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The Later Schillebeeckx's Unfinished Work on the Sacraments
A Report from the Archives

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In 2000, in what proved to be one of his last scholarly works, Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009) published a paper entitled "Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sacramenten: Ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagse leven", with which he indicated his plans to return to the topic of his earliest academic work, sacramental theology[1]. There, Schillebeeckx indicated that he intended to begin his planned study from the insights of ritual studies. In particular, he announced in that article a full book about the Christian sacraments[2].

The suggestion was that he would primarily consider the sacraments as rituals, i.e. as complex human actions with a meaning referring to a transcendent reality. Theologically, such an approach would urge him to reflect on the notions of performance and performativity, because they allow one to take a step back from the intellectualisms which characterize many traditional theologies of the sacraments. At a concrete level, without being fully immersed in it, Schillebeeckx engaged in a new interdisciplinary conversation which was trending in the late 1990s and the early 2000s,

1. E. Schillebeeckx, *Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sacramenten: Ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagse leven*, in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 40 (2000) 164-187; published in English translation as *Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments*, in D. Lange (ed.), *Ordo: Bath, Word, Prayer, Table. A Liturgical Primer in Honor of Gordon W. Lathrop*, Akron, OH, OSL Publications, 2005, 6-34; the English was republished as *Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments*, in *Essays: Ongoing Theological Quests* (The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, 11), London, Bloomsbury, 2014, 183-210. The most significant of the early works are *De sacramentele heilseconomie*, Antwerpen, 't Groeit, 1952; and *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter of God*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1963; (The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, 1), London, Bloomsbury, 2014 (first published in Dutch in 1959). The contents of, and relation between, these published earlier and later works is discussed by J. Geldhof, *The Early and Late Schillebeeckx OP on Rituals, Liturgies, and Sacraments*, in *Usus Antiquior* 1 (2010) 132-150, https://doi.org/10.1179/175789410X12729674261065; and Id., *Schillebeeckx's Sacramental Theology of the Sacraments*, in S. van Erp – D. Minch (eds.), *T&T Clark Handbook of Edward Schillebeeckx*, London, T&T Clark, 2020, 252-264.

2. Schillebeeckx had first indicated an intention to write this book in the newsletter of the *Stiching Edward Schillebeeckx* in 1992. See E. Schillebeeckx, *Verzet, engagement en viering*, in *Nieuwsbrief Stichting Edward Schillebeeckx* 5 (October 1992) 1-3.

especially in the Netherlands. That conversation had emerged in the context of the rise of ritual studies, and took on a particular shape at Dutch universities including the ones located in Tilburg, Nijmegen and Groningen[3].

Given his own intellectual trajectory and curiosity, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that Schillebeeckx suspected that, in reaching out to the discipline of ritual studies, something relevant and important could be done in the field of sacramental theology. In his eyes, as will be shown below, sacramental theology had not evolved enough beyond classical top-down patterns of thinking, and he considered that the opening towards ritual studies could offer something productive for that. In particular, according to Schillebeeckx, classical sacramental theology had not sufficiently expanded theoretically, so that it could really take on board the input of human experience.

Because of his death, Schillebeeckx never completed the work he had announced. However, a number of materials from his research towards it have been retained in the archive of his papers and computer files at the Katholiek Documentatie Centrum at Radboud University, Nijmegen[4]. While this paper addresses the material broadly chronologically, we also intend to present a clear systematic view of the material. The goal of that is to allow deeper insight into Schillebeeckx's work, what he read, how he worked, and what he deemed important. This is by no means irrelevant, since Schillebeeckx is widely considered and respected as one of the major thinkers who renewed Catholic sacramental theology in the twentieth century, alongside other pioneering figures such as Karl Rahner, Otto Semmelroth and Louis-Marie Chauvet[5].

3. The process and results of that discussion, albeit without any involvement from Schillebeeckx, are illustrated well by B. KRANEMANN – P. POST (eds.), *Die modernen ritual studies als Herausforderung für die Liturgiewissenschaft / Modern Ritual Studies as a Challenge for Liturgical Studies* (Liturgia Condenda, 20), Leuven, Peeters, 2009.

4. Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx. The majority of items in Schillebeeckx's archive are in Dutch, though English, French, German and Italian are also all represented (at least). Unless otherwise noted any quotations from unpublished archive material have been translated by the authors. Where we cite items from this archive in this paper: for physical items, the catalogue number is given; for electronic items, the location of the file in complete clone of Schillebeeckx's computer files held at Nijmegen is given. In all cases, for cited items from the archives, a scan or a copy of the file is available from T. MCLEAN – J. GELDHOF, *Selected Archive Papers of Edward Schillebeeckx on Liturgical and Sacramental Theology*, KU Leuven RDR, 2025, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO. Citations in this text will include catalogue numbers (beginning SCHI) to identify the files in the repository. Fuller explanation of this cataloguing is also included in the linked repository.

5. Note, by way of example, the introductory comments of D.N. POWER, *Sacraments in General*, in F.S. FIORENZA – J.P. GALVIN (eds.), *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, 2nd ed, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2011, 479-490. See also the more comprehensive overview of R.A. DUFFY – K.W. IRWIN – D.N. POWER, *Sacramental Theology: A Review of Literature*, in *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 657-705, https://doi.org/10.1177/004056399405500403.

The scope of the present article goes beyond a legitimate interest in Schillebeeckx studies, however, inasmuch as Schillebeeckx's latest work offers an opportunity to contribute indeed to the ongoing dialogue between ritual studies and sacramental theology. A reference to the late Schillebeeckx has the potential to move forward the conversation about the fundamental questions (i) of who the human being is, that they celebrate the liturgy, and (ii), at a more abstract level, how the relation between ritual and sacrament should be conceptualized. We assume and intend to argue that Schillebeeckx, although he did not elaborate on it, had something valuable to say in this debate, which cannot be ignored. This value is independent from the quite unsystematic way in which Schillebeeckx's work on the announced book actually proceeded.

To some extent the chronology of the material is explicit in the material Schillebeeckx is working with; elsewhere it must be deduced, quite often from the prior contents of scrap paper on which he was taking notes. However, as will become apparent, there is also a clear chain of development of thinking which Schillebeeckx is taking as he works. This is by no means comprehensive, and there are few indications of the systematic approach that surely lies behind the extensive bibliographies to each section of the *Jesus* books[6]. Nonetheless, the movement Schillebeeckx makes from considering sacramental theology in light of the theology of creation to the importance of bodily participation in the liturgical celebration[7], before coming to the focus on the importance of ritual behavior to sacramental theology that was his theme by the 2000 article can clearly be seen.

This paper cannot claim to attempt the same work as was done by Robert Daly or Gary Macy, extensive as that was – in the latter case amounting to co-authorship, in producing *The Eucharist in the West* and *Christian Symbol and Ritual* from the unfinished work of Edward Kilmartin and Bernard Cooke respectively[8]. We simply do not have enough material from Schillebeeckx to do anything to the same extent. Nonetheless, we can highlight the key themes and directions Schillebeeckx was proposing.

6. See, as typical examples, E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Jesus, an Experiment in Christology* (The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, 6), London, Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 44-45, 299-300.

7. At this point, it should be noted that it is striking how little Schillebeeckx refers to the achievements of the Liturgical Movement, Vatican II, and the encompassing liturgical reforms in the period under consideration. One cannot but assume, however, that he fully endorsed these developments. That assumption would be corroborated not only by Schillebeeckx's general reputation of an innovator in theology, but also by his preconciliar writings on the matter of liturgy and sacraments, in particular *De sacramentele heilseconomie* (n. 1), where he wholeheartedly subscribes to virtually everything which the promoters of the Liturgical Movement argued for.

8. E.J. KILMARTIN, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. R.J. DALY, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1998; B.J. COOKE – G. MACY, *Christian Symbol and Ritual: An Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

I. *Schepping en sacrament*

1. *Reading Martien Brinkman*

In Schillebeeckx's renewed interest in the sacraments, the first clear signpost is his meticulous reading of Brinkman's *Schepping en sacrament*, a notable academic monograph which appeared in 1991[9]. Martien Brinkman is a Dutch Reformed theologian and emeritus professor and dean at the Free University of Amsterdam. At the time when his book on creation and the sacraments appeared, he was 41 years old. His academic career was still at its very beginning[10]. Brinkman's early theology was deeply influenced by German thinkers such as Karl Barth and Wolfhart Pannenberg, about whom he wrote his doctoral dissertation. In *Schepping en sacrament*, Brinkman developed a comprehensive and inclusive view on God's creation and argued that the Christian sacraments must be always understood against the background of, if not on the basis of, a theology of creation. Schillebeeckx was particularly captured by Brinkman's work because of this convincing argument no less than the thorough way in which it was composed[11].

The archive retains Schillebeeckx's copy of this book and his 84 sheets of notes. Some of these pages are double sided with notes, most are single sided – reusing scrap paper, many sheets of which appear to have been a printout of an address book. While not a strict *terminus post quem*, we

9. M.E. Brinkman, *Schepping en sacrament: Een oecumenische studie naar de reikwijdte van het sacrament als heilzaam symbool in een weerbarstige werkelijkheid*, Zoetermeer, Meinema, 1991. Schillebeeckx's copy is held in the archive at Nijmegen under reference SCHI.3431, and his notes under SCHI.5739. The latter is available in the repository at https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

10. Brinkman has for many years been connected to the IIMO, the Interuniversitair Instituut voor Missiologie en Oecumenica (the Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research) at Utrecht. This institute was headed by Anton Houtepen, one of Schillebeeckx's pupils, who himself wrote a noteworthy book on creation and anthropology (cf. *infra*, n. 18).

11. It should be noted that this was not Schillebeeckx's first interest in creation theology. To the contrary, it can be counted among the important themes of his theology. See the discussions in P. Kennedy, *God and Creation*, in M.C. Hilkert – R.J. Schreiter (eds.), *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, 2nd ed., New York, Fordham University Press, 2002, 37-58; M.G. Poulsom, *The Dialectics of Creation: Creation and the Creator in Edward Schillebeeckx and David Burrell*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015; D. Minch, *Our Faith in Creation, God's Faith in Humanity: Edward Schillebeeckx and Pope Francis on Human Transcendence and an Anthropocentric Cosmos*, in *Theological Studies* 80 (2019) 845-863, https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563919874511; M.G. Poulsom, *Schillebeeckx's Praxis of Creation*, in van Erp – Minch (eds.), *T&T Clark Handbook of Edward Schillebeeckx* (n. 1), 237-251; E.M. Pyne, *Creation Faith and the Politics of Nature: Reading Schillebeeckx in an Ecological Age*, *ibid.*, 436-456; R. Lewis, *Concentrated Creation: Creation and Salvation in the Christology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (T&T Clark Studies in Edward Schillebeeckx), London, T&T Clark, 2023; E. Pyne, *Suspended Nature: Theology, Ecology, and Creaturely Politics* (T&T Clark Studies in Edward Schillebeeckx), London, T&T Clark, forthcoming.

can say that these notes were not made much before September 1992, as amongst the recycled sheets there is a draft of an order of service for a wedding on the 11th of that month. Also amongst the recycled sheets, there appear to be drafts of Schillebeeckx's article "Plezier en woede beleven aan Gods schepping" published in 1993[12]. In Schillebeeckx's reading, of particular interest to him appear to be the sources Brinkman draws upon, from ancient to contemporary. The names of Hugh of St. Victor, Martin Luther, Henri de Lubac and Alexander Schmemann are among those most prominent in Schillebeeckx's notes, as are references to the *Corpus Reformatorum* collection. There seems no particular reason why these four authors stand out, but all of them do have something profound to say about the sacramental order of the faith and the way in which it engages the world, of course.

2. *Drafts by Schillebeeckx*

The first datable writing among his archived papers reflecting the renewed interest in sacramental theology shown by Schillebeeckx is some drafts of chapters, probably towards the never published book, addressing the same theme as Brinkman's book, creation and sacrament[13]. Schillebeeckx's drafts, however, do not substantially discuss contents and insights of Brinkman's book.

There are three versions of this material preserved in the physical archive, along with others in Schillebeeckx's computer files. It is not possible to precisely date the printed copies, but a relative order can be deduced from the handwritten annotations to the word-processed texts. The computer files include versions of this text together in what appears to be a working folder from the early 1990s, as well as in a working folder from 1999 and 2000. We shall return to the latter below.

The first of these begins with the heading "Hoofdstuk II: Schepping en sacrament"[14]. This document consists of 86 pages of text, printed single sided. The numbering of the pages, however, is not consistent, which reveals that the document is composed of different pieces which have come into being at different points in time. While there are a large number of handwritten notes on many pages, Schillebeeckx's exact view on why

12. That is, E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Plezier en woede beleven aan Gods schepping*, in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 33 (1993) 325-346. This article has not been published in translation anywhere.

13. Such a connection has elsewhere been noted as an interest of Schillebeeckx by at least May 1993, according to K.W. IRWIN, *Pope Francis and the Liturgy: The Call to Holiness and Mission*, New York, Paulist Press, 2020, p. 102. However, creation is not specifically mentioned in Schillebeeckx's remarks on the book in the 1992 *Stichting* newsletter, *Verzet, engagement en viering* (n. 2).

14. That is, "Chapter II: Creation and sacrament". This item is catalogued in the archive as SCHI.5427, see the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

and how these fragments were related so that together they constitute "chapter 2" remains unclear. Important topics Schillebeeckx discusses include theories of creation (Christian theology versus emanationist and dualist views), the impact of the emergence of natural science, the relation between the concepts of creation, salvation and redemption, etc. However, the implications of these thoughts for a theology of sacramentality or the sacraments are not considered.

The second version consists of 82 pages, printed single sided, and can be dated to December 1992 based on a sheet included among the pages indicating when the file was last edited on Schillebeeckx's computer. The file name included in this log implies that this may be version four, or part four, of the project. At the beginning of the chapter, seemingly as a title for the entire project, is printed "Onderbroken verhaal: Verzet, engagement, viering"[15]. The actual structure of the document and the outline of a structure described at its beginning do not align, but it seems most likely that this is a natural evolution while writing and revising, rather than reflecting any change of direction.

Both these drafts contain significant overlap with two published articles from Schillebeeckx, "Plezier en woede beleven aan Gods schepping" and "La 'Ecclesia Jesu Christi' come 'racconto di future': Su perdone e riconciliazione"[16]. It appears that Schillebeeckx has expanded and adapted the material from these articles into this planned chapter, though whether the articles or the draft chapter are the original version of the text cannot be confirmed with certainty.

Striking when reading these texts is the quite fragmentary use of sources and references. On the one hand, Schillebeeckx refers to contemporary authors[17], friends and colleagues such as Harry Kuitert, Berma Klein Goldewijk and Anton Houtepen[18]. He had profoundly immersed himself in several of their writings and, clearly, he had certain sympathies with all

15. That is, "Interrupted Story: Resistance, Engagement, Celebration". This is catalogued in the archive as SCHI.5428, see the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

16. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *La "Ecclesia Jesu Christi" come "racconto di future": Su perdone e riconciliazione*, in D. MIETH – E. SCHILLEBEECKX – H. SNIJDEWIND (eds.), *Cammino e visione: Universalità e regionalità della teologia nel XX secolo scritti in onore di Rosino Gibellini* (Biblioteca di teologia contemporanea, 88), Brescia, Queriniana, 1996, 193-214. Schillebeeckx's contribution to this Festschrift was republished in Dutch with only very minor differences as *Over vergeving en verzoening: De kerk als "verhaal van toekomst*", in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 37 (1997) 368-383.

17. See, for, example E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Schepping en sacrament*, 1992, pp. 26, 31-32, Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, SCHI.5427; E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Onderbroken verhaal: Verzet, engagement, viering*, 1992, pp. 84, 131-132, Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, SCHI.5428. Both files are included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

18. Formerly Schillebeeckx's student, in 2006 Houtepen published an impressive theological anthropology anchored in a theology of creation: A. HOUTEPEN, *Uit aarde, naar Gods beeld: Theologische anthropologie*, Zoetermeer, Meinema, 2006. While this work dates from after Schillebeeckx's health prevented him producing any significant work,

of them, yet he does not fully subscribe to their views and is at times even very critical of them[19]. On the other hand, Schillebeeckx mentions classics of the Christian theological tradition, including Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. Especially the regular appearance of the latter is remarkable. There is not a single disapproving comment on either Aquinas or Thomism in the document under consideration – which may be considered a difference with earlier phases of Schillebeeckx's intellectual development, where he added at least some more nuance. To the contrary, Aquinas functions as a genuine source of inspiration and, in particular, as support for Schillebeeckx's own claim that sacraments have to be always seen against the horizon of creation, not as mere means of divine intervention and redemption[20].

Nonetheless, this text is more focused on "creation" than on "sacrament". Schillebeeckx makes few direct comments on sacramental theology. The discussion of the development of the doctrine of original sin is typical of the extent of these: Schillebeeckx outlines his conviction that this doctrine must be reframed when considered outside of the context in which Augustine developed the idea. He notes briefly that this has implications for the theology of baptism, and then continues his main argument[21]. If this chapter was to become part of a work on sacramental theology, that would imply Schillebeeckx intended to produce a very substantial work that began at a fundamental level, and in doing so this text would only form a preliminary chapter at best.

In laying such foundations though, Schillebeeckx suggests that the contemporary situation has two problems for theology, namely the age-old problems of the existence of evil, and the challenge of balancing the particularity of Christian claims to salvation with the universal aspect of faith in God as Creator. In responding to these Schillebeeckx affirms absolutely an inherent goodness to creation. He also expects an engagement with the natural sciences, and is confident of theology's ability to do so far exceeding a God-of-the-gaps model, developing this in relation to evolutionary

Houtepen's research would certainly have been of the highest relevance for Schillebeeckx's project.

19. By way of example, one could mention here Schillebeeckx's critical questions regarding Goldewijk's critique on Houtepen. Houtepen had defended the primordiality of a theology of creation vis-à-vis a theology of liberation or redemption. Goldewijk had called this an irrelevant discussion, something to which Schillebeeckx opposes, arguing that a theology of creation provides background meaning to any interpretation of liberation. See this discussion in SCHILLEBEECKX, *Onderbroken verhaal* (n. 17), p. 131, in the repository, SCHI.5428.

20. This does not take the form of the detailed study of Aquinas, as in Schillebeeckx's early work, but instead is in the form of more general remarks. See, for example, SCHILLEBEECKX, *Onderbroken verhaal* (n. 17), pp. 90-93, in the repository, SCHI.5428.

21. See *ibid*., pp. 103-106. We discuss this further in T. MCLEAN, *Developments in the Low Countries: The Interpretations of Original Sin of Schoonenberg and Schillebeeckx*, in *The Heythrop Journal* 65 (2024) 501-514, https://doi.org/10.1111/heyj.14348.

principles. In so doing, Schillebeeckx rejects the idea that creation exists solely for the benefit of humanity, but instead has purpose of its own. This leads Schillebeeckx to make a careful distinction between salvation and redemption, wherein salvation is an end to which all creation is moved, whilst redemption is located primarily in the human experience[22].

Overall with this material, at the stage of development presented by the archived texts, Schillebeeckx does not offer much that is all that distinctive, and certainly little beyond what he had published in the two articles, "Plezier en woede beleven aan Gods schepping" and "Over vergeving en verzoening", that feature within it. Sadly, any clear idea of how he intended to develop these ideas further, into the proposed sacramental theology, is absent.

II. An Issue of *Recherches des Sciences Religieuses*

Sometime in the early 1990s, Schillebeeckx also appears to have read carefully, making detailed notes, the entirety of issues two and three of *Recherches des Sciences Religieuses* 75, which were dedicated to sacramental theology. He appears to have begun with the article by Louis-Maire Chauvet[23], before reading the others in the order of publication.

Schillebeeckx's notes on reading Chauvet's article are catalogued imprecisely in the archive as notes towards the planned new book on the sacraments referred to in his 2000 article. While it seems that this text of Chauvet was contributing to his thinking, it is clear that the notes are reading notes rather than notes planning the book. The notes on Chauvet's article do not indicate a date, however, the notes on the bulk of the articles in these issues of *Recherches des Sciences Religieuses* are on the reverse of a selection of scrap paper[24]. The reverse of these pages includes drafts of an order of service for a wedding dated 9 December 1991 and of Schillebeeckx's chapter in *Maria: Gisteren, vandaag, morgen*, published by Schillebeeckx and Catharina Halkes in 1992[25].

22. In the original Dutch, the distinction is between *heil* (salvation) and *verlossing* (redemption). Given the general similarities of the two ideas, it is not surprising that the difference in nuance in Dutch is not exactly the same as in English.

23. L.-M. Chauvet, *L'avenir du sacramentel*, in *Recherches des Sciences Religieuses* 75 (1987) 241-266.

24. The notes on Chauvet's article are catalogued as SCHI.5438. The notes on the remaining essays are catalogued as SCHI.5444. Both are included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

25. E. Schillebeeckx – C.J.M. Halkes, *Maria: Gisteren, vandaag, morgen*, Baarn, Nelissen, 1992. ET: E. Schillebeeckx – C.J.M. Halkes, *Mary: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, New York, Crossroad, 1993.

As a whole, there is no particular or developed connection between these essays and the theme of creation. Instead, they address classical topics of sacramental theology (sacramentality, sign, symbol, etc.) from a variety of perspectives (biblical, sociological, theological, ethical, etc.). Alongside Chauvet, there are contributors from across the catholic theology faculties of France, including among others, Paul De Clerck, Joseph Doré, Pierre Gisel, and François Marty, under the long-standing editorship of Joseph Moingt.

This choice of reading suggests an attempt in the early 1990s by Schillebeeckx to engage with current developments in the field of sacramental theology since his previous engagements with the topic. The operational method of the *RSR* still consists of putting together different perspectives on a central issue of great relevance for contemporary theology. From his education Schillebeeckx was of course very familiar with French theology, and he must have been familiar with the Jesuit-run *RSR* at least since then. In addition, one can learn that Schillebeeckx not only selected the material he wanted to read very carefully, but also that when he read these sources, he did that with great intensity. In any case, he made a profound study of these *RSR* articles.

III. LATHROP, *HOLY THINGS*

Schillebeeckx's interest in "catching up" seems to have continued, leading to him reading *Holy Things* by Gordon Lathrop[26]. In his copy in the archive, Schillebeeckx notes receiving the book in January 1994. Lathrop had been a student at Nijmegen during Schillebeeckx's tenure there and was closely connected to Schillebeeckx as a result, so it is credible that this contributes to why Schillebeeckx is reading it.

Schillebeeckx made few notes in the book itself, underlining some passages, but mostly taking notes on 74 sheets. These notes are mostly single sided, using the reverse of print proofs; however, some pages are double sided with notes. Schillebeeckx pays particular attention to references to biblical, liturgical and patristic sources. He appears to be fascinated by Lathrop's thoughts on *ordo* in the liturgy.

The date of the notes may be deduced based on an interpolation, in Schillebeeckx's own hand, dated 9 December 1994, seemingly pointing to a hospital, "Balfeyn", "kamer 120" and "zware [?] operatie"[27].

26. G. LATHROP, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1993. Schillebeeckx's copy of this book is archived under reference SCHI.3739. Schillebeeckx's notes are found as SCHI.5711, which is available in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

27. "Balfeyn" appears to be a name, otherwise, in English, "room 120", "serious operation". Schillebeeckx may have misunderstood and not known the hospital in question. In the city of Ghent in Belgium there is a famous "Jan Palfijn" hospital, and so the call may

The archive catalogues these notes with a set of notes, with sheets numbered 15-29, that clearly do not relate to Schillebeeckx's reading of Lathrop. Instead, they appear to be notes on a German historical study of the Early Church, published in 1962[28]. The location of the first 14 of these pages is not immediately apparent, nor is the reason why they are stored with the Lathrop notes. They appear to be much older.

IV. An Issue of *Concilium*

The final item from the archive clearly among Schillebeeckx's reading in the early and mid 1990s is the third issue of *Concilium* from 1995. This was guest edited by Chauvet, under the title *Liturgie en lichamelijkheid*[29]. With two exceptions, he underlines points in all contributions. He has used both a blue and a red marker. In red, he seems to indicate things that particularly interest him, including rituals. This issue contains sixteen articles on the title theme, plus one additional article, from contributors from across the globe including François Marty (also among the contributors to *RSR* above), Louis-Marie Chauvet, Marcel Metzger, Elochukwu Uzukwu, Teresa Berger, Nathan Mitchell, and Jozef Lamberts.

This being said, it is surprising how minimally Schillebeeckx engaged with Chauvet's groundbreaking work in the area of (general) sacramental theology. One looks in vain, e.g., for an exchange of his with what the French theologian has to say about symbols and their relation to sacraments. Maybe, Schillebeeckx should have had to revise his take on late twentieth-century developments in sacramental theology if he had dealt more thoroughly with Chauvet's oeuvre. It remains an open question why he did not.

V. Dal Maso, *L'efficacia dei sacramenti*

On 18 March 1999, Schillebeeckx receives a letter from Alberto Dal Maso, offering a copy of his book, *L'efficacia dei sacramenti e la "performance" rituale: Ripensare l'"ex opere operato" a partire dall'*

have related to the Dominican community in that city at the time. However, from the note, it is clear neither from whom Schillebeeckx received the phone call nor who was hospitalized.

28. Specifically, K. Baus, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*. I: *Von der Urgemeinde zur frühchristlichen Großkirche*, Freiburg, Herder, 1962. There are no immediately obvious connections of content between the chapters of this book these notes refer to and any part of Lathrop's work.

29. L.-M. Chauvet (ed.), *Liturgie en lichamelijkheid*, *Concilium* 1995, no. 3. Schillebeeckx's copy is archived as SCHI.5138, see the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO. The English edition of *Concilium* titled that issue *Liturgy and the Body*.

antropologia culturale[30]. Dal Maso reports that he has been working as an editor at the Queriniana publishing house in Brescia since January 1998. The book is his doctoral thesis, written under the supervision of Aldo Natale Terrin in Padova; Dal Maso suspects, perhaps out of modesty, that Schillebeeckx might reject his book because of its provocative nature. He apparently also knows that Schillebeeckx is working on an essay on the sacraments and finds in it one more reason to offer him his book. He sends greetings on behalf of Fr Rosino Gibellini and Paola Baldracchi.

Rosino Gibellini was the founder of the theology section at Queriniana. In 1996, Schillebeeckx, together with Hadewijch Snijdewind (his research assistant) and Dietmar Mieth, published a volume in honor of Gibellini entitled *Cammino e visione: Universalità e regionalità della teologia nel XX secolo. Scritti in onore di Rosino Gibellini*[31]. Gibellini is additionally involved in the Italian edition of *Concilium* and wrote the foreword to Schillebeeckx's *I Am a Happy Theologian*[32]. The connection with Paola Baldracchi is less clear.

Schillebeeckx devoted himself to a painstaking reading of (most of) Dal Maso's book. This is evident from the many underlining and marginal notes, including to the footnotes and bibliography. Furthermore, in the margin he writes Dutch translations of Italian concepts and turns of phrase. The same pattern of intensive reading, even studying the texts, that we encountered earlier, applies here.

Dal Maso's book consists of three parts. The first has four chapters addressing in turn Rahner, Schillebeeckx and Chauvet, followed by a conclusion. The second part takes an anthropological approach to performativity with chapters on Victor Turner, performative language (including Austin), Stanley Tambiah and – as Schillebeeckx highlights in the table of contents – a transition to theology. The third part draws this anthropological material to a theological conclusion. Schillebeeckx appears to have been especially interested in the twelfth chapter, "L'antropologico in teologia: Dall'imbarazzo all'accoglimento" in which Dal Maso again returns, among others, to Rahner, Schillebeeckx and Chauvet[33].

30. A. DAL MASO, *L'efficacia dei sacramenti e la "performance" rituale: Ripensare l'"ex opere operato" a partire dall'antropologia culturale* (Caro Salutis Cardo. Studi, 12), Padova, Messaggero, 1999. Schillebeeckx's copy is archived as SCHI.3563; this item in the archive includes the author's accompanying letter to Schillebeeckx. The title might be translated to English as "The Effectiveness of the Sacraments and Ritual 'Performance': Rethinking the 'ex opere operato' from cultural anthropology". Schillebeeckx's annotated copy and Dal Maso's covering letter are included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

31. MIETH – SCHILLEBEECKX – SNIJDEWIND (eds.), *Cammino e visione* (n. 16).

32. In English, see, E. SCHILLEBEECKX – F. STRAZZARI, *I Am a Happy Theologian: Conversations with Francesco Strazzari*, London, SCM Press, 1994, pp. ix-xiv. The book was originally published in Italian and also translated into French, each including Gibellini's forward.

33. That is, "The anthropological in theology: from embarrassment to acceptance".

It is clear Schillebeeckx has read the chapter on Turner with great attention. In it, Dal Maso discusses the ritualization of the everyday – which is also an emphasis in Schillebeeckx's 2000 article[34]. He also underlines (p. 141) a passage where Dal Maso talks about a cognitive and sensory-emotional order in rituals.

In the chapter on performativity of language and ritual, there is a section devoted to the anthropologist Roy Rappaport, which was also clearly read attentively by Schillebeeckx[35]. Among other things, it talks about three levels, the third of which is the link between ritual and theatre: Schillebeeckx discusses this himself in his own 2000 article[36]. The idea of magical power in rituals and an overall positive evaluation of that (as in the 2000 article) also comes into play here (p. 202).

Schillebeeckx marks nothing in the chapter on Tambiah (i.e., chapter seven), nor in that on the rationality of the efficacy of rituals (chapter eight, which, as noted above, concludes the second part and marks the transition back to theology).

Schillebeeckx reads all the way through chapters nine till twelve, with varying degrees of intensity of marking. Among others, Dal Maso refers there to the work of Isambert (who is also important for Chauvet) entitled *Rite et efficacité symbolique*[37]. Likewise on p. 303, the footnotes successively refer to articles by Chenu and Dubarle (see below). In the bibliography, Schillebeeckx puts a line next to the works of Terrin that Dal Maso included, as well as those of Rappaport, Tambiah and Turner.

Among all the material available in Schillebeeckx's archived papers, his reading of this book seems to have been the most influential on the direction he took with his paper in 2000. It is not unlikely that significant bits of Schillebeeckx's knowledge about ritual theory largely depends on his familiarity with Dal Maso's book. At least, there is not much other evidence in the archives which indicates what he relies on when he develops the category of performance as the hinge between the anthropological and theological dimension of ritual[38].

34. Compare DAL MASO, *L'efficacia dei sacramenti e la "performance" rituale* (n. 30), pp. 122-125; and SCHILLEBEECKX, *Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments*, in *Essays* (n. 1), pp. 191-194.

35. DAL MASO, *L'efficacia dei sacramenti e la "performance" rituale* (n. 30), 197-207 (Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx. SCHI.3563).

36. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments*, in *Essays* (n. 1), pp. 208-210.

37. F.-A. ISAMBERT, *Rite et efficacité symbolique: Essai d'anthropologie sociologique* (Rites et symbols, 8), Paris, Cerf, 1979. See also L.-M. CHAUVET, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. P. Madigan – M. Beaumont, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1995, pp. 134-139, 348-351.

38. The only other indicative source we have located is a letter from Schillebeeckx to Kate Dooley in which he notes his appreciation for the work of Ronald Grimes as "the finest theoreticist [sic] in the field of ritual". See E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *To Prof. Dr. Kate Dooley o.p.*, Letter, 22 September 1999, Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx,

VI. Two Seminal Articles by Fellow Dominican Scholars

Among the material in the archive of Schillebeeckx's papers on sacraments, there are annotated copies of articles from the 1970s by his fellow Dominicans, theologian Marie-Dominique Chenu and philosopher Dominique Dubarle, which had appeared in *La Maison-Dieu*, the premier French journal in the area of liturgy and the sacraments[39]. There is no clear evidence from the copies when Schillebeeckx read them. However, the reference to the two articles together in Dal Maso's book indicates a distinct possibility that Schillebeeckx read them subsequent to reading that book. Alongside the long-standing influence of Chenu on his thought that Schillebeeckx himself noted[40], the fact that Schillebeeckx looked at what his Dominican brothers had said about the sacraments in the 1970s confirms the overall picture of careful research into the developments in sacramental theology after he had shifted his own focus away from it in the mid-1960s.

Among his notes, Schillebeeckx remarks that he should look at another text of Dubarle's, the chapter he contributed to the book *Le mythe et le symbole de la connaissance figurative de Dieu*[41]. Schillebeeckx also notes a comment on pp. 60-61 of Dubarle's article, namely, "Plea for trans-substantia-tion, against trans-significa-tion"[42]. That succinctly sums up what Dubarle is effectively saying in response to several theories that had

/digitale_bestanden/Bestanden_pc/Schillebeeckx/D-Schijf/datawfw/Brieven&Faxen/persoonlijk/Dooley.op.doc. This is available in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under reference SCHI.ZZ02. However, there are no notes on, or copies of, any works of Grimes preserved. Grimes was well-known among academic circles in Nijmegen. In addition to visits and workshops before Grimes held a chair in ritual studies at the Radboud Universiteit from 2005 to 2010. In personal correspondence, Grimes has noted to us that he did not meet with Schillebeeckx until he was no longer able to work, nonetheless, it is not absurd to assume that he knew Grimes' work through the Nijmegen connection and the increasing interest there in the field of ritual studies.

39. M.-D. Chenu, *Pour une anthropologie sacramentelle*, in *La Maison-Dieu* 119 (1974) 85-100; D. Dubarle, *À propos de la causalité des sacrements*, in *La Maison-Dieu* 129 (1977) 38-63. Schillebeeckx's annotated photocopies are archived as SCHI.5684 and are included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

40. See the comments in Schillebeeckx – Strazzari, *I Am a Happy Theologian* (n. 32), p. 8, alongside the obituary for Chenu republished in that volume, pp. 89-92.

41. S. Breton – D.-M. Dubarle – J. Greisch, *Le mythe et le symbole de la connaissance figurative de Dieu* (Institut Catholique de Paris. Faculté de Philosophie. Philosophie, 2), Paris, Beauchesne, 1977. Schillebeeckx's note occurs where Dubarle refers to the book himself, see Dubarle, *À propos de la causalité des sacrements* (n. 39), p. 59.

42. Note here Schillebeeckx's own earlier argument for transubstantiation rather than transignification, as presented by, for example, Schoonenberg. See E. Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, first published 1968, London, Burns & Oates, 2005; P. Schoonenberg, *Transubstantiation: How Far Is This Doctrine Historically Determined?*, in *Concilium* 4/3 (1967) 41-47. Real presence and transubstantiation were widely debated and hot topics in the Netherlands in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council.

challenged traditional interpretations of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Some of these theories, relying on historical insights that in the twentieth century one can no longer subscribe to and a view on nature and the cosmos which was based on Aristotelian philosophy, had advanced proposals which replace the central category of "substance" by alternatives. However, according to Dubarle, and apparently also Schillebeeckx, an ontological support of what happens with bread and wine is more solid than a theory that relies only on signs and human conventions regulating their meanings and interpretations. Finally, Schillebeeckx appears to appreciate very strongly the last paragraph of the article (p. 63), as he highlights almost everything of it.

VII. Osborne, *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*

Particularly noteworthy is Schillebeeckx's reading of Kenan Osborne's much acclaimed monograph *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*[43]. Schillebeeckx notes on the first page that he received the book through Robert J. Schreiter on December 28, 2002[44]. He must have started reading it straight away as he indicates on the last blank page of the book that he finished his reading on January 8, 2003. There are underlined words and sentences, brief notes and cross references on almost every page of Schillebeeckx's exemplar, which suggests that his reading of and thinking about the book must have been intensive and profound.

On the four blank pages at the back of the book, Schillebeeckx wrote a kind of personal book review of Osborne's study[45]. It ends quite dramatically, inasmuch as Schillebeeckx states that "for the editing of my new book on sacraments, I have no help from this book, which does not actually provide a postmodern sacramentology". Clearly, Schillebeeckx had expected more from the reading of Osborne's book. But intriguingly, we also learn that still in January 2003 his firm intention was to write a fully-fledged book on the sacraments. He clearly had not yet given up on the plan at that time.

43. K.B. Osborne, *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World: A Theology for the Third Millennium*, New York, Paulist Press, 1999. Schillebeeckx's copy is archived as SCHI.3757-2, see the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

44. Schillebeeckx had been Schreiter's *Doktorvater* in the 1970s and the two of them had established a lifelong connection.

45. This may be rightly called exceptional, since we have not observed this in any other book owned by Schillebeeckx. Notes in the books themselves are mostly limited to underlining and minor marginal notes. Besides this book, he took more extensive notes on separate paper and mostly summarized the content of what he was reading. Critical and evaluative comments are rather rare on these pages full of personal notes. A transcription and translation may be found in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO.

Schillebeeckx's personal review of Osborne opens with an overall positive appreciation. He calls the book "most interesting" and "fascinating", however, he finds that it does not offer a real "sacramentology", i.e., a theological discourse on the sacraments. Schillebeeckx points out that Osborne does not even explain the meaning of the word *sacramentum* and instead engages in a kind of critique of the church's self-referential theory of the sacraments. This observation makes Schillebeeckx at the end of his personal review say that Osborne's book is "largely a fight against windmills". According to him, many theologians have already left behind that battle, but not so "the official churches". In other words, Schillebeeckx sees in Osborne's book a rather classical apology aligning itself as much as possible with magisterial teaching on the sacraments. Could one say that Schillebeeckx sought a bit more audacity or intellectual adventure?

Moreover, Schillebeeckx is not at all convinced by Osborne's interpretation of *haecceitas*, a central notion in his book[46]. He finds the word abstract and idiosyncratic, even somewhat formalistic. In addition, he is not convinced that it can solve the pressing problems of contemporary sacramental theology. He also suspects that Osborne makes more out of this concept than is justified by the original theological context in which it appeared in the Middle Ages. This is not to say, however, that a more substantial emphasis on the here-and-now-ness and existential concreteness of the sacraments as well as the pluriform ways in which people experience them is unimportant for Schillebeeckx. The reverse is true; what Schillebeeckx is missing in the concept of *haecceitas*, however, is a clear faith content. In his analysis of the word, such content is not provided, as it is derived from an indicative pronoun only, thus not alluding to or implying anything substantial, let alone creedal or liturgical.

Schillebeeckx is also critical of the way in which Osborne represents him in his book. In particular, he does not at all agree with the suggestion that he can count as a postmodern theologian. And he notes that Osborne only refers to his 1957 book on the sacraments (*Christ the Sacrament*) and not to other relevant work such as *Mensen als verhaal van God* (*Church: The Human Story of God*), where he shows that God's salvation is present in the world[47]. Schillebeeckx concludes his personal review with the

46. Osborne introduces his use of this terminology on pp. 58-60, using it frequently thereafter.

47. More accurately Osborne refers primarily to the English translation, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1963; noting the Dutch edition *Christus, sacrament van de Godsontmoeting*, Bilthoven, Nelissen, 1959. Schillebeeckx in his comments refers to it as his 1957 book, which in that first edition carried different emphases, and a different title *De Christusontmoeting als sacrament van de Godsontmoeting: Theologische begrijpelijkheid van het heilsfeit der sacramenten*, Antwerpen, 't Groeit, 1957. Osborne, as Schillebeeckx notes, makes no use of *Mensen als verhaal van God*. ET: *Church: The Human Story of God* (The Collected Works of Edward Schillebeeckx, 10), London, Bloomsbury, 2014.

critical observation that Osborne's book ultimately is not about the sacraments but about the evident fact that human knowledge and experiences are always perspectival. This observation clearly does not do sufficient justice to the fine analyses of Osborne, as Schillebeeckx actually acknowledges in his notes in the margins of the book.

VIII. Pastoral Material

As well as the academic notes, the archive also contains notes, orders of service and other materials from Schillebeeckx's own pastoral and liturgical practice. There are a significant number of sermons, many of which have been previously published[48]. Additionally, there are notes from the preparation of many liturgies at which Schillebeeckx presided, containing, among other things, remarks to introduce the service[49]. Of particular interest here are two liturgical texts that illustrate the concerns he addressed in his academic work: orders for celebrating a wedding eucharist between a Christian and a Muslim, and for baptism of children.

1. *A Wedding Eucharist*

This liturgical text is the order of service for a wedding to be conducted by Schillebeeckx and J. Sax in December 1991[50]. The text is in English, and it reflects the fact that the bride is Christian and the bridegroom Muslim. It is not specified which of the celebrant's texts were said by Schillebeeckx and which by Sax, nor who was responsible for the final decision-making in planning the liturgy. Schillebeeckx is listed first in the order of

48. See E. Schillebeeckx, *God among Us: The Gospel Proclaimed*, trans. J. Bowden, London, SCM Press, 1983; Id., *For the Sake of the Gospel*, trans. J. Bowden, London, SCM Press, 1989; Id., *Verhalen van een Levende: Theologische preken*, ed. H. Snijdewind, Nijmegen, Valkhof Pers, 2015; Schillebeeckx – Strazzari, *I Am a Happy Theologian* (n. 32), pp. 93-105; E. Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch testament: Notarieel nog niet verleden*, Baarn, Nelissen, 1994, pp. 139-167.

49. One such example would be a liturgy for the Second Sunday of Easter, 1999, see E. Schillebeeckx, *"Beloken Pasen" in oorlogstijd* (Liturgy, 11 April 1999), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /digitale_bestanden/Bestanden_pc/Schillebeeckx/D-Schijf/datawfw/Prekem#nieuw/PREKEN/SERIE2/Beloken Pasen#oorlogstijd.doc. The texts for this occasion are also included in Schillebeeckx, *Verhalen van een Levende* (n. 48), pp. 188-200. This makes use of a revised version of the eucharistic prayer in wartime Schillebeeckx had earlier published, see E. Schillebeeckx, *Eucharistisch hooggebed in oorlogstijd*, in *Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven* 47 (1991) 335-339. The archive at Nijmegen contains – either in electronic or physical form – a wide variety of other liturgical texts too, but generally speaking the variations from the local norms of the Roman Rite are small enough to be of little note.

50. Presumably Jo Sax, from 1971-2007 pastor of the parish at which the service occurred. See Parochie Sint Brigida Noorbeek, *Pastoor*, Parochie Sint Brigida Noorbeek, 2020, https://www.parochiesintbrigidanoorbeek.nl/parochie/pastoor/.

service. The opening prayer draws upon language for God that may be shared by Christians and Muslims, addressed to "God of love, the All-mercifull [sic], the All-compassionate", and without either the common Trinitarian or Christological conclusion of collect prayers. In the prayer for absolution, the liturgy suggests some equivalence of Christian and Islamic paths, concluding "by following Jesus, your Christ, or by following the Qu'ran [sic]"[51]. Readings from both the Bible and the Qur'an follow: first Genesis 1,26-28.31a, then Surah 1 and finally Matthew 7,21.24-27. The paralleling of Christian and Islamic continues in the vows, and there is also a clear interreligious concern in the Prayers of the Faithful.

The adaptation for the occasion is further apparent in the eucharistic prayer. This appears to take as its foundation the first eucharistic prayer from the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book*[52]. The Preface describes God as "Father of Abraham, and of Jesus, inspiriting [sic] the prophet Mohammed". References in the prayer to the "we" who offer it are clarified to specify "we, the christians among us" and the rubric for response is similarly "All Christians"[53]. The Lord's Prayer includes the doxology without embolism (other liturgical texts in the archive suggest this may have been Schillebeeckx's usual practice), and is indicated for "Christians" to say "but all are invited to join in the Christians' prayer, because of the human, universal-religious tenor of this prayer". Anglican influence is also seen in the prayer before communion, where the Prayer of Humble Access is used, amending the petition "Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us" to read "Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat and to drink, liturgically, that we may evermore dwell in him, your beloved Christ, and He, our firstborn brother, in us"[54].

The most distinctive prayer text in this liturgy is the prayer after communion, which appears to be a completely original composition[55].

51. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Celebration of the Marriage of Nathalie van Den Boogaard and Ajmal Rahman* (Liturgy, December 9, 1991), p. 1, Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /digitale_bestanden/Bestanden_pc/Schillebeeckx/D-Schijf/datawfw/liturgie/liturgie2/LITURGIE.DOC. It should be noted that in the Netherlands, all civic legalities are handled by the secular authorities ahead of any religious aspects, and so the liturgist is not constrained by these requirements as in some jurisdictions. This order of service is included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under reference SCHI.ZZ01.

52. CHURCH OF ENGLAND, *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 131-132.

53. SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Celebration of the Marriage of Nathalie van Den Boogaard and Ajmal Rahman* (n. 51), p. 5. See repository reference SCHI.ZZ01.

54. *Ibid*., p. 6. Compare CHURCH OF ENGLAND, *The Alternative Service Book 1980* (n. 52), p. 128.

55. SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Celebration of the Marriage of Nathalie van Den Boogaard and Ajmal Rahman* (n. 51), p. 7.

Father of all humankind,
of men and women,
of people of divergent and still convergent, different worldreligions, [sic]
keep all of us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children,
from the Netherlands through Great Britain to Pakistan,
all over the world,
shall be free:
no chaos, no domination, but constant [sic] strive for justice, peace and integrity.
May all the universe live to praise your name:
Living God,
Sustainer of all the worlds,
Father of all humankind.

While the specific references to the three countries can be assumed to biographical details of the couple, the explicit interreligious tone, the framing of the petition for peace and justice, and the universal note seem deliberate choices.

2. *A Baptismal Service*

The text here is the order of service for the baptism of two children conducted by Schillebeeckx in 2005. The liturgical text itself is largely conventional. However, the order of service leaflet also contains a brief catechesis, seemingly to be read as part of the liturgy[56]. It is clear however that, with this text, Schillebeeckx is attempting to convey some of the ideas he is still developing at this time in his academic thinking at an appropriate level to the ordinary faithful.

Schillebeeckx begins his catechesis with the significance of the human ritual celebration of birth with the attendant welcome into family and human community, which is "a very different celebration from the celebration of a baptism with water and Holy Spirit"[57]. Further, he is clear that the children already "live in the space of the creative God from birth"[58]. Against this, Schillebeeckx asks what else there is to celebrate – and his continued emphasis is on *celebration*. Exorcistic tones are given no place either: "The good in them is older, more original, than the mischief they may and, even inevitably, will also exhibit"[59].

56. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Doopplechtigheid van Anne Maria Gipman en Abraham (Bram) Josef Stefanus Gipman* (5 June 2005). This item is among the items catalogued as SCHI.5552 in the archive, see the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO. The catechetical text is found on pp. 4-8.

57. *Ibid*., p. 4.

58. *Ibid*., p. 5.

59. *Ibid*., p. 6. "Mischief" here translates "kattenkwaad", which carries the sense of childlike misbehavior, rather than the seriousness of terms such as sin and evil (zonde, kwaad).

As is to be expected for the baptism of small children, Schillebeeckx places emphasis on the confession of faith of the parents, and while placing this primarily in its explicitly Christian sense, "following the life path of Jesus of Nazareth", he frames it too in the broader human sense that "recurring, human life experiences […] teach us that only justice, service and solidarity, love as a gift to others are the ultimate foundation of our lives". He is realistic and open about the possibility that the children may chose not to follow their parents' faith, but suggests that even still "the liberating mystery of an unfathomable divine source of love towards vulnerable people" is conveyed to them by the sacramental celebration[60].

It is clear in this catechetical text, Schillebeeckx is trying to address the general audience of the congregation for this liturgy and not a group of trained theologians, but nonetheless the indications he gives are significant. We note first the significance he assigns to rituals celebrating both birth and baptism, and the strong distinction he makes between them. Second, it is clear that the humanizing action of baptism is critical, alongside and in tandem with the specifically Christianizing aspect. Finally, he sees that there is a veiled ontological event here: despite the foregrounding of the human aspects of the rite, Schillebeeckx sees that through and in those actions, understood and performed as human actions, divine action truly occurs. While his framework does not treat the members of this congregation to a scholarly discourse on the topic, the increased attention he gives to the human aspects does not remove the fundamental premise that the sacrament causes grace, but perhaps even intensifies it.

IX. The Electronic Archive

The digital component of the archive contains a variety of material both personal and scholarly that Schillebeeckx had on his computer, dating from the late 1990s onwards. Some of the files have been archived from floppy disks, others from his computer. There is much duplication as files appear often to have been saved in multiple places – frequently this exceeds mere back-up to external disk.

Within this, what appears to be Schillebeeckx's working folder for his planned sacraments book – which exists in duplicate, back-up copies in a number of places – contains fourteen files. These files appear mostly not to have been edited after April 2000. One of the files is corrupt and the contents cannot currently be accessed. The other files can be grouped into five groups as follows:

1. Three files contain drafts of an introduction and outline to the proposed book[61]. Of these, there are substantial differences between all three.

60. *Ibid*., pp. 6-8.

61. E. Schillebeeckx, *Sac1afl2* (11 June 1999), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Sac1afl2.doc; Id., *Sac1afl5* (19 January 1999),

However, these changes present as a series of revisions, and as such the file that appears to have been most recently edited can be presumed to be as far as Schillebeeckx had reached with this text. There is also an additional file that contains the footnotes to one of the interim versions[62]. The corrupt file is named as though it contains the updated version of this last file.

2. Four versions of a text, where the last and longest version is, at least according to the file name, to have been the first chapter of the book. One version is significantly shorter than the others. However, the changes appear to reflect a text in development, culminating in the longest[63].
3. Three files containing versions of the material discussed above on creation and the sacraments. Two of these are near identical (i.e. apart from minor differences of formatting). There are significant differences to the third. This latter version bears the earliest "last edited" date, but this cannot be taken as conclusive proof of the order of editing, given some files have been clearly resaved later than the last edit[64].
4. A bibliography[65].
5. A file that contains a single line of text, "notes for the book on the sacraments. Literature and what comes to mind"[66].

Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Sac1afl5.doc; E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ten Geleide* (10 July 2015), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/TenGeleide.doc. These are included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under references SCHI.ZZ04, SCHI.ZZ05, and SCHI.ZZ06 respectively. The last version includes an unrelated note by Schillebeeckx's assistant Hadewijch Snijdewind that is clearly saved in the file in error, hence the date to it, which is therefore the date the file was last saved.

62. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Sac1afl6* (1 April 2002), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /digitale_bestanden/sacramenten/SAC1AFL6.DOC. See the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under reference SCHI.ZZ07.

63. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Back-up van sac1afl1* (28 May 1999), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Back-up van sac1afl1.wbk; ID., *Sac1Afl7* (11 June 1999), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Sac1Afl7.doc; ID., *Sac1afl1* (2 June 2005), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/sac1afl1.doc; ID., *Eerste hoofdstuk van sacramenten* (2005), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/eerste hoofdstuk van sacramenten.doc. See the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under references SCHI.ZZ07. SCHI.ZZ08, SCHI.ZZ09, and SCHI.ZZ10 respectively.

64. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Sac1afl3* (6 March 2000), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Sac1afl3.doc; ID., *Sac1afl4.doc* (6 March 2000), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Sac1afl4.doc; ID., *Sac1afl8#3* (6 March 2000), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/Sac1afl8#3.doc. See the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under references SCHI.ZZ11. SCHI.ZZ12, SCHI.ZZ13, and SCHI.ZZ14 respectively.

65. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Literatuur sacramenten* (28 April 2000), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/LiteratuurSacramenten.doc. See the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under reference SCHI.ZZ14.

66. In the Dutch, this appears exactly as "notities voor het boek over de sacramenten. Literatuur en wat me zo tebinnenvalt". No such notes follow. See E. SCHILLEBEECKX,

1. *The First (?) Chapter*

To call this collection of material a first chapter implies that it is rather more developed and organized than it is. Instead, a number of different, shorter elements have been placed in together. Little or nothing appears to have been done to connect them. Many of these appear to have originally been talks to various groups, and still often bear the marks of that. Themes addressed include Christology, the fundamental experience of contrast and the development of doctrine; all addressed in a fashion consistent with Schillebeeckx's earlier works. Among the fragments making up this material, much has been published elsewhere. A section reproduces part of a chapter from his *Theologisch testament* [67]. Another is a version of the text Schillebeeckx included in a Festschrift he co-edited for Ted Schoof [68]. There is also a paper given at the Albertinum in late September 1998, entitled "Historische situatie van het Christendom en de 'nieuwe priesters'", on the situation of the church today, published with only light revisions in a collection of papers from the occasion[69]. In speaking of "new priests", this article is concerned with the change in religious practice that follows from the transfer of a number of roles frequently undertaken by a priest to secular professionals (such as psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, etc.), and the development of a greater number of lay ministries within the church (liturgical, exegetical, catechetical, etc.). Given his wider views on a greater role for the laity in the church, Schillebeeckx does not see this as a negative development, but nonetheless a significant one.

Nowhere among any of this material is there any developed consideration of sacramental theology. However, there is a brief section of five pages wherein Schillebeeckx critiques the current state of sacramental theology, suggesting that there have been no significant contributions since his own work, and that of Karl Rahner, in the 1950s. In doing so, he emphasizes the importance of addressing the sacraments, observing:

SACDLNOT (31 May 1999), Nijmegen, Archief E.C.F.A. Schillebeeckx, /PC Scx/Laptop/sacramenten/SACDLNOT.doc. See the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under reference SCHI.ZZ15.

67. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Theologisch testament* (n. 48), pp. 127-137 is reproduced by ID., *Eerste hoofdstuk van sacramenten* (n. 63), pp. 11-21.

68. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Breuken in christelijke dogma's*, in ID. – B. VAN IERSEL – M. VAN KEULEN – H. WEGMAN – A. WILLEMS (eds.), *Breuklijnen: Grenservaringen en zoektochten. 14 essays voor Ted Schoof bij zijn afscheid van de theologische faculteit Nijmegen*, Baarn, Nelissen, 1994, 15-49. ET: E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Discontinuities in Christian Dogmas*, in *Essays* (n. 1), 85-109; part of this material is also found as SCHILLEBEECKX, *Theologisch testament* (n. 48), pp. 69-79. Here, *Eerste hoofdstuk van sacramenten* (n. 63), pp. 34-60.

69. That is, "The Historical situation of Christendom and the 'new priests'". See E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Het christendom en "de nieuwe priesters"*, in P. CHATELION COUNET (ed.), *De nieuwe priesters: Religiositeit op onverwachte plaatsen en momenten*, Zoetermeer, Meinema, 1999, 13-32. Here, SCHILLEBEECKX, *Eerste hoofdstuk van sacramenten* (n. 63), pp. 61-78.

> And yet the sacramental liturgy of the church is the place par excellence, where those theological reflections on God, Jesus the Christ and his ecclesial community of faith (in and through human failure) nevertheless animated by God and Jesus' Spirit, find their concretely experienceable and visibly sealed form and, as it were, have to be given hands and feet[70].

2. *The Creation Chapter*

The versions of this file included in Schillebeeckx's working material from 1999-2000 contain no substantial differences to the material discussed above from earlier in the decade. Schillebeeckx appears to have considered this material to remain part of his project, even if no longer its central focus.

3. *The Bibliography*

There is nothing to indicate how Schillebeeckx developed or was using this bibliography[71]. It is simply a list of books, divided against a number of chapter headings, which serve as thematic divisions. The longest section is that concerned with "important literature from linguistics, semiotics, cultural anthropology and the study of folklore". This list includes most of the names that might be expected, given Schillebeeckx's 2000 paper: among them J.L. Austin, Catherine Bell, Mary Douglas, Mircea Eliade, Ronald Grimes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roy Rappaport, J.R. Searle, Stanley Tambiah, A.N. Terrin, and Victor Turner.

There is also a list of "Theological (new) literature on sacraments". This begins with a reference back to Schillebeeckx's own work on the sacraments at the end of the 1950s, thereby framing the "new" of the heading. Authors mentioned include Margaret Mary Kelleher, Edward Kilmartin, Jozef Lamberts, Gerard Lukken, Paul Post and David Power[72]. Furthermore, there is a moderately extensive list of thinkers on the place of religion in the modern world, including theologians, philosophers and social scientists.

Of the texts there is archival evidence that Schillebeeckx read, not all are included in this list. The essays of Chenu and Dubarle mentioned above are included, Marty's and Chauvet's (alongside several of Chauvet's other works) contributions to *RSR* are mentioned, but none of the other articles from that journal that he clearly had read carefully. The 1995

70. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Eerste hoofdstuk van sacramenten* (n. 63), pp. 22-26, here p. 24.

71. Of the files listed above, this is SCHILLEBEECKX, *Literatuur sacramenten* (n. 65), repository reference SCHI.ZZ14.

72. The bibliography also includes references to Louis-Marie Chauvet, both books and articles mostly published in *La Maison-Dieu*. The presence of these works confirms the paradox that Schillebeeckx knew about the French theologian's work and its reputation, yet that he did not profoundly engage with it.

volume of *Concilium* discussed above is included as a single item, along with specific reference to the article therein of Francis Jacques[73]. Finally, Dal Maso's book is included, which given the lower profile of its author confirms the idea that Schillebeeckx considered it important. On the other hand, strangely enough, Lathrop and Brinkman are not included.

Brinkman is also almost the only author cited in Schillebeeckx's 2000 article not to be included in this bibliography. Such an exclusion, of an author whom Schillebeeckx had clearly valued on the relationship between creation and sacrament, along with the lack of any further development of the draft texts suggests that this theme was only marginal in Schillebeeckx's final assessment of his project.

4. *The Introduction*

The most complete and coherent text among the electronic materials for Schillebeeckx's unfinished project is an introduction of thirty pages[74]. In it, Schillebeeckx picks up on secularization and what he considers outdated presentations of faith as two specific contemporary issues that he does not believe have been adequately addressed. Secularization, he portrays as neutral, and in his consideration of it he is more critical of the failure to respond to the emergence of the natural sciences by the church. His sense is that many presentations of the Christian faith are outdated because they are cognitive reflections on faith content, and not rooted in everyday life, thus achieving a dogmatism that is an obstacle to sacramental praxis.

Schillebeeckx offers also a brief overview of sacramental theology as he sees the development since his own work and the work of Karl Rahner in the 1950s. With the possible exception of the contribution of Chauvet, about which he actually says very little, he suggests there have been no fundamental innovations in that time, although he is appreciative of some of the contributions from a feminist perspective.

With this criticism in mind, Schillebeeckx returns to the same source as he turned to in his earlier sacramental work: Thomas Aquinas. While pointing to the limitations of the physicalist categories that underlie Thomistic hylomorphism, in Aquinas' principle that *sacramentum est in genere signi*, Schillebeeckx finds a foundation[75]. He then proposes to investigate this symbolic action using the analyses of contemporary semiotics, linguistics and cultural anthropology. He names J.L. Austin, E. Benveniste, P. Bourdieu,

73. While Schillebeeckx cites the Dutch edition, in the English edition of *Concilium*, this article is F. JACQUES, *From Language Games to "Textual Games": The Case of the Religious Rite*, in *Concilium* 1995, no. 3, 1-21.

74. Of the files listed above, this is SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ten Geleide* (n. 61), repository reference SCHI.ZZ06.

75. Per *ST* IIIa, q. 60, a. 1, co.

M. Douglas, N. Chomsky, R. Finnegan, C.S. Peirce, R.A. Rappaport, J.J. Schaffer, J.R. Searle, S.J. Tambiah, and V.W. Turner as his intended principal dialogue partners[76]. On the basis of Thomas' assertion that *gratia supponit naturam*, Schillebeeckx is confident that "the Christian sacraments presuppose human beings as social-cultural beings, living on this earth within the totality of the cosmos" and as such any study of that social and cultural environment can contribute to the study of the sacraments[77].

Alongside the human sciences, Schillebeeckx points approvingly to two contemporary theological works as well. One is the work of Dal Maso addressed above, which clearly interests Schillebeeckx because of its account on a "performative sacramental efficacy", according to which "the human symbolic celebration of the community of faith *is* God's gift of grace and cannot be added to it"[78]. Schillebeeckx judges that Dal Maso succeeds better than others in avoiding both the objectification of ritual and the objectification of the intellect[79]. The other contemporary author for whom Schillebeeckx shows appreciation here is the liberation theologian Francisco Taborda, noting in particular Taborda's analysis of how sacramental-ritual celebration of religious vision transcends earthly expectations. The eschatological aspect that Taborda draws out is particularly important for Schillebeeckx[80].

Schillebeeckx suggests that very often – and especially in the West – the *legomenon*, the verbal aspect of the liturgy, has been emphasized to the exclusion of the *drômenon*, the physical action. He attributes this in part to the stagnation in the post-Tridentine liturgy, and while reminding that many so-called ancient representations of faith are anything but ancient, points to the enthusiastic celebration of the liturgy elsewhere in

76. The omission of Ronald Grimes is conspicuous, especially given by this time Grimes was well known in Nijmegen, though without clearer signs of how Schillebeeckx intended to develop this point, this should be treated cautiously. It is, however, noteworthy that this list shows strong correspondence with Dal Maso's sources.

77. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ten Geleide* (n. 61), p. 21, repository reference SCHI.ZZ06.

78. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ten Geleide* (n. 61), p. 23, emphasis original.

79. That is (and as discussed above), DAL MASO, *L'efficacia dei sacramenti e la "performance" rituale* (n. 30). The contrastive example Schillebeeckx cites is P. MOYAERT, *De mateloosheid van het christendom: Over naastenliefde, betekenisincarnatie en mystieke liefde* (Filosofische diagnosen), Nijmegen, SUN, 1998. Schillebeeckx's annotated copies of both books are included in the repository, https://doi.org/10.48804/2NIVGO, under references SCHI.3563 and SCHI.4061.

80. F. TABORDA, *Sacramentos, práxis e festa: Para uma teologia latino-americana dos sacramentos* (Coleção Teologia e libertação. Série 4: A Igreja sacramento de libertação, 5), Petrópolis, Vozes, 1987. It highlights the incompleteness of Schillebeeckx's bibliography discussed above that this book does not feature on it. See Schillebeeckx's discussion at SCHILLEBEECKX, *Ten Geleide* (n. 61), pp. 22-23.

the world where the *drômenon* has begun to be inculturated and the "experiential poverty" of the modern Western worldview is less dominant[81].

The final aspect of his proposal Schillebeeckx emphasizes is the role of ritual in relation to contrast experiences[82]. Aided by the poetry of his friend Huub Oosterhuis, Schillebeeckx proposed that his book would be subtitled "Contrastervaringen tot ritueel gelouterd"[83]. For Schillebeeckx here, the contrast experience gives purpose, life and direction to the ritual action, which itself revitalizes the norm against which the contrast experience sees the world.

X. Conclusions and Assessment

The archived books, papers and electronic files that we have examined in this paper are a long way from a draft of the new book on the sacraments that Schillebeeckx had planned to write from at least the early 1990s. Schillebeeckx left no developed texts.

In terms of his working method and the sources on which he relied, we can conclude that Schillebeeckx did not operate as systematically as he did in his earlier work. The encyclopaedic basis of knowledge for his theological reflection is basically the result of contingencies. One cannot say that Schillebeeckx had a detailed plan of what he needed to investigate in order for him to achieve his goal of a "new" or innovative sacramental theology against the background of postmodern culture or in conversation with a theology of creation. Rather, it seems he read books, book chapters and journal articles which crossed his path almost coincidentally.

What can be seen from these documents is a concern for the reinvigoration of the sacramental praxis of the church, rooted in experiences of normal human life. For this foundation, Schillebeeckx did turn first to the

81. See Schillebeeckx, *Ten Geleide* (n. 61), p. 26. This point is one with which Schillebeeckx begins in the 2000 article, see Schillebeeckx, *Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments*, in *Essays* (n. 1), pp. 183-184.

82. That is, contrast experiences in the sense in which he had developed the idea of a fundamental, pre-religious negative experience of contrast; on how this forms part of Schillebeeckx's epistemology, see P. Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus: The Knowability of God in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Ökumenische Beihefte zur Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie, 22), Fribourg/CH, University Press, 1993, pp. 241-249.

83. That is, "Contrast experience to ritual transfigured". The same reference to Oosterhuis is included in Schillebeeckx, *Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sacramenten* (n. 1), p. 181. In the English translation, *gelouterd* was translated "distilled", see Schillebeeckx, *Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments*, in *Essays* (n. 1), pp. 203-204. However, *louteren* should be distinguished from *zuiveren*, purify, and *distilleren*, distill, and has a figurative cathartic sense which is better contained by some of the theological implications of "transfigure". Schillebeeckx is inspired here by H. Oosterhuis, *Levende die mij ziet: Gedichten, gezangen en gebeden*, Kampen, Kok, 1999, p. 76.

theology of creation and then to the insights of the human sciences. He does not indicate why – or even *that* – he rejects creation as a suitable meeting point, but it is clear that he no longer saw it as the most important or a necessary place to begin by the late 1990s. Indeed, it seems Schillebeeckx aimed to include the perspective of the whole of creation in his renewed approach, albeit as only one among a number of threads.

For human beings at least, this is spelt out through the thoroughly optimistic understanding of the human condition and of the human capacity to cooperate with the divine – which may be a consequence of the profound Dominican spirituality, seeking God in "everything", which Schillebeeckx had embraced for the entirety of his adult life[84]. Never does he suggest that the First Cause (in the classical, Thomistic sense) is anything other than God, but he is inclusive in where he sees this active. Hence, among the pastoral material, the willingness to recognize God's action in the lives of faithful Muslims and the importance of the humanizing elements of the rite of baptism beyond narrow views of sacramental or sanctifying grace. Schillebeeckx is committed to the idea of this being embodied action, both with respect to the fleshly body of the individual and the social body of the community, alongside mere words.

As we have noted, Schillebeeckx is by no means as original in these insights in the 1990s and early 2000s as he was with his work on the same topic in the 1950s. Nevertheless, a quarter of a century later, these remain questions driving much contemporary reflection on the sacraments, and beyond this, there is still a significant degree to which such shifts are still required in the everyday life of the church[85]. In particular, discussions around what could be called a "non-extrinsicist" position are worth pursuing. Schillebeeckx was convinced that the meaning of the sacramental act is not artificially added to Christian ritual gatherings, but intrinsically interwoven with them. The ins and outs of this intrinsic interwovenness, however, are not yet clear, neither from the perspective of human sciences nor from the point of view of sacramental theology.

Therefore, Schillebeeckx's intuitions around a "non-extrinsic" relationship between the two are definitely worth considering, not only for the sake of better understanding this original theologian's work, but also with

84. See the evaluation of Schillebeeckx's evolving understanding of his Dominican identity (and its importance) of E. BORGMAN – A. MILH, *Schillebeeckx on Dominican Spirituality*, in VAN ERP – MINCH (eds.), *T&T Clark Handbook of Edward Schillebeeckx* (n. 1), 63-85.

85. Consider, for example, the way these issues are raised by K.H. BELCHER, *Eucharist and Receptive Ecumenism: From Thanksgiving to Communion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108884464; T.M. BRUNK, *The Sacraments and Consumer Culture*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press Academic, 2020; C. CARVALHAES, *Ritual at World's End: Essays on Eco-Liturgical Liberation Theology*, York, PA, Barber's Son Press, 2021; K.W. IRWIN, *Context and Text: A Method for Liturgical Theology*, rev. ed., Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2018.

a view to developing a solid model for a smooth integration of anthropological insights into theology. In sum, the real contribution of Schillebeeckx's late and unfinished work on the sacraments may lie here: to lay the foundations for future reflections and research at the intersection of ritual studies and sacramental theology in a way that both disciplines mutually reinforce each other instead of seeing the other as a threat or a competitor.

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Abstract. — It was no secret that toward the end of his life, Edward Schillebeeckx had intended to write a new book, returning to the topic of sacramental theology, which he had not substantively addressed since his very earliest work. This work was never completed before his death. By careful examination of the archived material from this period of work, we identify the key themes and directions from which he was intending to develop this project. In particular, we identify the connection Schillebeeckx makes between creation theology and the sacraments, and his thoroughly optimistic view on the human condition and its capacity for cooperation with the divine. Nonetheless, we note that the progress he appears to have made towards the book he indicated he was writing on the topic is quite limited. Based on his work, we provide some initial indications of how these themes might provide important avenues for further reflection in the study of Schillebeeckx, and for sacramental theology more generally.

Résumé. — Ce n'est un secret pour personne qu'à la fin de sa vie, Edward Schillebeeckx avait l'intention d'écrire un nouveau livre, reprenant le thème de la théologie sacramentelle qu'il n'avait plus abordé de manière approfondie depuis ses tout premiers travaux. Mais il n'a pu mener à bien ce projet avant de mourir. En examinant attentivement les documents d'archives de cette période, nous identifions les thèmes et les orientations clés qu'il comptait développer dans cet ouvrage. Nous mettons notamment en évidence le lien que Schillebeeckx établit entre la théologie de la création et les sacrements, ainsi que sa vision profondément optimiste de la condition humaine et de sa capacité à coopérer avec le divin. Nous constatons néanmoins que les avancées qu'il semble avoir réalisées en vue

de l'ouvrage annoncé sur ce sujet sont assez limitées. À partir de ses écrits, nous proposons quelques premières pistes sur la manière dont ces thématiques pourraient ouvrir d'importantes perspectives de réflexion tant pour l'étude de Schillebeeckx que pour la théologie sacramentelle en général.