttered under these conditions of

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[9] Many of the features of religion depicted in 'The Seventh Seal,' and the underlying visual criticism, reflects a consonance with Luther's own critique of the state of Catholic religion in the sixteenth century; cf. 'The Ninety-Five Theses' and 'The Babylonian Captivity of the Church', in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. and trans. Timothy F. Hull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 21-29, 267-314 (esp. 268-271).

[10] This aspect of Christ and meal will be explored in depth in a later section of the essay.

history. The visual contention of Bergman, in the juxtaposition of these images, appears to be that disbelief and 'atheism' can be dispelled *only in view* of the crucified; this is to suggest that neither numbed religiosity nor unbelief are acceptable solutions, for they fail to take seriously the radicality of God's hiddenness or the manifestation of hope. Bergman's knight, herein, can only perceive God in the tragic if this history is contained in the tragedy of the one on the cross. In this way, the visage of the young woman who is mindlessly burned as a witch becomes reconciled with the face of God in the executed Christ; the absurdity of history, in Bergman's imagery, is exegeted cruciformly.

The thematic interplay of the hiddenness of God and the visualization of Christ runs through Bergman's successive films, up to 'Persona.'[11] The image of Christ, in Bergman, becomes the visualization of the possibility of belief or faith in God, reconciliation from alienation through God's manifestation *sub species contrarii*, and the locus of hope for the future. This strategy of Christic interpretation can be observed in the arresting 'dance of death' finale in 'The Seventh Seal,' in which Bloch's faith is restored (or, rather, brought to birth) in sacrifice, which spares the accompanying 'holy family' of actors (Joseph and Maria) and their infant, who was earlier seen in a beatific vision.[12] Bergman further amplifies the role of Christ as *respondio* to the hiddenness of God in 'A Winter Light,' in which the liturgical performance of the daily office, visually framed by Bergman under an imposing crucifix bathed in sharp light, serves as the solitary solace and answer for a priest in crisis. The miseries of economic depression, in which an ice-fishing village falls victim to the advances of an industrial age, the collapse

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[11] [Insert note on montage as interpretative key to 'Persona'] [Correspondence w/ Bonhoeffer—quote on p. 31].

[12] One cannot overlook the visual parallel in the finale of 'The Seventh Seal' with the jubilatory Pauline pericope in 1 Cor. 15.53-57.

of personal and spiritual health, suicide, and the apocalyptic terror of the atomic bomb are the cloaks under which Bergman's film suggests God is hidden. In 'A Winter Light,' humanity's alienation in herself, in the world, and from God is openly manifest; the unbelief of the priest, and most of the community, though, cannot maintain solvency for Bergman—to do so would be to refuse amelioration of humanity's godless absurdity. Bergman absolves the tension of the apparent aporia of God's presence in the space under the cross.

Theologically, Bergman can be perceived as reflecting Luther's construction of the *Deus absconditus*, the hidden God.[13] Luther conceives of God in wholly *negative* fashion from the standpoint of human history and reason, as completely hidden, or even absent; God, in these terms, according to Luther, is a terrifying abyss, an unknown, which stands nakedly over against the world.[14] The shape of the world, in Luther's estimate, is such that one is forced into the position of saying that there is no God or that, at the very least, in the absence of God the world has gone *widdersynnisch*.[15] However, Luther's *Deus absconditus*, the terrifying *Deus nudus*, is transformed into the *Deus ludens* as unveiled paradoxically in the *Deus cruces*. Luther argues that God becomes open to human perception through revelation under the form of contrariety: in the naked, broken figure of the crucified.[16] In the crucified, Luther sees the limitations and *agnosia* of

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[13] Cf. A. Adam, "Der begriff 'Deus Absconditus' bei Luther nach Herkunft und Bedeutung," *Luther Jahrbuch* 30 (1963): 97-106. Ferdinand Kattenbusch, "Deus absconditus bei Luther," in *Festgabe für J. Kaftan* (J. C. Mohr, 1920), 204ff.; Paul Althaus, "Luthers Theologie des Glaubens," *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 2 (1924): 281-322; Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Der Einfluß der Anfechtungserfahrung auf den Prädestinationsbegriff Luthers," *Kerygma und Dogma* 3 (1957): 109-39; B. A. Gerrish, "To the Unknown God: Luther and Calvin on the Hiddenness of God," *Journal of Religion* 53 (1973): 263-292.

[14] Cf. Luther, *D. M. Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar, 1883-) [hereafter cited as *WA*, follwed by vol.], 18.606.12, 668.5, 685.19.

[15] See Luther's sermon on Genesis 32, *WA* 24.569.31.

[16] *WA* 5.176.32-33; 605.11, 16-17

reason burst apart through the emergence of God in the cross of Christ;[17] all forms of disbelief *and* religion are abjured in this event.[18] Likewise, Bergman's prolific use of images of the cross, and especially the form of the crucified, seen throughout 'The Seventh Seal,' 'The Virgin Spring', and 'A Winter Light,' becomes the singular locus point at which genuine God-talk and faith emerge; religion, whether in disbelief or belief, is tried by Bergman against this image. The Christ of Luther and Bergman is the *Nattvardsgesterna* that throws open a light upon the world and upon God.

A Theology of the Cross as Theodicy

The second significance of Christ in the films of Bergman, which is closely related to the first, is the visual depiction of Christ *as the suffering Christ*; the suffering Christ, referenced by Bergman through imposing visuals of a tortured, agonized *crucifixis Christi*, [19] is the place of reconciliation between the evils and suffering in the world and God. Herein, Bergman develops a visual theodicy that centers upon the suffering of Christ as the only possible location, albeit profoundly mysterious, of response. The absurdity of violence and human alienation find their provisional absolution in the straits of the open, wounded arms of the crucified. In Bergman's visual depiction, the profundity of human suffering finds its true counterpart in the suffering of Christ, and issues in response to follow the lead of the God found in this suffering one, which

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[17] *WA* 5.168.25; 3.463.15-18.

[18] Cf. Karl Barth, "Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes," *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie: Gesammelte Vorträge* (München, 1929), 5-17; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: the Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1973), 32ff., 145ff.

[19] The visual of the crucifix utilized by Bergman is strikingly similar to the altarpiece of Grünewald; in both 'The Seventh Seal' and 'The Virgin Spring,' Bergman repeats lingering, up-tilted shots of a mangled, battered, and broken Christ. The somber image of this tortured and humiliated Christ becomes the centerpiece for the faith and piety of many of Bergman's characters (e.g., Bloch's wife in 'The Seventh Seal,' and Tøre the farmer, and his wife in 'The Virgin Spring').

generates a sense of hope for a surplus of gratuity towards the sufferers. This is demonstrated most profoundly in Bergman's 'The Virgin Spring.'

'The Virgin Spring' centers upon the rape and murder of Karin, a young, beautiful girl, who is waylaid and brutalized by three bandits (one of whom is a child) as she is on her way to the parish to set the candles for the Feast of the Virgin. The bandits leave young Karin's naked, desecrated body in an open field; they stop for the night, to escape the cold, at a local farm. The farmer, Tøre, discovers his daughter's clothing among the belongings of the drifters. Upon his discovery, Tøre determines to exact revenge for their perpetration against Karin; Tøre ritually purifies himself for the task, and then sets about executing the criminals. During his rampage, Tøre unintentionally murders the child accomplice of the two thieves. In his lost innocence, Tøre mourns the death of his child and his own vigilantism at the site of Karin's murder.

Bergman constructs the story around several key images that open up the theological elements of the film. First, the image of the suffering, crucified Christ forms the central leitmotif for the whole film. The crucifix is displayed in several locations in the farmhouse, which Bergman uses as a visual cue for the film's main sequences.[20] Bergman captures the image of the crucified Christ in the background during the unfolding of Tøre's violent acts of vengeance. The form of the cross, as well, is interposed in the sequence of Karin's rape, in which Bergman frames the scene at angles whereby Karin's body is crossed by trees and men. Second, Bergman juxtaposes the images of violence with images of nature, submersing humanity's acts of inhumanity

[20] E.g., Karin's journey from the farm and her subsequent attack are bookended by shots of the crucifix; the family's vigil for the missing girl, prior to the arrival of the thieves, is replete with shots of Tøre's wife performing prayers and supplications before the crucifix; two communal meals are framed with the crucifix in the center of the background.

within the frame of nature's serenity. Bergman fuses the images in such a way as to gesture toward the imposition of violence and death in nature on account of humanity.[21] Third, Bergman layers the film with depictions of prayer, not as a saccharine act of naïve piety, but as an act that itself contains the dialectic of the vacuity of divine silence and the depth of anticipated fulfillment. The prayer of Tøre, at the film's finale, is paradigmatic, in that it is offered in the sobriety of violence and suffering's wake, as a wrestling with God who looked on in silence at the horror, and, concomitantly, a penitential resolution to adhere to God's mysterious pull toward the future.

Bergman's film, through these images, works as an interrogation of God in the face of profound and horrendous evils. Bergman does not, in this, offer up an easy answer, in fact evil remains an unquiescent question as to its manifestation. Bergman does not console the audience with explications of evil's origins or reason: there is no rationale behind or justification of the murder of two children. Yet, Bergman ends the film with Tøre's resolution to build a stone church with his own hands as an offering to God, a penitential act for his own culpability, and the springing of a fountain from the place where Karin's body lay. The family of the murdered girl breaks into an ancient hymn on the resurrection in the kingdom of God. The incongruity is exploded by the ubiquity of the cross throughout the film, in which Bergman appears to redirect the focus of the interlocution to the crucified. The effect of this is that Bergman's theodicy resolves into a theology of the cross, in which, through Bergman's visual representation, the world itself *appears as crucified in the Crucified*. Tøre's violent revenge requires

[21] Karin's rape and murder, for instance, occurs in the midst of a pleasant, bucolic pasture; in two instances, as well, natural elements are utilized by human characters as weapons in acts of violence. In one of the most celebrated shots of the film, Tøre tears down a tall birch tree with his bare hands, which he then uses to beat and purify his body in preparation for the slaughter of the rogues.

penitence because he cannot extract a crucifixion of justice above that which has already occurred (visually depicted in the mangled, crucified Christ imposed on the wall above of the theatre of action). Evil itself cannot extinguish hope for God, even in the numbness of horror, but instead repeatedly signals its own negation in the sign of the cross over all forms of alienation and the generation of penitence in the culpable. Hope, in fact, springs from the space of darkness and absurd godforsakenness, as Bergman's visuals display, as the recognition of a mimetic counterpart in the cross, one which contains the suffering of all others, and extinguishes it in the gratuity of resurrection.

[To be completed: Luther and the *visibilia posteriora Dei*]

Christ as the Shared Meal

A final visual motif that runs through these films, and in effect binds them together, and further clarifies the meaning of Christ for Bergman, is the communal meal. The meals in these films take on a decidedly Eucharistic depth, in which Christ is depicted as *head* or *host* of the meals, and that which gives power and meaning to the meals. In both 'The Seventh Seal' and 'The Virgin Spring', the sharing of a meal occurs at a pivotal point in the story, in which the act of sharing binds the characters together in a charitable fellowship as a participatory extension of hospitality and community (this would have been indispensable for survival in the harsh realities of medieval Sweden). Bergman frames the meals in set-ups that replicate the image of the last supper of Christ, with his actor, Max von Sydow,[22] at the center of the table as a clear representation of Christ. In fact, this effect is amplified in both features through the presence of an imposing crucifix *behind* von Sydow. The meals themselves, especially in 'The Virgin

[22] von Sydow plays Antonius Bloch and Tøre respectively in 'The Seventh Seal' and 'The Virgin Spring.'

Spring,' are *presided* over by von Sydow's character, who ritually blesses and passes food and drink. There is, in Bergman's presentment, both a physical and symbolic likeness of Christ as Eucharistic head: as the meals are ritually presided over by von Sydow, so also the meals themselves (in 'The Virgin Spring') are unable to commence without the presence of von Sydow.

The importance of the meals is reflected in the communal nature of the event, in which the table is open and provides space and equality *for those around the center figure*. In 'The Seventh Seal,' for instance, the meal at Bloch's residence, in celebration of reunion with his wife, consummates into communion those who have joined Bloch on his journey through the Plague infested countryside; the upshot of this meal is that class and social distinctions come under erasure at the table in Bloch's presence. Actors, squires, and knights (representing the spectrum of social classification) sit at table with Bloch and his wife without distinction or barriers; Bloch's provision of communion as host of the meal draws together the diversity of the group, irrespective of status, into a unity of fellowship. Likewise, the act of meal sharing in 'The Virgin Spring' extends the same visual metaphor. Tøre, as host of the meal, opens the table to all, extending the provision of 'family status' to those who work on the farm; Tøre's fellowship instinct is displayed, even more, in his adoption and seating at table of an orphaned girl pregnant out-of-wedlock.[23]

Bergman underscores the considerable significance of the communal meal, in 'The Virgin Spring,' by structuring two parallel meal sequences, in which he frames the scenes in exact replicating angles. The first meal occurs before Karin is sent off to

[23] Like the band of actors in 'The Seventh Seal,' this young woman represents the lowest of social order in medieval society.

church with candles for the Virgin, and the second meal follows the arrival of the thieves after the rape and murder of Karin. The distinction in the two scenes is the replacement of Karin at the table with her rapists. von Sydow presides over both meals as the priestly Christ figure; in the second, von Sydow opens the table to the thieves. A strange silence pervades over this second meal in contradistinction to the joviality of the first; the most distinct section of dialogue in this scene being the blessing of the offered by Tøre. Bergman further amplifies the Christic symbolism of this second meal, when the child accomplice vomits at the table after being given the blessed food; he is unable to 'stomach' the act of kindness in contrast to his own soiled and plagued conscience.[24] In effect, there is a dialectic of embrace and judgment at the table in the figure of the president of the feast.

'A Winter Light' provides a unique disclosure of Bergman's thought on the consonance of the meal and the person of Christ; it is, in fact, the pivotal point of the film that Christ is the very meaning of the Eucharistic meal, and as such is the sole reason for the continuation of the community. As the priest in the film undergoes a spiritual crisis of doubt, in which he is unable to prevent a communicant's suicide, resolve his relationship with his fiancée, or, more consequentially, even pray. The priest is reduced to finding an answer to the query of his continuation of priestly duties. The only answer for the priest is the Eucharist, and that as long as even one communicant remains there is still hope that God is in fellowship with humanity. The priest, in this way, clings to what Bonhoeffer denotes is the corporeal address of God to humanity, as Jesus Christ present,

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[24] One cannot help observing the parallel between this scene and that recounted by St. Cyprian, in which a young child vomits the Eucharist after being polluted by his presence at the Roman sacrifices to the Emperor; cf. Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, trans. H. Bevenot [find quote].

hallowed and hallowing the sacrament.[25] While God cannot be explicated in the context of the absurdity of the world, for Bergman's priest, God yet is disclosed, active and present in the liturgical rehearsal of Christ's sacrifice. Christ, here, addresses the community in his own meal with hope generated for the deferred arrival of God's kingdom.

Conclusion

The Christological layer of Bergman's films is accessible through the concatenation of images, by which the depth of meaning of the films becomes decipherable. Bergman does not, in this, export an *apologia* for the Christian faith or Church; in fact, Bergman himself stands outside of this structure. Bergman can be understood, in conversation with his imagery, as attempting to unfold *the possibility* of meaning of Christ from within the climes of despair and alienation, whether cultural or individual. Christ, in the context of Bergman's films, is not a facile, pietistic answer, an antiseptic for existential wounds. What Christ does mean, limned from Bergman's visuals, is that talk of God is only possible when it emerges from this location; suffering and *agnosia* are contained within this one 'discourse,' around which *koinonia* may form in the space of silence that contains the dialectic of despair and doxology.

[25] Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, 53f.