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EDITORIAL

In this issue, various themes connect and interrelate. They deal with witness (marturia), inculturation, the ever-present temptation of assimilation, and hermeneutics: the hermeneutics to be implemented in order to approach fairly the corpus that constitutes a reference for our Christian and confessional identity and that of the people with whom we are called to dialogue. All this brings us back to our incarnate condition in space and time, to 'the face of the other', that is 'a living presence' but refusing 'to be contained' (Emmanuel Levinas).

One contribution widens our vision and reflection in the field of interreligious dialogue. It might lead to contributions from authors of different Christian churches in their relationship to Islam.

Other articles echo the OIC issues of the last year (52:1 and 2), especially the contributions of Ruth Reardon, allowing us to deepen their investigations.

Finally, we are very happy to include contributions about Olivier Clément who died ten years ago in 2009. He was a very important figure in ecumenical dialogue at an existential, spiritual and theological level.

HOLINESS IN POPE FRANCIS' APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE* AS KEY TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

Markus Schmidt, S.J.*

In spring 2018, Pope Francis promulgated his apostolic exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate. Its theme is holiness. This article explores holiness as key in the endeavour of making Christian unity more visible. Holiness is considered a fundamental attitude which supports sanctification as dynamic growth in holiness. Growth in holiness means that people strengthen their focus in life on Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, people are united with God and with one another. Holiness, therefore, is key to Christian unity.

'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy' (Lev. 19:2).¹ The congregation of Israel received this demand on their journey with God. It summarises God's will for the people of Israel. God invited the Israelites to a covenant with him and gave them instructions on how to fulfil it. The covenant is about relationship. Therefore, it is not enough to merely obey certain rules. God calls God's people to more: to become holy because God is holy.

This call becomes more apparent if we remember that the covenant with Israel is a covenant of love. In love, both the lover and the beloved, usually, are longing for unity with each other; becoming like the other is an expression of this unity. It, therefore, makes sense that God calls the people of Israel to become holy, too. Holiness unites us with God

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¹ If not otherwise stated, all quotations of the Bible are taken from *The New Revised Standard Version* (Washington DC: Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 1989).

and with each other. People who strive after holiness are united with each other in God. All who are united with God are at the same time united with each other. In this perspective, holiness appears to be a key to Christian unity.

In spring 2018, Pope Francis promulgated his apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*. Its theme is holiness, and it suggests itself, therefore, as an appropriate text for reflection on holiness as key to Christian unity. I shall present the main points of the apostolic exhortation first. Afterwards, I will explore holiness as the key to Christian unity.

The apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*

On 19 March 2018, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis signed his third apostolic exhortation entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate*². The exhortation deals with the call to holiness in today's world. It has five chapters which are not meant to present definitions and discussions about the subject but to deal with the topic in a more practical way. Francis states: 'My modest goal is to re-propose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities.'³ This call is grounded in God's call to holiness. God 'chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love' (Eph. 1:4).

The first chapter is dedicated to God's call to holiness. Francis refers to Hebrew 12 to show that there is a great number of saints. Their testimony encourages us and makes us realise that we are surrounded by 'so great a cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12:1). It is not that the saints have always been perfect.⁴ It is true, however, as Francis emphasises, that 'yet even amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord.'⁵

² Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/pa-pa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.pdf.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴ See *ibid.*, 22: 'Not everything a saint says is completely faithful to the Gospel; not everything he or she does is authentic or perfect. What we need to contemplate is the totality of their life, their entire journey of growth in holiness, the reflection of Jesus Christ that emerges when we grasp their overall meaning as a person.'

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

The saints about whom Francis is talking are the saints next door, not only the beatified and canonised people. The beatified and canonised persons are put before the faithful as ‘an exemplary imitation of Christ, one worthy of admiration of the faithful.’⁶ In his apostolic exhortation, however, the Pope focuses on the holiness very often found ‘in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in our midst, reflect God’s presence.’⁷

Francis emphasises that holiness gives the Church its most attractive face. This is true for all Christian Churches. Pope Francis refers to John Paul II who stated that ‘[t]he witness to Christ borne even to the shedding of blood has become a common inheritance of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants’⁸. The common inheritance of the shedding of blood as witness to Christ is now known as ‘Ecumenism of martyrdom’.

Francis points out that it is the Lord who calls to holiness. God invites his people to become holy because God is holy (see Lev. 11:44.). He goes on to make clear that each person has to find his or her own way to become holy. Holiness is not about copying someone else. It is about finding holiness in one’s own life and growing in it.

Holiness, therefore, is not only for others but also for each one of us, as Francis remarks. In particular, small gestures in daily life will support personal growth in holiness. The Pope encourages the faithful to let the grace of baptism bear fruit in their lives – in other words encourages them to grow in holiness. The mission, in Christ, the believer has received in baptism, accompanies the growth. Francis is clear that the mission cannot be thought of apart from the path of holiness. ‘At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life.’⁹

Francis also encourages the believers to let themselves be renewed by the Holy Spirit and to see their whole life as a mission. ‘The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that

⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁸ John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_1994110_tertio-millennio-adveniente.pdf, 37.

⁹ Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 20.

you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.’¹⁰

Activity is something that is important for Francis but not solely. He argues that both activity and silence are necessary to walk on the path of holiness, or in Ignatian terms, to be *in actione contemplativus*¹¹. A good balance of both will support growth in holiness: ‘We need a spirit of holiness capable of filling both our solitude and our service, our personal life and our evangelizing efforts, so that every moment can be an expression of self-sacrificing love in the Lord’s eyes. In this way, every minute of our lives can be a step along the path to growth in holiness.’¹²

The second chapter is dedicated to the two subtle enemies of holiness. Francis describes them as false forms of holiness. The first enemy is Gnosticism. The Pope defines it as ‘a purely subjective faith whose only interest is a certain experience or a set of ideas and bits of information which are meant to console and enlighten, but which ultimately keep one imprisoned in his or her own thoughts and feelings.’¹³ Francis stresses against the gnostics that the measure for a person’s perfection is not the information or knowledge he or she possesses but the depth of charity the person is living and giving.

The second enemy of holiness is, according to Francis, contemporary Pelagianism. It focuses the efforts on the human will. Francis summarises: ‘Now it was not intelligence that took the place of mystery and grace, but our human will.’¹⁴ The tragedy is that a person who

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹ P. Hieronymus Nadal SJ (1507–1580) introduced the phrase in his commentary on the ‘Examen generalis’ of the Constitution of the Society of Jesus: Hieronymus Nadal, ‘In Examen Annotationes (1557)’, in *P. Hieronymi Nadal Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu*, ed. Michael Nicolau, Epistolae et Monumenta P. Hieronymi Nadal, V (Roma: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1962), 131–206, here 162. See Anton Witwer, ‘Contemplativo En La Acción’, in *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, ed. Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana (GEL), Colección Manresa 37 (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2007), 457–65.

¹² Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 31.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36, quoting Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013),

https://m.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf, 94.

¹⁴ Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 48.

counts only on his or her own will and who does not acknowledge his or her own limitations, hinders God's grace to work effectively. Francis refers here to *Evangelii Gaudium* to make it clear: 'Ultimately, the lack of a heartfelt and prayerful acknowledgement of our limitations, prevents grace from working more effectively within us, for no room is left for bringing about the potential good that is part of a sincere and genuine journey of growth.'¹⁵ Moreover, the Pope stresses that growth happens as 'historical and progressive reality'¹⁶ and that love is the centre.¹⁷

Francis continues his apostolic exhortation in chapter three with the theme: 'In the light of the Master'. In this part of *Gaudete et Exsultate*, the Pope encourages the faithful to go 'against the flow'. Francis explains this attitude with the Beatitudes (see Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-23). 'The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card. [...] In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives.'¹⁸

Each Beatitude starts with the word 'Happy are those' or 'Blessed are those', depending on the English translation. The point is that Jesus calls those people 'happy' or 'blessed' who live according to the example of his own life. The attitude of his life is articulated in the Beatitudes. Happiness, therefore, becomes a synonym of holiness as Francis remarks.¹⁹ The Pope, however, is not unrealistic. He is aware that Jesus' words are unsettling, challenging, and 'demand a real change in the way we live'²⁰. If Christians do not change their way of life, in the view of the Pope, holiness will be nothing more than an empty word.

Francis, then, reflects on the beatitudes and goes on to search for the great criterion by which to recognise holiness which is pleasing to God. He finds it in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew (Matt. 25:31-46). This chapter foretells the final judgement. It is here where Francis finds the great criterion: 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me

¹⁵ Ibid., 50. See also Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 44.

¹⁶ Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 50.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, 60.

¹⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 64.

²⁰ Ibid., 66.

clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me' (Matt. 25:35–36).²¹

It is important for Francis that these verses are not talking just about charity but about Christology. He is in line here with John Paul II who writes in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*: '[I]t is a page of Christology which sheds a ray of light on the mystery of Christ.'²² This understanding is justified because Jesus identifies himself with the poor in Matthew 25:31–46. John Paul II uses telling words to explain Jesus' identification with the poor. Francis quotes him again: 'If we have truly started out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified'²³. It is clear that holiness cannot be lived apart from mercy because mercy is at the centre of Jesus' life which is the embodiment of holiness. The consequences Francis draws are that '[t]hose who really wish to give glory to God by their lives, who truly long to grow in holiness, are called to be single-minded and tenacious in their practice of the works of mercy.'²⁴

In the next chapter, which is chapter four, Francis reflects on signs of holiness in today's world within the framework of the Beatitudes. He does not give a sum of all possible models of holiness but focuses on five expressions of love for God and neighbours. The five signs are (1) perseverance, patience, and meekness, (2) joy and a sense of humour, (3) boldness and passion, (4) community, and (5) constant prayer.²⁵ Francis considers them 'of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today's culture.'²⁶

In chapter five, Francis deals with spiritual combat, vigilance, and discernment. He is clear that the Christian life is a constant battle and needs to be strengthened and encouraged. 'This battle is sweet, for it allows us to rejoice each time the Lord triumphs in our lives.'²⁷ The first

²¹ See *ibid.*, 95.

²² John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001), https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.pdf, 49. See Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 96.

²³ John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 49. See Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, 112–157.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

section of this chapter is dedicated to combat and vigilance. Francis is aware that the battle a Christian has to fight is not only against the world and its mentality but also against human weaknesses. Moreover, 'it is also a constant struggle against the devil, the prince of evil.'²⁸ The Pope also warns that 'spiritual corruption is worse than the fall of a sinner, for it is a comfortable and self-satisfied form of blindness.'²⁹ This many-fold battle does not sound encouraging so the Pope is quick to add that Jesus himself rejoices in our victories in this battle.³⁰

To win the battle it is important to be able to discern between good and evil, to know what is from the Holy Spirit and what stems from the spirit of the world or the devil.³¹ To succeed in discerning it is necessary, Francis continues, to refer not only to intelligence or common sense but also to prayer. The Pope emphasises that spiritual discernment is a supernatural gift. He makes clear: 'If we ask with confidence that the Holy Spirit grants us this gift, and then seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel, then surely we will grow in this spiritual endowment.'³² The ability to discern spiritually is more needed today than ever, as Francis remarks. As a means of support for that ability, he asks all Christians to practise daily the 'examination of conscience'³³.

Pope Francis is so clear on the discernment of spirits because it liberates Christians from rigidity. Rigidity 'has no place before the perennial "today" of the risen Lord. The Spirit alone can penetrate what is obscure and hidden in every situation, and grasp its every nuance, so that the newness of the Gospel can emerge in another light.'³⁴

Finally, Francis highlights the fundamental condition which is necessary to make progress in discernment. It is 'a growing understanding of God's patience and his timetable, which are never our own.'³⁵ Discernment is about finding ways to carry out, more truly and faithfully, the mission Christians received in their baptism. The mission can demand sacrifices, and sometimes even the sacrifice of everything

²⁸ Ibid., 159.

²⁹ Ibid., 165.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, 159.

³¹ See *ibid.*, 166.

³² Ibid., 166.

³³ Ibid., 169.

³⁴ Ibid., 173.

³⁵ Ibid., 174.

a Christian has and is. However, it does not diminish happiness, for true happiness does not follow the logic of the world but a mysterious logic, as Francis states.³⁶ To accept this logic opens the Christian to discernment. Francis concludes: 'Discernment, then, is not a solipsistic self-analysis or a form of egotistical introspection, but an authentic process of leaving ourselves behind in order to approach the mystery of God, who helps us to carry out the mission to which he has called us, for the good of our brothers and sisters.'³⁷

Having presented the main points of *Gaudete et Exsultate*, I will now turn to the reflection on how holiness is key to Christian unity. Two perspectives seem fundamental to me: first, holiness as a basic attitude, and second, sanctification as dynamic growth in holiness. These two perspectives are supported by *Gaudete et Exsultate* and will lead to understanding holiness as key to Christian unity.

Holiness as fundamental attitude

The exhortation deals with the call to holiness in today's world. It is therefore not surprising that the first chapter reflects on the very call to holiness and the meaning of holiness. The following chapters of the exhortation deal with its practice. I will focus particularly on the first chapter because it supports the most our reflection on holiness and Christian unity.

The exhortation does not immediately begin with a reflection on holiness, but starts with a quotation of Matthew 5, verse 12: 'rejoice and be glad' (*gaudete et exsultate*). This is like the starting cord of a symphony which sets the tune of the music. The same is true here. The first three words of the exhortation set the tune of the whole text. They orient the reader to joy and happiness. It is not superficial happiness, but happiness that is 'true life' and 'happiness for which we were created'.³⁸ Francis explains this kind of happiness further: 'He [the Lord] wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.'³⁹

The first paragraph of the exhortation communicates two messages. First, holiness is something joyful and creates fulfilling happiness. It does not mean that it cannot be difficult at certain times to be holy, but

³⁶ See *ibid.*, 174.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

it calls to mind that the fundamental effect of holiness is joy and true happiness. Second, holiness is about living with God and not being satisfied with a mediocre life. Living with God, then, is to participate in God's life which is love because God is love (see 1 John 4:8, 16).

Three terms are key: happiness, holiness, and love. They are interrelated and belong together. We could say that love puts holiness into practice the effects of which are happiness. Holiness, therefore, is nothing static but a process and needs to be understood dynamically. This dynamic understanding is called sanctification.

Sanctification as dynamic growth in holiness

God calls his people in various ways to be holy. This is without doubt true, but it is not the whole story. The call to holiness is the original call every human being receives from God when he or she is created. Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 140–202) supports this view.⁴⁰ He interprets Adam and Eve (Gen. 1–3) not as adults but as children who have still to grow and mature into perfection and the likeness of God. Perfection, according to Irenaeus, is the intimate communion with God. This communion is immortality for human beings. God 'made the things of time for man, so that coming to maturity in them, he may produce the fruit of immortality' (*Adversus haereses* IV,5,1).⁴¹

The Irenaean view on the creation story, particularly on the beginnings of the human race, sounds unfamiliar today, but 'Irenaeus might have built his interpretation on a more or less common view of *Genesis*. At least, this would explain why he seems to see his view not outstanding.'⁴² Bechtel confirms this in his study which shows that there were interpretations with which Irenaeus' view is in tune.⁴³

Growing, thus, belongs very much to human beings. It is God's call and gift to God's human creatures from the very beginning of creation.

⁴⁰ See Markus Schmidt, *Called to Grow: Brokenness and Gradual Growth Towards Wholeness* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2012), 40–45.

⁴¹ Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, second reprinting, 10 vols (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 1:466. Irénée de Lyon, *Contre Les Hérésies*, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1965–1982), 100:424: 'qui temporalia fecit propter hominem, uti maturescens in eis fructificet immortalitatem'.

⁴² Schmidt, *Called to Grow*, 42 (emphasis in original).

⁴³ See Lyn M. Bechtel, 'Genesis 2:4b–3.24: A Myth About Human Maturation', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 20, no. 67 (1995): 3–26, here 14–26.

If humans are called to grow in the likeness of God, and if the likeness of God is holiness, then we can conclude that humans are called to grow in holiness. The dynamic process of growing is called sanctification. Holiness and becoming holy, therefore, belongs to the dynamics of life and is key to human growth.

Holiness is key

Humans who grow in holiness impact, also, the institutions with which they work or to which they belong. The same applies with the Church. Holy people—and I do not allude here only to beatified or canonised people but to everyone striving after holiness in daily life—give the Church the most attractive face. This is true for the various Churches worldwide. One especially fruitful witness of holiness is the shedding of blood as a witness to Christ. John Paul II. calls to our mind that ‘the witness to Christ borne even to the shedding of blood has become a common inheritance of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants’⁴⁴.

The shedding of blood as a witness to Jesus Christ is not only a phenomenon of the Church during the period of the Roman Empire and afterwards but continues to be a powerful witness in modern times. Particularly in the twentieth century, more Christians than in the 2000 years before, had to shed their blood as a witness to Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ The tendency for Christians to be the most persecuted group of believers seems to continue into the twenty-first century. Christians are tortured and murdered because they are Christians, that is to say, independently of their denomination. They witness to Jesus Christ together. Their common witness, therefore, is unity in martyrdom, which is often called ‘ecumenism of blood’.

Pope Francis emphasises unity in martyrdom, too, and quotes John Paul II’s apostolic letter *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* 37 in his own apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* 9. Martyrdom as a witness to Christ is the consequence of the personal call from God to holiness. This call is fundamental to all unity. God calls repeatedly the people of

⁴⁴ John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* 37.

⁴⁵ See David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends Ad 33–Ad 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2001), 229, Table 4–3: There are 45.400.000 Christian martyrs only in the twentieth century. The total number of Christian martyrs since AD 33 to 2000 is 69.420.000 martyrs.

Israel to holiness. We find this call, for instance, in Leviticus 11:44: ‘be holy, for I am holy’, or in Leviticus 19:2: ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.’ The people of Israel can only be holy if each person strives after holiness. It is not incorrect, therefore, to see in God’s call to Israel, also, the personal call for everyone within the people of Israel. The same is true for 1 Peter 1:15–16: ‘Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”’ The author of 1 Peter refers obviously to Leviticus 11:44 and Leviticus 19:2.

These verses make clear that striving after personal holiness is fundamental so that holiness can flourish in the people of God. God calls every man and woman to long for holiness. The answer to God’s call will impact the whole people of God, that is to say, the communion of Christians. One example, out of many, of a person, who accepted God’s call to holiness, is Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Her striving after holiness impacted many people worldwide, Christians and non-Christians alike. Admiration of her by many, illustrates the impact she had, and still has, on unity, on Christian unity and human unity. Many other Christians could be listed here.

The question arises why holiness is capable of making an impact on the communion of Christians. God calls to holiness because God is holy.⁴⁶ This means that God is the one who defines holiness. In other words, God is the measure of holiness. It is obvious then that it is necessary to know God. This leads to the necessity of knowing the Word of God. Through it God reveals that God is love.

Experiences show that to know the Word of God does not suffice. A person can know the Word of God like any other literature, but it will hardly have an impact on his or her life if not taken seriously. The Word of God will have an impact on the lives of Christians if they focus their lives on the Word of God. This focus means that they put the Word of God into practice. To live according to the Word of God reveals that a person is aware that he or she is under the Word of God.

To put oneself under the Word of God is to take the Word of God seriously. This is supported by remembering that the Word of God is not just literature but a person. The Word of God, the *logos*, who was

⁴⁶ See Lev. 11:44; 19:2.

God,⁴⁷ became flesh and a human being.⁴⁸ This human being, who is the Son of God, is called Jesus Christ, the Messiah. To focus on the Word of God, then, means to centre one's life on Jesus Christ.

People who focus their lives on Jesus Christ have the same centre. Jesus says about himself that he is 'the way, and the truth, and the life' (John 14:6). Who focuses on Jesus, then, centres his/her self on 'the way, and the truth, and the life'. This focus gives life and directs oneself, together with the other faithful, to the truth. Christians who centre their lives on Jesus find themselves on the same way, that is to say, on the way with Jesus. To be on the same way enables Christians to recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. When Christians become aware of each other as brothers and sisters, Christian unity is growing.

To recognise other Christians as brothers and sisters will have another impact. It will make it easier to see one's own strengths and limitations and those of others. In other words, it broadens one's own point of view. To see and acknowledge one's own strengths and limitations and those of others is sometimes difficult but necessary. What is necessary is an honest acknowledgement of them. Francis points out the consequence of the lack of such acknowledgement. He writes in *Gaudete et Exsultate*: 'Ultimately, the lack of a heartfelt and prayerful acknowledgement of our limitations prevents grace from working more effectively within us, for no room is left for bringing about the potential good that is part of a sincere and genuine journey of growth.'⁴⁹

The consequence, which Francis observes, is tragic because grace cannot be effective in one's life. The reason is that a genuine journey of growth cannot happen. The journey of growth is, however, necessary for the progress of Christian unity. To discover, at least the potential for good, in my own life and that of others, will support growth. Growth, however, needs grace. If something prevents grace from working effectively, one will not grow. To see the good in other Christians has a transformative effect because it builds trust between Christians. The same is true for listening carefully to one another and learning from other Christians. Trust among Christian believers lays the ground for strong bonds which will also cross denominational boundaries.

⁴⁷ See John 1:1.

⁴⁸ See John 1:14.

⁴⁹ Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 50. See also Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 44.

Honesty with regard to one's own strengths and limitations is an integral part of the growth in holiness. Holiness is the noble call of God for human beings, the more for Christians who belong to God's family as sons and daughters. To accept and follow God's call to holiness enables the believer to set out on a journey of growth which ultimately transforms him or her more into the image of God. This God is love and communion, for God is a triune God. If holiness transforms a person to reflect better the image of God, holiness must be closely linked to love. For Francis, it is indeed the love presented in the great judgement (see Matt. 25:35–36) which is the criterion for holiness that is pleasing to God.⁵⁰ Love between Christians of different denominations will enact holiness and will strengthen trust between Christians of different traditions. Trust draws the faithful closer to each other and, finally, strengthens growing unity.

Unity among Christians encourages them to bear witness to the triune God. It will be an effective witness because the fundamental condition is fulfilled. Jesus articulates the fundamental condition for the world to believe in his prayer to the Father. He asks him that all may be one, 'so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (John 17:21). Unity as a pre-condition to witness effectively supports Christians to centre themselves on Jesus Christ and his mission. The focus on Jesus Christ and his mission, given to his followers,⁵¹ could strengthen efforts to take steps forward in the task of making Christian unity visible. Holiness is key to that aim.

⁵⁰ See Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* 95.

⁵¹ For a spirituality of mission see Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

CATHOLICS, ISLAM AND CRYPTO-CHRISTIANITY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ALBANIA: THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF POPE BENEDICT XIV'S ENCYCLICAL EPISTLE *QUOD PROVINCIALE*

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Pope Benedict XIV's Encyclical Epistle Quod Provinciale, 1754, contains the first significant reference to Islam by the papal magisterium of the Catholic Church in the Modern period. Quod Provinciale demonstrates the robust manner in which Pope Benedict defends Catholic Christian orthodoxy against crypto-Christianity in Albania. It is an eloquent statement of the Catholic understanding of Islam at the time, and has relevance for our understanding of Muslim-Christian relations today.

Pope Benedict XIV's Encyclical Epistle *Quod Provinciale* contains the first significant reference to Islam by the papal magisterium of the Catholic Church in the Modern period.¹ Written in 1754, *Quod Provinciale* was one of the many 'encyclical' letters issued by Benedict XIV. Indeed, it is during this period that 'the uninterrupted sequence

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¹ Wolfgang Müller *et al*, in Gunther J. Holst, trans., *The Church in the Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 566-573. According to the conventions of theological research and for the purposes of this study, I will assume that the Modern Period and the Era of Enlightenment began circa 1700. Pope Benedict had a great interest in European intellectual life during the period. Pope Benedict was in correspondence with many Enlightenment figures, such as Voltaire.

of historical encyclicals begins'.² The document demonstrates the robust manner in which Pope Benedict defends Catholic Christian orthodoxy, and it is an eloquent statement of the Catholic understanding of Islam at the time.

Quod Provinciale was directed at Catholics of the Eastern and Latin Rites, both lay faithful and ordained ministers, especially those bishops and priests who had failed to challenge those among the laity who had adopted a form of crypto-Christianity in the wake of Ottoman Turkish rule in the Balkans. Pope Benedict condemns the use or adoption of Muslim or Turkish names by Albanian Catholics and by extension other Catholics in the region, as profoundly unfaithful to the requirements of the gospel and of Church law. Apostasy to Islam and the practice of crypto-Christianity or crypto-Catholicism was of great concern to the Church.³ Michele Lacko explains the phenomenon of crypto-Christianity:

Frequently this change of religion was merely external. Many families remained crypto-Catholics and preserved Christian traditions and usages, such as Baptism, veneration of saints, pilgrimages, and dietary regulations. As a result there evolved a kind of Islamo-Christian syncretism.⁴

The language of *Quod Provinciale* with regard to Islam, displays many of the characteristics and presuppositions of the period, and offers a new sort of description of the Muslims. It marks the emergence of a novel form of terminology with which the Catholic Church described and interpreted Islamic beliefs and practices. *Quod Provinciale* has great historical significance within the teaching tradition of the Church and its use of new textual and literary forms and material content began the movement towards a truly 'Modern' Catholic approach to Islam.

² Anne Fremantle, *The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Context: The Teachings of the Popes from Peter to John XXIII*, (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1963), 105.

³ See F.W. Hasluck, 'The Crypto-Christians of Trebizond', in *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, Margaret M. Hasluck, ed., 469-474. See the magisterial discussion of Crypto-Christianity in Stavro Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area Under the Ottomans', in *Slavic Review*, Volume 26, Number 2, (June 1967), 227-246.

⁴ Michele Lacko, 'Albania: Christianity in Albania', in *New Catholic Encyclopedia: Volume I [Hereafter NCE, V.I]*, (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1967), 246.

The eighteenth century marked a significant change in the way in which the magisterium approached Islam. This change is particularly evident in the magisterium produced during the pontificate of Benedict XIV (1740-1758). At the beginning of his pontificate, in encyclicals and encyclical epistles, with reference to Islam, Benedict advocated adherence to the statements of the solemn magisterium of the medieval period. In terms of Benedict's approach to Islam, in his encyclical *A Quo Primum* in 1751, he advocates that the Jews specifically, and the Muslims by implication, ought to be treated in the manner sanctioned by the *Decretals* of the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils. His encyclical *A Quo Primum* specifically addressed to the Polish Catholic hierarchy, was occasioned by the growing number of Jews in their territories, and the increase in instances of social integration between Christians and Jews in Poland. He attempts to respond to Polish Christian grievances against the Jews of Poland. He does not appear to favour persecution of the Jews, but he does favour a return, or recourse, to earlier methods of segregation between Christians and Jews and between Christians and Muslims to deal with this issue. In *A Quo Primum* he teaches that:

It is enough to peruse decretals with the heading *De Judaeis, et Saracenis*; the constitutions of Our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs Nicholas IV, Paul IV, St. Pius V, Gregory XIII and Clement VIII are readily available in the Roman Bullarium..[t]o understand these matters most clearly...⁵

However, as time went by, Benedict began to develop a very different style and approach, which expresses an attitude toward Islam and the Muslims more in keeping with the *zeitgeist* of his own age. During the reign of Benedict XIV not only the teaching content but also the style in which papal teaching documents were constructed and used went through something of a revolution. Benedict was the 'first pope to give the name "encyclical" to a letter sent by him to all Catholic bishops "in peace and communion"'. The first such encyclical of modern times was *Ubi Primum* issued during the first year of his pontificate in 1740. In the judgment of Ann Fremantle *Quod Provinciale* is one of the 'most important' of these encyclicals, displaying as it does his concern for

⁵ Benedict XIV, 'A Quo Primum, 1751', in Claudia Carlen IHM, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals: 1740-1979, Benedict XIV to John Paul II, Volume 1*, 43.

Christian truth and moral integrity, which were distinguishing features of the papal magisterium promulgated during his pontificate.⁶

Quod Provinciale was an encyclical directed at irregular practices in the Albanian Catholic Church. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note the following aspects of the text of *Quod Provinciale*:

The Provincial Council of your province of Albania was held in the year 1703 during the pontificate of Our Predecessor Pope Clement XI. It decreed most solemnly in its third canon, among other matters, as you know, that Turkish or Mohammedan names [*Mahumetanis Nominibus*] should not be given either to children or adults in baptism. It also decreed that the faithful of Christ should not allow themselves to be called by Turkish or Mohammedan names which they had never received, for the purpose of either exemption or immunity from taxes, or the advantage of free trading, or avoiding penalties... In Our letter mentioned above [i.e. *Inter Omnigenas*], We designated that abuse as a cowardly concealment of the Christian profession, approaching infidelity. Since then, We have learned with great mental anguish that many people in that province continue to take Turkish or Mohammedan names despite the consideration of their eternal salvation. They do so not only in order to be immune and free from those taxes and burdens which have often been and continue to be imposed on the faithful of Christ, but also in order that neither they themselves nor their parents may be thought to have abandoned the Mohammedan sect [*Mahumetana secta*], thereby avoiding the requisite penalties. For all this cannot take place without a pretense of the errors of Muhammed [*Muhumetis errorum*], even if the faith of Christ is adhered to in the heart, and this is at variance with Christian sincerity. It involves a lie in a most serious matter and includes a virtual denial of the Faith, most insulting to God and scandalous to their neighbours. It even gives the Turks themselves a suitable opportunity to rate all Christ's faithful as hypocrites and deceivers, and accordingly to persecute them justly and deservedly...[S]ome of you yourselves, venerable brothers [i.e. the Albanian bishops] ...do not hesitate to allow those who take common Turkish or Mohammedan names and desire to be addressed by them, to partake of the Sacraments with no pang of conscience at all. We equally strictly prohibit any of Christ's faithful from daring to take Turkish or Mohammedan names in order to be considered Mohammedans [*Mahumetani*], in any case, under any pretext, or in any conceivable circumstance...[E]xhort the faithful of Christ in your Province to lead a good life among the nations...This should not be hard for any one of you, venerable brothers and beloved sons, for none of the schismatics and

⁶ Fremantle, *Papal*, 106.

heretics has been rash enough to take a Mohammedan name, and unless your justice abounds more than theirs, you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven... Finally, gravely advise those who converted from Mohammedanism [*Mahumetanum*] or the children of such converts, if they lack confidence in their constancy in the Faith, fearing punishment by their rulers if they abandon their Turkish names, to emigrate secretly from those territories and come for refuge to Christian lands. [Latin Text.⁷ English Translation.⁸].

The opening section of *Quod Provinciale* makes reference to the first regional council or synod held by the Catholic Church of the Latin Rite in Albania. The Council of Shköder (modern day Scutari) of 1703 was held at the request of Pope Clement XI; indeed, Pope Clement was from a family with its historical origins in Albania. The Catholics of Shköder and Northern Albania were predominantly of the Latin Rite. Since the Turkish invasion of the fifteenth century, and the eventual suppression of fierce Albanian resistance to this usurpation led by George Castriota (d.1468), many Albanians eventually became converts to Islam, others resorted to various degrees of outward accommodation to Islam and became crypto-Christians. These defections were particularly prevalent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries due to intense pressure exerted by the Turkish authorities, who could make conditions extremely difficult for Christians.⁹ One gathers from this extract a sense of the strong religious and ethnic boundaries which existed, or which the magisterium considers *ought* to have existed, between the Christian and Muslim communities in Albania at the time.

Quod Provinciale makes reference to *Inter Omnigenas*, a papal encyclical epistle of 1744, in which Pope Benedict had already condemned aspects of crypto-Christianity and the taking of Muslim and Turkish names.¹⁰ This text was addressed to Christians, especially their religious leaders, not Muslims. It is concerned with reminding Catholics of their faith witness to Christ and of their religious and moral

⁷ Benedict XIV, *Bullarium Pontificium Sacrae Congregationis De Propaganda Fide: Tomus II*, (Rome: Typis Collegii Urbani, 1840), 333-336.

⁸ Benedict XIV, 'Quod Provinciale, 1754', Pdraig M. O' Cleirigh (trans.), in Carlen, *Encyclicals*, V.I, 49-50.

⁹ Lacko, 'Albania', in *NCE*, V.I, 246.

¹⁰ Benedict XIV, 'Inter Omnigenas, 1744', <https://w2.vatican.va>; accessed by the author 13/03/2019. Italian text. I have not found a published English translation of *Inter Omnigenas*.

obligations as Christians. Pope Benedict cites the taking of Muslim or Turkish names by Catholics that he regards as a near formal act of apostasy from the beliefs, values and practices of Christianity. The text also alludes to the Muslim *jizya*, a tax paid by Christians and others with *Dhimmi* status to the Ottomans in exchange for the right, as defined legitimate by Islamic authorities, to worship and live according to their own religious customs. Of course, such *Dhimmi* status was not the sort of religious freedom enjoyed in the twenty-first century West but it did afford some level of religious, political, socio-cultural and economic status for non-Muslims under Islamic Law.¹¹

Through the abandonment of Muslim or Turkish names the actions of crypto-Christian Catholics or converts from Islam to Christianity would be considered an indication of apostasy from Islam by their supposed co-religionists. This might indicate that they had accepted baptism, a most serious matter within Islamic Law because, according to the Muslim understanding, to receive baptism was *shirk* – the acceptance of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity – and therefore the ascription of ‘partners’ to Allah. An abandonment of the strict requirements of Islamic Monotheism was considered blasphemous and therefore regarded in Muslim lands as a crime that incurred in many cases, if established, the death penalty. That apostasy from Islam incurred the death penalty was a fact of which Western Christians had been aware since their earliest contacts with Islam.¹² An alternative to this penalty was deportation and hard labour the severity of which usually led to premature death. Alternatively, if the death sentence or deportation were not imposed other severe privations may have followed including the imposition of *jizya* itself.

Pope Benedict’s approach indicates a largely negative estimation of Islam as a religious system. A participation in the religious customs of Islam, or association with the religion of Islam, was, in his view, and that of the larger Church he represented, an acceptance of, and a participation in, ‘the errors of Muhammed’. This ‘(virtual) denial of the [Christian] Faith’ is ‘insulting to God’, in other words it was considered blasphemous. The implication of his judgment is that Christian

¹¹ Bat Ye’or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude, Seventh – Twentieth Century*, Miriam Kochan and David Littman, trans., (London: Associated University Press, English Edition, 1996), *passim*.

¹² Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims*, (Princeton: University Press, 1984), *passim*.

Baptism marks the beginning of the Christian life; after baptism a 'concealment' of Christian identity (i.e. pretending to be a Muslim), 'under any pretext' was an act of apostasy from the Christian faith; if it was not apostasy *per se*, nevertheless such an act was tantamount to apostasy.

From a theological point of view, Pope Benedict ruled that such forms of apostasy and assimilation jeopardized the eternal salvation of those who undertook them because the Christian knowingly and willingly placed him/herself outside the confines of the visible Church of Christ and its faith; by extension, crypto-Christians removed themselves from the invisible or mystical Body of Christ which is the life of the Kingdom of Heaven. Benedict was not necessarily making a similar judgment about Muslims who may have been regarded as culpably or inculpably ignorant of Christ.¹³

Nothing within the religious system of Islam seems to be considered of salvific efficacy, indeed it is implied that abandonment of every vestige of Islam is the only way to be sure of one's salvation. Even the association with Islam implied by the use of a Muslim name, especially for the sake of socio-cultural, political or economic expediency, was considered an 'infidelity' in Christian terms and ought to bar an already baptized person from the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. In such acts of (virtual) apostasy 'faithful' Christians may be dissuaded from the proper expression of their own faith, and Muslims would be justified in considering such an act the work of 'hypocrites' and 'deceivers'. In Islam the sin of hypocrisy is considered a most grievous one. Hypocrites [*munafiqun*] are specifically considered to be those who pretend to be true Muslims but are in fact dissemblers and Benedict may be alluding to his knowledge of this Islamic understanding enshrined in Surah 63 of the Qur'an.

However, it is possible to discern a subtle distinction made in the text between the Islamic religion and Muslims themselves. Islam as a religious system was considered unequivocally erroneous, in that according to the principle of non-contradiction and the norms of Christian theology, Islamic doctrinal errors were incommensurate with Christian teaching. By definition those living in such error could not

¹³ See the discussion of the Jesuit Juan de Lugo's thought (1583-1660) in Francis Sullivan SJ, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Response*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 94-99.

participate in Christian truth, nor could their erroneous beliefs and practices be in any way right or acceptable. Nevertheless, there seems to be some trace of respect for Muslims rulers, at least in the sense that they have the right to be treated fairly and justly. As Louis Massignon explains:

The doctrinal power of the Popes has distinguished in Islam, in theory, a spiritual power, and, in practice, a temporal power...Theoretically, they have defined and condemned the doctrine of the Islamic state, 'the infidel state', par excellence. In practice, they have considered the Moslem princes...as the temporal rulers of nations...¹⁴

Benedict teaches that Muslims have a natural right not to be deceived by duplicitous Christians according to the principles of the moral law. Therefore, Christians have a religious and ethical obligation to act with integrity in their dealings with others, especially non-Christians. According to Pope Benedict, in as much as they are deceived, Muslims would have a right to lawfully punish those who deceive them. Interestingly, a current Catholic website, dedicated to the promotion of justice and peace issues, mentions *Quod Provinciale* as one of the earliest modern encyclicals concerned with social justice issues.¹⁵ This is an interesting perspective because it seems to suggest that one of the reasons why Benedict considered the avoidance of the *jizya* a grave issue was that he saw it as a crime against social justice. Avoidance of the poll tax by crypto-Christians was an injustice towards those Christians who had to pay the poll tax, because they were not prepared to hide their identity as *Dhimmis* by pretending to be Muslims. Perhaps we might also speculate that non-payment was unfair to the Ottoman administration which had a right, as the temporal power, to collect taxes from its subjects. Certainly, this state of affairs could cause grave scandal to Muslims and Christians who did not dissemble.

Pope Benedict reminds Catholics that there were many communities of Eastern Christians not in union with Rome, be they Orthodox or Oriental Orthodox, whom he describes as 'schismatics and heretics' who had lived for centuries as religious minorities among the Muslims, but who had never assimilated in this specific way.

¹⁴ Louis Massignon, 'The Roman Catholic Church and Islam', in *The Moslem World: A Quarterly Review*, Vol.5, 1915, 134.

¹⁵ <https://www.justpeace.org/docu.htm>, accessed by the author 13/03/2019.

Apart from Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Christians, there were Albanian Christians of the Byzantine Rite who were in full communion with Rome, predominantly in the South. The effects of the Great Schism of 1054 reached Albania very slowly. Many Byzantine Rite Christians remained in communion with Rome until the seventeenth century, and resisted the encroachment of Greek and Slavic influence. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Byzantine Rite Christians from Chimarra, in sympathy with Rome, asked for Roman priests to be sent to assist them. This request was responded to in 1628 when the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith sent Greek Catholic clergy and monks to Chimarra. A formal union with Rome was enacted in 1660, however, after the Turkish authorities banned Catholic missionary activity in 1765, this mission collapsed.¹⁶

Perhaps Arabic-speaking Christians elsewhere in the East would often have names which would have sounded distinctly 'Islamic' to the ears of Western European Christians unaware of the historical and cultural aspects of 'Eastern' Church life. It is significant also, in defense of the crypto-Christians to whom Benedict refers, that it was unusual for them to adopt explicitly the name 'Ali' or the name of 'Muhammad', or one of its derivatives, such as 'Ahmed' or 'Mehmet'.¹⁷

The time of Benedict's pontificate was a period characterized by the massive missionary endeavours of the Western Europeans in China, India and South America. The cultural and religious questions that this expansion raised led to a new confidence among missionaries, especially the Jesuits. The Jesuits attempted to incorporate into Christian beliefs, values and practices, the customs of the indigenous people they encountered. Within many European Catholic circles, and especially among members of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, this missionary expansion created an equally strong sense of caution, not to say mistrust, of such innovations.

Although Albania was under Muslim rule, it is instructive to consider analogous cases to those found in the Albanian Church in other frontier territories during Benedict's reign. In his Bull *Ex Quo Singulari* (1742) he shows his concern at the assimilation (or accommodation) of 'pagan'

¹⁶ Lacko, 'Albania', in *NCE*, *V.I.*, 247; Ines Angeli Murzaku, 'The Basilian Monks and their Missions in 17th -18th Centuries to Chimarra (Himara) Sothern Albania', in *The Downside Review*, 2017, Vol. 135 (1), 21-34.

¹⁷ Hasluck, 'Crypto', in Hasluck, *Sultans*, 473.

Chinese practices into Christianity by the Jesuit missionaries. Chinese converts had been allowed to use the words ‘*Shang-ti*’ and ‘*T’ien*’ to refer to ‘Heaven’ and ‘God’, and had been allowed to continue the practice of so-called ‘ancestor worship’. The ‘Chinese rites controversy’ and a similar controversy over accommodation by Jesuits of Indian practices into Catholic rites in Malabar addressed in Benedict’s Bull *Omnium sollicitudinum* (1744)¹⁸, led to the condemnation of these beliefs and practices as inconsistent with those of Catholics.¹⁹

In terms of the relevance of this text for our own time, it is interesting to note that for some contemporary Catholics, particularly those holding certain varieties of ‘Neo-Conservative’ or ‘Traditionalist’ convictions, and who either reject outright, or are severely critical of current Catholic Church policy with regard to Islam, *Quod Provinciale* has become a key text, and something of an online rallying point. They judge the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, in this regard, not as a legitimate historical and theological development within the solemn magisterium, or as a retrieval of earlier ‘lost’ or ‘minor’ traditions, but as a historical novelty and, for the most part, a doctrinal aberration. In their rejection of a hermeneutic of continuity such groups appear to consider *Quod Provinciale* to be the last significant document produced by the magisterium to express ‘legitimate’ Catholic teaching with regard to Islam. This tension suggests that we need to take the importance of historical context, and textual-critical method very seriously if we are to arrive at an authentic interpretation of this and other texts. It is important to note that at the time of the promulgation of *Quod Provinciale* its method and material content, when compared with the medieval period, would have appeared novel to its readership in the same way that the documents of the Second Vatican Council appear

¹⁸ See ‘Accommodation’, 10; and ‘Benedict XIV’, 156, in F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*; Claudia Carlen IHS, ed., *Papal Pronouncements: A Guide: 1740-1979, Benedict XIV to John Paul II, Volume I*, (Michigan: The Pierian Press, 1990), 3-5. For a fuller discussion of the Chinese and Malabarese Rites Controversies see Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750*, (Stanford: University Press, 1996), 571-596.

¹⁹ In the cases of China, Malabar, and Albania, Benedict reiterated the condemnations of his predecessors Clement XI and XII, and the judgements of the Inquisition and in the case of Albania, the decision of a local synod during the pontificate of Clement XI.

novel to some Catholics today. In one such recent critique of current official policy, the anonymous author uses the presuppositions and terminology of the eighteenth century to make a judgment about the contemporary Catholic Church:

Benedict [XIV] issued a strong warning forbidding all Catholics from using Muslim names in which the Roman Pontiff proclaimed, 'For all this cannot take place without the pretense of the errors of Mohammed....' Why, we ask with all sincerity, would the current administration of Rome seek to justify this pretense by accepting a false religion in the name of ecumenism? Benedict's [i.e. Benedict XIV's] words give one food for thought...²⁰

Contrary to the views of some 'Traditionalist' Catholics, *Quod Provinciale* was not a document representative of either the earliest Christian traditions or of the medieval Latin traditions but was rather a novel and innovative document, a product of the presuppositions of eighteenth century Catholics. It is deeply ironic that *Quod Provinciale* should be viewed as a document that represents a 'traditional' form of Catholic discourse with regard to Islam. That contemporary Catholic 'Traditionalists' should base their approach to Islam on this particular document is intriguing.

Quod Provinciale marks a period during which the terminological conventions and patterns of discourse with which the Catholic Church referred to Muslims and Islam changed significantly. Although the term 'Mohammedan' had been used by Catholics previously ²¹, the text of *Quod Provinciale* marks the first time that the terms 'Mohammedan' 'Mohammedans' and 'Mohammedanism' were used in a document of the solemn papal magisterium. The particular term 'Mohammedan sect' [*Mahumetana secta*] is unique to *Quod Provinciale*; however the approximate configuration, 'sect of Mahomet [*Mahumeti secta*]' was used in the texts of the Council of Basel in the fifteenth century.²²

Before the time of *Quod Provinciale* the terms 'Saracen' or 'infidel' were used in the magisterial texts to refer to, or describe, a Muslim. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* there is evidence that the

²⁰ 'Significant Papal Decrees: From Trent to Vatican I', <https://www.dailycatholic.org/papal1.htm>, accessed by author 13/03/2019.

²¹ St. Thomae Aquinatis, 'Capitulum II: Quae sit in hoc opere auctoris intentio', in *Summa Contra Gentiles*, (Roma: Casa Editrice Marietti, 1946), 2.

²² Norman Tanner SJ, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils Volume I: Nicaea I – Lateran V*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 478 [Latin] and *478 [English].

term 'Saracen' was still being used in the mid-sixteenth century (1552); therefore, about the time of the Council of Trent the term was still current (although Trent does not use the term). Beyond this time 'Mohammedan' seems to have gained an increased level of currency. For example, evidence of the use of the term 'Mohammedan' to refer to a Muslim can first be found in a source in English in 1681. According to extant written sources the term 'Mohammedism' (the religion of Islam) begins to become common in England between 1614 and 1850, and an explicit reference to a variation of this term, the more familiar 'Mohammedanism', is found in evidence later. Therefore, the use of 'Mohammadan' and its cognates in the Latin text of *Quod Provinciale*, seems to suggest that this was the normative term in England and Europe in and around the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This term had become the standard term used to describe Islam by the time of Benedict's pontificate, reflecting the language and presuppositions of the Enlightenment period.²³

The description of Islam as the 'Mohammedan sect' is the magisterium's first reference to the religion of Islam that seems to acknowledge Islam as some sort of religious system. This terminology marks a move away from the application of terms which suggest an ethnic identity, such as 'Turk' or 'Moor'²⁴; or from those titles of ancient and sometimes uncertain provenance and with a biblical connotation, such as 'Hagarenes', 'Ishmaelites' or 'Saracens'. *Quod Provinciale* and subsequent magisterial documents avoid pejorative terms such as

²³ 'Mahumetanism', with its Latin cognate 'Mahumetana', begins to appear in the literature in Europe in 1612. See Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1962, reissued 1991), 60. See Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Religion, Religions, Religious', in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Mark C. Taylor, ed, (Chicago/ London: Chicago University Press, 1998), 269-284, and Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of the World Religions*, (Chicago/ London: Chicago University Press, 2005), esp. 179-206.

²⁴ 'Turk', 'The Bull of Convocation of the Sacred Council of Trent', in *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, H.J. Schroeder, trans., (Rockford: Tan, 1978), 1-2; 'Moor' or 'Moorish' was often used by Aquinas, e.g. '*loquentes in lege Maurorum*' ('those speaking with regard to Islamic [lit. Moorish] law'). 'Moor' is now regarded as an archaic term; however even in the time of Aquinas it was more applicable as a term to describe the inhabitants of a particular geographical location, rather than a term to denote 'Muslims' or 'Islam'. David B. Burrell, 'Aquinas in Dialogue: Thomas for the Twenty-First Century', in *Modern Theology* 20, 2004, 71-89.

'impious', 'enemies of the faith' and 'enemies of the cross of Christ' etc.²⁵ Therefore, Benedict's use of the term 'Mohammedan Sect' [*Mahumetana Secta*] to denote the religion of Islam is of great significance as it marks a modest conceptual development in the way Islam is referred to. Of course 'Mohammedan Sect' as a descriptive term is inferior to the term 'Islam', laden as it is with inaccurate presuppositions. The term 'Islam' and 'Muslims' which were known at the time, and were used by some early Arabic speaking Christian apologists, failed to gain any common currency in Catholic discourse until the mid-twentieth century during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1964).

During the period between *Quod Provinciale* and the mid twentieth century the material content and terminology, as well as the methodological approach and literary style of the teaching documents of the Catholic Church when it referred to Islam did not change significantly. Muslims were still described as 'Mohammadans' and the religion of Islam was still essentially regarded and described as the 'Mohammadan Sect'. Although the documents tend not to contain the invective and polemical sentiments found in the documents of earlier times, they still reflect a somewhat negative evaluation of the religion of Islam and the beliefs and practices of its adherents.²⁶ Indeed, the last time that the term 'Mohammedans' [*Mohometani*] was used in a document issued by the solemn magisterium of the Catholic Church was contained within Pope Paul VI's inaugural encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, 1964.²⁷ Thereafter, the Second Vatican Council, under the direction of Pope Paul, used the terms 'Musselmen [*Musselmanos*]' and 'Muslim [*Muslimos*]' in the documents *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* respectively to convey the Church's esteem for the Muslims. *Nostra Aetate* uses the term 'Islamic faith [*fides islamica*]' in its eirenic description of aspects of Islam.

²⁵ Norman Tanner SJ, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils Volume I: Nicaea I – Lateran V*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), *passim*; see the discussion of these issues in Cantwell-Smith, *Meaning*, 80-118.

²⁶ See Norman Tanner SJ, ed., *Decrees, Volume I, passim*.

²⁷ Paul VI, 'Ecclesiam Suam, On the Church, 6 August, 1964', <https://w2.vatican.va>; Latin and English texts; accessed by the author 14/03/2019. The original Latin uses 'Mohometani', literally 'Mohammedans', although more recent translations, including that on the Vatican website use 'Moslem' or 'Muslim'.

In summary: as well as the fascinating insight it gives us into the phenomenon of crypto-Christianity, Pope Benedict XIV's Encyclical Epistle *Quod Provinciale* contains the first significant reference to Islam by the papal magisterium of the Catholic Church in the Modern Period.²⁸ The eighteenth century marked a significant change in the way in which the magisterium approached Islam. The language of *Quod Provinciale* with regard to Islam, displays many of the characteristics and presuppositions of the period, which offers a new sort of description of the Muslims and Islam. *Quod Provinciale* marks the emergence of a novel form of terminology with which the Catholic Church described and interpreted Islamic beliefs and practices. *Quod Provinciale* has great historical significance within the teaching tradition of the Church and its use of new textual and literary forms and material content began the movement towards a truly 'Modern' Catholic approach to Islam.

A recent commentary on the encyclicals of John Paul II by Martin K. Barrack suggests that:

Since 1740 the Popes have produced nearly three hundred encyclicals, most of no continuing pastoral or theological interest... *Quod Provinciale*... address[es] no pressing needs for the Church...of our day. Indeed, among the encyclicals written before Pope John Paul II, perhaps ten percent are currently studied by faithful theologians.²⁹

It is difficult to ascertain what percentage of encyclicals are actually read by scholars and others. The reason perhaps why many people avoid these documents is that they require time, effort and often a degree of expertise in the particular area of study. I would contest Barrack's argument that many of these texts, in terms of their contemporary significance, are unimportant or irrelevant. I trust that I have demonstrated that *Quod Provinciale* is theologically and historically speaking, a pivotal text. Indeed, aspects of its subject matter may well be acquiring new relevance in the light of some contemporary global issues concerning Christian-Muslim relations, especially in terms of the question of the nature of religious identity, the issues

²⁸ Wolfgang Müller et al, in Gunther J. Holst, trans., *The Church in the Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 566-573.

²⁹ Martin Barrack, 'From the review of *Precis of Official Catholic Teaching* published in *The Catholic Faith Magazine*, Nov.-Dec. 2001 Issue', cited on www.secondexodus.com/html/vaticandocs/general/historyofchurchletters.htm; accessed by the author 13/03/2019.

surrounding the relationship between Christian proclamation and interreligious dialogue and the demand for religious liberty.

In conclusion: seeking to account for the Church's historical and contemporary relationship with Muslims, which is surely one of the most significant pastoral and theological issues facing the Catholic Church in the twenty-first century, a historical contextualization and appropriate hermeneutical understanding of this document and the whole corpus of Catholic Church teaching is essential. One only needs to see how Pope Benedict XIV's namesake and successor's allusion to a thirteenth century Christian text on Islam in his 'Regensburg speech' can spark a world-wide debate, and have potentially grave geo-political consequences. In the pontificate of Pope Francis, the issues raised in *Quod Provinciale* are still pertinent and ones with which authentic Christianity must continually wrestle. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013, Pope Francis reminds us that:

A facile syncretism would ultimately be a totalitarian gesture on the part of those who would ignore greater values of which they are not the masters. True openness involves remaining steadfast in one's deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one's own identity, while at the same time being 'open to understanding those of the other party' and 'knowing that dialogue can enrich each side'. What is not helpful is a diplomatic openness which says 'yes' to everything in order to avoid problems, for this would be a way of deceiving others and denying them the good which we have been given to share generously with others. Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another... In order to sustain dialogue with Islam, suitable training is essential for all involved, not only so that they can be solidly and joyfully grounded in their own identity, but so that they can also acknowledge the values of others, appreciate the concerns underlying their demands and shed light on shared beliefs...I humbly entreat [Muslim] countries to grant Christians freedom to worship and to practice their faith, in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalisations...³⁰

³⁰ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*, 24 November 2013, arts. 251-253, <https://w2.vatican.va>; accessed by the author 13/03/2019.

THE GERMAN BISHOPS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF INTERCOMMUNION

James M. Cassidy*

This article compares the document One Bread and One Body, issued by the English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish hierarchies in 1998, and that of the German Bishops, Walking with Christ – Tracing Unity, of 2018. It examines the theology behind the documents, and traces the developments over the 20 years between them. It also looks at the magisterial documents of the period. The conclusion is drawn that personalised approach of the German document accurately reflects the teaching of the current Pontiff.

In recent issues Ruth Reardon has written about the German Bishops' recent document (*Walking with Christ – Tracing Unity*, henceforth *Walking*) on intercommunion in the context of 'inter-church' marriages.¹ The purpose of this present article is to compare that document with the 1998 document from the Episcopal Conferences of these isles (England & Wales, Scotland, Ireland): *One Bread One Body* (henceforth *OBOB*²), which dealt with sacramental sharing in a slightly more general way and see if there has been any development in the *praxis* of the Church. *Walking* is a set of pastoral guidelines, prepared by the German Bishops' Conference, and supported by a majority of the

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¹ See *German Bishops' Proposed Guidelines on Eucharistic Sharing in Interchurch Families*, (Vol 52, 2018, No.1) and *German Bishops' Guidelines on Eucharistic Sharing in Interchurch Families 2018*, (Vol 52, 2018, No.2).

The German Bishops' document is available at:

https://dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/dossiers_2018/Walking-with-Christ_Tracing_Unity_Arbeits%C3%BCbersetzung-der-Orientierungshilfe_ENG.pdf

² Available at [one-bread-one-body-1998.pdf](#).

bishops, and described as an 'orientation text' for the bishops.³ The base lines are in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* and the later Pontifical Council for Christian Unity's *Second Ecumenical Directory* issued in 1993. Up to the time of writing (March 2019), there has not been any further document on the subject from a Vatican dicastery.

OBOB, which has not been revised or replaced, permits: 'in particular circumstances, by way of exception and under certain conditions, admission to Holy Communion and to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick may be permitted, or even commended, for Christians belonging to communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church... Each individual case in which admission is sought must be examined on its own merits.'⁴ There is to be a 'grave and pressing need' possibly at a 'unique occasion'.⁵

The immediate occasion for *Walking* seems to have been the episode in Rome in November 2015 when the Pope was asked by a Lutheran woman why she could not receive Communion in the Catholic Church. The Pope replied: 'One faith, one Lord, one baptism. Speak with the Lord and go forward. I do not dare say more.'⁶ This does seem a trifle disingenuous by the Holy Father; he is the Supreme Legislator, it is he, and he alone, who makes or authorises each and every law. However, one is aware of dissension within the Church over various decisions, and perhaps the Pope felt disinclined to make law 'on the hoof.'

Walking has the advantage of being published twenty years after *OBOB*. Although the root-texts remain the Conciliar *Unitatis Redintegratio*, of 1964, and the 1993 *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* from the Pontifical Council, the encyclicals *Ut Unum Sint* and *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* of St. John Paul II are quoted.⁷ Both documents mentioned the possibility of the Eucharist being administered to non-Catholics in special circumstances of need.⁸ *Walking* also refers to *Amoris Laetitia* of Pope Francis, published in 2016. As regards Eucharistic sharing, *Amoris Laetitia* quotes the 1993 *Directory* verbatim. 'Although the spouses in a mixed marriage share the sacraments of baptism and matrimony, Eucharistic sharing can only

³ See Ruth Reardon's article in *One in Christ*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 339 – 340.

⁴ *OBOB* pars.107- 110.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ See *Walking*, par.5.

⁷ *Ut Unum Sint*, 1995, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 2003. Both repeated the 1983 *Code*.

⁸ *Ut Unum Sint* 46, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 45; In *Walking*, pars.16,17.

be exceptional and in each case according to the stated norms.⁹ However, *Walking* goes on to refer to the case of admission to Communion of remarried divorcés briefly discussed in *Amoris Laetitia*.¹⁰ In particular, the following is quoted: ‘Neither the Synod nor this Exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases. What is possible is simply a renewed encouragement to undertake a responsible personal and pastoral discernment of particular cases.’¹¹

The German bishops remind themselves that *Amoris Laetitia* called them to respond to local circumstances, and find solutions for specific cases.¹² It is notable that the Pope in *Amoris Laetitia* writes of rules and canons, and does not mention underlying theology upon which canons and rules must be based.

However, we can plot a thread from *Unitatis Redintegratio* through several Vatican documents:

a) the what now appears to be the grudging acceptance of shared prayer in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, of 1964: ‘Witness to the unity of the church generally forbids common worship, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice.’¹³

b) the Ecumenical Directory from the Pontifical Council in 1967, allowed Communion to be given to non-Catholic Christians in time of danger of death or urgent need.¹⁴

c) the Pontifical Council’s statement of 1972, allowed Communion to be given to those who, for a prolonged period are unable to receive Communion from their own minister, who ask for Communion, having proper dispositions who have a faith in conformity to the Church, and have a spiritual need.¹⁵

d) a subsequent *Note to the 1972 Statement*, issued by the Pontifical Council in 1973 which stressed that it was the local Ordinary who

⁹ *Amoris Laetitia* 247, reference to the *Directory*, pars. 159-160.

¹⁰ *Amoris Laetitia* 300 – 305. *Walking*, pars.19,20.

¹¹ *Amoris Laetitia* 300.

¹² *Walking*, par. 20, reference to *Amoris Laetitia*. 3 et 199.

¹³ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 8. It was, of course, seen as a major step forward in 1964.

¹⁴ Par.55.

¹⁵ Par. IV – 2.

granted permission, and this should not turn into a general permission.¹⁶

e) the *Code of Canon Law* of 1983: in danger of death, or other grave need, as judged by the bishop, or Bishops' Conference, non-Catholics may receive Communion if there is no access to their own minister, and they ask of their own accord, are properly disposed, and share the Catholic faith.¹⁷

f) The *Ecumenical Directory* from the Pontifical Council in 1993 encouraged Bishops' Conferences to establish norms for judging situations of grave and pressing need, and to follow the Code. It also allowed ministers to judge particular situations.¹⁸

g) *OBOB* 1998 underlined the need for a bishop's permission for a non-Catholic to receive Communion at a Catholic Mass subject to the conditions of the Code, it is his permission, after the priest has discerned the circumstances.¹⁹

h) *Walking* in 2018, moved the discernment from the bishop, or the Bishops' Conference to the recipient, helped by his or her pastor, again subject to the Code.

Unitatis Redintegratio is very cautious. It reflected its time. The Ecumenical Council wrote of common worship: 'Witness to the unity of the Church generally forbids common worship, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice.'²⁰

Of Eucharistic sharing, the 1967 *Ecumenical Directory* moved things forward: 'Celebration of the sacraments is an action of the celebrating community, carried out with the community, signifying oneness in faith, worship, and life of the community. Where this unity of sacramental faith is deficient, the participation of the separated brethren with Catholics, especially in the sacraments of the Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick, is forbidden. Nevertheless, since the sacraments are both signs of unity and sources of grace the Church can

¹⁶ Note, *Dopo la pubblicazione*, par. 6.

¹⁷ C.844, par. 4.

¹⁸ Pars.130 and 131.

¹⁹ Par.113.

²⁰ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 8.

for adequate reasons allow access to those sacraments to a separated brother. This may be permitted in danger of death or urgent need...'²¹

This was elaborated by the Pontifical Council in its 1972 Decree, *In quibus rerum circumstantiis*, which taught: 'The strict relationship between the mystery of the Church and the mystery of the Eucharist can never be altered, whatever pastoral measures we may be led to take in given cases. Of its very nature, celebration of the Eucharist signifies the fullness of profession of faith and the fullness of ecclesial communion. This principle must not be obscured and must remain our guide in this field. This principle will not be obscured if admission to Catholic Eucharistic communion is confined to particular cases...'²²

This is repeated, in essence in the 1993 *Directory*.²³ The *Directory* goes a bit further in allowing Bishops and Bishops' Conferences the ability to establish norms for judging particular circumstances.²⁴

Thus the background. Is there any conflict between the seeming clarity of the 1983 *Code*, reflected in the 1993 *Directory*, and the pastoral discernment of particular cases, too complex for simple rules, which was urged by *Amoris Laetitia* in 2016? Already in 1998, *OBOB* offered various situations in which Communion could be offered to non-Catholics: times of persecution, of suffering and danger; and also when Sacraments are celebrated: at marriage, baptisms, and also funerals.²⁵ This is *OBOB's* interpretation of 'grave and pressing need' and it broadens the understanding of the non-availability of a non-Catholic minister to include a 'unique occasion' such as marriages and funerals.²⁶ Crucially, and here *OBOB* anticipated Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia*, *OBOB* asks that the person asking for permission for intercommunion, 'after prayer and reflection' should approach the local priest, who 'must also make a discernment about whether this should be brought to the local bishop or his delegate for a decision.'²⁷ Prayer, reflection and discernment are part of the process, but the decision is to be made according to the established norms, here by the bishop.

²¹ Par.55.

²² Par. IV.

²³ Par.129. The references there are to *Unitatis Redintegratio* 8 and the *Code*, c. 844, par.1.

²⁴ Par.130. This slightly widens c. 844, par.4.

²⁵ *OBOB*, pars.107 – 112.

²⁶ *OBOB*, par. 112 & 114.

²⁷ *OBOB*, par.113.

Walking urges a similar process of discernment, albeit in a more generous fashion.²⁸ The final section of the document is an Annex, 'Guidance on holding a conversation' to help discern the way forward for each couple. It has that 'the conversation... should lead to a conscientious decision that is in harmony with the church's teaching and practice.' It concludes that the 'good decision' may be either to receive Communion, or not to receive.

On the one hand we have the general prohibition of administering Holy Communion to those not in full communion with the Catholic Church, and the allowing of this in special circumstances, to be discerned. This is a peculiar sort of law. Does it permit a dispensation from the law: a relief from the letter of the law in a particular case? However, a dispensation can only come from those who have executive power, not legislative power.²⁹ Or is it a privilege: a private law, giving a favour for the benefit of someone or for some group?³⁰ If one had to choose between the two traditional categories in canon law it would appear to be the latter: a concession granted by the law in particular cases, given that the conditions required are met. Thus the law. We can debate the precise meaning of the words 'grave necessity' in the canon and *Directory* – is it just when there is a danger of death, or when there is a time of persecution; or the immediate grave spiritual need of the individual and family concerned at a unique occasion?

However, I would suggest that one must look more closely at the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which currently governs the life of the Latin Rite of the Church. We can note that there is a parallel between canon 844, paragraph 4 which permits the reception of Holy Communion by non-Catholics in specific circumstances, and canon 61, paragraph 1, 1^o and 2^o which permit General Absolution, when there is danger of death or grave necessity. Both are prohibitive laws, with privileges added for specific cases. 'Catholic ministers administer the sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone...'³¹ and 'absolution cannot be imparted in a general way to many penitents without previous confession, unless...'³² These are not stand alone canons, to them must also be added the final clause of the final canon in the Code,

²⁸ *Walking*, par.54.

²⁹ C. 85.

³⁰ C. 76, par.1.

³¹ C. 844, par.1.

³² C. 961, par.1.

which adapts Cicero's 'Salus populi suprema lex' to 'salute animarum, quae in Ecclesia suprema semper lex.'³³ Following on from this we can ask if the salvation of souls depends on a favour, a privilege, as appears from the earlier canons, or is it a right, as indicated in the concluding canon? The references given in the Code for canon 844 are to the 1917 Code, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the 1967 *Ecumenical Directory*, and the 1972 *Instruction on Ecumenism*.

If it is a favour, then the process of discernment falls into place: in a particular case are the necessary requirements present for the favour to be granted? *OBOB*, and to a greater extent *Walking*, with the emphasis on discernment and discussion, seem to incline to this interpretation of the law. However, if we focus on law then we examine what can be described as the curtain of rules that covers the reality of the underlying theology. The 1983 *Code*, unlike its 1917 predecessor, explicitly introduced theology into the legislation in the theological introductions, or preambles, to the sections on the Sacraments.³⁴ Thus theology cannot be separated from the legislation.

Nevertheless, no Vatican document elaborates the theology behind the permitting of Communion to other Christians only in special circumstances. What the documents state to a greater or lesser degree is that Communion is what it says: a sign of unity, and this is to mean full, visible unity. There is an implied reference to St. Paul, Ephesians 4: 4 – 5: 'There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; *one Lord, one faith*.'³⁵ The basic reason in the documents seems to be disciplinary: the Eucharist is usually only to be shared if there is full communion. *OBOB* presents the fullest attempt at justification, and mentions the letters of accreditation given to travellers by bishops in the early church.³⁶ It specifies, 'receiving Holy Communion at a Catholic mass implies a longing for communion in faith and love with the local Catholic bishop and the Pope.'³⁷ *Walking* has paragraphs on communion with Jesus Christ, and communion with

³³ Cicero, *De legibus*, and c. 1752.

³⁴ See c. 834, par.1 and cc. 840, 849, etc. This is an example of the 'newness of the new Code' to which Pope St. John Paul II referred in his Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae Disciplinae Legis*, introducing the 1983 Code.

³⁵ *OBOB* also refers to 1Cor. 11: 17 – 34.

³⁶ Par.63.

³⁷ Par. 61.

the whole church.³⁸ No document cites the particular paragraph of the Conciliar *Lumen Gentium*, which in dealing with those who are baptised, but who do not possess the faith in its entirety, or do not preserve the unity of communion under the successor of Peter, has, 'indeed, there is a true bond in the holy Spirit...'³⁹

It is through baptism that those so reborn are incorporated into the Church.⁴⁰ This is stated without qualification by the *Code*. It would seem to imply that there cannot be any shading, one can no more be slightly a member of the Church, in the way that a woman cannot be 'slightly pregnant.' There is no option as to the sort of membership in the way that some of the London clubs offer 'town' or 'country' membership. *Lumen Gentium* formulated its understanding by declaring that the 'unique Church of Christ ... subsists in the catholic church' adding that 'outside its structure many elements of sanctification and truth are to be found.'⁴¹ The Fathers of the Council, looking at the reality from their own point of view continued that the Catholic church recognises that it is somehow joined to the baptised, even though they do not possess the Catholic faith in its entirety, and are not explicitly united under the Pope.⁴² Later in the Council, in a way which was less self-centred, they expressed this truth by declaring that there is a fundamental unity [between the Christian churches] of baptism, although that unity might be imperfect.⁴³ We can distinguish between the unity between the churches which may be imperfect, and the essential union of a baptised person with the Trinity, which is effected by baptism in the name of the same Trinity and cannot be imperfect. Once a person has been baptised they share the Trinitarian life, and are joined to the church which 'subsists' in the Catholic Church. This unity between Christians, due to the sharing of the Trinitarian life, is the basis of whatever unity, is perceived as externally existing between the churches, whether this is perfect or imperfect. It is this fundamental unity in the Trinity which is celebrated whenever the saving mysteries are called to mind in the Eucharist.⁴⁴

³⁸ *Walking*, pars. 37 - 39, 42 - 45.

³⁹ Par. 15.

⁴⁰ Thus c. 849.

⁴¹ Par. 8.

⁴² Par. 15.

⁴³ Thus *Unitatis Redintegratio* 3.

⁴⁴ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 2, 7 and 47.

The granting of exceptions in the various documents would seem to indicate that full union with the Pope and local bishop, what we might call in the terms of the Council 'imperfect unity' is not a minimum qualification for admittance to Communion. Desirable, probably, but this is clearly not an absolute *sine qua non*.⁴⁵ (It may be of interest to note that when I attended an Anglican Eucharist at the Anglican Centre in Rome in the 1970s, three bishops were mentioned in the Eucharistic Prayer: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, and the Bishop of Rome.) The 'true bond in the Holy Spirit' of *Lumen Gentium* would seem to suffice.

Both *OBOB* and *Walking* mention faith in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, as being necessary for receiving Communion, and repeat traditional Catholic teaching.⁴⁶ In its section, *OBOB* refers to the ARCIC I document of *Elucidations* on the 1971 Agreement on Eucharistic Doctrine.⁴⁷ There is no parallel to this in *Walking*, but the opening paragraph in the section on the Catholic teaching and belief in the Eucharist concludes with the sentences: 'Some of these topics [on Eucharistic belief] are often seen differently by the Catholic and Protestant sides. In the ecumenical dialogue, however, they have been dealt with such that rather than focusing on differences, the two sides have instead made the links easier to recognise.'⁴⁸

The theology in both documents is generally unsurprising. *OBOB* has a section, 'Our Catholic Faith' (Part 2 of the booklet). This covers various topics: the union of the family of God, the Church as the Sacrament of Salvation. It also has three sections on 'Full and Partial Communion' - repeating *Unitatis Redintegratio*, that baptism is the sacramental bond, also adding that there is but partial communion with other Christian communities.⁴⁹ In fact *Unitatis Redintegratio* does not use the term 'partial communion' but 'communione, etsi non perfecta' which removes any temptation to measure the extent of the part. The subsequent sections on 'The Eucharist', the longest section of the book, emphasize the need for the 'Amen' at the end of the

⁴⁵ See *OBOB*, par. 62 which refers to communion with the bishop and Pope; there is a less tendentious reference in *Walking*, par. 46.

⁴⁶ See *OBOB*, pars. 50 - 55 and *Walking*, pars.35 - 46.

⁴⁷ *OBOB*, par.50; reference to *Elucidations*, 1979, par. 6.

⁴⁸ *Walking*, par.35.

⁴⁹ Par. 22, reference to *Unitatis Redintegratio* 11 and 3.

Eucharistic Prayer, and on receiving Communion.⁵⁰ The other sections present Catholic teaching in a fairly uncontroversial way. It also mentions those at Mass who for various reasons do not receive Communion.⁵¹ Here, *OBOB* (and it is briefly mentioned in *Walking*)⁵² introduces the idea of 'spiritual communion' and the receiving of a blessing at Communion, in place of receiving Holy Communion. The bishops encourage this.⁵³ This I find strange, the practice is not supported by the Sacred Congregation for Worship.⁵⁴ The blessing at Communion was introduced by the Church of England in the nineteen-fifties to accommodate children who had not yet been confirmed.⁵⁵ This spread to Catholic churches, and children under the age of Holy Communion and those not receiving Communion were encouraged to 'come up for a blessing'. Besides the liturgical novelty of this, there is the theological question: how can a person wish to receive a blessing, and not wish to receive Communion?⁵⁶ The section on 'Spiritual Need'

⁵⁰ Pars. 23 – 67.

⁵¹ Pars. 42 – 43.

⁵² *Walking*, par.55. *Walking* sees this as step along the path to deeper unity.

⁵³ *OBOB*, par.84.

⁵⁴ Written reply to a question posed by me to the Sacred Congregation for Worship, as to the use of this, which stated that the practice of giving a blessing, 'is not a custom, neither good liturgy - Vatican II sets out in the Constitution on the Liturgy to unburden the liturgy of such extraneous accretions - nor is it good theology.' The letter continued: 'The desire to acknowledge the presence of non-communicants is understandable but the proposed solution, namely the giving of a blessing, is not satisfactory.' ... 'it is not opportune to promote the practice of giving a blessing to non-communicants' (Protocol: CD 794/90).

⁵⁵ The best explanation I have had, came from a conversation with the eminent Anglican liturgist and chronicler of liturgy, Bishop Colin Buchanan, who said that it began in the Church of England in the 1950's when the Family Communion movement was growing, and something had to be done with the numbers of children who had not been confirmed and who were not allowed to receive Holy Communion. The custom grew, but he said that nobody seems to know precisely when and where it started.

⁵⁶ In 1910 Pope St. Pius X re-introduced the admission of children to Communion because he was convinced that children who had attained the age of reason, and who wished to receive Communion, should not be refused Communion (*Quam Singulari* 1). There was no option given of a 'blessing at Communion' as an alternative. He deliberately reversed what was the then current practice and teaching, restoring the practice of the primitive Church.

is positive, but *OBOB* makes the point that sharing Communion is 'exceptional' – only full reconciliation between the Churches can make it normal.⁵⁷

Walking is a thinner document, but then it is only concerned with mixed marriages. It too begins with *Unitatis Redintegratio*,⁵⁸ but adds: 'We will show how spouses living in an interdenominational marriage can, with pastoral support, reach a conscientious decision that they can express publicly within the Catholic Church, which might also involve Holy Communion.'⁵⁹ The document alludes to the well-known statement of Henri de Lubac: 'The Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church.'⁶⁰ It also quotes *Unitatis Redintegratio*: 'Baptism establishes a sacramental bond of unity...'⁶¹ *Walking* underlines that marriage strengthens this bond for the couple.⁶² However, it also makes clear that the general admission to Communion by non-Catholics is not possible. Nevertheless, and here the dilemma is obvious, it underlines the intrinsic link between the Eucharist and marriage, as expressed by Benedict XVI, and the pain when Communion cannot be shared.⁶³ The German bishops indicate three dimensions of the Eucharist, which are important: communion with Jesus Christ, communion with the whole Church, and communion with the world, these are explored in a very positive way in the subsequent paragraphs.⁶⁴ The concluding section of the document is also positive, as shown in the title: 'Unity in Christ is a source of joy to us.' It states: 'An interdenominational marriage that unites sacramentally already partially realises the church communion we hope to achieve. A

For the history of this see P. Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (Liturgical Press, 2000), chapter 11, .41 – 44, also the associated CD-ROM, chapter 11, 36 – 39.

⁵⁷ Par. 93.

⁵⁸ Par.8.

⁵⁹ Par. 6.

⁶⁰ For the genesis of De Lubac's phrase see P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church* (T & T Clark, 1993), xv, xvi, also 79. *Walking*, par.12.

⁶¹ Par.22.

⁶² Par. 29.

⁶³ In his Post-Synodical Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 27; *Walking*, par. 23.

⁶⁴ Pars.36 - 50.

marriage of this kind that is lived in faith is a “housechurch” in intrinsic communion with the Eucharist.⁶⁵

Because of the more limited focus of their work the German document is able to dwell positively on Christian marriage, and the difficulties of the couple. It invites them to have a conversation of discernment (an annex to the document provides guidance for this). If they conclude that they do share the faith of the Church, and must end the situation of 'grave spiritual need' then they may receive Communion.⁶⁶

It would seem from both of these documents that in the process of discernment whether a particular person should receive Communion, there should also be an investigation about their belief in the real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. I am not sure how practicable this is: people may not be able to articulate their belief in the real Presence in the words of the Council of Trent, or the Catechism of the Catholic Church,⁶⁷ but if they wish to receive Communion then it would be fairly easy to assume that they do not believe in what we may call 'the real absence'. In *Walking*, Cardinal Schönborn of Vienna is quoted: 'Whoever can say “Amen” to the Eucharistic Prayer with an honest heart, can also receive the fruit of this Eucharistic prayer, Holy Communion, with an honest heart.'⁶⁸ This seems pastorally and theologically slightly easier than being catechised about one's understanding of the formula of the Tridentine Council of nearly four centuries ago.

In September 2013, shortly after his election, Pope Francis gave an interview to Antonio Spadaro, the editor of the Jesuit review *Civiltà Cattolica*. The Pope is quoted as saying: 'According to St. Ignatius, great principles must be embodied in the circumstances of place, time and people. In his own way, John XXIII adopted this attitude with regard to the government of the church, when he repeated the motto, “see everything; turn a blind eye to much; correct a little.” John XXIII saw all things, the maximum dimension, but he chose to correct a few, the minimum dimension. You can have large projects and implement them by means of a few of the smallest things. Or you can use weak means

⁶⁵ Par. 55.

⁶⁶ Par. 56.

⁶⁷ *OBOB*, par.50 cites the Council of Trent, and the explanations in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1322 - 1405.

⁶⁸ *Walking: Annex, Discovering Faith in Prayer*.

that are more effective than strong ones, as Paul also said in his First Letter to the Corinthians. ... Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor.⁶⁹ It is possible to see these principles being reflected clearly in *Walking*. Discernment is prescribed in *OBOB*, first by the person concerned, then by the priest, then by the bishop or his delegate.⁷⁰ In *Walking* this process is described in more detail, in a more encouraging way.⁷¹ 'We hope that they [the inter-church couple] understand that we are inviting them to follow their own consciences by reaching a decision in a pastoral conversation. As we issue our paper we believe it is important that they serve the freedom of conscience, the responsibility of faith and peace in the church.'⁷² *OBOB*, following the Vatican documents, removed the decision from the individual concerned: 'Except when there is danger of death, it is for the diocesan bishop or those delegated by him to judge whether there is a grave and pressing need.'⁷³

This is the fundamental difference between *OBOB* and *Walking*. They are both based on the same root documents, which we have examined, but reach different conclusions: in the earlier one the bishop, or his delegate is in charge, in the later it is the couple, their discernment has priority, reached in conversation with the priest or pastor. The development should not come as a surprise: there cannot be stasis in theological understanding, and thus neither in canon law. Movement in both fields should be expected as we expect growth and development during the period of human adolescence. The German bishops do not abrogate the responsibility given to them in the earlier documents, but delegate the person with pastoral responsibility to engage the people concerned in a conversation which leads to discernment.⁷⁴ They conclude, that should the couple discern that should receive Communion, 'it will then be a "source of joy" (*Ut Unum Sint* 46, *Ecclesia*

⁶⁹ Section, 'What does it mean for a Jesuit to be Bishop of Rome?' See Vatican website, Pope Francis' speeches, 21st Sept. 2013.

⁷⁰ *OBOB*, par. 112.

⁷¹ *Walking*, pars. 54 – 56.

⁷² *Walking*, par. 54.

⁷³ *OBOB*, par. 113.

⁷⁴ *Walking*, pars. 54 and 56.

de Eucharistia 46) to administer the Sacrament of the Eucharist to them.⁷⁵

Returning to the Code, which is the basic law, it can be argued that Communion is to be only shared under the most deliberate of conditions: grave and pressing need, - death, persecution, or similar, and the absence of a minister of the appropriate Church. To this we can reply: if an act is sometimes permitted, albeit under certain circumstances, then it cannot be of itself intrinsically wrong. In legal terms, we could distinguish between something wrong, *per se*, and something 'illicit' - within or without the law, depending on the circumstances. The absence of a minister is not mentioned either in the encyclicals of Pope St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* and *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, or in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, although there is a reference in these three to canon 844.⁷⁶

This leads us to the field of discernment, either of the Bishop (as in *OBOB*, which also mentions his delegate) or the individual, helped by a pastor (as in *Walking*). There would appear to be three distinct subjects of this discernment, all subjective: the 'grave need', the belief of the individual, and the personal disposition.⁷⁷ - To which *OBOB* added 'a unique occasion', adapting the other less subjective condition required by the canon: the person cannot approach his or her own minister; suggesting that it applies at such an occasion (e.g. marriages, funerals).⁷⁸

Is the 'grave need' just to be danger of death? The *Code* allows the bishop, or Bishops' Conference to decide. Danger of death is not subjective. It is clear. Thus, it is admitted that the need, outside the danger of death, can be subjective: it needs discernment. *OBOB* mentions also the admission to Communion on a unique occasion 'for joy or for sorrow in the life of a family or individual.' They specify, 'We are thinking of an occasion which of its nature is unrepeatable'⁷⁹ The footnote refers to canon 884, and to the 1993 Directory. However, in neither document is this possibility mentioned. This was, perhaps, an unnoticed step forward by the bishops of these islands, their understanding of the 'grave and pressing need.'

⁷⁵ *Walking*, par.58.

⁷⁶ *Walking*, par.17 refers to the *lacunae*.

⁷⁷ C. 844, par.4.

⁷⁸ *OBOB*, par.114

⁷⁹ Pars.106 and 109. They give examples of baptisms, funerals, etc.

The belief of the individual is clearly subjective. *OBOB* has that the belief should be in harmony with the Catholic faith, but offers no ready means of discernment.⁸⁰ *Walking* suggests that there be a conversation, based on the Eucharistic Prayer.⁸¹

The personal disposition of the recipient is clearly subjective. However, *OBOB* has that the norms expected of Catholics should be used. That is the recipient should not be in a [manifest] state of sin, or in an irregular marital situation.⁸² *Walking* does not mention this, as it just refers to inter-church couples.

Thus, the 1983 *Code* allows subjective interpretation of all its norms. *Walking* clearly takes advantage of this. But this is not a free interpretation of established norms. It represents a growth in understanding of what is shared. The movement from 1964 to 2018 is vast. As well as this natural development of theology, the influence of the present Pontiff is palpable. We have moved to a Pope who is not afraid of the shades of grey in real life, who accepts that life is generally not composed of clear divisions between black and white, and the salvation of souls is the ultimate law. To adapt de Lubac's phrase, it is the household of the church which makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the household of the church. All are united in the true bond of the Holy Spirit, established by baptism.

⁸⁰ Par.114.

⁸¹ Annex. See above, note 49.

⁸² Par.114.

SHARING THE EUCHARISTIC INSIGHTS OF THE 'STAR WARS PRAYER': A STEP ON OUR PILGRIM JOURNEY TOWARDS BEING ONE IN CHRIST

Thomas O'Loughlin*

Individual churches have always borrowed ideas, texts, personnel, and resources from one another: this not only enriched them but gave them a sense of the oikoumene and it forms the strong human bonds holding them together. Today, one way such borrowing could take place - and indeed in many ways is taking place - is to see how churches can learn from and borrow Eucharistic Prayers that speak to the situation all Christians find themselves: where (a) the environmental crisis looms large, (b) there is a growing threat of a clash between faith and science, and (c) where many inherited biblical images are very problematic. In this situation it is worth examining the two versions of what is known as 'the Star Wars Prayer' produced by the Anglicans in the USA and Canada. This paper argues that we have much to learn from this anaphora and that the Canadian version in particular is a most valuable text for study, adoption and adaptation by other Anglophone churches.

Since our earliest days as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth the churches, local communities that came together in Jesus' name to praise the Father while sharing the cup and breaking the loaf,¹ have continually borrowed from one another. This borrowing has been of material resources such as Paul's collection in Greece for the relief of famine in

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¹ See T. O'Loughlin, 'One or two cups? The Text of Luke 22:17-20 Again' in H.A.G. Houghton ed., *The Liturgy and the Living Text of the New Testament: Papers from the Tenth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Piscataway, NJ, 2018), 51-69.

Palestine but also of people: teachers, prophets and evangelists were all travellers between the communities. There was also a sharing of texts; indeed, it was the copying and sharing of letters and the recorded performances of the evangelists that generated the body of texts that eventually formed the Canon. Items of liturgy, such as hymns, have been found embedded in letters, and texts for blessing the Father have been found within the *Didache*. It was this constant interchange that formed the links between the communities and made them aware that no one church was an island but that together they formed one body, one *oikumene*, one people. The *una sancta* they confessed was not a theological abstraction but a felt sense of belonging built up by the way each church contributed to, and received from other churches.

This giving and taking continued for centuries with regards to the liturgy. Indeed, the history of the liturgy is, very largely, the story of how one ritual spread from one place to another. Some of these borrowings were confined to specific areas – and thus we can speak of Antiochene or East Syrian liturgical tendencies, and some became almost universal such as the inclusion of the memorial of the Last Supper ('the institution narrative') in the Eucharistic Prayer.² Some of the borrowings can be traced to an exact moment – such as the introduction of the *Agnus Dei* into the Latin liturgy³ – and while other links are so obscure that they have generated decades of academic dispute.⁴ But one fact is certain: travellers between churches always seem to have had an eye open for new ideas which were brought home, adopted, and which soon seemed as native and traditional as the rest of the liturgy.⁵

² See L. Ligier, 'The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer,' *Studia Liturgica* 9(1973)161-85; and R.F. Taft, 'Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001,' *Worship* 77(2003)482-509.

³ See J.A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)* (New York, NY, 1955), vol. 2, 332-40.

⁴ The outstanding example is the case of debates surround the Sanctus; see R.F. Taft, 'The Interpolation of the Sanctus into the Anaphora: When and Where? A Review of the Dossier,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 57(1991)281-308 and 58 (1992)83-121.

⁵ A good example is the triple genuflection during the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday which was brought to the west from the use of imperial court ritual within liturgy in Constantinople in the seventh century. For an early (if not the

This process for borrowing, adapting and adopting has not ceased. The most outstanding example is the 1969 lectionary for the Eucharist produced by the Catholic Church. Its origins lie in an initiative of the Protestant Church in France in the 1950s, which was adapted by Catholics in the late 1960s, and has now spread, with varying degrees of adaptation, to church after church.⁶ Its use is an important factor in helping us to pray with one heart and mind and voice.⁷ However, that leaves us with the question as to whether there are other liturgical developments in particular churches which should be more widely known, whose adoption / adaptation could enrich other churches, and which might be yet one more sinew linking the various members of the Lord's body? One very real possibility is that the churches could learn from one another in the most demanding of liturgical forms: the composition of Eucharistic Prayers. It is the argument of this paper that one case calling out for such borrowing and adaptation is provided by the related prayers known as 'Prayer C' (from the Episcopal Church of the USA) and 'Prayer 4' (from the Canadian Anglicans) which have now become famous through their slightly derogatory, mightily inapt, but very memorable nickname: 'the Star Wars Prayer.'

Multiple anaphoras in the western liturgy

When the Catholic Church introduced a plurality of texts of the Eucharistic Prayer in the 1960s,⁸ few could have imagined that this would spark a whole new genre of liturgical composition across almost the whole range of western churches. Churches that had used a single prayer since the sixteenth century have since produced suites of prayers, while other churches with a less 'liturgical' identity have adopted new anaphoras as models for use in worship, and the creativity

earliest) western attestation, see Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* 3,3 (D. Meehan ed., Dublin 1958), 108-11, which presents it as a curiosity, but one clearly worth imitating.

⁶ See T. O'Loughlin, *Making the Most of the Lectionary: A User's Guide* (London 2012).

⁷ See the Reims Statement on the Lectionary by the English Language Liturgical Consultation available at www.englishtexts.org/the-reims-statement (accessed 20/062019).

⁸ A convenient, almost contemporary, account is J.B. Ryan, *The Eucharistic Prayer: A Study in Contemporary Liturgy* (New York, NY, 1974).

continues as can be seen by a quick computer search.⁹ This copying of one another – so many churches now have four or more Prayers paralleling the four main prayers of the Roman Rite – is itself an excellent example of ecumenical borrowing of liturgical ideas.

Moreover, this radically new development has led to reconsideration of how the Eucharist is understood as an event in the life of Christian communities by an even wider spectrum.¹⁰ This massive increase, dare one say an explosion, in the composition of these Great Prayers of Thanksgiving is a phenomenon without parallel within Christian history. Although the universal Church is no stranger to a variety of anaphoras – the notion that there should be but one, a canon, was confined to the western churches – most of these prayers bear the marks of gradual evolution over time, and their actual origins are usually lost in a past clouded by hagiographical myth. Now we have texts that were composed consciously as whole units, they were produced as fixed texts in the manner of modern literary works, and they have appeared in a quantity never seen before over a very short period of time.

Despite being produced with the fixity of text that is a function of a print culture, these prayers are also oral texts: they are designed to be heard in an assembly and so are subject to widespread scrutiny in use in a way that is relatively new. For Catholics the contrast is greatest – not only was the Roman Canon recited in Latin but inaudibly – and even for those churches who prayed the Eucharistic Prayer aloud and in the vernacular, the actual use of a variety of texts was intended for a situation where they should be listened to with care, so that through hearing these differing Eucharistic perspectives there would be a renewal in Eucharistic understanding. We have moved from ‘the minister doing his bit’ to this prayer being the property of the whole gathering performed as a dialogue of presider and community. This has produced a curious effect in that there is a formally fixed text, yet oral texts are inherently ‘living texts’ continuously being moulded by the needs of the community hearing and using them.¹¹ Even in churches

⁹ See T. O’Loughlin, ‘*Gratias agamus Deo*: a reflection on specificity in our Eucharistic prayers,’ *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 15,4(2017)254-265.

¹⁰ See A. Wilson, *Spirit and Sacrament: An Invitation to Eucharismatic Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2018).

¹¹ For the background to the notion of living texts, see D.C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1997); it has been further developed by E.J. Epp

with a tradition of exact verbal conformity between usage and book – Catholics and Anglicans for example – there has arisen the phenomenon of local variations that go beyond the variations envisaged in the texts themselves. While there has been a significant recent effort (2011) to curb this tendency from the Catholic authorities,¹² the actual dynamics of oral performance make such minute control almost impossible.

Moreover, these new prayers are being performed in a wide variety of situations in cultures that are themselves experiencing change at a rate unknown even a generation ago, and so there is a conscious awareness of the need to adapt texts that is itself a new element within liturgical consciousness. How, for example, is a prayer composed in the 1960s fitted to the situation half a century later? One way around this is to imagine the new Eucharistic Prayers as re-working of ancient texts and, thereby, imply that there is a timelessness about these texts. However, the price of such a 'timeless' perspective is a failure to acknowledge the very need to utter thanks in our own culture and language that is implicit in the move away from a single canon to a variety of prayers. Thus if we are to acknowledge the need for adaptation while also retaining a relatively fixed text – a 'printed text' of some sort – then we need to assume that these texts will be periodically revised. Furthermore, we shall have to acknowledge that the lifespan of any particular form of an anaphora is to be counted in terms of decades rather than centuries – indeed we see below, just how short-lived can be some parts of an anaphora. In such a situation we need to observe the developments around us not only with an eye to borrowing, but as pointers to how our current formulations may be deficient and in need

in several articles: 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text" in New Testament Textual Criticism,' *Harvard Theological Review* 92(1999) 245-81; 'Issues in New Testament Textual Criticism moving from the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century' in D.A. Black ed., *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2002), 17-76 [with additional notes in: *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism. Collected Essays, 1962-2004* (Leiden, 2005), 641-97]; and 'It's All about Variants: A Variant-Conscious Approach to New Testament Textual Criticism,' *Harvard Theological Review* 100,3(2007)275-308.

¹² The 2011 translation does not highlight those places where the presider can use similar words, and this had led to the phenomenon in recent years of the same formula being used on every occasion.

of revision. The Eucharistic Prayer of another church is not simply ‘a target for acquisition,’ but a finger wagging at us reminding us that we need to renew our anaphoras far more regularly than in the past.

The Star Wars Prayer: two texts

I know of no contemporary Eucharistic compositions that so merit close study than these two texts. They come from churches with a similar history and ethos – both Anglican; both were composed in the language of their expected use – English; both come from cultures that are relatively close – the United States and Canada; and are separated by just six years in terms of publication – 1979 and 1985; yet they exhibit such differences, especially when viewed with the hindsight of forty years, that they serve as a model for our exploration of the need for a process of on-going revision of such texts. The American prayer came into use around the time the film phenomenon Star Wars – the first of the sequence appeared in 1977 – began to be a significant text in our culture and while the name seems to ridicule the opening images of the Prayer it does bring home to us how this Prayer uses a range of images that are far more immediate within our culture; than many we normally hear in the liturgy; I am referring to traditional prayers which suppose a familiarity with biblical and early Christian culture that might appeal to scholars but are without significant echoes for the vast majority of worshippers. These ‘Star Wars’ compositions are unashamedly modern texts – a massive contrast to those created for the Roman Rite of 1970 where there was a deliberate desire to ground new prayers by an appeal to historical precedents – and deserve attention as such. Moreover, the differences between the original American text and its Canadian ‘revision’ invite us to note how the experience of use should lead to revisions and improvements based on how ‘they work.’ In this case the revised version profits from ‘road testing’ of five years of use; again, this is the opposite of what has happened in the Catholic Church where the 2011 revision of the translation was not based on lived experience but on the *a priori* belief that a closer verbal fidelity to the Latin original¹³ [itself not subject to revision] should be the chief criterion of improvement. Likewise, we see how over just that short period there were cultural shifts that have made the US Prayer seem far more ‘dated’ than its Canadian sister text: the cultural map of western society does

¹³ See P. Jeffrey, *Translating Tradition: A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam* (Collegeville, MN, 2005) for the background.

not stand still and it is in each new day that we have to proclaim the gospel.

While the historical instincts of many liturgists would seek to explain the differences between these two prayers in terms of their authorship and genesis within the world of the late 1970s and 1980s, this will be eschewed here in favour of comparing them as texts we encounter in the same way as someone hearing them in a liturgy and seeing how they, as liturgical artefacts, would relate to our situation today if we were to use them. So let us start by reading them in parallel.

The two texts¹⁴

Here the words used by the presider are given in ordinary Roman type (e.g. 'Lord be with you'); the responses of the gathering are in italics (e.g. 'and also with you'); rubrics are given in bold (e.g. **The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest ...**); while the numbering is supplied by me to facilitate identifying text later in the article.

	US Prayer C	Canadian Prayer 4
1.	In this prayer, the lines in italics are spoken by the People. The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest, faces them and sings or says	
2.	The Lord be with you. <i>And also with you.</i> Lift up your hearts. <i>We lift them to the Lord.</i> Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. <i>It is right to give him thanks and praise.</i>	
3.	Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds	
4.		It is right to give you thanks and praise,

¹⁴ These are taken from the websites of the two churches, both of which offer pdfs of their sacramentaries.

	God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise. <i>Glory to you for ever and ever.</i>	O Lord, our God, Sustainer of the universe, you are worthy of glory and praise. <i>Glory to you for ever and ever.</i>
5.	At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.	
6.	<i>By your will they were created and have their being</i>	By your will they were created and have their being
7.		<i>Glory to you for ever and ever</i>
8.	From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill;	
9.	You made us the rulers of creation.	you made us the stewards of creation.
10.		<i>Glory to you for ever and ever</i>
11.	But we turn against you, and betray your trust; and we turn against one another.	
12.	<i>Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.</i>	
13.	Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages, you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfil your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.	Again and again you call us to return. Through the prophets and sages you reveal your righteous law. In the fullness of time you sent your Son, born of a woman, to be our Saviour. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. By his death he opened to us the way of freedom and peace.
14.	<i>By his blood, he reconciled us.</i>	<i>Glory to you for ever and ever.</i>

	<i>By his wounds, we are healed.</i>	
15.	<p>[And]¹⁵ Therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn: <i>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.</i></p>	
16.	<p>And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.</p>	
17.	<p>At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it, and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.</p>	
18.	<p>On the night he was betrayed</p>	<p>Blessed are you, Lord our God, for sending us Jesus, the Christ,</p>

¹⁵ Omitted in the Canadian text.

	he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said,	who on the night he was handed over to suffering and death, took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, gave it to his friends, and said,
19.	<p>“Take [this, and] eat [it]¹⁶: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” [In the same way,]¹⁷ after supper, he took the cup of wine; he gave [you]¹⁸ thanks, and said, “Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”</p>	
20.		<i>Glory to you for ever and ever.</i>
21.	Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving, <i>We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.</i>	
22.		Gracious God, we recall the death of your Son Jesus Christ, we proclaim his resurrection and ascension, and we look with expectation for his coming

¹⁶ The American text reads ‘Take, Eat: this ...’.

¹⁷ Omitted by the American text.

¹⁸ Omitted by the American text.

		as Lord of all the nations.
23.	Lord God of our Fathers: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:	
24.	Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name. <i>Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.</i>	
25.		We who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring you these gifts. Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this offering of your Church, that we who eat and drink at this holy table may share the divine life of Christ our Lord. <i>Glory to you for ever and ever.</i>

		<p>Pour out your Spirit upon the whole earth and make it your new creation.</p> <p>Gather your Church together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, where peace and justice are revealed, that we, with all your people, of every language, race, and nation, may share the banquet you have promised;</p>
26.	<p>Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation.</p>	
27.		<p>through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, all honour and glory are yours, creator of all. <i>Glory to you for ever and ever.</i></p>
28.	Amen.	

What is worthy of note?

By far the most startling element in this pair of anaphoras is the opening lines of the preface: ‘At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.’ It is all too easy to dismiss this, as I have heard more than once, as no more than ‘a pious reading of the opening scene from [the original series of] Star Trek!’ But a moment’s reflection notes that one of the yawning gulfs between contemporary Christians and our Christian forebears is the implicit cosmology of our

broader culture. We speak of billions of years since 'the big bang' and refer to its on-going background radiation as a casual fact. We speak of the solar system, not as a closed world beneath a further series of angelic hierarchies,¹⁹ but as an evolving system which we investigate with our probes and date using millions of years.²⁰ We have to make sense of the universe as a home in the face of an image of seemingly infinite darkness and with Pascal utter: 'the eternal silences of these infinite spaces frightens me.'²¹ Yet it is in this very world, rather than within a cosy anachronism, that we have to imagine the hand of God at work. If God is the creator, then this is the creation that comes from God – and it is this world that must supply our imagination when we pray. Yet most of our creation images within the liturgy are derived from a cosmological imagination that we have abandoned for all but religious purposes centuries ago. Such a dualism of scientific and religious imaginations not only fuels the myth of an irreconcilable chasm between faith and reason, but (more importantly from the standpoint of the liturgy) it assumes an alienation between cult and world, between the Creator and the actual world of our endeavours. I have heard comments that these images of 'galaxies and planets' is a 'cold image' but we should note that all such images, such as that in Job 38:31: 'Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?' are 'cold' – the warmth is the vision that they are not 'just there' but the work of God calling forth our scientific curiosity and wonder: 'The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork' (Ps 19:1). This Prayer is a modern take on a fundamental theme in our theology of creation.

To many Christians there is only one language range with which to address the theme of creation: that of Genesis presented usually in a mix of the twin theologies of the *Hexaemeron* and that of Eden. This language is wholly absent and I welcome this because we all too often forget the problems that this language causes those who are listening.

¹⁹ See T. O'Loughlin, 'The Quincentenary of Schedel's Map of the Creation: A Turning Point in the Development of the Modern Mind', *Milltown Studies* 31(1993)30-52.

²⁰ I take today's paper as witness to this: there is a notice that NASA have just sent a probe to orbit the asteroid Bannu which itself comes close to the earth every six years; it notes that the asteroid is between 700 million and two billion years old (*The i*, 19/06/2019, 25).

²¹ *Pensées*, n. 206.

Sometime ago I was listening to Genesis 1 being read in the liturgy while two small children nearby were playing with model dinosaurs on the church floor blissfully unaware of the sounds coming from the reader. We all too easily dismiss this dissonance by insisting that, in the words of one of my students, this is 'simply a case of being aware that the Bible must be read as a series of mythic theologoumena.' Alas, most people make the (unfounded) assumption that there is some direct link between what is read with authority, from the Bible, from the lectern, by the church, and 'the facts' as empirically perceived. This may be an inadequate liturgical hermeneutic, but it is a fact – and so part of the existential situation within which we worship. By contrast, presenting a creation language that is consonant with the larger language within the culture is an act of evangelisation which is dynamically equivalent to the work of the Priestly Author who presented a radically new theology of creation, the metaphysic of *creatio ex nihilo*, by adapting the cultural expectations of Mesopotamia.²² The avoidance of biblical images does not mean that the language of the scriptures is absent from the Prayer (see item 6 and 13 drawing heavily on Pauline language) but that this language has been made *our* language of worship rather than being used as 'Bible quotations.'

Having a thorough-going theology of creation is a fundamental need in worship; but this has taken on a new twist and urgency with the ecological crisis. Only decades ago reference to 'the stewardship of creation' was imagined as little more than a pious avoidance of causing suffering to animals; today it is the challenge that faces every human being and is at the core of discipleship. Whether we read Pope Francis's *Laudato si'* or not, if Christianity is to take its moral duty seriously then it must accept that abusing and destroying the environment is a moral issue and that if there is a confession of God as the Creator then this is close to the heart of our message. However, this new consciousness has arisen *after* the creation of most of our contemporary Eucharistic Prayers in the late 1960s: we are without adequate liturgical expression of our environmental situation. Moreover, while we speak about the creation we are often left without a vision of the environment as God's work. This is probably the greatest contribution this Prayer has to make

²² See R.S. Kawashima, 'The Priestly Tent of Meeting and the Problem of Divine Transcendence: An "Archaeology" of the Sacred,' *The Journal of Religion* 86(2006)226-57 at 232.

to churches which might borrow it: it presents a lyrical vision of the universe as the creation, and it emphasises our role as those, who in the Christ, bring it to its completion – a priestly work – or who can, through selfishness and neglect bring it to destruction. Put simply, any church which does not adopt the Star Wars Prayer will still have to adopt a Prayer almost identical to it.

If we note on the one hand how the Star Wars Prayer picks up the theme of the creation with an explicitness we would not have expected only a decade earlier, we should also note how already over a period of less than a decade it was in need for revision because of a significant shift in our faith perspective. The American version used the inherited language of power over the creation (e.g. the phrase 'Ruler of the Universe' in n.3) and of the human role of being master within the creation (e.g. 'You made us the rulers of creation' in n.9) which can be traced back to Genesis 1:28: 'fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' But as the first stirrings of the environmental crisis were heard in the late 1970s and early 1980s this theme of 'filling and subduing' was seen as one of the fundamental flaws in western approach to nature. Christianity was seen by many not as a solution but as one of the basic problems that had led to the mess. So it is significant that in the Canadian version we have God presented as the 'sustainer' rather than the 'ruler' and human beings presented as 'stewards' rather than 'rulers.' There is a similar move with regard to male-centred language. While the American version invokes the image of 'Lord God of our Fathers: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' – an echo of Mark 12:26 and parallels – there is no such imagery in the Canadian prayer.²³ This change should not merely point out to all churches that there are rapid cultural shifts taking place within society today, but that all Prayers in living language need to be 'road tested' by use with a congregation as to how they are received and understood, and then revised accordingly. My own church (writing as a Catholic) has almost no awareness of this need as witness the continued use of the 2011 translation which has been wholly immune to such road

²³ I have heard American presiders adapt this by adding 'and God of our mothers' but the effect is to weigh the Prayer down in what is clearly an attempt to get around gendered language.

testing: here is a situation arguing not only for borrowing of texts but borrowing of practice.

While the most obvious feature of this Prayer is its creation imagery, the other beauties, as this anaphora, should not be overlooked. The first of these is the way it locates the Eucharistic action of its gathering within the sweep of the history of salvation. There has been a tendency to separate the notions of incarnation, linking it to the plan of salvation unfolded in Israel's history, from the redemption, linked to the reconciliation after sin often presented within Protestant texts in terms of 'the atonement.' Not only is it unhelpful to make these divisions, even at the linguistic level, but it adds further confusion when this happens in the context of the Eucharist. The presentation of number13 to number13 can, therefore, be seen as an elegant restating of these themes which presents them as one, single history of the divine love ending with the non-judgemental eschatological vision: 'By his death he opened to us the way of freedom and peace.' How we conceive the end – doomsday or liberation – is central to the vision of God we transmit within the liturgy.

Two other major differences between the American and Canadian version concern the self-presentation of what is taking place when the Prayer is being used by a church. The American version is still recognisably a 'traditional western' anaphora with an epiclesis before the institution narrative focused on the phenomenon of the consecration of the elements (n. 16), while in the Canadian prayer the invocation of the Spirit (n. 25) has moved to the 'eastern' location and is descriptive of the whole work of the Spirit who is the giver of life within the Church. This shift in pneumatology is to be welcomed not only because of its forming a potential link with the Orthodox, but because it presents the Spirit's work within the grand narrative of the Prayer. Moreover, it serves the emphasis that the whole Prayer is a Spirit-empowered act of worship in the Christ to the Father rather than a prayer of consecration to 'make present' the Christ in the elements.

The other major difference between the two versions is in how they approach the institution narrative.²⁴ A major problem with most Eucharistic Prayers is the transition from a prayer directed to the Father to the narration of the Last Supper context and the so-called 'words of

²⁴ See T. O'Loughlin, "The "Eucharistic Words of Jesus": An Un-noticed Silence in our Earliest Sources,' *Anaphora* 8,1 (2014)1-12.

institution' which is carried out as if it were an absolute recitation thus effecting / confecting 'the Eucharist' as a sacramental object. Moreover, in many traditions this event is seen as the 'sacramental form' which stands alone and relies simply on the power of orders. While most churches have moved away from this theology, the very structure of the Prayers used seems to demand its return. Presiders present the opening part of the anaphora as a prayer to the Father and a narrative of anamnesis, then default to presenting a re-enactment combining the words of Jesus with the narrative comments and sometimes the actions referred to in the narrative.²⁵ So while we have moved from referring to this part of the anaphora as 'the consecration' to the 'institution narrative'; the performance is that of 'consecrating' the bread and the wine. In this the American version, n.18, is wholly traditional. However, the Canadian version is a wonderful improvement presenting the recollection of the Last Supper within a haggadic anamnesis, framed within the form of a blessing (*beraka*) such that the attention never leaves the Father nor is there any sense of an interruption of the Prayer. For this alone, this text is an important gift to other churches and is an element worthy of being borrowed and made at home. This consistent Eucharistic focus – offering thanks to the Father – of the Canadian version is enhanced by two other omissions. First, in the American version there is a text inspired by the Prayer of Humble Access (n. 24) which presents the Eucharistic Prayer as a necessary facilitation of receiving the Christ present in the elements at Communion. This has disappeared in the later version so that the whole thanksgiving is a blessing of the Father as part of the meal gathering of the baptised. Second, the rubrics of the American version (nn. 1, 3, and 17) which are conducive to approaching the Prayer as one that effects a consecration have been omitted by the Canadians. This not only allows a greater freedom of styles of prayerful presiding, but lessens the temptation for the presider to mime the Last Supper rather than lead a community in their Eucharistic activity where they are gathered.

Old and new

Borrowing and adapting is at the core of liturgical activity of those churches which see themselves, however imperfectly, as parts of the

²⁵ See T. O'Loughlin, 'Blessing and breaking: a dissonance of action and interpretation in the Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite,' *Anaphora* 7/2(2013)53-66.

oikoumene. We have borrowed since the beginning and will continue to do so, and in this give and take the bonds of our oneness in the Christ become more visible, tangible and felt. When it comes to liturgical borrowing we tend to be rather historical in our tastes: an anaphora, for example, from the fourth century seems most worthy of being dusted off and brought back into use or at least found worthy of providing a structure which we can imitate. But these prayers, particularly the Canadian version, are new - products of our culture and its needs and urgencies. This very newness, which sounds even more threatening if rendered as 'novelty,' makes many hesitate before using them, yet it is precisely in this freshness that their value lies. The Spirit is inspiring the churches now as much as in the early centuries, and these speak for us today and if they do this well, then they are worthy of our use. Tradition is, as Picasso once remarked, having a baby, not wearing your grandfather's hat!

THE SAINT IRENAEUS JOINT ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC WORKING GROUP: A BRIEF HISTORY OF ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OVER THE FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS

Johannes Oeldemann*

The article outlines the history of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group since its foundation in 2004. It explains why this unofficial group of Orthodox and Catholic theologians was established, describes the aims of the Irenaeus Group, the themes of its annual meetings and its working methods. The author then elucidates how ‘Serving communion’, the first common study of the Irenaeus Group, was elaborated during the last five years. Finally, he delineates the structure and content of this document and its considerations on the relationship between primacy and synodality.

On October 18th 2018, the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group adopted its first common document, which is now been published in this booklet. It is the outcome of quite a long process of discussion that began almost fifteen years ago, the origins and course of which will be outlined here briefly to make it easier to situate the document and to understand its background.

In 2003, the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue experienced a major crisis. It arose in the late 1980s when the Eastern Catholic Churches, especially in those countries that were previously under Communist rule, were again able to act freely and to rebuild their church structures. During the 1990s, the debate about ‘uniatism’ and ‘proselytism’ dominated the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. The International Orthodox-Catholic

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Dialogue Commission discussed these subjects at its sessions in Freising (1990) and Balamand (1993), but the statements adopted there were met with objections on both the Orthodox and the Uniate sides. After a gap of seven years, the International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches met in July 2000 for its eighth plenary session in Baltimore (USA). Looking back, Cardinal Walter Kasper, who was then still the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, recalled, 'When in 2000 in Baltimore the Commission tried to deal with this thorny issue again, this led to a fiasco and a *de facto* failure of the dialogue'.¹ The Commission dispersed without agreeing on any further procedure and the future of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue was uncertain.

A further deterioration of relationships, especially between Rome and Moscow, came about in the spring of 2002 when the Holy See announced the elevation of the four Apostolic Administrations, which the Roman Catholic Church had established in the Russian Federation in 1991 and 1999, to the rank of dioceses. 'Clumsiness in the Vatican's information policy in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate and erroneous estimates of the significance of this step for the Russian side led to mutual accusations and an escalating conflict'², which was an additional burden on Orthodox-Catholic relationships. The existing thread of dialogue was in danger of breaking and the dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox could also have come to an end at levels below the official Dialogue Commission.

The establishment of the Irenaeus Group

In this situation, at the invitation of the Johann-Adam-Moehler-Institute for Ecumenics, six experts met in Paderborn on March 13th 2003 to reflect on the future of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. The minutes of that discussion state, 'In view of the current stalemate in the official dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, it is important to consider together in which way the theological dialogue

¹ W. Kasper, "The Legacy of Cardinal Jan Willebrands and the future of Ecumenism", in: A. Denaux / P. De Mey (eds.), *The ecumenical legacy of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands (1909-2009)* (Leuven, 2012), 301-314, here 307.

² J. Oeldemann, *Orthodoxe Kirchen im ökumenischen Dialog. Positionen, Probleme, Perspektiven* (Paderborn, 2004), 106.

between Orthodox and Catholics can be given a new impetus³. Participating in these initial, preliminary discussions were Thomas Bremer, Basilius Groen, Antoine Lambrechts, Johannes Oeldemann, Rudolf Prokschi, and Wolfgang Thönissen. It was agreed 'to create a dialogue forum on a pan-Orthodox level which could discuss existing theological problems as well as general, hermeneutical questions'⁴. In the course of the discussion, the idea arose to establish a continuing working group of Orthodox and Catholic theologians. 'A permanent working group of this kind, meeting with the same participants as far as possible, could develop into a body able also to tackle the difficult issues in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue as the members become increasingly familiar with one another'⁵, as the notes on the Paderborn meeting state. During 2003, the initiators were able to gain the consent of the Serbian Bishop Ignatije (Midić) of Braničevo and the then auxiliary bishop of Magdeburg, Dr Gerhard Feige, to serve as co-presidents of the proposed working group. In close consultation with these two moderators, twenty-four theologians were then invited to the initial, constitutive session of the working group, twelve Orthodox and twelve Catholics.

At its first session, which took place from June 23rd to 27th 2004 in Paderborn, the first task of the participants was to take stock of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue both on the world level and in different regional contexts. In addition, various examples for a possible working group were presented, such as the 'Ökumenischer Arbeitskreis evangelischer und katholischer Theologen' (Ecumenical Working Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians) in Germany⁶, which is also known as the 'Jaeger-Stählin-Kreis', and the 'Groupe des Dombes'⁷ in France. Enzo Bianchi reported on the experience of the ecumenical symposia at Bose and Bishop Ignatije and Auxiliary Bishop Feige attempted an outline of the future prospects for the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. At the end of the Paderborn meeting, the participants agreed

³ Minutes of the consultation on March 13th, 2003 at the Johann-Adam-Möhler Institute for Ecumenics, Paderborn (Archive of the Möhler Institute).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cf. B. Schwahn, *Der Ökumenische Arbeitskreis evangelischer und katholischer Theologen von 1946 bis 1975*, (Göttingen: 1996).

⁷ Cf. C. Clifford, *For the communion of the churches*. The contribution of the Groupe des Dombes (Grand Rapids, 2010).

to establish a permanent working group and decided to name it ‘The Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group’.⁸ The suggestion to choose St. Irenaeus of Lyons as spiritual patron was made by a number of Orthodox participants. St. Irenaeus appeared suitable because he is a church father venerated in East and West and his biography – coming from the East (Asia Minor) and serving as a bishop in the West (Lyons) – is an example of the spiritual and intellectual links between the churches in East and West which the working group hoped to promote through its deliberations.

Among the founding members, who are still active in the Irenaeus Group today are, on the Orthodox side, Nikolaos Loudovikos, Paul Meyendorff, Vladan Perišić and Mariyan Stoyadinov, and, on the Catholic side, Auxiliary Bishop Gerhard Feige (Bishop of Magdeburg since 2005), Thomas Bremer, Basilius Groen, Hervé Legrand, Johannes Oeldemann, Rudolf Prokschi, Ronald Roberson, and Wolfgang Thönissen. Today the Irenaeus Group is comprised of 13 Orthodox and 13 Catholic theologians from 16 different countries: Argentina, Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Serbia, the Ukraine, and the USA. The members of the working group are not delegated by their churches but selected on the basis of their theological competence. New appointments, for example on the resignation of a member, are made by a common vote of the working group. Therefore, the Irenaeus Group is not an official dialogue commission and views itself as an unofficial dialogue group, but one which meets with the intention of promoting Orthodox-Catholic dialogue on the international level.

The first ten years

Following the initial meeting in Paderborn, the second gathering of the Irenaeus Group took place at the invitation of the Church of Greece in November 2005 at the Penteli Monastery in Athens. When choosing sites for its meetings, the working group has always been concerned to meet alternately in a Catholic or Orthodox setting. At the meeting in Athens, the members of the Irenaeus Group dealt with the relation between the local church and the universal church in Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiology and examined the question of how other

⁸ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Paderborn: http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2004_paderborn_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

Christian churches are viewed in Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiology.⁹ On each sub-theme, there were addresses from the Orthodox and the Catholic side which made it possible to compare and discuss how each presented itself and was perceived by the other.

The third annual meeting of the Irenaeus Group was held at the end of November 2006 at the Belgian Benedictine Monastery of Chevetogne. The main issue at this meeting was the doctrine and practice of primacy during the first millennium.¹⁰ This was examined not only in several addresses on the relations between the Early Church patriarchates, the right of appeal and the significance of synods, but also by a joint study of the sources (e.g., the canons of the Council of Sardica). The working group considered it important from the very beginning not only to look at the theoretical conception of primacy, as laid down in the canons of the Early Church councils, but also to investigate the actual practice of primacy as expressed in exchanges of correspondence, mutual visits, and liturgical commemoration.

At the invitation of the Orthodox co-president, Bishop Ignatije of Braničevo, the Irenaeus Group gathered for its fourth meeting in early November 2007 in Serbia. After the opening at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade, the working sessions took place in the Pokajnica Monastery near Velika Plana in the diocese of Bishop Ignatije. Following on chronologically from the discussions in Chevetogne, the members of the group examined the doctrine and practice of primacy in the Middle Ages. The main focus was on the developments connected with the Gregorian Reform and the conflict between papacy and conciliarism in the West, as well as the Union Councils of Lyons and Ferrara-Florence.¹¹ At this meeting, the Working Group adopted the method of discussing the addresses in language groups, each of which then summarised their insights in theses that were later submitted to the plenary for discussion. The points of

⁹ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Athens: http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2005_athens_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

¹⁰ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Chevetogne: http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2006_chevetogne_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

¹¹ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Belgrade: http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2007_belgrade_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

consensus were then incorporated into a communiqué from each annual meeting and published in five languages (English, French, German, Greek, and Russian) on the website of the Moehler Institute and also sent to church leaders responsible for inter-Christian dialogue.

The fifth annual meeting of the Irenaeus Group was held in November 2008 in Vienna with the support of the Pro Oriente Foundation. At this session, the subject was the doctrine and practice of primacy in early modern times. The focus was on the development of papal primacy following the Council of Trent and also the primatial functions of the patriarchs of Constantinople in the Ottoman Empire and of the patriarchs of Moscow in the Russian Empire.¹² At this meeting, for the first time there was a public evening of lectures at which Job Getcha and Hervé Legrand gave papers on the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. Following the Vienna meeting, the work of the Irenaeus Group attracted wider interest, and the communiqués were subsequently published in a number of periodicals in English, French, and German.

At the beginning of November 2009, the sixth annual meeting of the Irenaeus Group took place at the invitation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in Kiev. At this meeting on the premises of the Theological Academy on the grounds of the Kievan Monastery of the Caves, the working group for the first time dealt intensively with the First Vatican Council.¹³ Various papers shed light on the historical context of the Council from ecclesial, cultural, and political points of view. In addition, by means of studying the sources together, the members endeavoured to grasp the precise meaning and intended message of the Council's definitions. The programme of the meeting also included an encounter with the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Volodymyr (Sabodan).

At the seventh annual meeting in November 2010, for which Bishop Gerhard Feige, as Catholic co-president, had invited the group to Magdeburg, discussion on the First Vatican Council continued. On this occasion, the group examined the internal Catholic reception of the

¹² Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Vienna:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2008_vienna_en.pdf
 (12.11.2018).

¹³ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Kiev:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2009_kiev_en.pdf
 (12.11.2018).

Council and the Orthodox reactions to the Council's decisions.¹⁴ At the session in Magdeburg, Metropolitan Youhanna (Yazigi) from the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch was present for the first time as the new Orthodox co-president. Unfortunately, he had to give up this responsibility again after only three years when he was elected the patriarch of his church.

The eighth annual meeting of the Irenaeus Group, held in November 2011 at the Orthodox Theological Academy in St. Petersburg at the invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church, devoted itself again to the definitions of the First Vatican Council and Orthodox reactions to them.¹⁵ It became clear in the process that it is of fundamental importance to understand the First Vatican Council using the instruments of the historical method in order to go beyond the frequently apologetic reactions on both sides in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The working group was also informed about proposals relating to papal primacy made by other ecumenical study groups (the Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation in North America, the Farfa Sabina Lutheran-Catholic Study Group).

At the ninth annual meeting, which took place in early November 2012 at the invitation of the ecumenical community of Bose in their monastery in Northern Italy, the members of the Irenaeus Group turned their attention to the twentieth century for the first time. They dealt with the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1917/18 and with the Second Vatican Council.¹⁶ In this connection, the focus on the Orthodox side was on the participation of priests and lay people at the Russian council and on the relation between the council and the patriarch. The group also examined the question of how the definitions of the First Vatican Council were received in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. It proved helpful for the discussion that each

¹⁴ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Magdeburg:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2010_magdeburg_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

¹⁵ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in St. Petersburg:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2011_petersburg_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

¹⁶ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Bose:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2012_bose_en.pdf (12.11.2018).

Orthodox presentation was followed by a Catholic response and *vice versa*.

Producing a common study

In November 2013, the Irenaeus Group gathered for its tenth annual meeting in Thessaloniki on the premises of the University Ecclesiastical Academy at which the Orthodox co-secretary, Nikolaos Loudovikos, teaches. Having completed the historical analysis, the group now devoted its efforts to hermeneutical and historical aspects of the theological dialogue.¹⁷ One important concern was to define the relationship between history and theology, on which papers were presented by Bishop Gerhard Feige and Job Getcha, who took on the responsibility of Orthodox co-president following his episcopal consecration at the end of November 2013. In addition, there was a discussion on Orthodox reactions to the Second Vatican Council and on the conception of primacy and synodality in contemporary Orthodox theology. An initial summary of the results of the work over the first ten years was also presented in Thessaloniki, and the decision was taken to produce a common study on the relation between primacy and synodality.

The eleventh meeting of the Irenaeus Group took place early in November 2014 at the Archdiocesan Seminary of Rabat in Malta.¹⁸ The main subject of this meeting was primacy and synodality in the Orthodox churches because the preparatory committee, established for the first time for this meeting, had noted that the working group had paid too little attention to this aspect in its discussions thus far. The subject was examined in reference to the relation between primacy and synodality in the first millennium, on the one hand, and, on the other, the group discussed the documents from Constantinople and Moscow concerning the understanding of primacy which had just been published. During the session in Malta, a drafting committee of four persons was appointed and entrusted with further work on common study. The Orthodox members were Assaad Elias Kattan and Vladimir

¹⁷ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Thessaloniki: http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/Communique_2013_Thessaloniki_EN.pdf (12.11.2018).

¹⁸ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Rabat: http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/Communique_2014_Malta_EN.pdf (12.11.2018).

Khulap and the Catholics were Edward Farrugia and Johannes Oeldemann.

At its meeting in June 2015, on the basis of responses from the working group concerning the conception of the study which had been discussed in Malta, the drafting committee produced a first, basic version of the document which is now being published. This draft was then discussed in detail for the first time at the twelfth annual meeting held at the invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the beginning of November 2015 in the Theological School of Halki on the island of Heybeliada near Istanbul.¹⁹ At this meeting, papers were also presented on some issues which had not yet been treated sufficiently in the first draft of the study, e.g., the significance of the national church principle in the Orthodox Church, the understanding of authority in the Church, and the notion of *communion/koinonia* and its ecumenical significance.

In the last two years, the work on the common study occupied more and more time. The drafting committee normally met twice a year, once in Rome and once in Paderborn, in order to identify gaps, distribute tasks, and incorporate additional theses. During the thirteenth annual meeting, which took place early in November 2016 at the invitation of the ecumenical community of Taizé in France, the primary focus of the discussion was on the text of the common study.²⁰ In addition, the working group examined the hermeneutics of dogmas and the understanding of authority in the Church.

At the fourteenth annual meeting at the beginning of October 2017 in the Caraiman Monastery at the invitation of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Irenaeus Group again worked primarily on the common study. In order to fill gaps which still existed, the members looked at the role of the Eastern patriarchates in the first millennium, the role of the Apostle Peter in the tradition of the Church, and the right of appeal in East and West.²¹ Over the months that followed, the drafting

¹⁹ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Chalki:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2015_Chalki_EN.pdf
 (12.11.2018).

²⁰ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Taizé:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2016_Taiz%C3%A9_EN.pdf
 (12.11.2018).

²¹ Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Caraiman Monastery:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2017_Caraiman_EN.pdf
 (12.11.2018).

committee incorporated the last amendments and sent the completed version of the study to all the members for their final perusal.

On October 18th 2018, in the context of its fifteenth annual meeting which took place in the Mariatrost Diocesan House of Formation of the Catholic diocese of Graz-Seckau, the Irenaeus Group discussed the text for the last time and adopted it unanimously.²² For the first time, the meeting was presided over jointly by Bishop Gerhard Feige together with the new Orthodox co-president, the Romanian Metropolitan Serafim (Joantă) of Germany, Central and Northern Europe who had taken on this responsibility from Archbishop Job because the latter had been appointed co-president of the official International Dialogue Commission in the meantime. In the evening of October 18th, there was an official presentation of the study during a public meeting organised in the Meerscheinschlössl of Graz by the Theological Faculty of Graz University in cooperation with the Graz Section of the Pro Oriente Foundation.

Structure and content of the common study

The common study which has now been published focuses on the relationship between primacy and synodality in the Church. The document of the Irenaeus Group thus deals with the same subject as the official International Dialogue Commission. The members of the Irenaeus Group are convinced that primacy and synodality fulfil their mission only when they are 'serving communion', as the title of their common study underlines. The subtitle expresses the need for 're-thinking the relationship between primacy and synodality'. Why re-thinking? What is the new approach in this study? Firstly, that, in this document, primacy and synodality are considered neither merely historically nor merely systematically, but the two approaches are combined on the basis of hermeneutical reflections.

Therefore the 'Hermeneutical Reflections' constitute the first main section of the document. After fundamental reflections on the significance of hermeneutics for ecumenical dialogue, it presents considerations on the hermeneutics of theological language, of dogmas, and of canons. In conclusion, the hermeneutical chapter discusses the influence of non-theological factors and the significance of history for

²² Cf. the communiqué from the meeting in Graz:
http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/pdf/texte/kommunikues/2018_graz_en.pdf
 (12.11.2018).

theology. In the course of their discussions, the members of the Irenaeus Group became increasingly aware that a self-critical reflection on each side's interpretation of history, and on the systematic conclusions derived from it, was the key to deeper mutual understanding. Thus the chapter on hermeneutics is of fundamental importance for the whole document. The hermeneutical reflections are probably the most innovative part of the whole study because there is so far nothing comparable developed jointly by Orthodox and Catholic theologians.

The second and longest chapter of the document contains 'Historical Observations' on the development of the relationship between primacy and synodality. The heading was deliberately formulated very cautiously. The Irenaeus Group does not claim to present totally new insights into history, but it has summarised the most important results of the historical research of recent decades and has derived 'observations' from it concerning the understanding of primacy and synodality that differ at certain points from preconceived opinions and widespread prejudices. This applies both to the period of the Early Church, when primacy and synodality 'stood in a creative tension with one another' (par. 7), and to the following centuries which led, as 'the result of a long process of mutual alienation' (par. 8), to the break between the Greek East and the Latin West. Starting in the sixteenth century, there was the 'formation of confessional identities' (par. 9) and of an 'exclusivist ecclesiology' which led both Catholics and Orthodox to ask 'whether a community in schism could serve as an instrument of salvation' (par. 9.10).

The nineteenth century presented a special challenge for a common description of this history; it is described in the study as the period of 'ecclesiological introversion'. In the Catholic Church, the new challenges in the ecclesiastical, political and intellectual realms led to focussing on the papal office, and this reached a climax in the definitions of the First Vatican Council concerning the infallibility and jurisdictional primacy of the Pope. The study produced by the Irenaeus Group contains a well-founded interpretation of the dogmatic definitions of Vatican I based on the common study of the sources and makes clear on the one hand that the Fathers of the Council did not want to make the pope 'an absolute monarch' (par. 10.7), and on the other hand that the later 'maximalist interpretation' was not faithful to the Council's definitions (par. 10.10). The study also contains a reminder

that, during the nineteenth century on the Orthodox side as well, with the conflict over the Enlightenment and the formation of autocephalous, national churches, major changes took place which still affect the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue today.

The historical chapter of the common study closes with remarks on the 'ecclesiological renaissance' in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries which is linked to the development of Eucharistic ecclesiology on the Orthodox side and the rediscovery of the Church Fathers together with the liturgical movement in the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council opened the door for ecumenical dialogue and was welcomed by Orthodox theologians 'as a positive step in the direction of conciliarity' (par. 11.14). The preparatory process for a Pan-Orthodox Council on the Orthodox side witnessed to a 'serious effort to exercise synodality in both theory and practice' (par. 11.6). The fact that this did not succeed with the Council of Crete in the way desired, together with the observation of the difficulties to strengthen synodality in the Catholic Church under the pontificate of Pope Francis, led the Irenaeus Group to state at the end of the chapter on history, 'Thus, Orthodox and Catholics both face the challenge of integrating primacy and synodality, and it would be useful and productive for both churches to address these issues jointly, so as to reach a mutually acceptable solution' (par. 11.15).

The third section of the document contains 'Systematic Considerations' on the main subject. Starting with a joint description of the understanding of 'communion' (*koinonia/communio*), the document first outlines a conception of authority in the Church which must always be at the service of the community, irrespective of whether it is exercised in a primatial or synodal way. The theological understanding of primacy and synodality is considered in two further sub-sections, before the conclusion underlines the interdependence of primacy and synodality in the service of the community. The members of the working group emphasise the 'equality of origin' and the 'complementarity' of the primatial and synodal principles in the Church (par. 16) and are convinced that 'one cannot legitimately understand primacy without synodality, nor deal with synodality while ignoring primacy' (par. 16.3).

The final conclusion summarises the most important arguments and offers a 'vision for the future' in which the members of the Irenaeus Group appeal for a way to be found 'to surmount certain positions of

the past and to integrate the essential elements that have been preserved in both traditions into a common understanding of primacy' (par. 17.8). This demonstrates their conviction that 'simply turning to the past is not a solution, either for the Orthodox or for the Catholics' (par. 17.10). What is required, on the contrary, is 'a common solution, acceptable to both churches' which can 'respond to the needs of the twenty-first century' and 'builds on the strengths of both sides' (par. 17.12). Such a solution, as the final comment of the study states, can only succeed if the dialogue is not restricted to academic theologians alone but also engages the bishops and priests and, not least, the faithful on both sides.

The members of the Irenaeus Group therefore hope that there will be a broad reception of their study, not only in academic theological circles, but also in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue at international, national, and regional levels. An article published recently on the Group's work to date describes the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group as 'a kind of think-tank for the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue on the international level'²³. If it wishes to do justice to this claim, the Group will need to continue to tackle the deeper issues which continue to be a burden on the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, albeit in a more hidden than obvious way. Following the adoption of the documents of Ravenna (2007) and Chieti (2016), the International Dialogue Commission is in a process of transition to a new phase of the dialogue. As a result of the escalating dispute between the patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow over the Ukraine, the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue is in danger of succumbing to another crisis. The Irenaeus Group was established fifteen years ago because of a crisis in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. Therefore, at the present time, it would appear that its continued existence is meaningful and necessary in order to continue the dialogue, independently of current developments in church politics as far as possible.

²³ R. Kisić, "Gemeinsamer orthodox-katholischer Arbeitskreis St. Irenäus", in: M. Hastetter / S. Bortnyk (Hg.), *Mosaik der Ökumene. Rezeptionsimpulse zum orthodox-katholischen Dialog* (Freiburg i.Br., 2018) (Forum Ökumene 2), 110-129, here 128.

SERVING COMMUNION. RE-THINKING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIMACY AND SYNODALITY

Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group*

'Serving communion' is the first common study of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group, an unofficial working group of thirteen Orthodox and thirteen Catholic theologians. It was unanimously adopted by the group in October 2018. In this document the members of the Irenaeus Group present common reflections on the relationship between primacy and synodality, the topic around which the theological dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics has revolved in recent years. The document presents a new approach to the interrelationship between primacy and synodality insofar as they are considered neither merely historically nor merely systematically, but both methods of theological thinking are combined on the basis of common hermeneutical reflections.

I. Introduction

For over a decade, the relationship between primacy and synodality has been the focus of theological dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox. Ever since the document of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church on 'Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority' (Ravenna 2007) was released, the ecclesiological discussions between Catholic and Orthodox theologians have revolved around how primacy and synodality, as correlative terms, function at different levels, namely locally, regionally, and universally. The

* Graz, October 2018. This text and the former one (p. 64-76) were first published in: *Serving Communion. Re-thinking the Relationship between Primacy and Synodality. A Study by the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group*, Los Angeles 2019 (published in collaboration with the Huffington Ecumenical Institute, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles).

commission's most recent document on 'Synodality and Primacy during the First Millennium: Towards a Common Understanding in Service to the Unity of the Church' (Chieti 2016) reconsidered some of these aspects, but is still only one step on the way to a common understanding of the relationship between primacy and synodality.

Nevertheless, the question concerning the relationship between primacy and synodality is not new. It was reflected to a certain extent in the theological and ecclesiological interchanges during the first millennium. In the second millennium, it affected the discussions between Eastern and Western theologians that were often characterized by polemics. Since their separation, Catholics and Orthodox have developed different forms of exercising authority, both individually and collegially. This led to one-sided approaches in teaching and practice on both sides. Still, the relation between the community of bishops and its primate is not static: the diverse forms of exercising primacy in the Catholic Church after Vatican I (1869-70) show that the same idea of primacy can be realized in different ways, while in the Orthodox Church the cooperation of the first hierarch and the local bishops is far from homogenous. In addition, the dialogue between our churches has focused thus far on primacy and synodality as categories used mainly for ecclesiastical hierarchy. Yet it is also imperative to reflect on them within the larger framework of the people of God and their manifold charisms.

A re-thinking of the relation between primacy and synodality is therefore not just a task for Orthodox-Catholic dialogue but a challenge for internal church debates as well, as the Catholic Bishops' Synods in Rome (2015 and 2016) and the Orthodox Council in Crete (2016) have shown. Against this background, the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group presents this study – hoping that it might give new impulses towards a re-thinking of the relationship between primacy and synodality.

The self-understanding and objectives of the Irenaeus Group

The Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group was founded in 2004 in Paderborn, Germany, at a time when the official International dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches was experiencing difficulties. The group comprises thirteen Orthodox and thirteen Catholic theologians from various countries (currently

from Argentina, Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the USA). The members of the Working Group are not appointed as delegates by their churches, but are invited on the basis of their theological competence. The Irenaeus Group is therefore not an official dialogue commission, but an unofficial working group of experts, meeting with the intention of supporting Orthodox-Catholic dialogue at the international level.

As an international group with a broad linguistic and cultural diversity, the members of the Irenaeus Group consider it to be their task to investigate the existing differences in mentality and church practices, as well as in ways of thinking and doing theology. They try to understand the current problems and to see how both churches can enrich each other in an 'exchange of gifts'¹. They hope that in this way they will be able to promote mutual understanding in their respective churches, and they commit themselves to personal involvement in this effort.

The method of our common study

The present document is the fruit of a common effort carried out by the members of the Irenaeus Group over several years. This work is mainly an inquiry into a wide range of hermeneutical, historical, and systematic issues in the form of presentations, responses, and the formulation of common theses. We are convinced that the still unresolved questions between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches can only be successfully overcome by an interplay of hermeneutics, history, and systematics. In this, we are aware that our study inevitably had to be limited, especially in its historical part.

This document presents considerations according to this threefold grid by way of sixteen common statements. Each of them is accompanied by commentaries that aim to illustrate its main concern with the help of examples, as well as to explain terms, identify developments, and formulate open questions. The present document is inspired by an endeavour to offer a common approach to the relationship between primacy and synodality, and to afford a common description with regard to divergences.

¹ *Lumen Gentium* 13; John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* 28.

II. Hermeneutical Reflections

1. The significance of hermeneutics for ecumenical dialogue

Common Statement: The development of hermeneutics has brought to the fore historicity and socio-cultural embedding of concepts as a permanent challenge to theology. Every discourse has a historical setting and is conditioned by social and cultural factors. Hence, every theological dialogue must take account of linguistic differences, the ways of thinking, and specific emphases of each tradition. In our endeavour to increase mutual understanding, we need to situate expressions from the past in their historical context and to avoid reading them anachronistically. In this way, we can come closer to understanding statements as they were intended, and their lasting value can be identified. This requires a constant rethinking of different traditions which in turn express the richness of the faith and are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

1.1 Hermeneutics refers to interpretation. Christianity may be described as inevitably hermeneutical, insofar as it presupposes an adequate interpretation of biblical texts (cf. Rom. 7:6 and 2 Pet. 3:16) as well as symbols of faith, patristic writings, and other expressions of Christian faith. More particularly, the critical study of the Bible has challenged traditional approaches to Scripture and opened up new horizons for Orthodox and Catholics alike.

1.2 Both Orthodox and Catholics believe that Holy Scripture must be interpreted within Tradition, which thus serves as a hermeneutical key. This hermeneutical approach becomes concrete in liturgy, spiritual life, and *diakonia*. The hermeneutical dimension of our dialogue implies the endeavour of interpreting together the manifold expressions of Tradition. We are convinced, in turn, that the very comprehension of what Tradition is relies on mutual understanding of how our dialogue partner approaches its various components.

1.3 Complete objectivity is not attainable, since any interpretation is historically conditioned. Nevertheless, a critical consciousness may disclose prejudices and repressed resentments that generate inadequate interpretations. For example, the hermeneutical reflection on the twentieth-century shift from a hierarchy-oriented and exclusivistic ecclesiology to an ecclesiology of communion (cf. chapters 11 and 12) makes it easier to spot and avoid anachronisms in reading

past controversies, as well as to identify in them non-theological factors.

1.4 The concept of reception is fundamental for ecumenical dialogue. Reception should take into account the principle that both the whole and the parts interpret each other reciprocally. It is important, for instance, that Vatican I's statements on primacy and infallibility, which still represent a stumbling block in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, be integrated into the whole of ecclesiology and tradition of the Catholic Church, particularly in the light of Vatican II (cf. §§ 11.10 – 11.11). On the Orthodox side, it has become widely accepted today that Eucharistic ecclesiology is helpful to understand the ecclesiology of the Early Church.

1.5 The question of how we deal today with our respective identities calls for further explanation, since these have varied considerably and have sometimes been even badly tarnished in the course of history. Here account must also be taken of the images we have of one another, and whether these images correspond to the way our partners in dialogue see themselves.

2. Hermeneutics of theological language

Common Statement: In dialogue we often use terms that have different meanings in our respective traditions. In the course of time the understanding of these terms has changed. They usually have multiple layers of meaning and are frequently interpreted differently by various addressees. Accordingly, the dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics requires sufficient clarity about what is meant by certain terms. Furthermore, when terms are translated into a different language, they may convey a different connotation.

2.1 Our theological reflection has profited from ecumenical experience which has brought into dialogue various ways of Christian thinking. These in turn have evolved in different directions over time. Keeping this in mind facilitates understanding between different theological mindsets, and helps to overcome present antagonisms and contradictions insofar as they can be attributed to misunderstandings and fallacies in the way different concepts are understood. To clarify the particular way of thinking is one of the most important tasks in ecumenical dialogue.

2.2 Cultural and historical differences often lie behind various theological notions and their reception. Translations of Greek notions into Latin and vice versa were inevitably transpositions into another cultural sphere with different theological priorities. This led to different emphases, as for example the different nuances of the terms *mysterion* and *sacramentum* or of *protos* and *primus* show. The problem of translation still affects modern languages, where for example the notion of ‘infallibility’ is rendered in various languages with different connotations (e.g. ‘sinlessness’ in Russian, ‘freedom from error’ in Greek).

2.3 For the sake of better understanding, we must take cognizance of the fact that the same words sometimes describe states of affairs that differ. Notions used by both sides but pointing to different realities, be it in the course of history or in a particular era, have to be clarified. This is particularly true for well-known ecclesial notions such as catholicity, primacy, synodality, collegiality, and conciliarity. Thus, the notion of *sobornost* can in our days be understood in the sense of catholicity and conciliarity, but it is strongly shaped by the philosophical and theological context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia. Similarly, one must beware of understanding the concept of primacy in the sense of centralization or the concept of synodality in the sense of decentralization.

2.4 It would be particularly useful to develop together a glossary that defines key ecclesiological notions and draws attention to the different nuances of meaning that arise when a concept is expressed in Greek or Latin, for instance the expressions used by the First Vatican Council of *potestas immediata* and *plenitudo potestatis* or the Greek terms *presbeia tēs timēs* and *taxis*.

3. Hermeneutics of dogmas

Common Statement: A hermeneutics of dogma draws attention to the fact that one must distinguish between the formula of a dogma (‘what is said’) and the statement intended (‘what is meant’). Although dogmas are binding doctrinal statements of the church, they are historically conditioned in the sense that they are reactions to specific theological or pastoral challenges in a concrete context and in a given language. Therefore, dogmatic formulations are limited both formally and in content, because they can never be an exhaustive expression of what they witness to and attempt to interpret. This corresponds to the apophatic

nature of theology, which can only approximately perceive and articulate God's mystery and work.

3.1 The church has never tried to articulate its faith fully and in all detail. Rather, dogmas are to be understood as demarcations (*horoi*) the church felt obliged to draw when questions of truth were challenged, in order better to protect the treasure of faith kept in her bosom. In doing so, many theologians were aware that the contents of revelation are incomparably greater than human comprehension and therefore exceed those notions that try to describe them. As Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580-662) put it: 'The great mystery of the divine incarnation always remains a mystery'.²

3.2 Dogmatic formulations always presuppose a certain framework of understanding and are embedded in a context of interpretation. That is why dogmas are not only to be understood literally but comprehended against the background of the situation in which they originated and the intention of their message (cf. §§ 10.1 – 10.9). The consistent application of this methodology in ecumenical dialogue has proved to be extremely fruitful and has shown that one can come to agree on the subject itself, despite using sometimes different notions. In this way, recent dialogues between Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians³ have shown that both sides have used different terms and concepts to express essentially the same Christological faith.

3.3 Although the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church may not always share a common understanding of doctrine, both traditions distinguish, in different ways, between dogmas, generally accepted teachings, and non-binding theological opinions. Moreover, Vatican II speaks of a 'hierarchy of truths'⁴ in order to account for how doctrines relate to the foundation of Christian faith, an idea that corresponds, to a certain extent, to the view of some Orthodox theologians as well, such as Vasilij V. Bolotov (1854-1900). By deepening the common reflection on the nature of doctrinal statements, one can hope to contribute to

² Maximus the Confessor, *Capita XV*,12: PG 90, 1184B.

³ Cf. J. Gros et al. (eds.), *Growth in Agreement II. Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva, 2000), 187-199.

⁴ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 11.

overcoming difficulties in the appraisal of doctrines held only by one tradition.

3.4 It is the task of the hermeneutics of dogmas to assess the varying articulation and explication (*anaptyxis*)⁵ of the apostolic heritage throughout history, taking into account the respective context, and to discern to what extent such new formulations are legitimate expressions of the faith as articulated in the sources.

3.5 Hermeneutical work on the Church's deposit of faith and on dogmatic expressions can lead to new insights. These insights are important insofar as they relate to the salvation of human beings. Consequently, the hermeneutical work on dogmas encompasses not only the theoretical level, but may also help to evaluate Church life and practice.

4. Hermeneutics of canons

Common Statement: Church canons are often applied ecclesiology. Like dogmas they must be interpreted within their respective context. Catholics and Orthodox take different approaches to canon law and have a different understanding of the connection between church law and church doctrine and practice. Consequently, there needs to be an in-depth discussion of the hermeneutics of the canons – both within each church as well as between Orthodox and Catholics. The new situation of the church in the third millennium requires further reflection on how the Early Church canons can be applied in a globalized world.

4.1 In considering our division and the possibility of overcoming it, we should take account of the canonical dimension. Canon law often has a stronger influence on church life than dogma. However, even in the first millennium the canonical ideal did not always match the historical reality. Thus, bishops were transferred from one city to another in spite of canon 15 of Nicaea I. In the second millennium the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches understood and applied canons in different ways. Whereas the Orthodox mostly limited themselves to commentaries on

⁵ At the Constantinopolitan council of 1351, Palamas described his teaching as an 'explication' or 'unfolding' (*ἀνάπτυξις*) of the teachings of the Sixth Ecumenical Council on the two energies and the two wills of Christ: cf. A. Melloni et al. (eds.), *The Great Councils of the Orthodox Churches* (Turnhout, 2016), (CCCGOD IV.1), 183. See further J. Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris: Patristica Sorbonensia, 1959), 142.

already existing canons and formulated new canonical regulations only on the level of local churches, the Catholics developed a codified system of church law which in part grew independently of ecclesiology.

4.2 One reason for the estrangement between East and West was the loss of a common mental framework in dealing with canons. For example, Emperor Justinian II, by means of the canons of the Second Council in Trullo, known as the *Quinisext* (691-92), aimed, among other things, at bringing Rome's canonical praxis in line with that of Constantinople with little respect for its own long-standing traditions. However, the so-called 'anti-Roman canons'⁶ were not motivated by hostility towards Rome, but sought to re-establish the ideal of uniformity in one empire. On the other side, the Gregorian Reform in Rome was a factor that led to an increasingly juridical approach to primacy by overemphasizing the role of the bishop of Rome, which was completely incomprehensible to the Byzantines (cf. § 8.4).

4.3 Canons on the whole have great theological weight in the Orthodox Church; nevertheless, due to changed historical conditions, they, or at least some of them, tend to be dismissed as irrelevant in today's world. In light of the need to apply the canons in Orthodoxy today, one may speak of a 'hierarchy of canons', not all canons being of the same importance. Nikolaj Afanas'ev (1893-1966) spoke of their abiding message; as he put it: 'The underlying dogmatic truth of the canons cannot be changed; only the application and embodiment in a canon can be altered by the historical existence of the Church'⁷.

4.4 For the Catholic Church, the canon law now in force is the *Codex iuris canonici* of 1983 (for the Latin Church) and the *Codex canonum ecclesiarum orientalium* of 1990 (for the Eastern Catholic Churches). The canons of the ecumenical councils now serve as *fontes*, that is, sources, on which current canon law draws; canon 4 of Nicaea I (325), which says that at least three bishops have to be present for the

⁶ Cf. *Concilium Quinisextum*, can. 13, 36, 55 (for example). See further H. Ohme, 'Die sogenannten "antirömischen Kanones" des Concilium Quinisextum', in: G. Nedungatt / M. Featherstone (eds.), *The Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome, 1995), 307-321.

⁷ N. Afanas'ev, 'The Canons of the Church: Changeable or Unchangeable?', in: *SVSQ* 11 (1967) 54-68, here 62.

ordination of a bishop, is still in vigour.⁸ Besides, certain ancient church canons have been included in current liturgical praxis, for example canon 20 of Nicaea I (325) with regard to the *gonyklisia*, that is, that one should not kneel in Eastertide or on Sundays. This rule is still observed by Catholics of the Byzantine rite.

5. The significance of non-theological factors

Common Statement: The reasons for the separation of our churches were not only theological, but also had political, social, cultural, psychological, and other dimensions. Indeed, political and cultural factors strongly influenced the development of ecclesiastical structures in East and West. Therefore, in examining the causes and consequences of schisms, the role of these factors must be considered and assessed theologically. More particularly, this requires a multidisciplinary approach that also takes into account these aspects that have little dogmatic relevance, but nevertheless affect the ecclesiological practice of the churches. Such factors still contribute to the difficulties in the official theological dialogue between our churches.

5.1 The church is not only divine, but also human. This is why it can be described not only in theological terms in the narrow sense, but also in sociological and other terms. More specifically, in the course of history the church had to take on ever-increasing areas of responsibility that required new organizational structures. Since the social and political context differed in West and East, different ecclesiological models developed that have to be understood as providing a response to the challenges of the corresponding era. Their theological interpretation and canonical determination quite often only came afterwards and have to be seen as historically limited explanations of their time.

5.2 One must neither idealize models of the past by projecting later structures into earlier times, nor totally reject the past by considering everything in it as irrelevant to the present if not detrimental to progress. Towards this aim, the manifold methodologies developed by human sciences such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology can be very useful. Furthermore, the theological and non-theological factors have to be correlated in a well-balanced way, and one-sided positions have to be avoided. In doing so, one's own confessional

⁸ Cf. CCEO, can. 746.1: 'A bishop should be ordained by three bishops, except in case of extreme necessity'.

perspective must not unduly predominate in scholarly work on the history of the church and its doctrines (cf. § 6.3).

5.3 In Orthodox-Catholic dialogue there is a strong tendency to idealize the first millennium. However, in the 506 years between 337 and 843 there were 217 years of schism between Rome and Constantinople⁹, so that one cannot simply speak of an ‘undivided’ Church of the first millennium. Nevertheless, the experience of the first millennium can be highly inspiring in re-establishing communion between our churches (cf. chapter 7).

5.4 Though in different ways and to a different extent, the churches in both East and West were often confronted with the temptation of conflating church leadership with secular power and its institutions. At times models were imposed on the church by the state (cf. §§ 9.8 and 10.2). Challenges such as the exercise of worldly power, the tendency to centralize or decentralize, as well as the strong emphasis on national identity, can be observed in both East and West. This has often reinforced primatial authority at the expense of synodal structures. Although synodality at times very much took a back seat, it was never completely absent from the consciousness of the church as a theological principle. Synodal structures of one kind or another were always present in the life of the church.

5.5 Primatial and synodal forms have evolved over the centuries. They will and should continue to change in order to adjust to new developments such as globalization, geopolitical changes, and new political power structures, without conforming to the spirit of this world (cf. Rom. 12:2). This means a constant effort to reform and renew church structures, in fidelity to the church’s fundamental identity as the Body of Christ and in obedience to its mission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

6. The importance of history for theology

Common Statement: The Christian faith is inconceivable without reference to history, because God’s revelation in Jesus Christ took place at a specific historical moment. As Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God has a human story. God’s saving action for human beings does not occur apart from time and space, but in the midst of human history. Therefore,

⁹ Cf. Y. Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1959), 3.

the self-understanding, theology, and preaching of the church are also marked by history. Research into church history is required to better appreciate the role of historical, social, and cultural factors in the development of theology, especially where divisive issues are concerned. Common research and the common presentation of history resulting from this can offer a framework for understanding controversial theological questions.

6.1 Church history concerns itself with both general and particular trends in Christianity. This entails probing into church life in its dogmatic, symbolical (creedal), liturgical, canonical, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. Moreover, church history makes use of many of the same methods and sources as other historical disciplines, often in close interchange with them.

6.2 As a discipline, church history has a considerable theological significance. It raises questions about tradition, continuity, and change in the church, its structures and theology, and facilitates a critical elaboration of ecclesial memory. Historical investigation can also help to draw the line between those cases when Christians remained faithful to the gospel and when they, consciously or unconsciously, falsified it. Church history thus makes an indispensable contribution to a responsible ecclesiology.

6.3 Research in church history should not succumb to the temptation of justifying the history of one's own confession and nation, but should rather be concerned with critically discussing one's own tradition and other traditions according to their own self-perception. Rather than going along with certain biases and prejudices, theologians are expected to study what the teachings and practices of the dialogue partner really amount to so as to foster authentic dialogue in a spirit of love and truth.

6.4 Hermeneutically balanced research into the history of church and theology has recently brought about a more nuanced view of the controversial issues dividing the churches. Concrete examples of this include: the work on the Christological controversies over the decisions of the Councils of Ephesus 431 and Chalcedon 451 (cf. § 3.2); a fresh appraisal of the crisis of 1054 (cf. § 8.3); the 1999 agreement between Catholics and Lutherans on basic principles of the doctrine of

justification;¹⁰ or the joint presentation of the history of the Reformation in the 2013 document by the International Catholic-Lutheran dialogue commission.¹¹ These examples show that it is possible to describe history across confessional divides.

6.5 A joint description of history, as is attempted in the present study, is essential for the healing of memories. For the members of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group, such an endeavour is an indispensable prerequisite for the restoration of full communion between their churches.

III. Historical Observations

7. The Early Church period (first – eighth centuries)

Common Statement: In the period before the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325), church structures developed, including the monepiscopacy, a three-level hierarchy, and local councils, as well as the acceptance of the canon of Holy Scripture. For this reason, the pre-Nicene era has a preeminent significance for ecclesiology down to the present day. The issues that were controversial at that time (e.g., the date of Easter, the rebaptism of heretics and schismatics) and their attempted solutions can still give us insights for dealing with differences within the church today. In the era of the ecumenical councils (fourth - eighth centuries), the church became an imperial church, to a certain extent defined along the lines of civil structures. This had an impact on the process of decision-making within the church. The emperor played a crucial role in convening the ecumenical councils and implementing their decisions. As a general rule, in every province the bishop of the provincial capital presided over the episcopal synod as well as the election of bishops and their ordination. In that period the five ancient patriarchates, which were to be called the 'pentarchy', played a significant role, especially in the East. The bishop of Rome had an important function, but his prerogatives were interpreted differently in East and West. Throughout this period, primacy and synodality stood in a creative tension with one

¹⁰ Cf. *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 2000).

¹¹ Cf. *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. Report of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity (Leipzig/Paderborn, 2013).

another. Although East and West understood them in different ways, the mutual relationship of primacy and synodality nonetheless proves to be a viable model that can inspire us on the way to a restoration of church unity.

7.1 A number of different forms of primacy or 'headship' in local and regional churches emerge in the first several centuries of Christianity. These include the primacy of a single bishop in the local church – usually a city with its surrounding area – which was widely accepted by the mid-third century; the primacy of the bishop of a metropolitan (capital) city among the bishops of a particular province; and later, the primacy of the bishop of a major urban center (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, for a time other cities such as Carthage, Thessalonica, Milan, and Ravenna) among the churches of a political 'diocese' or imperial region (from the time of Diocletian's reforms). Some of these (including Jerusalem as a center of pilgrimage) came to be called 'Patriarchates' in a process that started in the mid-fifth century (cf. § 7.8). This metropolitan and patriarchal primacy was exercised through presiding over local and regional synods, as well as over the ordination of local or metropolitan bishops and acting as an instance of appeal in cases involving bishops that had previously been handled locally.

7.2 Rome's fame as the place where Peter and Paul had taught, were martyred, and had their tombs, established an unparalleled prestige for the city from the start, without denying that the two apostles came there because it was the capital of the empire. Ignatius of Antioch described the Church of Rome as the one which 'presides in love' (*prokathēmenē tēs agapēs*). Rome's standing is illustrated by Clement's first letter to the Corinthians, read every year in the Sunday liturgy in Corinth, on the testimony of Dionysius (ca. 170), its bishop.¹² By the end of the second century, Rome's status had increased to the point that its bishop Victor I's attempt to excommunicate the Quartodecimans for celebrating Easter apart from the rest took all of the mediatory skills of Polycrates of Ephesus and Irenaeus of Lyons to avert. An inscription, not later than 216, on the tomb of Abercius, bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, says that 'the chaste shepherd ... sent me to Rome, to behold a

¹² Cf. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV, 23,11.

kingdom and to see a queen with golden robe and golden shoes¹³. Cyprian (d. 258) coined for Rome the expression as the church ‘from which all the priesthood takes its origin’¹⁴, and the ‘*cathedra Petri*’¹⁵, on which, however, all bishops sit, thereby bringing out the interdependence of the Roman bishop and other bishops as a collegium. The canons of Sardica (343) secured bishops the right to appeal to Rome (cf. § 7.3). The idea ‘*Roma locuta, causa finita*’, attributed to Augustine (d. 430)¹⁶, was not followed by the bishops of Carthage in the case of the presbyter Apiarius, twice condemned by them, twice absolved by Rome, until he was definitively condemned by Carthage (418), who forbade a simple priest to appeal to Rome on pain of excommunication. The weightiest appreciation for Rome came from the greatest Byzantine theologian of the seventeenth century, Maximus the Confessor, who in the context of the monothelite controversy called the ‘most holy church of the Romans’ not only first among all the churches, disposing of the power to bind and to loose¹⁷, but also asserted that all Christians should look up to this church as to a ‘sun of eternal light’¹⁸.

7.3 One of the more significant and controversial fourth-century attempts to hold a new universal council was the Council of Sardica (or Serdica; today Sofia), called by the Emperor Constantius II in 343 in the hope of healing the widening rift over the reception of the creed of Nicaea. Fearing that they would be dominated by the Latin-speaking Western bishops who were intent on rehabilitating the exiled Athanasius, the Greek bishops eventually declined to meet in a general council, moving instead to Philippopolis in Thrace (today Plovdiv). The Western council issued a set of canons concerning church structure and discipline. Canon 3 of the Greek collection affirmed the right of any bishop who had been deposed by his provincial synod to appeal to the bishop of Rome, who could order that a new trial be held. Although the Council of Sardica was initially not recognized in the East, canon 3 was later taken up in canon 2 of the Second Council in Trullo / Quinisext

¹³ Cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. 1: *The Beginnings of Patristic Literature* (Utrecht/Brussels, 1950), 172.

¹⁴ Cyprian, *Ep.* 59, 14.1.

¹⁵ Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesiae catholicae* 4.

¹⁶ Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 131,10.

¹⁷ Cf. Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula theologica et polemica* 12: PG 91, 144C.

¹⁸ Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula theologica et polemica* 11: PG 91, 137D.

(691-92), considered by the Orthodox to be a continuation of the fifth and sixth ecumenical councils. Through their reception by the Quinisext, the canons of Sardica became an integral part of the canonical corpus of the Orthodox Church. In fact, there were repeated instances of appeal to the Roman bishop in dogmatic and practical matters during the first millennium, such as in the cases of John Chrysostom (d. 407), Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), and Theodore the Studite (d. 826). In the second millennium, the renowned Byzantine canonist Theodore Balsamon (ca. 1120-98) recognized in his comment on canon 3 of Sardica the right of appeal to the Roman pope, applying this right however to the Patriarch of Constantinople.¹⁹

7.4 In recent years, a number of Orthodox and Catholic theologians have pointed to *Apostolic Canon* 34, part of a larger collection of liturgical and disciplinary rules from the Church of Antioch which dates to the fourth century, as a model for the complex interaction of primatial and collegial leadership that characterizes the exercise of church authority at its best. The ‘Apostolic Canons’ are the work of an unknown author or authors (c. 300) and were recorded in various Oriental languages (Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopian and Arabic). Moreover, they gained authority in the West due to the fact that Dionysius Exiguus (d. before 556) included them in his collection of canons. Canon 34, probably written by the compilers of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, of which the eighty *Apostolic Canons* form the final section, represents the widespread concern for balance in episcopal leadership that marked the last decades of the fourth-century Trinitarian controversy. It lays down that ‘the bishops of each *ethnos*’ – presumably meaning each political province – should recognize the authority of ‘the one who has first place among them’ – their metropolitan bishop – and should ‘not do anything important (*perittos*) without his consent (*gnome*)’, but that he also should do nothing ‘without the consent of all’. The central focus of every bishop’s labor, the canon insists, should be only what pertains to his local church (*paroikia*). Along with the rest of the *Apostolic Canons*, canon 34 was not widely cited by theologians until recently. Apparently dependent on canon 7 of Nicaea (325) and canon 9 of the Synod of Antioch of 341, it reflects the continuing concern of the fourth-century church in the Eastern provinces to prevent the doctrinal and jurisdictional

¹⁹ Cf. PG 137, 1432-1436.

domination by powerful church leaders that underlay much of the fourth century's theological polarization.

7.5 The role of the bishop of Rome must be seen within the different spheres of influence in which he made effective decisions and articulated church tradition. In central Italy, understandably, he was metropolitan bishop of the ancient capital, and called and presided over local synods. In *Italia Suburbicaria* (including Central and Southern Italy, Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia) he exercised supra-metropolitan or, in later language, patriarchal authority. In the fourth century, especially in response to the Arian crisis, this sphere of influence was gradually extended over the entire Latin-speaking western part of the empire – west of the Rhine, south of the Main and Danube, as far east as Thessalonica and as far north as Scotland; here the bishops of Rome were occasionally represented at regional synods, expected to be informed of their decrees, and could be appealed to in cases of disputed local decisions. From the time of Pope Damasus (366-84), the bishops of Rome began to issue decisions, in the form of juridical rescripts, on doctrinal and disciplinary questions that had arisen in various churches of the Latin West and had been brought to their attention for resolution.

7.6 In the Eastern churches the role of the bishops of Rome was less clearly defined, but grew in importance during the great doctrinal controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. In 404 John Chrysostom appealed to Pope Innocent I, Venerius of Milan and Chromatius of Aquileia for support in his own struggles in Constantinople. In the run-up to the Council of Ephesus (431), Cyril of Alexandria secured the support of Pope Celestine I in his battle against Nestorius of Constantinople. Flavian of Constantinople and Theodoret of Cyrrihus appealed in strong terms to Pope Leo I, in 449, to overturn the christological and administrative decisions of the synod of Ephesus of that same year, on the basis of his 'apostolic authority'. The Roman bishops in this period were coming to be seen, especially in times of disruptive tensions between local churches, as preeminent defenders of apostolic tradition, by virtue of their being bishops of Rome. Illustrative of this fact is that the Council of Chalcedon (451) acclaimed Pope Leo as the voice of Peter: 'Peter has spoken through Leo'. That said, the Council was also careful to underline Leo's agreement with Cyril: 'Piously and truly did Leo teach, so taught Cyril'.

7.7 The bishop of Rome's significant role in the formation of doctrine in the writings of major hierarchs such as Leo I and Gregory the Great was not seen as competing with the authority of local and regional bishops or synods in the Western Church, but rather as reinforcing, promulgating, and regulating their work. Both Leo and Gregory frequently urged the metropolitans of the West to ensure that local and regional synods met regularly and followed canonical procedure; Gregory held a synod of bishops from *Italia Suburbicaria* (cf. § 7.5) at Rome every five years. Both of them saw the purpose of local and regional synods as consisting of passing authoritative judgment on both disciplinary and doctrinal issues; their own function was to be informed of these decisions, to confirm them, and to intervene only in cases where local authorities could not reach a clear solution. Leo – who identified himself strongly with Peter²⁰ – saw his own role above all as that of clearly proclaiming the apostolic faith and practice that had been accepted in all the churches since the time of the apostles. During crises, it was the task of regional and ecumenical councils to *define* that faith explicitly; the pope's role was 'to make clear what you know and to preach what you believe'²¹. As Leo wrote to the bishops at a local synod meeting in Chalcedon in 453, 'Can your holinesses recognize that I am, with our God's help, the guardian both of the Catholic faith and of the legislation of our ancestors?'²² His task was not to express his own beliefs, but to ascertain the apostolic faith.

7.8 From an early stage the East approached the question of ecclesial primacy through the prism of the relationship between the great sees. Rome was consistently granted precedence ahead of sees such as Alexandria and Antioch but was not primarily viewed in the East as possessing a special form of authority in all matters. The canons of Nicaea take the province, headed by the bishop of the main city, as the norm, but they recognise and approve of the fact that the sees of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch have accrued additional authority and prerogatives. Nicaea also grants to Jerusalem, again on the basis of

²⁰ Cf., e.g. Pope Leo, *Ep.* 156: Pope Leo the Great, *Letters*, E. Hunt (tr.), (Washington, DC, 1986), 243.

²¹ Pope Leo, *Ep.* 165.1, to the Emperor Leo: Pope Leo the Great, *Letters*, E. Hunt (tr.), (Washington, DC, 1986), 263.

²² Pope Leo, *Ep.* 114.2: Pope Leo the Great, *Letters*, E. Hunt (tr.), (Washington, DC, 1986), 198; cf. PL 54, 1031-1032.

custom, a place of honour after these great sees. Rome and Alexandria are generally recognised as the chief sees of West and East respectively – for instance in Theodosius’ decree *Cunctos populos* (380). But a great change was set in motion with the establishment of Constantinople as New Rome, the capital of the emerging Christian empire. The Second Ecumenical Council (381) elevated Constantinople to the next place after Rome on political grounds, an elevation resented and resisted by Rome and Alexandria. Chalcedon goes further in granting additional privileges to Constantinople and defining its status as equal to that of Rome save in the matter of rank – again on political grounds. With the removal of Jerusalem from the authority of Caesarea Maritima, the system of the pentarchy (rule of the five ancient patriarchates) is, in principle, fully formed. The pentarchy is further affirmed in the legislation of Justinian and by the Second Council in Trullo. That said, the operation of this model of pentarchy was undermined by the Chalcedonian schism, which hit Alexandria and Antioch particularly hard. The Arab conquest weakened the pentarchy still further, drastically reducing the capacity of the sees of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem to offer any practical counterweight to Rome and Constantinople. By the eighth century it was clear that the pentarchy had resolved in practice into a diarchy including Rome and Constantinople. The ensuing schism between East and West was to some extent the result of the emergence of Rome and Constantinople as competing blocs with different conceptions of ecclesial primacy.

7.9 The fathers of the church provide us with valuable insights on questions of primacy and synodality. For instance, Maximus the Confessor suggests by his personal example that these concepts are in principle not exclusive of each other when it comes to the church on the universal level. He encouraged Pope Martin I to convoke the Lateran Council of 649 which condemned monotheletism and played a major part in shaping the council’s decisions. Moreover, as a father of both the Western and Eastern churches, his engagement demonstrates that no one body has a monopoly of truth in the church.

7.10 In the acts of the Council of Nicaea II (787), in the sixth session, we come across a refutation of the Council of Hieria (754), which, while condemning the veneration of icons, pretended to be ecumenical: ‘Again, how is this council “great” and “ecumenical”, since those presiding over the rest of the churches did neither accept nor consent

to it but rather dismissed it with anathema? It did not have the collaboration of the Pope of the Romans of that time and his priests, by means of either a representative of his or an encyclical letter, as is the rule in the councils. Nor did it have the consent of the Patriarchs of the East, that is of Alexandria, of Antioch, and of the Holy City, or of their priests and bishops'.²³ One sees that the position of the pope is clearly distinguished from that of the other patriarchs and that his approval of a council carries a special weight. Retrospectively, Constantinople I (381) was convoked by the emperor as a regional council and attained ecumenical status because its creed was later 'received' by the Council of Chalcedon, whereas the Roman bishops, first Pope Hormisdas (d. 523) after the resolution of the Acacian Schism, also accepted its dogmatic decisions in 519, but not, however, its canons, on account of canon 3 assigning Constantinople a primacy of honor second only to Rome. When Leo I refused to approve Chalcedon because of canon 28, which assigned wide jurisdictional authority to Constantinople, Emperor Marcian nonetheless urged him to ratify the council as a whole, because otherwise its authority would be jeopardised.

7.11 These observations show that up to the eighth century there was no generally accepted formula defining the relationship between primacy and synodality on the universal level. Both primacy and synodality in the Early Church evolved, reflecting the challenges of their times. They were exercised, but not codified. No single model seems to have been universally accepted. Besides the fact that the seven ecumenical councils were all recognised by Rome and the Eastern patriarchates, the correlation between the primacy of the Roman bishop and the authority of an ecumenical council remained undefined. In order to understand how primacy found expression in the ecumenical councils, it is necessary to consider the particular context of each case, including imperial authority, the doctrinal disputes, and cultural differences.

7.12 The absence of a clear definition of the relationship between the primacy of the Roman bishop and ecumenical councils does not mean that there was no creative interaction between primacy and synodality. It was in fact this interaction that often helped the churches to remain faithful to the Gospel. Thus, the fathers of the ecumenical councils – even though they never called the special status of Rome and its bishop

²³ Mansi 13, 208D – 209A; cf. D. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto, 1986), 52.

into question – barely responded to the occasional western voices that sought to understand this primacy in a maximalistic way, and therefore provided a corrective *a silentio* to these voices.

8. The period of estrangement (ninth–fifteenth centuries)

Common Statement: The break between the Greek East and the Latin West was the result of a long process of mutual alienation that took place between the ninth and fifteenth centuries. This was, first of all, culturally determined: whilst Latin was understood only with difficulty in the hellenized Eastern Roman Empire, Greek was hardly understood in the West. Secondly, in political terms, the removal of Eastern Illyricum from papal jurisdiction and the loss of the Byzantine-ruled territories in Italy led to a stronger orientation of the bishops of Rome towards the Carolingian Empire and to their growing mistrust of the Byzantine emperors. Thirdly, from an administrative point of view, the bishop of Rome increasingly undertook functions that were originally carried out at the regional level. In the fourth place, theologically, Byzantine iconoclasm deepened the chasm between Constantinople and Rome. Furthermore, the Filioque controversy came to be perceived as church-dividing by Patriarch Photius of Constantinople (ca. 810-893). The establishment of Latin hierarchical structures after the capture of Jerusalem by the crusaders in 1099 and the conquest of Constantinople in 1204 caused the chasm between East and West to widen even more. Efforts to restore unity, initially between the Latins and the Byzantines and later including other Eastern churches, could not bridge this gap. Even so, the status of the other as a church was not put into question. Later, the condemnation of conciliarism in the West led many theologians to be suspicious of synodality for a long time.

8.1 The hostile attitude of several Byzantine emperors to icons and the transfer of the papal territories in Southern Italy and the Eastern Illyricum to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople contributed to the reorientation of the popes from the Byzantines to the Franks. The crowning of Charlemagne as emperor by Leo III on Christmas Day in the year 800 brought about political tensions between Constantinople and Rome. De facto, there was no longer one empire but two with two emperors. The political division between Rome and Constantinople was the prelude to later church division.

8.2 After Nicaea II (787), Carolingian theologians – though without seeking the support of Rome – started a controversy with ‘the Greeks’

about the veneration of icons. Reciprocal misunderstanding was increased by the first Latin translation of the *Acta synodalia*, which failed to distinguish properly between ‘adoration’ (*latreía*) and ‘veneration’ (*proskýnesis*). The latter was inaccurately rendered as ‘adoration’ instead of ‘veneration’. Then, as early as 807, the first major dispute about the *Filioque* arose between Greek and Latin monks in Jerusalem. This came to a head under Photius, who became Patriarch of Constantinople in 858. However, not all bridges were burned. For example, the first Latin translations of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor were made during this Carolingian period by Johannes Scotus Erigena (ca. 810-77). Furthermore, the Council of Constantinople in 879-80 succeeded in re-establishing communion between Rome and Constantinople by restoring Photius as patriarch.

8.3 The crisis of 1054, often and inaccurately presented as constituting the *definitive* break between Rome and Constantinople, was related to two factors: (a) The advance of the Normans into Southern Italy, which destroyed the political alliance between Rome and Constantinople; (b) Following Byzantine annexation of Armenia in the early eleventh century, the dispute over the use of unleavened bread (*azymes*) in the Eucharist flared up once again, and soon this dispute broadened to include the Roman Church, which also used unleavened bread. A Roman delegation led by Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida travelled to Constantinople to resolve these two disputed issues. There they encountered the resolute resistance of Patriarch Michael Cerularius. The inability of the parties to reach an agreement led to mutual anathemas which, it should be noted, applied only to specific persons and not to the Churches of Constantinople and Rome as a whole. By that time Leo IX, the pope who had sent the Roman delegation, had already died. Until today it is still debated whether the delegation had a right to proceed. When Bari fell to the Normans in 1071, the Byzantines lost their last military bastion in Italy, and Rome gave up any hope for military help from Constantinople against the Normans. The efforts of Patriarch Peter III of Antioch (1052-56) to mediate during the dispute proved unsuccessful.

8.4 Against this background, the primatial function of the bishop of Rome changed fundamentally during the Middle Ages. The end of the Roman Empire in the West in 476 created a power vacuum which was partially filled by the pope, who was thus able to establish himself as

the only point of reference in conflicts in the West. In the investiture dispute (late eleventh – early twelfth centuries) between the papacy and the German empire, the pope won such a clear victory that the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the people was largely wrenched from the emperor's hands. The *Dictatus papae* (1075), an unofficial document whose real context is unclear, reflects this development. In its 27 axioms, it attributes to the pope an authority greater than ever before, including the right to depose the emperor. Although the Gregorian Reform (named after Pope Gregory VII, 1073-85) aimed at ending simony, clerical abuse and the emperor's interference in the life of the church, the *Dictatus* is an example of how one-sided certain aspects of this reform were. These developments understandably irritated the Byzantines.

8.5 The crusades were a consequence of Western political, cultural and theological developments during the eleventh – thirteenth centuries that also included the new self-understanding of the Roman popes. Initially intended to render military assistance to the Byzantines under Emperor Alexios I (1081-1118), they soon became a powerful tool to foster the leadership of the papacy and consolidate the collective identity of the Western Church. The establishment of the crusader states and the development of parallel canonical structures, including the appointment of Latin patriarchs in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Constantinople, were connected to an awareness of the opposition between the Byzantines and the Latins. The violent conquest of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade led to a deep-seated hostility of the Byzantines towards Rome. The transfer of the Byzantine emperors and patriarchs in exile (they resided at Nicaea until the recapture of Constantinople in 1261) and the occupation by Latins (under their own patriarch) of the most important churches and monasteries of Constantinople appeared to make the chasm unbridgeable.

8.6 The greater self-confidence of the Roman popes was also evident in the medieval councils of the Western church. The first four councils which took place in the Lateran (1123, 1139, 1179 and 1215) can be called 'papal councils'. The bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302) of Pope Boniface VIII reinterpreted the 'two-swords' theory to mean that the clergy wielded the 'spiritual sword' whereas the state had to wield its 'worldly sword' for the church. The bull provoked a military reaction from Philip IV the

Fair of France, whose troops attacked the pope in Anagni (1303). In this era, the pope intervened more frequently when there were problems in a local church, without even having to wait for an appeal. His status as “vicarius Christi” was supposed to put him above the bishops, but without altering their status as bishops.

8.7 Among the factors that led to the division between Orthodox and Catholics, one should not underestimate problems of ecclesial jurisdiction (cf. § 8.1) in addition to the dogmatic and liturgical differences such as the *Filioque* and the azymes. The Council of Lyons II in 1274, reflecting the fears of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos of a new Latin occupation of Constantinople after 1261, did not succeed in re-establishing church unity because it involved no substantive discussion and was not received by the Orthodox Church.

8.8 The Council of Constance (1414-18) can be understood as a reaction to the exceptional condition in which the Western church found itself at the time – torn between three ‘obediences’ where neither saints nor theologians, neither the Catholic princes nor the rank and file of the faithful ultimately knew who the real pope was. So-called ‘conciliarism’ developed as a reaction to the Western schism (1378-1417). It was a theological approach meant to overcome major problems generated by an overemphasis on papal primacy and, therefore, stressed the superiority of councils over popes. Although the deposition of two rival popes (John XXIII and Benedict XIII) by a council, and the resignation of Pope Gregory XII, was never questioned, conciliarism, understood as the fundamental superiority of an ecumenical council over the pope, was condemned in practice. The precise validity of the Decrees of Constance is still disputed today. The pope elected by this council in 1417, Martin V, immediately adopted measures against conciliarism in 1418, and his successor, Eugene IV (1431-47), did so even more strongly. Paradoxically, a boost to papal authority was given by the Greeks, who chose to negotiate with the anti-conciliarist party of Eugene IV at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and not with the Council of Basle. Conciliarism was definitely condemned only in 1516 by the Fifth Lateran Council, which resolved ‘that only the contemporary Roman pontiff, as holding authority over all councils, has the full right and power to summon, transfer, and dissolve councils’.²⁴ The debate on conciliarism

²⁴ N. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils I* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 642.

demonstrates that the conception and practice of synodality existed within the Catholic Church; but because of these disputes it was for a long time discredited.

8.9 At the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-39), Greeks and Latins engaged one another on the same level and in this way recognised one another as churches, without being challenged. A union was agreed upon in July 1439. During the same council ephemeral unions with major Oriental churches such as the Armenians and the Copts were also reached. The promulgation of the Union Decree on December 12, 1452, in Hagia Sophia divided the Byzantines even more and increased the antipathy of the Greek clergy and people towards the Latins. The Greeks expected not only to establish union with Rome, but also to receive military aid against the Ottomans. The big army promised by the pope to meet this challenge was defeated by the Ottomans in Varna on the Black Sea in 1444. Shortly afterwards, Constantinople fell to the Ottomans on May 29, 1453. In 1484, thirty years after the fall of Constantinople, all four Eastern patriarchs formally rescinded the union. Thus, the council failed in its attempt to re-establish the unity of the church. Nonetheless, it was used as a model for later partial unions with Rome (cf. § 9.10), and for this precise reason it was viewed increasingly negatively by the Orthodox.

9. The period of confessionalisation (sixteenth – eighteenth centuries)

Common Statement: After the failure of the Union Councils of Lyons II (1274) and Ferrara-Florence (1438/39) and the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans (1453), there was on both sides a gradual hardening of positions, reinforced still more by the Reformation. Orthodox and Catholic disputes with each other and with the Protestants led to the formation of confessional identities, which were characterized by opposition to one another. In the 'symbolic books' that were written at this time following the pattern of the Protestant confessions, Orthodox theologians adopted Catholic arguments against the Protestants and Protestant arguments against Catholics. Furthermore, the 'synodal model' introduced in Russia by Peter the Great was based on Protestant models. In the Catholic Church, post-Tridentine theology adopted an exclusivistic notion of salvation, which enhanced missionary efforts among other Christians. In some regions, partial unions of Orthodox with Rome (Brest, Užhorod, et al.) were signed. Yet, only in the eighteenth

century was sacramental communion, which had remained in practice in certain regions, finally revoked. This confirmed the de facto break that had already existed for centuries.

9.1 During the Reformation, Lutherans sought support from the Orthodox as did, somewhat later, some Anglicans. Although the Orthodox rejected these overtures, they also began to produce ‘confessional books’, which drew not only on traditional Orthodox sources, but also on Protestant and Catholic ones. In the twentieth century, Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) strongly criticized these developments as a deviation (*pseudomorphosis*)²⁵ – a point that historians and theologians continue to debate.

9.2 In the wake of the Reformation, which developed differently in various European countries, both Catholics and Orthodox increasingly adopted confessional models of self-understanding. In spite of this problematic reduction of ecclesial identity to confessional formulae, this period also witnessed creative developments in these churches, especially in spirituality, as well as mutual influence between East and West. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), for example, showed a great concern for being faithful to the spirituality of the Greek fathers, and the Bollandists deeply studied the Eastern fathers and saints. Dominicans such as Jacques Goar (1601-53) and Michel Le Quien (1661-1733) contributed much to the promotion of study of the Christian East. On the Eastern side, Nicodemus the Hagiorite (1749-1809) edited such classics as *The Spiritual Combat*²⁶ of the Theatine Lorenzo Scupoli (ca. 1530-1610). And the *Philokalia*, compiled by Nicodemus the Hagiorite and Macarius of Corinth (1731-1805), first published in Venice (1782), has had a great if uneven impact in the East and the West alike.

9.3 The context in which the Catholics and the Orthodox found themselves led to the development of systems of higher education, such as the Jesuit academies throughout Europe and the academy of Peter Moghila in Kiev. While theology in this period was largely polemical, nevertheless theologians of the stature of the Orthodox Maximos

²⁵ Cf. G. Florovsky, ‘Western Influences in Russian theology’, in: *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, Vol. 4: *Aspects of Church History* (Belmont, MA, 1975), 157-182, here 179.

²⁶ Also known as ‘The Unseen Warfare’: cf. *Unseen Warfare. The Spiritual Combat and Path of Paradise* of Lorenzo Scupoli, edited by Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain and revised by Theophan the Recluse (Crestwood, NY, 1978).

Margounios (1549-1602) and the Catholic Leo Allatius (ca. 1586-1669) openly expressed the substantial convergence of their respective churches.²⁷

9.4 Orthodox polemicists typically used Catholic arguments against the Protestants, as in the dispute about the Eucharist, and Protestant arguments against the Catholics, as in their arguments against papal primacy. Similarly, Catholics used Orthodox arguments against Protestants; for instance, Nikolaos Cabasilas' (ca. 1321-92) statement on the real presence in the Eucharist was cited by the Council of Trent.²⁸

9.5 Although the authority of the papacy was vigorously questioned by the Reformers, the Council of Trent (1545-63) did not deal directly with papal primacy and thus left open the question of the authority of the pope to define doctrine. In practice, however, the reforms in church life initiated by the Council of Trent and implemented by the popes led to a centralization of doctrinal authority in the Catholic Church and a stronger role for the Roman See. Since then loyalty to the papacy has developed into a distinctive mark of Catholic identity.

9.6 In the sixteenth century, that part of Southern Italy known as Magna Graecia was home to tens of thousands of Byzantine Christians. After the Council of Florence, this community, which included newly-arrived refugees from Albania, continued to be an autonomous Church fully in communion with the Church of Rome. It lost its autonomous status due to the post-Tridentine disciplinary reforms, which resulted in the 1596 *Perverbis Instructio* decree. Owing to this decree, the community was submitted to the jurisdiction of the local Latin bishop. Although deprived of its bishop, it nevertheless kept its liturgy and its priests. But without its links to Constantinople and losing its autonomy, it was reduced to be a rite tolerated within the Catholic Church (*ecclesia ritualis*). It was granted a titular bishop, known as *ordinant*, who resided in Rome, and whose sole function was to ordain the community's priests and deacons in the Byzantine rite. This development provided a model for uniatism (cf. § 9.10).

²⁷ Cf. Margounios' comment on Saint Augustine's *De trinitate* (1588), ed. G. Fedalto (Brescia, 1963); Leo Allatius, *De ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua consensione* (Cologne, 1648).

²⁸ Cf. S. Ehses (ed.), *Concilium tridentinum VIII/5: Acta* (Freiburg i.Br., 1919), 912,39 – 913,1. The Council of Trent speaks of Nicholas Cabasilas in the context of its doctrine on the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

9.7 The fact that the Catholic Church was progressively losing ground as a political agent abetted this process. Refusal to deal with the Protestants isolated the representatives of Rome in the bargaining to end the Thirty Years War (1618-48), so that even Catholic states frequently set their own interests before those of the church. The Catholic Church increasingly turned inward, developing new forms of piety such as certain Marian devotions. While huge territories in Europe were lost for the Catholic Church because of the Reformation, Catholic church leaders were quick to stress the importance of evangelizing the recently discovered continents.

9.8 In early eighteenth-century Russia, Peter the Great tried to modernize the country according to European models, a process that affected the church in many ways. He introduced the 'synodal' system of church government and also sought to raise the educational level of the clergy. This led, on the one hand, to the concentration of church administration in synodal structures (patterned after Protestant models rather than those of the Early Church), in which the interests of the state played a decisive role. On the other hand – likewise according to Western church models – theological formation improved, laying the foundation for the achievements of Russian theology in the nineteenth century.

9.9 In the Ottoman Empire, the structure of the Rum-Millet led to a centralization of the Orthodox Church. The Ottoman era, consequently, witnessed an enhancement of the importance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the expense of the other Orthodox patriarchates, which according to Ottoman practice were effectively subordinated to the Ecumenical Patriarch. This would have far-reaching consequences for the church in the nineteenth century, when national movements within the Ottoman Empire became stronger, especially in the Balkans. Those Orthodox who were not Greek no longer saw in the Patriarch of Constantinople someone who represented them, especially not in their political efforts to achieve national emancipation.

9.10 Throughout this period, all attempts to re-establish unity with Rome in Eastern European countries led only to partial unions, which split up the local communities into Catholics and Orthodox. The first who tried to restore communion with Rome were the Orthodox in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth who were motivated by a wish to

attain equality with the Polish nobility. In 1595 they sent two bishops to Rome for negotiations, but, although they signed an agreement with Rome, not all bishops accepted it at the Synod of Brest (1596), because they expected to be treated on the basis of the council of Florence, not that of Trent. Next came the Uskoki, the Orthodox who fled from Ottoman rule in Serbia. In 1611 they formed a small Catholic Eastern Church in Marča in Croatia, retaining their rite and remaining in communion with both the Orthodox patriarchate of Peć (Serbia) and the pope. In 1646, in the same spirit of the Union of Brest, the eparchy of Mukačevo (now in Transcarpathian Ukraine), then divided between Hungary and Transylvania, joined, in the Synod of Užhorod, the Catholic Church. In 1700, a part of the Romanian-speaking believers in Transylvania (as of 1918 part of Romania) joined the Catholic Church, as a reaction to the mounting pressure of the Calvinist princes, but likewise encouraged by Jesuit proselytism. Given the exclusivistic ecclesiology which came to dominate after Trent as a reaction to the Protestant Reformation, both Catholics and Orthodox questioned whether a community in schism could serve as an instrument of salvation.

9.11 In other parts of the Eastern Orthodox world, e.g., in the Mediterranean area, Orthodox and Catholics had, despite undeniable tensions, times of relatively peaceful coexistence. It was only in July 1729 that the *Propaganda fide*, the Roman congregation for the missionaries, decreed an interdiction of any *communicatio in sacris* with Christians who were not in communion with Rome.²⁹ This decree is important because it indicates that until that time some form of liturgical and sacramental sharing between Orthodox and Catholics was still in practice (otherwise it would not have been necessary to forbid it). The response to the Roman decree from the Orthodox side was published in July 1755, when the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem declared that they regarded all sacraments outside the Orthodox Church as invalid and would receive all non-Orthodox converting to Orthodoxy only through baptism.³⁰ The Russian Orthodox Church, however, continued to receive converts from the Catholic Church by confession alone.

²⁹ Cf. Mansi 46, 99-104.

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 38, 619.

10. The period of ecclesiological introversion (19th century)

Common Statement: In the nineteenth century the Catholic Church in Western Europe was challenged in three ways: ecclesiological, especially by Gallicanism; politically by increasing state control of the church; and intellectually by modern scientific developments. A reaction to these challenges was the ultramontanist movement, which would give an exaggerated importance to papal primacy, as expressed in the definitions of the First Vatican Council. However, an adequate understanding of the council's definitions should ensue from a careful reading of its proceedings, and not from its maximalist interpretation.

In the nineteenth century, the emphasis on the concept of nation in the political sphere led certain Orthodox peoples to overemphasize the ethnic principle at the expense of the territorial one, thus favouring the formation of national churches. A synod of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs in Constantinople in 1872 reacted by condemning ethnophyletism. Nonetheless, the ethnic ecclesiastical principle continues to have an adverse effect on the witness of the Orthodox Church for unity down to the present day.

10.1 In Gallicanism (from Gaul, meaning France), a concept that goes back to the seventeenth century, the concept of conciliarism, aiming at subordinating the pope to the council, was revived and transformed in the nineteenth century by placing an emphasis on the autonomy of national churches. The Gallican ideas, especially widespread in France, took a similar form in Febronianism in Germany (named after Febronius, pseudonym of the auxiliary bishop of Trier, Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim, 1701-90). Against the background of the debate about conciliarism in the late Middle Ages, both Gallicanism and Febronianism were condemned by the popes of the time.

10.2 In the political realm, the Catholic Church found itself confronted by fundamental changes in the relationship between state and church, such as the instrumentalization of the church by the state in France and in the Habsburg empire (as a consequence of 'Josephinism', named after Emperor Joseph II, ruled 1780-90), and the threat of losing the Papal States. In addition, the church was challenged by the growing influence of liberalism, which was associated in many European countries with the strong anticlericalism of governments with a secular approach.

10.3 The intellectual challenge consisted in the development of the modern natural sciences, in the criticism of religion in philosophy and

the arts, and in the application of the historical-critical method to Holy Scripture. The scientific progress made in archaeology, geology, history, etc., raised questions about the traditional formulations of the faith; there was an urgent need to find a way to express it adequately in a new situation. This challenge called for a reconsideration of the relationship between faith and reason.

10.4 In reaction to these challenges, a movement called Ultramontanism arose in the countries north of the Alps that exaggerated papal primacy. Supporters of this movement were convinced that the leadership of the pope, reigning in Rome 'beyond the mountains' (ultramontane), was necessary. However, Ultramontanism was not only a movement of reaction but can also be considered to be an adaptation by the church to the constraints of modern society. Through a re-orientation towards Rome, the church was trying to respond to the French Revolution and its consequences: the disappearance of the Holy Roman Empire, the re-drawing of the map of the French dioceses, and the deposition of all their bishops. Yet, these consequences paradoxically led to a tremendous strengthening of the powers of papacy.

10.5 The ultramontane movement, supported by new forms of communication which made it possible for papal declarations to be received directly by a wider public, strengthened the emotional ties of many faithful with the bishop of Rome. Under Gregory XVI (1831-46) and Pius IX (1846-78) the papacy itself became one of the main actors in the ultramontane movement. In addition, Rome's central role was reinforced by the missionary expansion of that time which relativized the importance of national borders. The pope increasingly became the primary figure symbolizing the Catholic Church, with whom many Catholics worldwide identified.

10.6 Certain ideas of the ultramontane movement were reflected in the definitions of the First Vatican Council. The doctrinal definitions of Vatican I can only be understood correctly by taking into account their historical context, which had a strong influence on the text. The formulation of the dogmas regarding universal jurisdiction and infallibility may plausibly be seen as a response to the challenges of that time, continuing the centralizing tendency of previous centuries and struggling against inner-church rationalism and the assaults of unbelief spreading throughout Europe. Due to the changes in church structures

in the course of the nineteenth century that resulted from politics, the Catholic Church at the First Vatican Council enhanced the authority of the pope in order to preserve the unity of the church at critical moments.

10.7 Contrary to the prevailing popular understanding of Vatican I, and according to a careful reading of the proceedings of the council, the dogma of universal jurisdiction does not make the pope an absolute monarch, because he remains bound by divine revelation and natural law and has to respect the rights of the bishops and the decisions of the councils. As a matter of fact, Vatican I did not dogmatise the proposition that ‘the pope is infallible’; rather, in a much longer definition it specified under what conditions the pope can express the doctrine of the church in an infallible way. According to the self-understanding of the council, the statement that papal definitions are irreversible ‘of themselves and not by the consent of the church’ (*ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*) does not mean that he can define a doctrine in isolation from the community of the church. The pope does not pronounce a new teaching but only gives a more detailed formulation of a doctrine already rooted in the faith of the church (*depositum fidei*).

10.8 For an adequate interpretation of the definitions of the First Vatican Council it is necessary to know the history of the document (*Textgeschichte*), especially the background that conditioned the choice of terms used. In this respect, it is methodologically necessary to have recourse to the explanations which preceded the vote on those documents. Only in this way is it possible to grasp the exact meaning of the wording intended by the council fathers. In addition, the history of reception, namely the subsequent interpretation of the resolutions by the Catholic Church’s magisterium, is of the greatest significance for an adequate understanding of the council’s teaching. Within the history of reception the ‘Response of the German bishops to Bismarck’s Circular Dispatch of 1875’³¹ is of crucial importance, because it was received by Pius IX, the pope who convened the council, as its authentic

³¹ An English translation of this German document has been published as an appendix to H. Küng, *The Council, Reform and Reunion* (New York, 1961), 193-99 [Appendix I: ‘A Declaration by the German Bishops on the Relation between the Episcopate and the Papal Primacy’].

interpretation.³² According to this document, the jurisdictional primacy of the pope does not reduce the ordinary authority of the bishops, because the episcopate is based on ‘the same divine institution’³³ as the papal office. Moreover, papal infallibility ‘covers precisely the same field as the infallible teaching office of the Church in general, and is limited to what is contained in the Scriptures and Tradition and the doctrinal decisions already made by the Church’s teaching office’.³⁴

10.9 The interruption and abrupt end of the council – as a result of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and the subsequent annexation of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy – contributed to an imbalance in its ecclesiology: the treatment of papal primacy independently of the episcopate and of the mystery of the church as a whole (cf. § 11.12). Therefore, the First Vatican Council does not provide a complete ecclesiology, especially with regard to the role of bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs, synods, the laity, etc. The council had other limitations as well: first, its use of highly specialized canonical terms often carrying different meanings in everyday life and hence susceptible to erroneous interpretation; second, a theology insufficiently informed by Holy Scripture and church history.

10.10 Historical investigation leads one to observe that many of the ways in which Vatican I was received, especially maximalistic ones, were not faithful to the definitions of the council. For example, the infallibility of the pope is not the source of the indefectibility of the church, but the other way round. Another example is that the doctrinal statements of the pope do not claim infallibility, except for *ex cathedra* definitions. Only if one is conscious of these differences between the original intention and the ensuing reception is it possible to overcome the subsequent apologetic attitudes.

10.11 Although the First Vatican Council was primarily a response to the phenomena in Western society that have been mentioned above, one should not forget its Eastern dimension. The ecclesiological approach of the Christian East, which places more emphasis on the rights of the local churches, was raised at the council primarily by some of the

³² Cf. Pius IX., *Litterae apostolicae ad Germaniae archiepiscopos episcopos etc.*, in: *Irénikon* 29 (1956) 148-49.

³³ Cf. ‘Declaration by the German Bishops’, 196.

³⁴ Cf. ‘Declaration by the German Bishops’, 198.

Eastern Catholic bishops present there. But they, like a minority of the Latin bishops, failed to get the council to consider their concerns.

10.12 The teachings of Vatican I embodied in the constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (1870) elicited objections from a significant number of Catholic bishops, priests, and faithful. Within the Catholic Church, it was only after some years that the decisions of the council were accepted by all the bishops in spite of their persisting concerns. Some Catholic priests and laypeople who regarded the council as a deviation from the tradition of the church eventually founded the Old Catholic Church, which in turn had an intensive dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church. During these conversations, for example at the Bonn conferences in 1874 and 1875, it became clear that many differences between the churches in East and West (e.g., the *Filioque* issue) could be solved more easily if they were discussed apart from the question of primacy.

10.13 An increased respect of the popes for the traditions of the Christian East can be observed after Vatican I (cf. the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Orientalium dignitas*, 1894). But this remained within a unionist framework that was unacceptable to the Orthodox and, from a contemporary point of view, not suitable for the restoration of communion between our churches (cf. the encyclical of the same pope *Satis cognitum*, 1896). Analogous positions can also be found in official texts of the Orthodox Church of that time (cf. the encyclical of Patriarch Anthimos VII of Constantinople, 1895). These documents are based on an exclusivistic ecclesiology of 'return' and illustrate a condescending attitude expressed in the conviction of each church that it alone possesses the fullness of the truth, and that the other church is defective in some way. Neither side at that time was willing to genuinely consider the position of the other.

10.14 Just as in the West, also in the East the Enlightenment challenged established church institutions. The Greek-speaking world had come into contact with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Initially, there were some positive reactions, and distinguished scholars (many of whom were members of the Orthodox clergy or monks) translated a series of works by Western authors on science, mathematics, astronomy, etc., while others composed similar works themselves. Many of these authors also engaged with the French and German Enlightenment, while some of them went even further back to

Descartes (1596-1650) and Leibniz (1646-1716). On the other hand, there was a gradual reaction against some aspects of the Enlightenment, such as autonomy of the individual, resistance to tradition, materialism, and anti-clericalism, which initially emerged within the circles of the admirers of the scientific achievements of the Enlightenment and eventually provoked a negative attitude on the part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. As a consequence, the Enlightenment became suspicious for many, and some of its supporters were not allowed to teach in higher church schools. Another group of theologians gradually emerged who were hostile to the Enlightenment and Western culture as a whole. Traces of this conflict can be found throughout the Orthodox world even today.

10.15 Russian religious philosophy of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries became a significant component of the Orthodox spiritual revival of the epoch. It was focused on the discussions between 'Slavophiles' and 'Westerners' and initiated a broad and creative comprehension of contemporary political, social and cultural phenomena including such important concepts as Khomiakov's 'sobornost' or Soloviev's philosophy of 'pan-unity'. Furthermore, it gave an important impulse to the later development of theological thought in the Russian diaspora.

10.16 On the threshold of the twentieth century, the Orthodox in the Near East were actively involved in the cultural and scientific revival of the Arab World, usually referred to with the Arabic term *Nahda* (renaissance). Orthodox intellectuals advocated the idea of an encompassing Arab identity irrespective of religious differentiation and propagated the ideals of the French Enlightenment with regard to education, progress, and science. This pronounced secular orientation was intended primarily to find a common platform with Muslims apart from the religious realm and to pave the way for a societal model based on reason. As far as the church was concerned, the *Nahda* proved to be an ambivalent phenomenon: it contributed, on one hand, to the creation of church councils consisting mainly of lay people and to the implementation of educational and humanitarian institutions such as schools and orphanages, but, on the other hand, it widened the gap between lay intellectuals and a clerical class largely uneducated or deeply absorbed by polemics with Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

10.17 The formation of national autocephalous churches in South-Eastern Europe was closely connected with the establishment of national states in the nineteenth century. Different but interrelated factors such as territory, ethnicity, state, politics, and language all played a role. Further clarification is needed with regard to the extent of their ecclesiological relevance. The national churches were expected to assist in the formation of the national states and the consolidation of their national identity.

10.18 The development of national autocephalous churches in South-Eastern Europe (Greek, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian, as well as the Albanian Church in the twentieth century) followed different patterns, but also exhibited several common traits: the majority of South-European ethnic groups lived in more than one country, with the result that several church structures emerged for each of them. Moreover, the governments of the newly-established national states wanted autocephalous churches on their territory, which led to discussions on whether the church in the new state should end its relationship with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Bulgarians, however, followed a somewhat different path: in their case, the church autonomy, namely the creation of the Bulgarian exarchate by the Sultan, preceded the independence of the Bulgarian state.

10.19 Concerning the recognition of autocephaly, it should be kept in mind that all these newly-established churches had been under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Ecumenical Patriarch, together with the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and the Archbishop of Cyprus, reacted to the Bulgarian aspirations for autocephaly by condemning ethnophyletism at a synod in Constantinople in 1872; they refused to accept a separate jurisdiction for Orthodox Bulgarians within the Ottoman Empire because that set the ethnic principle above the territorial. This led to a break in communion that was overcome only after the Second World War. After the complete independence of the new national states, the autocephaly of the new national churches was ultimately recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the basis of the territorial principle.

10.20 All this led to a change in the understanding of autocephaly during the nineteenth century. It was no longer considered to be a matter of internal church order but became a sign of independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Ecclesial autocephaly was seen as

parallel to state sovereignty. One consequence of this development was confusion between the ethnic and the territorial principles in church structure. This became a problem because the geographic boundaries of ethnic groups and the borders of states did not always coincide.

10.21 Within Orthodox theology there have been ongoing debates about the meaning of the ethnic principle for ecclesiology. This has taken place above all in the context of discussions regarding the method of granting autocephaly to a regional Orthodox church, and there is no agreement to this day. Consequently, the topic was dropped from the agenda of the Orthodox Council in Crete (2016), which dealt only with autonomy within an autocephalous church.

11. The period of ecclesiological renaissance (twentieth and twenty-first centuries)

Common Statement: In the twentieth century, both Catholics and Orthodox have striven to return to the sources and to foster an ecclesiology that focuses more on the model of the Early Church. The elaboration of Eucharistic Ecclesiology in the Orthodox Church has led to a theological questioning of the influence of ethnic and national principles. The need for a more intensive Orthodox cooperation and a debate over the issues of modernity and post-modernity has been increasingly felt in many Orthodox circles. On the other hand, the rediscovery of the church fathers, the Liturgical Movement, and the reception of Eucharistic Ecclesiology have enabled the Catholic Church to overcome a narrow juridical understanding of the church. This is particularly reflected in the documents of the Second Vatican Council such as Sacrosanctum Concilium and Lumen Gentium. Both developments contain elements that can help to overcome the ecclesiological divergences between Catholics and Orthodox.

11.1 The Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of 1917-18 was a response both to external historical circumstances (democratic upheavals in society, etc.) and to the necessity of reforms within the church. The council consisted not only of bishops, but also of priests and lay persons. The alienation between bishops and parishes seemed to be so great that urgent pastoral questions had to be discussed and decided upon with the participation of priests and lay people. At the same time, it was acknowledged, even within the hierarchy, that priests and lay people needed to be involved in the process of church reform.

This participation was theologically founded on the concept of *sobornost* and the Pauline image of the church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27).

11.2 Against the background of two hundred years of state domination of the church (the Synodal Epoch) the Russian Local Council of 1917-18 developed a pattern of church leadership that combined primatial (restoration of the Patriarchate) and synodal elements. Because of the Bolshevik revolution, this pattern could not be implemented in the Russian Church. Nonetheless, it may still serve as a model for the relationship between primacy and synodality.

11.3 The various Orthodox Churches differ in their internal organization, as defined in the statutes of each local church. All have an essentially conciliar structure, with a synod meeting on a regular basis and presided over by a primate. However some churches are highly centralized, with great authority vested in the patriarch, while others give greater authority to a synod. The choice of primates takes place in various ways, sometimes by an episcopal synod alone, sometimes by the convocation of a council involving lower clergy and laity as well. Similarly, the way in which bishops are chosen varies greatly, from election exclusively by a synod of bishops to nomination by a diocesan assembly, composed of clergy and laity, with subsequent confirmation by the synod. In some churches, lay persons have no role in church governance, while in others lay people, together with priests, play an active role.

11.4 Just as there is variety in local structures, so there are differences among the local Orthodox Churches in their views on universal primacy. With regard to this issue, the Orthodox usually refer to the expression 'primacy of honor' (*presbeia tēs timēs*)³⁵, but they differ in how they understand this term. For example, the Russian Orthodox Church tends to understand universal primacy as being purely honorific, while the Patriarchate of Constantinople tends to see it as implying the right to convene councils, grant autocephaly, hear appeals, etc. Significantly, this disagreement has surfaced in the context of discussions on primacy and synodality with the Catholic Church, indicating that it has relevance not only internally for the Orthodox, but also in Orthodox-Catholic discussions on ecclesiology.

³⁵ Cf. First Council of Constantinople (381), canon 3.

11.5 Personal encounters with representatives of the Western churches – partly as a result of Russian emigration after the Bolshevik revolution and partly in the context of the ecumenical movement – led Orthodox theologians in the twentieth century to reflect more deeply on how the Orthodox Church understands itself. One of the most important results of that period is the concept of *Eucharistic Ecclesiology* – among whose major representatives are Nikolaj Afanas'ev (1893-1966), Alexander Schmemmann (1921-83), and John Zizioulas (b. 1931) – which sees the local church, gathered around its bishop, as the starting point and central focus of ecclesiological reflection. This vision led to a deeper consideration of the relation between unity and diversity within the Orthodox Church, which in turn contributed to questioning the narrow, nineteenth-century conceptions of national churches.

11.6 Within the Orthodox Church during the twentieth century, the awareness grew of the need for Pan-Orthodox cooperation. The encyclical letter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Orthodox sister churches (1902) already gives witness to this. The sixteenth centenary of the first Council of Nicaea (1925) gave a new impetus to the discussion about whether it would be possible to convoke an ecumenical council in the twentieth century. The answer, after intensive debates during the First Congress of Orthodox Theologians in Athens (1936), was negative.³⁶ The urgent need for Orthodox cooperation was raised again in the Pan-Orthodox Conferences (1961-68) convoked by Patriarch Athenagoras. Here and in a series of other Pan-Orthodox Conferences that followed, an agenda for a future council of all Orthodox Churches was developed. The assembly of primates of the fourteen autocephalous churches of the Orthodox Church, held in Chambésy in January 2016, decided to convoke the 'Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church', but shortly before the gathering four churches (Antioch, Russia, Bulgaria, Georgia) withdrew for various reasons. Nonetheless, the other ten autocephalous churches met on Pentecost 2016 in Crete, and the six documents earmarked for discussion at Chambésy were approved with some modifications.³⁷ While the documents and the encyclical of the council

³⁶ Cf. H. Alivisatos (ed.), *Procès-verbaux du premier congrès des théologiens orthodoxes à Athènes* (Athens, 1939).

³⁷ All documents are available on the council's website: <https://www.holycouncil.org> (February 7, 2018); see also: A. Melloni (ed.), *The*

address some of the problems Orthodoxy faces in the twentieth century, an obviously important aspect of the council in Crete was the serious effort to exercise synodality in both theory and practice. During the council, suggestions were made to hold this type of assembly every seven or ten years, and this may be one of the most important contributions of the gathering.

11.7 In the Catholic Church, the first half of the twentieth century was marked, on the one hand, by increasing centralization based on a maximalist interpretation of the papal dogmas of the First Vatican Council. This was expressed, for example, in the promulgation of the code of canon law (*Codex iuris canonici*, 1917) which was binding for all Catholics throughout the world (and for all Christians from the Roman point of view). On the other hand, new ecclesial and theological tendencies developed in individual local churches (e.g., the *Liturgical Movement* in France, Belgium, Austria, and Germany, or the *Nouvelle Théologie* in France) which led to a rediscovery of the liturgy of the Early Church and of the theology of the fathers. The protagonists of this theological renaissance (e.g., Lambert Beauduin, Odo Casel, Romano Guardini, Pius Parsch for the *Liturgical Movement*; and Yves Congar, Jean Daniélou, Henri de Lubac for the *Nouvelle Théologie*) were stimulated not least by their contacts with Orthodox theologians who had found a new home in the West. The theological stimuli which came from these circles contributed to gradually overcoming the narrow approach to the papacy in Catholic ecclesiology of the nineteenth century, and thus prepared the ground for the Second Vatican Council.

11.8 The Second Vatican Council was marked by the desire of the council fathers 'to impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful' and 'to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1). This document, the 'Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy', was the first document adopted by the Second Vatican Council. It took up liturgical concerns which had already been prepared over a longer period and expressed the desire for a renewal of Christian life. In this sense the council understood itself as a pastoral council, not seeking to issue condemnations (*anathemata*) but rather to present church teaching to the modern world in a positive

Great Councils of the Orthodox Churches. Crete 2016 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), (CCCOGD IV.3).

way.³⁸ While there were no new dogmatic definitions, the council's documents are binding and guiding for the Catholic Church, but beyond that they also have ecumenical relevance.

11.9 One of the major decisions in the context of Vatican II was the so-called lifting of the anathemas of 1054. On the eve of the official end of Vatican II (December 7, 1965), both Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras consigned to oblivion the anathemas in a simultaneous ceremony at the Vatican and the Phanar. This symbolic act, though important, was not sufficient to resolve the schism if only because no final break of church communion actually occurred in 1054 (cf. § 8.3).

11.10 The Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, refers back to the early church and emphasizes the sacramentality of the ordination of the bishop and the significance of the collegiality of the bishops, thus leading Catholic ecclesiology closer to the Orthodox position (cf. *LG* 21-22). While insisting that the pope retains all the essential prerogatives of his office, this constitution, by means of structural changes, strengthened the office of the bishop. Nonetheless, the competences of bishops' conferences have not been clearly delineated. This is why many Catholic theologians regard these competences in their current form as unsatisfactory. In addition, the implementation of *Lumen Gentium* in canon law only partially corresponds to the ideals of the council. These discrepancies have engendered a continuing discussion within the Catholic Church about the relationship between primacy and synodality.

11.11 In its Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, the Second Vatican Council clearly strengthened their status within the Catholic Church. However, this decree did not succeed in clearly defining the significance of the Eastern Catholic Churches and their relationship to the Latin Church. As a consequence, the wish of the Eastern Catholic Patriarchates and Major Archbishoprics to extend their jurisdiction beyond their territorial boundaries, in order to preserve the spiritual traditions of their faithful who had emigrated, is still controversial today. This is comparable to the difficulties concerning territorial jurisdiction that the Orthodox diaspora is facing in the West. It is notable that *Orientalium*

³⁸ Cf. Opening address of Pope John XXIII 'Gaudet mater ecclesia', in: *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, Vol. I (Bologna, 1976), 26-53.

Ecclesiarum indicates the temporary character of its juridical provisions until unity with the Orthodox is regained (cf. *OE* 30).

11.12 Vatican II raised the question of how the episcopate is understood and how it is related to the papal ministry, an issue that was not addressed at Vatican I, and tried to find an answer. In doing so, the fathers of the council took up the definitions of Vatican I on papal primacy and supplemented them by emphasizing the role of bishops.³⁹ A number of reservations on papal primacy which had been expressed at Vatican I by the minority were also now taken into consideration. This was intended to create a balance between primacy and collegiality.

11.13 The reception of Vatican I by the Second Vatican Council sketches out a new equilibrium that once again values the episcopate and the communion of local churches. The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, which shows great esteem for the Orthodox Churches, encourages a dialogue ‘on an equal footing’ nourished by a historical approach. In addition, the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) issued by John Paul II (1978-2005) proposes a ‘patient and fraternal dialogue’ with other churches about the forms that the exercise of Roman primacy could take in a reunited church.⁴⁰

11.14 Vatican II, in which Orthodox observers participated and introduced the perspective of Orthodox theology into the discussion of the drafts, was in general welcomed by the Orthodox as a positive step in the direction of conciliarity. However, from the Orthodox viewpoint, it did not go far enough in reconsidering Vatican I’s dogmas of the infallibility and primacy of the pope. Vatican II also had the effect of stimulating reflection by Orthodox theologians on the issues their own church was facing, such as the possible convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Council, and eventually made possible an official theological dialogue with the Catholic Church.

11.15 The history of the reception of Vatican II up to now shows that this council has not yet fully succeeded in balancing the existing tendency towards too much centralization in the Catholic Church. Difficulties in embracing a stronger synodality have led Pope Francis to lay insistently

³⁹ Cf. G. Philips, ‘Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. History of the Constitution’, in: *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I (New York, 1967), 105-37, here 105; Karl Rahner’s comment on *Lumen Gentium* 22: *ibid.*, 195-205.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ut Unum Sint* 95 and 96.

more stress on free synodal consultation, especially by recognizing the significant role of bishops' conferences and of the Synod of Bishops. Moreover, we note that the various autocephalous and autonomous Orthodox Churches themselves also face difficulties in their mutual cooperation and in the practical implementation of synodality. Thus, Orthodox and Catholics both face the challenge of integrating primacy and synodality, and it would be useful and productive for both churches to address these issues jointly, so as to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

IV. Systematic Considerations

12. Koinonia/Communio as a basis of ecclesiology

Common Statement: The rediscovery of the ancient church sources in the twentieth century has led Catholics and Orthodox to realize the extent to which the church is fulfilled in the Eucharist. This is reflected in the Greek term 'koinonia', referring both to sacramental communion (communicatio in sacris) as well as to the communion of saints (communio sanctorum). Eucharistic communion is an expression of the nature of the church. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the church shows itself to be the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. When the Eucharist is celebrated, the church is wholly present but it is not the whole church. So the Eucharist also points to the overarching unity of the whole church. This sacramental understanding of church provides the theological foundation for the interrelationship between primacy and synodality as the structural principle of the church on the local, regional, and universal levels.

12.1 In the New Testament, the church is described as the new people of God (cf. Acts 13:16-39; 15:13-21; Rom. 9:24-30), the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-27), and the temple of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19). The body of Christ is the Apostle Paul's favourite image for the church and he relates it to the Eucharistic body of Christ: 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. 10:17). In the letter to the Colossians, the term is also applied directly to the church: 'He is the head of the body but the body is the church' (Col. 1:18). The First Epistle of St John makes the understanding of *koinonia/communio* in the New Testament particularly clear: 'that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also

to you, so that you may have fellowship (*koinonia*) with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3).

12.2 The New Testament term *koinonia* has a variety of aspects. It includes both communion with God through Christ by which the faithful become children of God who share the same Spirit, as well as communion with one another. This communion with God and with one another is fulfilled in the Eucharistic *koinonia*. The Eucharistic sharing is the visible expression of the full unity in Christ through the Spirit.

12.3 The mystery of the Church is rooted in the mystery of the Holy Trinity (cf. John 17). Communion with the Triune God is the foundation of the life of the church. The Holy Spirit as source and bestower of different charisms for the edification of the community (cf. 1 Cor. 12:1-11) is the prime agent of *koinonia*. The Trinitarian roots of *koinonia* are a frequent subject in the writings of the church fathers.⁴¹ The first two of the four marks of the church mentioned in the Nicene Creed (one, holy) are also derived from the church's communion with the Triune God.

12.4 The *koinonia* of the church is nourished by the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments, under the leadership of the church's ministers chosen to serve both of them. The reality of the church as participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit becomes fully manifest in the light of the Eucharistic mystery in which the *koinonia* of the church is experienced.

12.5 According to the common faith of Orthodox and Catholics, the church is a fellowship of baptized believers gathered in the Holy Spirit around Christ present in the assembly. This requires communion among all the local churches, presided over by a bishop. Each congregation that celebrates the Eucharist under the presidency of a bishop or a priest in communion with him is ultimately aware that it is within the *koinonia* of the whole church.

12.6 The recognition of the full reality of the Eucharistic mystery is the foundation of the mutual recognition of churches as the Church of Jesus Christ. From a Catholic point of view, 'through the celebration of the

⁴¹ Cf. Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu sancto* 15, 30, 38, 59; Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium III*, in: W. Jaeger (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* 2 (Leiden, 1960), 247; John of Damascus, *Expositio Fidei* 8, in: B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskus* 2 (Berlin, 1973), 24.

Eucharist in each of these [the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox] churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature' (*UR* 15). In the Orthodox Church, there are different viewpoints regarding the recognition of the ecclesial status and the validity of the sacraments of the Catholic Church; so far, there is no full agreement about this among the various Orthodox local churches.

12.7 The understanding of the church as a *koinonia* does not only have consequences for the church itself and its inner life, or for inter-church relations. It also implies a relationship with 'the world', i.e., with society and with those who are not within the community of the Church. Some Orthodox theologians have adopted the notion of 'the liturgy after the liturgy'⁴² for this, which means that *koinonia* finds its expression also in everyday life of the Christian, and that the Eucharistic gathering has its continuation – though in a different way – in the life of Christians in the world: The *koinonia* of the Church enables Christians to act as Christians.⁴³ To live as Christian in the world is not separated from the Eucharistic experience and belonging, but is rather its expansion into God's creation. The Catholic Church has expressed similar views in Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*.

13. Authority in the church in service of the community

Common Statement: Every service for the unity of the church needs authority which can be exercised in both a primatial and a synodal way. Authority of this kind is based on a gift from God, the charism of leadership (cf. Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:7-12), and its tasks include the proclamation of the faith, the celebration of the sacraments, the preservation of the doctrine, and the guidance of God's people. The authority of the 'First' (Primus/Protos) is a personal form of authority in service of the community. Christ himself has given us an example of how authority is to be understood: as a service that includes the willingness to practice self-renunciation ('kenosis', cf. Phil. 2:5-11; Matt. 23:8-12). Primatial and synodal forms of authority are recognized as such through a process of reception that reveals the authority of the whole people of

⁴² Cf., for example, Ion Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy* (Geneva, 1996).

⁴³ Cf. the document 'The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church' (2000) and the document of the Council of Crete on 'The Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today's World' (2016).

God (plērōma) preserving true doctrine by its 'sense of the faith' (sensus fidelium).

13.1 In every human society, the phenomena of authority and power exist. A distinction should be made between these two phenomena. Authority concerns the influence of a person or an institution that is grounded on tradition or competence and the prestige that accrues from it. Power, on the other hand, has to do with the ability to employ certain means and procedures in order to bring about decisions. Both can all too easily be misused.

13.2 The notions of authority and power acquire a particular significance within the Church. Power (*dynamis*) appears firstly as an attribute of God (cf. Rev. 7:12). Scriptural texts present his power over all 'gods' and over creation (cf. Ps. 82:1). In this sense, his supreme power can be identified with God's glory (cf. Ps. 63:2; Heb. 1:3). This power is always related to his love for Israel and all humanity, his gift of salvation, his forgiveness, and, especially, his mercy (cf. Hos. 2:19). The New Testament regards God's power as acting in Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24). The risen Christ, who had received from God full authority (*exousía*), empowered the apostles in and with his Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 28:18-19). Following Jesus' commandment, authority in the Church must not be understood as domination but as service to God's people based on the power of the Cross.

13.3 In the Church, there are persons with different charisms who receive and exert authority in various areas, as Ephesians 4:11 shows: 'And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.' This suggests that authority in the church should always be linked to the community. This applies to the ordained ministry, more particularly to the ministry of the bishop which has acquired a special significance for church life throughout the centuries. However, figures such as Elder Silouan of Mount Athos and Mother Teresa show that spiritual authority does not presuppose ordained ministry.

13.4 As Christ is the head of the Church, he is the source of all authority within the Church, irrespective of whether this is exercised by one (the primate), by some (the synod), or by all (the people of God). The authority of a synod and of the one who presides over it is rooted in the mystery of the Church as the body of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Synodality, as an essential dimension of the Church, reflects her

mystery, and, as such, is connected to the authority of the whole people of God who, through their 'sense of the faith', aroused and sustained by the Holy Spirit, are able to discern what is truly of God.

13.5 Any use of power in the Church is meaningful only if exercised according to the model of the crucified Christ, as a service and not as a way of dominating over others (cf. Mark 10:42-45 par; John 13:1-17). This applies also to the exercise of primacy at its various levels. The means at the disposal of those who exercise primacy are to be employed only in this spirit. This includes the duty of accountability to the community at the different levels.

14. Theological interpretation of primacy

Common Statement: Christ is the sole head of the church. He is the example for all those who exercise the ministry of governance in the church. Holy Scripture testifies that, however fluid forms of governance might have been, they were nonetheless indispensable for the Christian communities right from the beginning. Patristic testimonies from the second century onwards point to the fact that the charism of presiding was entrusted to a person whose particular task was to witness to, promote, and protect the unity of the church. This task is performed at the various levels of ecclesial life in different ways and with different emphases.

14.1 In the New Testament, a series of passages shows that the Christian communities had leaders from the beginning. In one of the oldest of these texts, the Apostle Paul encourages community members to acknowledge and respect their leaders (*proistamenoï*): 'But we beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you' (1 Thess. 5:12). Other texts illustrate the existence of early forms of ministry exercised by persons called bishops and deacons (e.g., Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1). The New Testament offers no consistent image of these ministries and leaves open many questions concerning their precise functions.

14.2 According to the New Testament, during his earthly ministry Jesus chose as his constant companions the Twelve, gave them power (*dynamis*) and authority (*exousia*) to preach the Gospel, to heal and to drive out evil spirits (Luke 9:1), and promised that they would be the eschatological judges over Israel (cf. Matt. 19:28; see also Rev. 21:12). Three of them, Peter, John, and James, held a special position insofar as

they were chosen to be with Jesus on special occasions such as the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-10 par), or in the garden of Gethsemane before he was arrested (Mark 14:32-42 par). Paul testifies that James, the 'brother of the Lord', as well as Peter and John, were looked upon as the 'pillars' of the community in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9).

14.3 Peter functions as a special witness of the resurrection in the context of the oldest Christian creed that can be found in the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians: 'and that he (namely the risen Christ) appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve' (1 Cor. 15:5). Despite obvious differences, the Gospels agree that a special role was attributed to Peter in the circle of the disciples. Thus, in the Gospel of Luke Jesus instructs him to strengthen his brothers (Luke 22:32) and in the Gospel of John orders him to tend the lambs and the sheep (John 21:15-19). In the first passage, Christ's words are set within the Last Supper, and the second passage evokes the Eucharist. At the same time the Evangelists in no way conceal Peter's weaknesses, but even emphasize them: Peter denies the Lord three times and has need of forgiveness (Luke 22:34 and 61-62). In the Gospel of Matthew, the dialectic of special status and weakness reaches its climax: Peter, who is appointed to receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19), is called 'Satan' when he tries to restrain the Lord from going the way of the cross (Matt. 16:21-23). Though involved in a debate with Paul over fellowship with non-Jewish Christians (cf. Gal. 2:11-21), Peter enjoys special respect and is depicted as a mediator during tensions and conflicts (cf. Acts 15:6-14).

14.4 Very early the Church of Rome came to be associated with Peter and Paul, who witnessed to Christ and suffered martyrdom in Rome (cf. § 7.2). The veneration of their graves in Rome, combined with its importance as the imperial capital, formed the basis for the special standing accorded to the Church of Rome and, as a consequence, to its bishop, from the third century onwards.

14.5 The special standing of Peter within the college of the Twelve, as witnessed by Holy Scripture, is also reflected in the liturgical tradition and usually associated with Paul's exceptional role owing to his mission among the gentiles. Both the Roman and Byzantine rites commemorate the Apostle Peter together with the Apostle Paul on June 29. In the Roman rite it is a solemnity; in the later Byzantine tradition, the feast of the Apostles is preceded by a special period of fasting which emphasizes the prestige of both of these Apostles.

14.6 In the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, which date back to the second century, the bishop appears as a guarantor of the unity of the church. This should probably be understood in light of the author's worry that the generation of the apostles and their immediate disciples had ended. In addition, for Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) every bishop, as a successor of the apostles, sits on 'Peter's Chair'. The special status of Peter, to which the Gospel of Matthew testifies, for Cyprian implies the unity of the episcopate.⁴⁴ The ministry of the bishops was eventually seen as a way of continuing the apostolic inheritance and making it a present reality.

14.7 The ecclesial status of primacy at a regional level is described in Apostolic Canon 34 (cf. § 7.4). Although the canon itself is formulated in a somewhat vague way, partly because the situation varied from region to region (e.g., the different exercise of primacy in Alexandria and Antioch), it reflects fourth century hopes and aspirations. From Canon 34 we learn something vital about the dynamics of primacy – the interdependence between the *protos* and his synod.

14.8 Maintaining the unity of the church is the responsibility of all its members. However, the 'First' among them should take care of it *par excellence*. Such a task of governance includes mediation, preserving a balance between unity and diversity, and giving an account of this. The words of Jesus apply to the exercise of this ministry: 'If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all' (Mark 9:35).

14.9 With the evolution of church structures and differentiation of its various levels, the exercise of primacy also became more demanding. Yet it remains pertinent to every level of the church to this day: local congregation, diocese / eparchy, ecclesiastical province/ metropolitanate, patriarchate, and the church universal. The exercise of primacy varies according to the different levels in the church. So, primacy in a regional church is not the same as that of a bishop in his diocese, because, in the diocese, the bishop has a special ministry as the one who guarantees the communion between his church and other local churches.

14.10 It is absolutely necessary to take into account the particular historical context of every statement on primacy, the history of its development, its importance for its own time, and also the history of its

⁴⁴ Cyprian of Carthage, *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate* 4-5.

effects. For example, with regards to the bishop of Rome, a distinction must be made between the primacy of jurisdiction and infallibility. As a consequence of the definition of jurisdictional primacy, the Roman See increased in importance in the period after Vatican I. Regarding infallibility, it is important to note that, in the period of roughly a century and a half since Vatican I, the Roman popes have resorted only once to a proclamation *ex cathedra*, namely the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven (1950).

14.11 A better understanding of the Catholic concept of primacy at a universal level could be attained through a clearer distinction between the pope's unique position in the Catholic Church and his possible function as primate within the broader Christian community. The role of the bishop of Rome in the first millennium, as described in chapter 7 of this paper and in the Ravenna and Chieti documents of the International Orthodox-Catholic commission, provides a useful point of departure on this question.

15. Theological interpretation of synodality

Common Statement: Holy Scripture and church tradition bear witness to the fact that church governance is based on a synodal principle as expressed, for example, in the communion of the apostles and the local synods of the early church. This synodal principle must also come to bear on all levels of church life according to the respective area of responsibility.

15.1 The synodal principle has as its paradigm the apostolic council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). The Book of Acts describes how 'the apostles and the elders' (Acts 15:6), confronted with the disruptive problem of circumcision, gathered in Jerusalem with James presiding. There, the problem was openly debated. The final decision that circumcision could not be imposed served to build community (Acts 15:28). One can also see the synodal principle anticipated in the gathering of the '120 brothers' during which Matthias was received into the circle of the apostles to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26).

15.2 Regional synods can be traced back to the debates on Montanism around the end of the second century. Irenaeus of Lyons sees apostolicity manifest in the agreement of the churches scattered throughout the world. It was expressed by the respective bishops,

whom he regarded as successors of the apostles.⁴⁵ Cyprian of Carthage switches the emphasis from the tradition safeguarded by the bishops to the collegiate character of the episcopate, whose apostolic office is manifested, when necessary, in councils.⁴⁶ For Cyprian, the church is 'united and held together by the glue of the mutual cohesion of the bishops'.⁴⁷ By the third century in East and West alike, the church council (whether local or regional) is universally recognized as the chief means whereby the unity of the church in the apostolic tradition is to be realized and safeguarded when circumstances demand. And after the defeat of Emperor Licinius at the hand of Constantine, the convocation of an ecumenical council became possible (324).

15.3 The synods of the early church, especially the seven ecumenical councils recognized by Orthodox and Catholics alike, were extraordinary, *ad hoc* events brought about by pressing circumstances, particularly the need to respond to heresy and to address major problems of church unity. Such councils should not be considered primarily in institutional terms, but rather as expressions of the voice or mind of the church on certain very particular issues. Synods in general are deemed authoritative in matters of doctrine, liturgy, and discipline in so far as they express the faith of the Church.

15.4 The synod is the major instance whereby the essential unity of the church may be manifested in particular contexts and in response to specific circumstances. The bishops as successors of the apostles came to be vested with the responsibility to pronounce on matters of doctrine and church order, expressing in particular the faith of their communities. The whole people of God, and the bishops in particular, are charged with the guardianship and transmission of apostolic preaching in accordance with I John 1:3: 'that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you'.

15.5 The bishops assembled in synod have no warrant to go beyond the apostolic teaching (*depositum fidei/paradosis*). Their task is essentially one of discernment, affirmation, and articulation: discerning the apostolic tradition on a certain topic, affirming that tradition, and proclaiming it.

⁴⁵ Cf. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* III.3, 1-4.

⁴⁶ Cf. Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 72 (To Stephen, Concerning a Council).

⁴⁷ Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 66,8.

15.6 The earliest canonical collections (dating from the fourth century) articulate the principle of synodality in manifold ways, for example: the insistence that a bishop must be ordained by at least three bishops⁴⁸; the need for bishops in each locality to recognize the authority of a 'First' for unanimity to be maintained between him and the other bishops⁴⁹; or the prescription that regular councils be held within each metropolitan diocese 'for the good of the church and the settlement of disputes'.⁵⁰

15.7 In the course of time, the churches have also developed other forms of synodal consultation which deal, as occasion arises, with matters of doctrine and church order and should be distinguished from synods (whether local, regional or universal). These include, for example, the standing or resident synod of Constantinople – the *synodos endēmousa* – consisting of bishops present in Constantinople for various reasons and therefore capable of assembling on short notice when a conciliar response was needed. A number of Orthodox autocephalous churches have in the modern era adopted a system whereby the respective churches are administered and directed by a permanent synod of bishops and other appointees.

15.8 Synodal expressions and processes belong to the self-understanding of both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. In the course of history, despite noticeable variations over time and between our two traditions, the Church has never existed without an awareness of synodality.

16. Primacy and synodality serving communion

Common Statement: An ecclesiology based on the Eucharist must be aware of both the equality of origin and the complementarity of the primatial and synodal principles. In the canonical tradition, this is reflected in Apostolic Canon 34, for example. Primacy and synodality are not optional forms of church administration, but belong to the very nature of the church because both of them are meant to strengthen and deepen communion at all levels. Both theologically and canonically, it is therefore impossible either to address the issue of primacy without

⁴⁸ Council of Nicaea, can. 4; Apostolic Canon 1, which, however, prescribes: 'Let a bishop be ordained by two or three bishops'.

⁴⁹ Apostolic Canon 34.

⁵⁰ Council of Antioch 341, can. 20; cf. Council of Nicaea, can. 5.

considering synodality, or to ignore primacy when dealing with synodality.

16.1 Jesus Christ is the head of the church (cf. Eph. 1:22), and therefore 'in everything he might be pre-eminent' (Col. 1:18). This living, organic unity of the head and the body is expressed in the life of the church in the interaction between the primate and the synod. Every form of ecclesial primacy is, by nature, not power *over* the church, but *within* it as a service subordinate to Jesus Christ its head (cf. § 13.2 and 5).

16.2 Both Eucharistic experience and canonical tradition show that primacy and synodality depend on one another. In the Eucharist, the fundamental expression of the ecclesial life as a whole, the community and the *proestos* presiding over it (the bishop or a presbyter delegated by him) are in an interdependent relationship: the community cannot celebrate the Eucharist without a *proestos*, who, in turn, should not celebrate without a community. In the canonical tradition, a description of the correlation between the 'First' and the other bishops is formalized on the regional level in Apostolic Canon 34 (cf. §§ 7.4 and 14.7): the bishops of each province cannot do anything important without the consent of their head, who, from his side, cannot do anything without the consent of all. Primacy and synodality must not be played off against one another. On the contrary, they must be considered as inseparable and as complementing each other in the service of the unity of God's church.

16.3 During the first millennium, all primatial institutions at every level of the church were rooted in synodal structures. Throughout various historical contexts, primacy remained a universal fact that expresses the relationship between an assembly and the one who presides over it, with different foundations and ways of functioning at the different levels at which communion in the church is practiced. Therefore, one cannot legitimately understand primacy without synodality, nor deal with synodality while ignoring primacy.

16.4 There is an analogy but no identity in the relationship between primacy and synodality at the different levels of the church: local, regional, and universal. Because the nature of primacy and synodality differs at each level, the dynamics between primacy and synodality also vary accordingly. For example, primacy and synodality on the regional level are not of the same kind as those on a diocesan level. In diocesan synodality, the diocesan bishop has a special charism, which enables

him to be the guarantor of the communion between his church and the other local churches. Similarly, the interrelationship of primacy and synodality at the universal level does not directly mirror those at the local or regional level and thus requires further theological exploration. The lack of a common Orthodox position on primacy at the universal level complicates the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue in this regard, as does the lack of a clear synodical structure in the Catholic Church.

16.5 An important aspect of the relationship between primacy and synodality is the question of how to safeguard a close correlation between the communion of the churches and the collegiality of the bishops. The bishops are witnesses of the faith of their churches, but also bear responsibility for the church as a whole. This charism, expressed in the sacrament of episcopal ordination, makes bishops servants of the whole communion – not just in their own local church, but also among the local churches, as signified by the laying on of hands by the concelebrating bishops.

16.6 Synodality, as a visible expression of the catholicity of the church, is not only related to the church hierarchy but also to the whole people of God. In this way, the unity of the ‘Firsts’ and their faithful can be expressed at different levels in church life, because responsibility for the church resides with all its members. That lay people have been invited as consultants both to the episcopal synods of the Catholic Church on family issues (2015 and 2016) as well as to the Orthodox Council in Crete (2016) is telling evidence of this. Lay people can enrich the synodal deliberations by their spirituality and expertise.

16.7 Church history reveals two ecclesiological trends: primarily, but not exclusively, synodal in the East, and primarily, but not exclusively, primatial in the West; yet these can coexist in a creative tension. Any restoration of full communion between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches will require, on both sides, a strengthening of synodal structures and a renewed understanding of a universal primacy – both serving communion among the churches.

V. Conclusion

Summary

17.1 In their work to date, the Orthodox and Catholic members of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group have engaged

one another in a spirit of friendship and intellectual exchange. They believe that, in the course of fourteen years, they have made much progress in their effort to build mutual trust, to understand one another more clearly, and to see beyond the barriers that have long prevented the re-establishment of full communion between their churches.

17.2 This has also been possible because the members have tried to adopt a methodology according to which historical data are interpreted in a way that takes full account of their context; anachronistic interpretations that read later disputes back into an earlier time are avoided; and the enduring value of expressions as they were originally understood is sought.

17.3 The members have adopted this approach in their study of a wide range of questions that have been grouped together in sixteen common statements, beginning with the importance of hermeneutics for ecumenical dialogue itself. In doing so, they have followed the following basic principles: 1) Language is important, and words take on different meanings at different periods of time; 2) The dogmas that Orthodox and Catholics hold must be studied in their context, in an effort to discern both what is said and what is meant; 3) The different approaches to canon law must also be taken into account, as well as the degree of applicability of certain canons elaborated many centuries ago in today's world; 4) In addition, the role of non-theological factors has to be considered in the study of our divisions; and 5) Indeed, an awareness of history is essential for an adequate understanding of the theological traditions in East and West. The past should be neither idealized nor downplayed, and a proper distinction must be made between the ideals expressed by the churches and the concrete human realities in which those ideals are lived out.

17.4 The Irenaeus Group has employed this same approach both to its study of the history of the growing divergence between East and West in the first millennium and to the different directions each has taken after the loss of full communion with the other. The period before the Council of Nicaea (325) is of particular significance and could provide elements of a useful model for dealing with difficult questions in the churches today. The principles of primacy and synodality were both in play during the early centuries, but no single model of the relationship between the two was universally accepted. The period of estrangement between the Catholics and the Orthodox from the ninth to the fifteenth

century was due in large part to mutual cultural alienation, and the developments they underwent were strongly influenced by the political and social realities they faced. Catholic and Orthodox confessional identities hardened in the period of confessionalisation (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), when Catholics and Protestants intensified their missionary work. This process culminated in the nineteenth century when Catholics and Orthodox had to respond to very different challenges. The Irenaeus Group devoted substantial attention to the historical and theological context of the much debated teachings of Vatican I regarding papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction. During this same period, new autocephalous churches came into existence in the East in response to political upheavals in South-Eastern Europe. It was with the ecclesiological renaissance of the twentieth century that the Catholic and Orthodox Churches experienced a process of rapprochement which kept gaining momentum thanks to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and parallel developments in Orthodox theology. The members of the Irenaeus Group believe that the current period of mutual relations is the most hopeful in centuries.

17.5 With these considerations in mind, the Irenaeus Group has reflected on certain systematic questions that touch upon the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The group acknowledges the centrality of the Eucharist as the primary manifestation of the Church, both in its unity and in the different roles played by its members. The interplay between the presider and the assembly at the Eucharist also provides the theological foundation for a renewed understanding of primacy and synodality in the Church, and of authority which, whether exercised in a primatial or synodal fashion, must always be at the service of the community. Both Scripture and Tradition attest to the need for a primatial ministry to serve the unity of the Church at various levels. But they also attest to the need for synodality at all levels of church life. The complementarity of these two principles will be central to a deeper theological understanding of the Church that will facilitate Orthodox-Catholic reconciliation.

Vision for the Future

17.6 The members of the Irenaeus Group are aware that they have not yet reached a point of making definite recommendations that would form a basis for the re-establishment of full communion. Nevertheless, they believe that Orthodox-Catholic dialogue is on the path towards

unity, and that even now it is possible to discern the broad outlines of a fully united Catholic and Orthodox Church. It is their conviction that any vision for the future should elaborate a nuanced model of communion, taking into account that the realization of this model would be gradual. Movement towards reconciliation between Catholics and Orthodox does not necessarily imply the immediate solution of all pending issues, but a shared framework of approaches towards this goal.

17.7 In their reflections they have taken note of the work of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, especially its 2010 agreed statement, 'Steps towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future'.⁵¹ With the North American Consultation, the members do not believe that any of the differences that have divided their churches for centuries are necessarily insurmountable. All of those differences will require intensive further study with a rigorous hermeneutical approach to determine if they truly prevent the re-establishment of full communion, or if they are examples of legitimate diversity. Above all, the churches will need to strive for a greater balance between synodality and primacy at all levels of church life, with a strengthening of synodal structures in the Catholic Church and the acceptance in the Orthodox Church of a certain primacy within the communion of the churches at the universal level.

17.8 The Irenaeus Group is aware that defining the precise role of the bishop of Rome within a re-established communion between our churches will be the most challenging aspect of this process. The members of our group are convinced that the bishop of Rome can and should play a greater role in expressing the unity of Christians in the world today. In order to do this, a new definition of the relationship between the Church of Rome and the Eastern churches must be elaborated in a way that is both faithful to the tradition of the undivided church and acceptable to Catholics and Orthodox alike. This will

⁵¹ North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, Steps towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future, in: *Origins* Vol. 40 No. 23 (November 11, 2010), 353-60; <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/orthodox/steps-towards-reunited-church.cfm> (March 10, 2018).

require a re-reading of the teachings of the First Vatican Council. In this regard, a distinction should be made between the practice of primacy as it developed within particular historical circumstances, and the very nature of primacy. A way must be found to surmount certain positions of the past and to integrate the essential elements that have been preserved in both traditions into a common understanding of primacy.

17.9 It would also be especially fruitful to examine anew the relationship between the Church of Rome and the Churches of the East during the first millennium, especially in the period before the First Council of Nicaea in 325, and in particular the relationship set forth in the provisions of the Council of Sardica in 343. It established a form of appellate papal right according to which disputes between churches could be referred to Rome, which would then provide for arbitration by another tribunal to which the bishop of Rome may send delegates. Such an arrangement would fully respect the autocephaly of the Orthodox Churches while assuring at the same time an effective universal ministry of unity by the bishop of Rome.

17.10 While our work up to this point has focused primarily on an examination together of historical factors that have brought our churches to the present, we are aware that this historical work, though certainly necessary and important, does not provide all the answers for the future. Our analysis so far clearly demonstrates the extent to which the structural developments in our churches have been conditioned by a variety of factors – theological, historical, and sociological. The challenges faced by the churches today are not the same as those faced during the first millennium – or even the nineteenth century. Thus we realize that simply turning to the past is not a solution, either for the Orthodox or for the Catholics.

17.11 Together, we affirm that we have much to learn from one another concerning issues of primacy and synodality. The Catholic Church has been able to sustain a strongly functioning primacy, even if some of its manifestations are viewed as problematic by the Orthodox. The Orthodox, on the other hand, have mostly been able to preserve strong synodal structures at local, regional, and more recently, global levels, even if these at times result in difficult situations that give Catholics pause. Thus each side exhibits both strengths and weaknesses, which we can all acknowledge.

17.12 As we seek the unity of the Church, it becomes increasingly clear to us that a common solution, acceptable to both churches, is needed, one that builds on the strengths of both sides. Not only must this solution be mutually acceptable, but it must respond to the needs of the twenty-first century, an age of instant communication that demands transparency and accountability. This implies, among other things, that ancient imperial or feudal models may no longer have a place. Most of all, however, this calls for good will, the desire to cooperate and to work together in building bridges – not only among academic theologians, but also among priests, who care for daily church life, as well as among all the baptized, who must find their proper voice as members of the Body of Christ. This holds especially true of our bishops, who oversee the life of our churches, and who would therefore be responsible for implementing and realizing the desired unity. The Irenaeus Group therefore supports the implementation of a number of intermediate steps that could be made even before the restoration of full communion, including bishops from both churches meeting on a regular basis, as proposed in the above-mentioned 2010 statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation.

17.13 As members of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group we commit ourselves to a continued study of these questions in the hope of making a significant contribution to the process of reconciliation between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This is currently promoted by a number of initiatives, above all by the official dialogue. We are fully aware that this process can only be successful if mutual exchange is not restricted to theologians, but also engages the faithful on both sides.

Current members (2018) of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group are:

Catholic members	Orthodox members
Bishop Dr. Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg (from Germany, member and Catholic Co-president since 2004)	Metropolitan Dr. Serafim (Joantă) of Germany, Central and Northern Europe (from Romania, member and Orthodox Co-president since 2018)
Dr. Johannes Oeldemann , Paderborn (from Germany, member and Catholic Co-secretary since 2004)	Rev. Prof. Dr. Nikolaos Loudovikos , Thessaloniki (from Greece, member and Orthodox Co-secretary since 2004)
Prof. Dr. Dr. Pablo Argárate , Graz (from Argentina, member since 2016)	Rev. Prof. Dr. Daniel Benga , Munich (from Romania, member since 2008)
Prof. Dr. Thomas Bremer , Münster (from Germany, member since 2004)	Rev. Dr. Cyril Hovorun , Los Angeles, CA (from Ukraine, member since 2008)
Rev. Dr. Hyacinthe Destivelle OP, Rome (from France, member since 2006)	Prof. Dr. Assaad Elias Kattan , Münster (from Lebanon, member since 2006)
Rev. Prof. Dr. Edward G. Farrugia SJ, Rome (from Malta, member since 2005)	Rev. Dr. Vladimir Khulap , Saint Petersburg (from Russia, member since 2012)
Prof. Dr. Basilus J. Groen , Graz (from the Netherlands, member since 2004)	Prof. Dr. Paul Meyendorff , Crestwood, NY

	(from the USA, member since 2004)
Rev. Dr. Michel Jalakh OAM, Beirut (from Lebanon, member since 2017)	Rev. Prof. Dr. Grigorios Papathomas , Athens (from Greece, member since 2004)
Rev. Prof. Dr. Hervé Legrand OP, Paris (from France, member since 2004)	Rev. Prof. Dr. Vladan Perišić , Belgrade (from Serbia, member since 2004)
Fr. Dr. Adalberto Mainardi , Bose Monastery (from Italy, member since 2012)	Dr. Evgeny Pilipenko , Moscow (from Russia, member since 2014)
Rev. Prof. Dr. Rudolf Prokschi , Vienna (from Austria, member since 2004)	Prof. Dr. Marcus Plested , Milwaukee, WI (from Great Britain, member since 2014)
Rev. Dr. Ronald G. Roberson CSP, Washington, DC (from the USA, member since 2004)	Rev. Prof. Dr. Mihai Sasaujan , Bucharest (from Romania, member since 2012)
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Thönissen , Paderborn (from Germany, member since 2004)	Prof. Dr. Mariyan Stoyadinov , Veliko Tarnovo (from Bulgaria, member since 2004)

Former members of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group were:

Catholic members	Orthodox members
Rev. Prof. Dr. Brian E. Daley SJ, Notre Dame, IN (from the USA, member 2014 – 2016)	Bishop Dr. Ignatije (Midić) of Braničevo (from Serbia, member and Orthodox Co-president 2004-2008)
Rev. Prof. Dr. Zygfryd Glaeser , Opole (from Poland, member 2004 – 2014)	Metropolitan Dr. Youhanna (Yazigi) of Western and Central Europe, Paris (from Syria, member and Orthodox Co-president 2009- 2012, now Patriarch of Antioch and all the East)
Pieter Kohnen , 's- Hertogenbosch (from the Netherlands, member 2004 – 2013, † 2018)	Archbishop Dr. Job (Getcha) of Telmessos (from Canada, member 2004- 2017, Orthodox Co-president 2013- 2017, now Co-president of the International Catholic- Orthodox Commission for Theological Dialogue)
Rev. Antoine Lambrechts OSB, Chevetogne (from Belgium, member 2004 – 2007)	Prof. Dr. Marios Begzos , Athens (from Greece, member 2004 – 2011)
Rev. Prof. Dr. Lorenzo Lorusso OP, Bari (from Italy, member 2008 – 2011)	Rev. Prof. Dr. Viorel Ioniță , Geneva (from Romania, member 2004 – 2007)

	Rev. Dr. Andrzej Kuzma , Warsaw (from Poland, member 2006 – 2011)
	Rev. Viktor Savik , Smolensk (from Russia, member 2004 – 2007)
	Rev. Dr. Vladimir Shmaliy , Moscow (from Russia, member 2009 – 2011)
	Rev. Prof. Dr. Jan Zozul'ak , Prešov (from Slovakia, member 2005 – 2007)

The **annual meetings** of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group took place at:

- 2004: Paderborn (Germany)
- 2005: Athens (Greece)
- 2006: Monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium)
- 2007: Belgrade / Pokajnica Monastery (Serbia)
- 2008: Vienna (Austria)
- 2009: Kiev (Ukraine)
- 2010: Magdeburg (Germany)
- 2011: Saint Petersburg (Russia)
- 2012: Monastery of Bose (Italy)
- 2013: Thessaloniki (Greece)
- 2014: Rabat (Malta)
- 2015: Chalki / Istanbul (Turkey)
- 2016: Community of Taizé (France)
- 2017: Bucharest / Caraiman Monastery (Romania)
- 2018: Graz (Austria)

The **communiqués** of the annual meetings are published in five languages (English, French, German, Greek, Russian) on the following website:

<http://www.moehlerinstitut.de/en/texts/kommunikues-irenaeus-arbeitskreis>

OLIVIER CLÉMENT: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Stefanie Hugh-Donovan*

Olivier Clément was one of the most significant religious thinkers and Christian theologians in modern Europe. Born on 17 November 1921 at Aniane in the Languedoc region of southern France. The 'atheism' and political cultural of the left and the divided Christian landscape of Protestant Huguenot versus the Catholic Church including French Catholic identity marked his early life and horizon. Ecumenical vision and the possibility of Christian Unity emerged to be of paramount concern for Clément. He rediscovered Christianity in the Eastern Orthodox Church which had been deeply influenced by the 'theologians' of the Russian exile community in Paris. However Clément's ecclesial trajectory was dynamic as he engaged in dialogue with the Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras - who himself had opened Orthodox-Catholic rapprochement with Paul IV in January 1964 at the historic meeting and pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For Clément a creative encounter took place as he developed his own thought with the central ideas of Catholic ecclesiology and theology in the context of Europe which determined a fraternal exchange with John Paul II.

This contribution sets out the historical, biographical and geographical foundation from which the trajectory of Clément's life proceeded, taking into account the early influences on Clément's formative years in a dechristianized area of France, the socialist atheist milieu of his

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family, and his sensitivity to the natural beauty of his surroundings. Clément's conversion to Christianity, and the importance of the Russian émigré philosophers and theologians in Paris that led to his baptism in the Russian Orthodox Church forms part of this reflection.

Olivier-Maurice Clément was born on 17 November 1921 at Aniane in the Languedoc region of southern France. He observes that he was born into 'atheism' the way others are born into a Church.¹ The socialist and atheist beliefs of his father and grandfather shaped the ethos of his family life, while the Mediterranean terrain, climate and culture of village life formed a secure matrix for his earliest memories and fostered in him a deep love of southern France and the Mediterranean Sea.

His spiritual journey began with a sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of the world around him; this moved him from a pagan concept of human existence and culture into a deeper search for truth that led to the transforming discovery of the theology of the Transfiguration and the belief that human beings are rooted in the 'supra-rational', the religious and the artistic. Clément judges that intellectual knowledge, consumerism and politics are expressions of a deeper nature and longing; 'mysticism is an existential attitude, a way of living at a greater depth';² it cannot be possessed by any one religion or Church, 'even atheists can be mystics'. For Clément, 'Christianity with its fresh vitality was able to reconcile negation and affirmation in a new way, uniting the divine with the human'.³ After an arduous search among religions of the East, Clément found fullness of life and spiritual depth in the mysticism, liturgy and theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Theologians of the Russian Diaspora who had settled in Paris assisted him in this quest. Clément's spiritual journey is one of the great affirmations of Christianity in recent times that witnesses to the reality of the Christian tradition. Through his writings he offers a message of hope to a secular society that has become disoriented, and a 'spiritual compass'⁴ to many searching for spiritual orientation.

¹ Clément, *Dialogues*, 9.

² Jean-Claude Barreau, 'Foreword' in Olivier Clément's *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, trans. by Theodore Berkeley (New York: New City, 1993), 8; originally published as *Sources* (Paris: Stock, 1982), a later edition (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008).

³ Barreau, 'Préface', *Sources* (2008), 8.

⁴ Olivier Clément, *Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008). See also Clément, *Mémoires*, in which he speaks of the hope

Russian Orthodox Renaissance and Diaspora

During the renaissance that flourished in the Russian Orthodox Church between 1900 and 1914 many Russian intellectuals turned to Christianity; later many of these fled the turmoil of the Revolution in 1917, travelling to Serbia, Germany and France, establishing an Orthodox presence in Paris and the West.⁵ The Orthodox Theological Institute of Saint Sergius (*Saint-Serge*)⁶ in Paris, founded by Russian émigré Christians in 1925, has remained an outstanding centre of Orthodox theology and spirituality up to present times.⁷ The Russian Diaspora⁸ brought about by the 1917 Revolution had consequences for Clément, which were pivotal in opening a way for dramatic and life-changing choices. His quest for the truth led him to discover Christianity in a new light through the influence and writings of two

that he experienced at his conversion, and the love of the resurrected Christ for each person.

⁵ Data from Nichols, *Light from the East*, 15.

⁶ On history and background to Saint-Serge in Paris: Alexis Kniazeff, *L'Institut Saint-Serge : de l'Académie d'autrefois au rayonnement d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1974).

⁷ Avery Cardinal Dulles SJ, 'Foreword', in Olivier Clément, *You Are Peter* (London: New City Press, 2003), 7.

⁸ Johnston, *New Mecca, New Babylon: Paris and the Russian Exiles, 1920-1945* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

important Russian thinkers, Vladimir Lossky⁹ and Nicholas Berdiaev.¹⁰ Regarding Christ through the lens of faith held up by Lossky and Berdiaev, Clément entered on a pilgrimage to the ‘interior’ of Eastern mysticism and experienced *metanoia*, ‘the great “turning round” of the mind and the heart, and of our whole grasp of reality.’¹¹ Jean-Claude

⁹ See Clément, ‘Vladimir Lossky, théologien orthodoxe’. Vladimir Lossky, 1903-1958, went into exile in 1922 with his father, philosopher Nicolas Lossky, and family. V Lossky chose to live and study in France. While remaining very close to the Russian Church, his entire theological work was written in French. His patristic theology is inseparable from spirituality. Firmly against nationalism, anti-ecumenism, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism, he had close links with many Catholic theologians, Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou and others, who were influential in preparing for the Second Vatican Council, which Lossky did not live to see. See Nicholas Lossky, ‘Theology and Spirituality in the Work of Vladimir Lossky’, given at the ecumenical conference on ‘The Autumn of Holy Rus: Holiness and Spirituality in Russia during a Time of Crisis and Persecution (1917-45)’, at the monastic community of Bose, Italy, in September 1998, and translated from French by the World Council of Churches Language Services; published in *Ecumenical Review*, 51 (July 1999), 288-293. Aidan Nichols judges that V. Lossky’s theology sees the individual as the concentration or typical manifestation of the community, and the community is the inter-relation of individuals; this schema is represented by nineteenth century Russian Slavophile writer, Alexei Khomiakov: ‘For Slavophiles the community of individuals the *sobornost* is the essential guide to faith.’ Nichols, *Light from the East*, 31. See also German Jesuit Catholic expert on Nicholas Berdiaev’s theology Bernhard Schultz, ‘Chomjakows Lehre uber die Eucharistie’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XIV, 1-11 (1948), 138-161. Schulz had additional articles published in the *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, an ecumenical Catholic review (1936-1964), renamed *One in Christ* in 1965-present day.

¹⁰ Nicolas Berdiaev (1874-1948), Russian religious and political philosopher was born into an aristocratic military family in Kiev, he became a Marxist and was expelled from University and exiled for three years to central Russia. He was exiled during the expulsion of intellectuals by Lenin on the so-called ‘philosopher’s ship’ and settled in Paris. He formed collaborative contacts with Catholic theologians and scholars and became one of the Russian theologians of the Diaspora who contributed to the Orthodox revival in Paris. He famously wrote the ‘Foreword’ for Aldous Huxley’s novel ‘Brave New World’, 1932. On Berdiaev: see the classic studies by Bernhard Schultze SJ, ‘Die Schau der Kirche bei Nikolai Berdiajew’ (Pontificum Institutum Studiorum Orientalium: Rome, 1938), *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 116; B. Schultze, ‘Nicholas Alexandrovich Berdayaev and his work’, in: *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, 8 (1949), 41-53.

¹¹ Clément, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*, 16.

Barreau judges that an additional factor influencing Clément's choice of the Orthodox Church was that he had no inherited family ties to any other Western Christian confessions.¹²

Orthodoxy is a mystically and contemplatively oriented, liturgical Church;¹³ Lossky, with Krivochéine,¹⁴ had, in a remarkable way, with other religious philosophers of the Russian Diaspora, retrieved and updated the great Patristic and Byzantine tradition.¹⁵ Clément later judged in 1985, that Lossky's *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l'Église d'Orient* constituted the first Orthodox dogmatic writing of the twentieth century, which combined theological originality and creativity with a faithfulness and deep respect for tradition.¹⁶ The creative teaching, intellectual and spiritual inspiration of the theologians of the Russian Orthodox Diaspora, some of whom he counted as personal friends and considered to be his 'masters', has a formative theological influence on Clément. Another Russian whose ecclesiology, theology and ecumenical thought was a major influence in leading Clément to Christianity was Paul Evdokimov;¹⁷ their relationship matured into a lifelong friendship and fruitful theological and literary collaboration. Evdokimov was one of a creative group of

¹² Jean-Claude Barreau, 'Préface', *L'autre soleil*, 8.

¹³ Nichols, *Light*, 15.

¹⁴ Archbishop Basil Krivochéine (1900-1985), a noted patristic scholar and theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹⁵ Olivier Clément, *Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs* (Paris: Labor et Fides, 1985), 12.

¹⁶ Clément, *Orient-Occident*, 12.

¹⁷ Paul Evdokimov (1900-1970). His father, an army officer, was assassinated in 1907. Paul with his twelve-year-old brother made their way into central Russia to rejoin their mother and pay last respects to his father. Clément judges that this scene gave Evdokimov two theological themes, the sacrificial love of the Father and the 'smile of the Father', which we have eternity to contemplate. He became a lay theologian of the Orthodox Church in France and a professor of Moral Theology at St Sergius Institute. The above data from: Aidan Nichols OP, 'Paul Evdokimov and Eschatology', in *Light from the East*, 194-204.

thinkers amongst whom Berdiaev, Bulgakov,¹⁸ Gillet,¹⁹ Afanasiev,²⁰ and later Schmemmann²¹ and Meyendorff²² are considered to be outstanding.

¹⁸ Sergei Bulgakov, 1871-1944, a Marxist professor of economics, who converted to Orthodoxy and fled with anti-Bolshevik Russians to the West (approximately one million left Russia). Aidan Nichols gives a Catholic response to Bulgakov in, *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Fr Sergei Bulgakov* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005). See also Nichols, *Light from the East*, 14. Bulgakov's new dogmatics focussed on divine Wisdom, introduced into Russian religious thought by pre-Revolution philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, Nichols, 16. Bulgakov considered by many to be the most creative and important theologian of the renewal, brought the Church's tradition into dialogue with modernity; see Michael Plekon, 'The Russian religious revival and its theological legacy', *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, ed. by Mary B Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 204.

¹⁹ Fr Lev Gillet, known as The Monk of the Eastern Church, was originally a Benedictine monk. His great insight was 'the recognition of God as Limitless Love ... precisely the kenotic God which Bulgakov and Evdokimov recognized, the "Lover of mankind"'; Plekon, 'The Russian religious revival', 212.

²⁰ Nicolas Afanasiev (1893-1966). Afanasiev was the only Orthodox theologian cited in the preconciliar *Acta* of Vatican II. His theological focus was the rediscovery of the Eucharistic ecclesiology of the early Church. His major work *The Church and the Holy Spirit* portrays the early Church's charismatic characteristics; see Plekon, 'The Russian religious revival', 206-207. Aidan Nichols, 'Nikolai Afanas'ev and Ecclesiology', in *Light from the East*, 114-128, in which Nichols 127-128, cites Catholic liturgical historian, Hans-Joachim Schulz: 'the celebration of the Eucharist [...] provides the clearest possible manifestation of [...] the Church as a community of faith', H-J Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Press, 1986), xix-xx.

²¹ Fr Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983) continued the work of Afanasiev in the renewal of the Eucharistic liturgy. Schmemmann was a student of Bulgakov at St Sergius Institute. In 1948 Fr Georges Florovsky and other leading theologians in Paris left for America, followed later by Schmemmann who became the advisor and spokesman for Orthodoxy in America, see Michael Plekon, 'Alexander Schmemmann: Teacher of Freedom and Joy in the World as Sacrament', *Living Icons: Persons of Faith of the Eastern Church* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 178-202.

²² John Meyendorff left Paris for St Vladimir's Seminary, New York, and became a prominent theologian of America and the Russian emigration', Michael Plekon, 'John Meyendorff: Defender of Living Tradition', in *Living Icons*, 203-233; and Nichols, *Light from the East*, 128, cites Meyendorff: 'This centrality of the Eucharist is actually the real key to the Byzantine understanding of the

The 'liturgical, Patristic and iconographic richness of Evdokimov's theology',²³ always faithful to Church Tradition, resonated deeply and authentically with Clément, who characterizes him as 'a "witness to beauty", a perceptive interpreter of the liturgy's poetry, choreography and music, of the icons' shimmering light and color, a riveting narrator of the Church's teaching'.²⁴ There are interesting similarities shared by Evdokimov and Clément, which would have enhanced the empathy between them: Evdokimov like Clément became a well-known writer, lay theologian of the Orthodox Church in France and a professor (of Moral Theology) at St Sergius Institute, yet he had also worked in car factories, rail yards and restaurants, as many did during this inter-war period, later managing an ecumenical hostel for poor immigrants and students. While remaining rooted in his Russian heritage he was fully part of Western culture and life, his concerns were about faith and culture, the spiritual life, liturgy, eschatology, freedom and authority, and like Clément, they brought into focus the struggle of living the faith in contemporary society in a time of totalitarian ideologies. Evdokimov's dialectical position challenged the meaning of past and contemporary historical events.

Clément: A Synthesis of East and West

'Spiritual renaissances, precisely because they respect individual freedom, take time',²⁵ observes Clément. The Russian Diaspora brought Eastern Orthodoxy into a fresh encounter with the West, enabling Clément, a young atheist, to discover Christ. His own conversion came at the age of twenty-seven; three years later aged thirty he became a baptized Christian in the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris in 1951. Before conversion however, his story is the quest of a man drawn into spiritual warfare,²⁶ caught between anguish and wonder: on the one

Church, both hierarchical and corporate; the Church is universal, but truly realised only in the local Eucharistic assembly, at which a group of sinful men and women becomes fully the "people of God". See, J Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974).

²³ Plekon, *Living Icons*, 104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁵ Olivier Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn* (London: Search Press, 1976), 10.

²⁶ It would seem that any person driven near to suicide and despair, as Clément himself had experienced, is in the battleground of spiritual warfare spoken of by St Paul in Ephesians 6:24. Ignatius of Loyola, 1491-1556, founder of the Society

hand, the angst and suffering of the culture of death that he found in the desert of the city led him to wrestle with the temptation of suicide, and on the other, a sense of awe and wonder before the faces, the beauty and the life he also witnessed around him. Nearly twenty-five years later in 1976, and a year after writing his own spiritual autobiography, *L'autre soleil*,²⁷ Clément writes regarding Solzhenitsyn:²⁸ he 'became in prison, a *visionary of the human face*, capable of identifying the righteous instantly from their faces', bringing them before his readers with 'a truly iconographic literary technique'.²⁹ Clément's admiration of Solzhenitsyn, his own understanding of the mystery of the human face, and the face par excellence that is Christ's, together with his gifted literary skills, suggest a sense of self-identification with the Russian writer; it could be said that Clément became the voice of Solzhenitsyn in the West. A charism of discernment of the signs of the times, enabled Clément to express his reflections on 'art, war, sexuality, death and love'³⁰ with a profound intellectual understanding of his subject combined with spiritual compassion and warmth. This is evidenced in the transparency, integrity and authenticity of the beautiful reflection: *L'autre soleil*.

of Jesus was conscious of this conflict between good and evil in the world, which Clément's case would appear to represent. With reference to St Ignatius and Oriental Christianity see, Tomáš Špidlik, *Ignace de Loyola et la spiritualité orientale*, (Brussels: Éditions Lessius, 2006); Felix Körner SJ, 'Salvific Community', *Gregorianum*, 94 (2013), 593-609.

²⁷ Olivier Clément, *L'autre soleil: autobiographie spirituelle* (Paris: Stock, 1975).

²⁸ Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, 1918-2008, Russian novelist and historian, was arrested in 1945 for criticizing Stalin in a private letter, he was sentenced to eight years' hard labor. During his imprisonment he changed from Marxism to the philosophical and religious position of Orthodoxy. There are parallels here with Dostoevsky who, a century before him, served eight years in hard labor in a camp in Siberia. Solzhenitsyn judged that the problems of East and West were rooted in atheism and the decline of Christian faith and practice. His books alerted the West to the existence of Soviet forced labor camps, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, 1970. He was exiled from Russia in 1974, but returned to Russia in 1994.

²⁹ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 218.

³⁰ Jean-Claude Barreau, 'Avant-propos' in Clément, *L'autre soleil*.

Family origins: geographical, cultural and religious milieu

Clément opens his spiritual autobiography by expressing a dislike of speaking about himself, while he finds positive pleasure in other peoples' stories; he prefers to speak and write of 'Him', who seeks us out, the One who Clément believes sought and found him.³¹ At the beginning of his reflections, Clément is concerned with what he calls the 'lost centre'.³² He recalls the narrative in Dostoevsky's, *L'Adolescent*, of the man who has lost everything, his wife, his family, his possessions, but who walks towards the 'place of the heart', the lost centre; this man awakens to the sun, *l'autre soleil*, and suddenly a sacred dread overwhelms him, that nevertheless somehow cheers his heart, in a way which reminds Clément of his feelings as a child on a deserted beach in winter as the sun sets; for the first time the man awakens, perceives and receives everything that is in this mystery. Dostoevsky's pilgrim understands that prayer is the essence of things and a prayer rises to his lips, 'Everything is in you, Lord, I myself am in you, receive me!'³³ Clément's own experience of mystery resonates with that of Dostoevsky's Macarius, who purified his heart in search of the lost centre, a man who finally found *l'autre soleil* shining as for a day that never fades, when prayer, which is the essence of things, rises from the heart, a mystery both terrible and marvelous that brings joy, and with it, the discovery that everything is in God, the pilgrim is himself in God, longing to be received by God. The apparent absence of God opens a space for this longing and understanding of God as our freedom; his very silence renders us free.³⁴ A contemporary Orthodox thinker reflects: 'Theology proper transcends the realm of the discursive reason, and can in the end only be apophatic, that is, can express its fundamental truths in paradox and negation.'³⁵ Clément knew that the space of atheism led inexorably towards nothingness; his received experience brought a *metanoia* of the heart that makes the future possible, he knew the words of Jesus for each of us are, 'Go and sin no

³¹ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 9.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 10.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Bishop Basil Osborne, 'Orthodoxy in a United Europe: The Future of Our Past', *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 17.

more', that there is no longer death, that He searches for us, and as Clément himself experienced, he was sought and found.³⁶ The sense of fruitful 'space' and 'absence' that Clément found in the mystery of Orthodoxy allowed conversion to flow into him; the ecclesiological space was an Absence. Clément realized that the apparent absence of God opens a space that enables man, woman and child to comprehend God as our freedom and the transferring of this knowledge to people in the West through his writing and witness lay at the heart of his life's work.

Writing about Dostoevsky,³⁷ Rowan Williams affirms the Russian author's insight on how the mystery of religion and holy presence operates in the individual person. Dostoevsky, Williams and Clément all point to the importance of individual religious experience, which can turn the person around and bring about *metanoia* of heart and reconciliation with God.

Clément grew up in a wine growing area with his grandfather's family, in a house surrounded by a vineyard; the cultural and communal aspects of village life were reassuring and supportive to the young boy. As a child, no one spoke to Clément of God. Even if he asked questions concerning life and death, no one ever mentioned or spoke of a living God.³⁸ Nevertheless 'god' was a topic of conversation among his family, yet even in this conversation there was a sense of absence; conversation itself signaled the awareness of absence. Every second Sunday his mother's sisters, primary school teachers, and an uncle came to dine with them in the town where they lived; Clément was impressed with the independence and intellectual character of the women in his family and he would wait with delighted anticipation for the dessert and discussion on the existence of God. His schoolteacher parents were atheists while his aunts were deists; their 'god' appeared to resemble a phantom that could not heal the tuberculosis of a wife or do miracles as reputedly occurred at Lourdes. This phantom 'Being' did not stay with Clément long, but the conversations left him recognizing some sort of mystery, which he identified as the 'sound of an absence';

³⁶ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 9.

³⁷ Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction*, Continuum, 2008. Also see A N Wilson, 'The Archbishop's Dostoevsky', *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 October 2008.

³⁸ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 10, 11.

importantly he became aware of silences.³⁹ It seemed to him that on Sunday and Thursday afternoons at the school where his mother was a teacher, and where one of his aunts lived, in some mysterious way a place of gigantic silence had been sculpted by the cries and gesticulations of the now absent children. In the silence of warm spring evenings when the first star appeared, he waited for millions of sparrows living in the acacia trees to start chirping; he connected this sense of mystery to a story he learnt later, that in the early Christian era it was thought that at a certain time of day the animals would pray.

Clément reflects that as he grew to adulthood, his whole life was structured by atheism, not only in his thoughts, but also in his whole being.⁴⁰ Clément's generation had inherited the nineteenth century's growing indifference about God, a disinterest that increasingly characterized Western thought, and led to 'atheism in one shape or other'.⁴¹ Paul Ricoeur⁴² and Alasdair MacIntyre⁴³ maintained that the 'characteristic of the contemporary debate between the atheists and the theists is the decline of its cultural urgency.'⁴⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche⁴⁵ had proclaimed that 'God is dead', in a prophetic sense he recognized that the god portrayed by moralistic religion had become 'unbelievable' and

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 79.

⁴¹ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (New York: Norton, 1969), 188, is cited by Michael J Buckley SJ in, 'Atheism and Contemplation', *Theological Studies*, 40 (1979), 680-699.

⁴² Paul Ricoeur, 1913-2005, was born into Protestant family in South-Eastern France. During World War II he was a prisoner of war in a German Prison Camp for five years from 1940. Phenomenologist, humanist and philosopher, he specialized in biblical exegesis. He taught at the Sorbonne, Paris, and at the University of Chicago for fifteen years.

⁴³ Alasdair MacIntyre was born 1929 in Glasgow, Scotland. A philosopher of moral and political philosophy. He converted to Roman Catholicism in the early 1980s and reflects on how one is chosen by a Tradition: see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice, Which Rationality* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 393-395. His early Marxist writings were succeeded by his work as a Christian theologian.

⁴⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre and Paul Ricoeur, *The Religious Significance of Atheism* (New York: Columbia University, 1969), 5, 15-20, 29, cited by Buckley, 'Atheism' 682.

⁴⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), *The Gay Science*, Book 5 (New York: Random House, 1974), no 343, 279, cited in Buckley, 'Atheism', 680.

therefore irrelevant; while John Henry Newman⁴⁶ foresaw that atheism was spreading throughout Europe and in those civilizations that were influenced by European thought. Clément reflects that he grew up in a worldview of atheism and indifference, which turned God into 'the great secret of our era'.⁴⁷ Today Pope Francis refers to a 'globalization of indifference' that closes 'the door through which God comes into the world and the world comes to him.'⁴⁸

The historical and geographical context of the person is deeply important in the formation, discernment and future vision of a theologian. This is particularly true of Clément in his passage from childhood to become a mature Christian thinker. Traversing from his grandfather's era, which had moved away from a religious worldview to embrace what were deemed to be true values of justice and socialism within a local community, albeit they were rooted in Christian ethics. After the First World War, communities were held in communion and amity through a shared enjoyment of their local village culture and heritage, but were drawn towards an atheistic, secular view that saw no purpose in speaking of God or death. It was an era in which many searched for a meaning to life but in which increasingly the answer of nihilism was accepted, that after death came 'nothingness'.

Clément was born between the Cévennes and the Mediterranean Sea in an area of France strongly influenced by Protestantism. His mother's forebears were Protestant and his father had Catholic ancestors; from childhood to adulthood he had no family experience of an ecclesial matrix and no opportunity to observe, or reject, the person of Christ of the Gospels. He had little familiarity with Catholic culture and faith, and this affected his outlook and inhibited his openness to Catholicism. While Clément's family was atheist, and their atheism held out no hope to the sensitive child who was disturbed by the 'nothingness', his parents believed followed life. Their goodness, loyalty and integrity manifested in Clément a palpable experience of 'Absence'. The question of Absence became a pre-occupation, which led Clément finally to find recognition of the person of Christ and an ecclesial home. Clément

⁴⁶ John Henry Newman, 1801-1890. His studies in history persuaded him to leave Anglicanism to become a Roman Catholic priest; he was later elevated to a cardinal. Newman wrote his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* between 1865-66.

⁴⁷ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 29.

⁴⁸ Pope Francis, Message for Lent 2015, <<http://www.news.va/en/news/vatican-popes-message-published-for-lent>> [Accessed 1.9.15]

came to believe that the apparent absence of God opens the space for an interior longing, a space which enables each person to comprehend that God is our freedom; that His silence renders us free.⁴⁹ All those people known to him, who seemed to be passing by like faces on a train to nowhere, did in fact have a destiny: the communion of saints, in communion with Christ, was a reality. Each person is called to become aware of the paradox that Absence can resonate with an affirming sense of presence and mystery. Clément found the opposite to be true of the self-alienating void of atheism, *le néant*, which leads to nothing.

The Languedoc Region: historical and religious influences

His awareness of mystery in ‘space and silence’ developed from an early age, enriched by a profound affinity to the topography and nature of the Languedoc region of the southern France of his birth and a deep interest in the local history. He describes the sense of ‘*being*’ he experienced as a young child and adolescent, ‘things quite simply *are*’: the wind rises the plane tree starts to sing, I know the plane tree *is*.⁵⁰ His inherited atheism did not quite resonate with his life as ‘a Mediterranean pagan’ who loved the natural world around him, the wind, water, sea and scrubland, all spoke to him of the mystery of things and of *being*.

Stretching out on the ground he somehow felt carried aloft in the wind and sky, and would feel a thrill of ecstasy.⁵¹ He learnt the local history from stories remembered by his grandfather, of passions, sufferings and strife passed down through the generations; the women especially carried within themselves the tragic history of the Cévennes.⁵²

Historically southern French Christianity was tragically fragmented and the area around Aniane had become largely anti-Catholic. Protestantism had strongly penetrated the mountain populations, and everywhere in that region had experienced repression through the Reform. Harsh treatment cries out for justice.

⁴⁹ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 11. For a history of the Cévennes from a Protestant view, see Patrick Cabanel, *Histoire des Cévennes: Le pays des Camisards*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2012).

Bitterness welled up as members of different Christian confessions developed a self-understanding and identity over against the claims of the 'heretical other'. The earlier crushing of the Cathars by the Catholic Church lives on in the generational memory. Catharism, which preached poverty, pacifism and a form of Manichaeism, found a following among the theologically literate, and was supported by both the nobility and the common people; it became established in the Languedoc area during the eleventh century and by the thirteenth century Cathari were in the majority. When St Dominic's attempts over ten years (1205-1215) failed to bring Cathars back to the Catholic Church, Innocent III called on the princes of Christendom to wage a crusade, a call to which the French responded vigorously. The cruel massacre of men, women and children to eradicate the Cathars during the anti-Cathar Albigensian Crusade and the Inquisition that followed are not forgotten in the area of Languedoc. The once cultured and educated Languedoc region was taxed and deprived of education while reading the Bible by laity became a capital punishment. The Bible has never been translated into the language of the area, the language *d'Oc*, as it had been in all the dialects of the Grisons; in an attempt at suppressing heresy the Council of Toulouse forbade lay use of the Bible in 1229. The language of the Occitan, considered one of the foremost literary languages in France, slipped into a decline, becoming a regional dialect that was disparaged by the French as patois.

These events influenced Clément's own cultural background and inherited milieu, they also had bearing on the working out of his vocation. Innocent III was responsible not only for setting into motion the Occitan distress in Western France, which may have paved the way for Protestantism three centuries later, and led to the subsequent development of socialist atheism, the cultural setting into which Clément was born; the Pope also launched the Fourth Crusade in response to the Muslim capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187. The crusaders instead of retaking Jerusalem, infamously sacked Constantinople and the Eastern Churches, causing a rupture between Eastern and Western Christianity, a rupture of communities to which Clément during much of his life had sought to bring healing and restoration of communion. However, at this time he was not aware that his future conversion would become the hinge around which his adult life and vocation would turn.

Socialist Influences at Aniane – Three Religions?

Olivier's grandfather always spoke and thought of socialism in French, rather than Occitan, just as his *Cévenol* ancestors had sung prayers and the songs of the Revolution in French. The family village of Olivier's father, where the two children and parents visited the grandparents each fortnight and during holidays, was of key importance to Clément; the ethos of his family life was shaped by the socialist and atheist beliefs of his father and grandfather, while the Mediterranean terrain, climate and culture of village life formed the matrix for the earliest memories.

Three 'religions', according to local people existed in juxtaposition: Catholicism, Protestantism and 'Socialism'. A socialist, as understood in that region of France, never entered a church, did not have his children baptized and was married at the town hall; although they did not have religious burials they held the dead in great respect. In this region there are no crosses in the cemeteries; Protestants, who were in the majority and socially dominated the region for a long time, fiercely rejected the Cross, later they were ousted by the socialists. Clément remembers digging in his grandfather's vineyard between the rows of vines, one would come across human bones, the remains of Protestants who, before the Edict of 1787, were banned from burial in cemeteries. The wars of religion continued into the nineteenth century when the Revolution permitted 'simple' changes, for example, the *rue de l'église* became the *rue Karl-Marx*.

Not far from his grandfather's village between the lagoon of ponds, young Clément loved to climb up inside a huge tower from which he could see the whole countryside, the mountains to the sea, the Aigoual mountain to the northwest, and the Ventoux to the northeast.⁵³ A story told by his grandfather held deep significance for Clément. In the eighteenth century many Protestant women, often *Cévenoles* like his mother, had been imprisoned in that tower. One who had been incarcerated at the age of eighteen was released at the age of sixty; she only had to say one word to be freed, but resisted, a word she had scratched into the surface of a wall, and which the boy Olivier traced with his finger, '*résister*'.⁵⁴

⁵³ For description of Cévenol terrain, see Cabanel, *Histoire des Cévennes*.

⁵⁴ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 15. The word Clément saw inscribed was spelt with a 'g' according to local dialect, *régister*.

The 'fundamentals' of Christianity still hold

Clément knew only his father's family, which had become third generation socialists, albeit from a past Catholic or Protestant Christian heritage. His grandfather, who had two children, Clément's father, and a daughter who became a couturier in the village, was a just man in an almost biblical sense. He had broken with Catholicism as a child, embraced socialism and married a Protestant; he was an agricultural worker and she worked in a hat shop. Gradually he acquired some land, helped by land reforms introduced by the Republic, and became an independent proprietor of a small vineyard while his children benefited from education in a school provided by the Republic.⁵⁵ He was a militant socialist, but without resentment or class distinction, who endeavored to build a civilized community life and enjoyed good relations with descendants of the aristocracy in the area; the people of this community had their land, their language, their culture, and the solidarity of friendship when the whole village assembled to enjoy social events and festivals such as the bull races, when everyone came together: the right, the left, Catholics, Protestants, Socialists.

As villagers gathered together in the evenings after a festival, the native language lent itself to storytelling and the local *vin rosé* circulated: stories were told of the solitary, the taciturn, of the secrets that surrounded the area of the ponds where bulls and horses roamed freely, and in sharing these 'rites of communication', there was the sense of a liturgical faith gathering. When night fell in the village all the household would gather in the dark round the fire, without lighting the petrol lamps or electricity; all were silent before the flames. It was there that he experienced his first meeting with mystery: the silence, the night, the flame, the solemnity. Then suddenly the light was turned on and family life resumed with busy preparations for the evening meal. It was a protected life that has been lost, friendship between humans and things, modesty without prudery, faithfulness within the family, the clan, the village. It was a culture shared by all, but without realizing it, the momentum of history had eaten up their 'spiritual capital'.⁵⁶ Now everyone is a nihilist, Clément writes in 1975,⁵⁷ people take

⁵⁵ On education in France after the evacuation of the Church see, Olivier Roy, *La Sainte Ignorance: Le Temps de la religion sans culture* (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

⁵⁶ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 21.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

tranquilizers, in the village just as much as those in the towns; this loss, according to Clément, is why we must retrieve the fundamentals.

He is certain that all people, religious or anti-religious, Catholics, Protestants or Socialists, live on the 'fundamentals' of Christianity, an ancient rich mixture of the earth and the fire of the Gospel; but the original stock root was split up and contact with the root became increasingly indirect. One of these latter developments was the socialism of his grandfather and father, who like the early French Socialists were marked by a social evangelism that was not only pledged for justice, but communion amongst the people that was founded on St Paul's teaching: we are all members of the one body. But, and here Christians may be at fault, the *ressourcements* became diverted or high-jacked; socialism had taken the social, communal dimension of the Gospel, which somehow had been neglected by Christians of the previous century and this paved the way for socialists to become atheists. The evangelistic socialism of 1848, admired by Dostoevsky because it had not rejected Jesus and was not a system,⁵⁸ gave way to Marxist dialectical materialism and the communist system. Creative Christianity and prophets such as Berdiaev and Bulgakov were submerged, but Clément judges, in the long term not vanquished: as one cannot build on 'nothing', and because Christ is risen, Christianity will again gain the upper hand.

Clément identifies '*une crise spirituelle*' 'in the events of social upheaval during the riots in Paris of 1968.'⁵⁹ He judges that the myth of revolution was expressing a spiritual need, that the 'combat is not political or social, but spiritual'.⁶⁰ This struggle was less a question of revolution but more a 'quasi-liturgical production of a passionate scene of revolution', where the revolutionary myth serves as an expression of a far greater need. Inside the barricades, the young people experienced a sense of sacred space, of meeting and sharing that seemed to them like a call to life. There are echoes of the 'rites of communication', shared during the village festivals of Clément's youth, when there was the sense of a liturgical faith gathering. Political propositions are most often unrealistic signs, an expectation of something else.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁹ Clément, *La Croix et la Réforme*, 1968, cited by F. Damour in *Olivier Clément: un passeur* (Anne Sigier, 2003), 9.

⁶⁰ F. Damour, *ibid.*

This tenet of Clément's that all people are rooted, either knowingly or unknowingly, in the fundamentals of Christianity appears in Paul Evdokimov's vision for humanity, that culture under the influence of grace becomes liturgy: 'Culture, in its essence, is a search in history for what is outside its limits. It becomes the expression of the Kingdom through the things of this world. Every judgement on culture is made by referring to the presence of God within it, a presence which is simultaneously a sign and an expectation.'⁶¹ Evdokimov writes in *L'Art de l'icône*, 'earthly culture is the icon of the heavenly Kingdom',⁶² and man is in the image of God. Aiden Nichols judges: 'There is a principle of theological anthropology at work in Evdokimov's eschatological vision: man is in God's image, but because of the Fall is reduced to an 'ontological silence'. Salvation liberates the dynamic quality of the image in its tendency to become the full likeness of God. For Evdokimov, the human being's aim in history is to achieve the eschatological likeness.'⁶³

Clément recognizes in his dying grandfather one who wished to bless his family but who did not know how to; he recognizes also in his father, a contemplative to whom no-one had spoken about God. Both men were just and had chosen and witnessed to socialism without any element of fanaticism. They had refused to become communists; his grandfather was shocked by a certain ethical relativism he had seen among the cadre in his own village, for him nothing could justify a lie or perjury. The move from the village to town life, meant for Olivier's family the loss of land, language, village life and community; then the whole culture collapsed under the weight of two wars, politics and endless new technology.

Some people are killed by the collective life in a town because they carry within them a silence, a nostalgia and emptiness that society cannot fulfil. Clément recognized this in his father. Facing death during the war he had experienced friendship, after the war he felt suffocated by the small worries of family life experienced in the closed family life in a town, rather than the lively shared community life of the village. In Paris with his parents, Clément visited some churches, it was part of

⁶¹ Paul Evdokimov, 'La Culture et l'eschatologie', *Le Semeur* 50 (1947), 358-69, cited by Nichols, *Light from the East*, 200.

⁶² Paul Evdokimov, *L'Art de l'icône. Théologie de la Beauté* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1970), 65, cited in Nichols, *Light from the East*, 200.

⁶³ A. Nichols, *Light from the East*, 201.

French culture, but he was bored, 'The God of Gothic art was exiled to the sky', and he 'knew' the sky was empty.⁶⁴

His father never spoke to anybody of what Clément believed to be the essential experiences of life, except once to his adolescent son. His father remembered that as a child he loved to read the Apocalypse in a Bible left in the house by a Protestant ancestor, and he then recounted what happened during the war in the trenches of Verdun. After fifteen days under a barrage of gunfire and deafening explosions, when one could neither sleep nor speak, silence came and he finally dozed. When he awoke it was a spring morning, he went out into a forest walking till he came to a clearing with flowers; the silence was intense. Suddenly the bells in an invisible bell tower rang out. The solitude, the flowers, the clearing, the silence, the song of the bells, brought an overwhelming burst of emotion that brought tears and he entered into a wordless adoration: he had found Jerusalem in the forest when the bells rang out proclaiming the Resurrection. After his father's death Clément finds these words meaningful for his father: death, hell, the Resurrection; death and love that is stronger than death, not a moral or pseudo-transcendence but life much stronger than death, the Resurrection. This is the only time they truly communicated with each other; otherwise the father remained silent and read his books. Clément later discovered links between his own personal pilgrimage and his father's thoughts; on his father's bookshelves he found Dostoevsky's *Les Frères Karamazov*, Tolstoy's *Le Père Serge*, and *La Vie de Saint Serge* by Boris Zaïtsev, strangely the grandfather of Clément's friend, Michel Sollogoub.⁶⁵ Clément discovered a similar secret when his father's sister died. She was an atheist like her father, but tucked away in a little drawer with the things she treasured, Clément found a copy of St John's Gospel.

Clément wants to point out that he and his family assisted in the act of burying all language about God, thus simultaneously burying the culture and way of being which gave meaning to their lives, and not only their culture. The same contemporary collapse occurred in many areas of France, especially among Christian communities. 'God became the great secret of our era.'⁶⁶ Prophetic Russian writers predicted all this

⁶⁴ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 33.

⁶⁵ See Sollogoub, 'L'engagement d'Olivier Clément dans la culture'.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

the century before. Dostoyevsky recalls that after the hell of the imminent gallows and house of the dead he suddenly heard the carillon of Easter and knew with certitude that the Crucified lives: *Il existe!* Since then Russia has known the descent into hell, but hope witnesses that the testimony of the Resurrection comes after that: for Clément this is the paradoxical advantage of our era, history itself drives us towards the ultimate.

It has been necessary to speak in detail of Clément's memories and perceptions of his own childhood and of old age because in the mystery of these two phases of our lives he sees that a circle is completed that opens up a recognition and meeting with transcendence. Memories of the wonder and astonishment of this mystery that he had already experienced in his childhood opened up a way through the anguish of the nihilism that he encountered at home and in the city, the unreality that filled the void created by the demise of a culture, and the near despair of the atheistic legacy that pointed only to nothingness. The meaninglessness of death haunted and disturbed him yet the beauty he encountered, even in the desert of the city, and the faces that spoke of the Cross, were to gradually draw him to an awakening through inner revelation, an awakening and experience in which at first he did not recognize nor place Christ.

The death of Clément's grandfather and aunt, two wise *vieillards*, still had the dignity of being embedded in the culture of their village and land, but for his father, also a *juste*, already the anchors of culture had slipped into a post-war emptiness and his father's own descent into a silence was layered with sadness: a 'contemplative', Clément reflects, who did not know how to pray.

Post-war Europe: denial of death

People attempted to fill the post-war emptiness by living in denial of mortality and by intellectualizing erotic love, which gave a sense of power that, acting for a moment as opium, helped them forget 'nothingness'. Ways of prolonging a life were sought in Eastern alternatives, theories and even monkey glands, all leading to preoccupation with self and self-gratification. Clément asked a young Hungarian soldier to describe what he felt about each of his amorous adventures: 'It was like shooting a bird.' The quest for the absolute was transferred to the quest of pleasure itself, the quest of the sacred in the profane.

The civilization with 'nothingness' at its centre had broken the circle by placing sexual love as the sole expression of *eros*, which is also legitimately found with the young and the old. In its denial of death, the West became forgetful of the value of elderly people within a family, increasingly people died away from their families and homes in hospitals; increasingly no thought was given to contemplate death. Nietzsche deciphered the death of God and the reign of nothingness, a legacy of nothingness that haunted Clément's childhood and young adult years.

He accepts that with his generation, he took part in the removal of language about God, and that the 'death' of God ran concurrently with the death of local cultures that gave meaning to the community and individual.

University of Montpellier: *Homo Religiosus*

In 1941 Clément became a pupil of historian Adolphe Dupront⁶⁷ at the University of Montpellier. For Dupront, history is rooted in the sacred, all that is deep in existence and life is religious, and man is above all '*Homo religiosus*'. Clément responded positively to Dupront's views on human anthropology and the sacred. He had always loved the portrayal of life in the great classics, and the idea developed in him that human history had flourished from a religious foundation which formed a sacred link of human persons with each other and with being, *l'Être*.⁶⁸ For the first time Clément entered into intelligent discussion on the mystery of 'being' and the transparency of things. Dupront showed that it was possible to think beyond the reality of just matter, he proposed a history that put under pressure all the ideas of existence and not one of them was seen as being decisive;⁶⁹ history was a succession of languages, of structures, of 'archaeologies of the mind'.⁷⁰ Dupront's approach took into consideration dialectic materialism and definitive freedom, not by getting round history, but through a more scientific

⁶⁷ Alphonse Dupront, 1905-1990, a French historian who specialized on the eras of the Middle Ages and Modernity. His doctorate, 1956, *Le mythe de croisade*, was published under the same title by Gallimard, 1996. He was the first President and founder of University Paris IV-Sorbonne in 1970, and the founder of the Centre of Religious European Anthropology.

⁶⁸ Clément, *l'autre soleil*, 56.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

approach that Clément found stimulating. Dupront was a pioneer on a grand scale; Clément helped him to organize meetings with researchers of different cultures and disciplines. There was a relationship above and beyond material evolution that Clément sought in poetry and *cosmogonie*,⁷¹ ‘*Pour l’un comme pour l’autre*’, it was a matter of mankind living a global approach in the quest for a hidden unity, without neglecting any one of its dimensions. In a sense Clément believed Dupront freed him and enabled him to find his real way ahead. Dupront taught that acquisition of knowledge is a road to all being, an honest amazement mixed with marvel at the discovery of what is authentic and real. The act of knowing is stripped of pride, desire and possession of modern rationality, a detachment which Clément himself acquired. ‘This asceticism was attained during a “night of reason” and kenosis [...] to find again the creative, biological, cosmic, astral, anxieties and hopes, freedoms [...] flowing towards unity in God or in short, all the fullness of human genre.’⁷²

Clément, always suspicious of ideological contamination, expanded these ideas thirty years later in dialogue with Stan Rougier.⁷³ With Rougier he reflects on the need for a multi-dimensional approach to an understanding of history, a true dialectic, enquiring into metaphysical contradictions and their solutions without having the right to speak like Marxists of systems, infrastructures and superstructures. All human complexity has anchorages both in earth and in heaven; it is positioned at the interior of personal existence like close knots of relationships, more or less in communication and more or less separate, more or less rooted in the earth, more or less transparent to heaven; like a gigantic symphony crammed with dissonances that makes up a structure in each era and in each civilization. This structure gives color and savor to all the rest, to institutions, to economic and social life, to culture in the narrow sense of the word. It is the transition of a structure from one to another that constitutes true history of humankind. But we can only observe, mark out, not explain; everything depends on the visible and the invisible, in these intrusions of eternity.⁷⁴ Clément

⁷¹ F. Damour, *Olivier Clément, Un Passeur*, 37. *Cosmogonie*: the study of the origin of the universe.

⁷² F. Damour, *Olivier Clément*, 39.

⁷³ Olivier Clément collaborates with Stan Rougier, *La Révolte de l'Esprit* (Paris: Stock, 1979).

⁷⁴ F. Damour, 34, citation from Clément, *La Révolte de l'Esprit*.

endorses John Henry Newman's comparison of the early history of the Church with the opening chords of a symphony, when the subjects which will later be brought out are introduced all together in a concentrated burst of creativity; after all he writes it was in 553 that the Fifth Ecumenical Council reaffirmed that God 'suffered death in the flesh'.⁷⁵

The Human Face

Clément wondered what it is that illuminates some faces with a light that is not that of the sun? As a child Clément loved the faces of old peasants, patient and sad, faces seen in the town seemed worn by triviality and nervous exhaustion, and haste that made time into an enemy rather than an ally. The women look beautiful but it was often an impersonal mask from which the voice rang false. Yet the faces of children, when they sleep or are attentive, and sometimes the face of a dead person have an aura of mystery. But finally the face, if devastated by individual or collective destiny through the scars of so many failures, so much sadness, becomes a cross and like a flint where sparks can fly out. Sparks that are capable of lighting fire that sheds spiritual light. If the face is just matter, how can it touch the heart, make the eyes shine, open for an instant the absence; what is this secret space where we speak and think, this depth which for us is communion, this centre where we are joined. Why are there faces at all if everything comes from nothing and returns to nothing?⁷⁶ Clément throughout his life returns to important insights of Emmanuel Levinas⁷⁷ on the 'face-à-face' encounter, which calls forth an ethical responsibility, that prioritizes the other over the self. For Clément his understanding that God himself is present in the other intensifies the imperative of this insight.

Total Humanity: Divine, Human and Cosmic

Clément points out that some intellectuals think the structure of matter comes under the domain of a consciousness that is part of a fundamental Source; they compare this Source to a collection of 'theme-programmes', this makes Clément think of the *logoï* of *Logos*, of word essences evocative of the Greek Fathers; or even of a mother

⁷⁵ Clément, *Sources*, 12.

⁷⁶ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 78.

⁷⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, 1906-1995, French Jewish philosopher of Lithuanian origin.

tongue that all the others attempt to speak each in his own fashion; it leads him to reflect on the Word 'through all things', dear to theology of the first centuries, which was strongly cosmic. St Maximus the Confessor⁷⁸ held that even the simplest perception constitutes a Trinitarian experience: being as a thing returns to the source of being, the Father; intellect to the Word-Wisdom, a movement towards fullness, to the Breath that gives life.⁷⁹

In his article 'Feather on the breath of God',⁸⁰ Rowan Williams refers to the interest in 'the sophianic' during the 1960s; the sophianic, he explains, is 'that level of the world where divine wisdom in its receptive femininity is at work. That depth of silent receptivity represented in scripture and tradition by the language of holy wisdom'. Williams points out the meaning of 'sophianic' for Thomas Merton, referred to by Merton in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*,⁸¹ which is linked to the 'divine child' in each of us 'that belongs to this apprehension of divine

⁷⁸ Maximus the Confessor, c. 580-662, also known as Maximus of Constantinople and Maximus the Theologian, a Christian monk, theologian and scholar. A number of his writings appear in the Greek *Philocalia*. He supported the Chalcedonian position that Jesus had both human and divine will. 'Humanity, the personal image of the Logos, has to discover and present the *logoi* of objects, their spiritual essences. Human rationality is thus offered boundless fertility in unifying and transfiguring the universe [...] The Christian West was to lay emphasis on our moral communion with Christ [...] The Christian East for its part was to insist on humanity's ontological participation in the divine energies. Maximus' theology is an admirable synthesis of these two approaches. And therein lies its relevance.' Olivier Clément, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism* (London: New City, 1994), 359-361; see also Olivier Clément, 'Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians: A Few Clarifications', trans. by Constantin Simon, from *Contacts*, 187, (1999) 193-205. See also Aidan Nichols, *Maximus the Confessor*.

⁷⁹ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 64.

⁸⁰ Rowan Williams, 'Feather on the breath of God', *The Tablet*, 20/27 December 2008.

⁸¹ With reference to Thomas Merton see also: Rowan Williams, 'Bread in the Wilderness', 174-196; Canon A M Allchin, 'The Prayer of the Heart and Natural Contemplation'; Allchin, 'The Worship of the Whole Creation: Merton and the Eastern Fathers', 92-102; Allchin, 'Our Lives a Powerful Pentecost: Merton's Meeting with Russian Christianity', 104-121, in *Merton & Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart*, ed. by Bernadette Dieker and Jonathan Montaldo (Louisville KT: Fons Vitae), 2003.

Sophia, the wisdom of the heart of things',⁸² which Clément sees as à *l'intérieur*. In his *Conjectures*, Merton refers to Karl Barth's account of his dream in which he attempts to persuade Mozart to explain why he was 'an unreconstructed and not terribly devout Catholic'; Mozart had no answer to give him. Mozart, said Barth, is the 'divine child in all of us'.⁸³ Merton, who died in 1968, writes in his Journal of 1963 as a baptized Christian of twenty-five years,⁸⁴ 'I think I will have to become a Christian'. Williams judges that Merton is challenged by Barth to see that 'a proper theology of the death of Christ tells me I am not serious; God is serious, my condition is serious, sin is serious, the Cross is serious. But somehow out of all this comes the miracle, the recognition that my reality rests like a feather on the breath of God. It is because God speaks, because God loves and it is for no other reason... I am because of the love of God.'⁸⁵ An echo of Merton's recognition that Christians are in a process of 'becoming' is expressed by Clément: 'I became Christian' he writes in 1979, 'I try without cease to become.'⁸⁶

In his desire to satisfy the thirst for the absolute Clément explored the hidden mystery he found interpreted in art and poetry, and in science, especially cosmology, searching for a link in history between humanity and the cosmos. He had been struck when reading Einstein's theories of relativity in his adolescence, by the idea of an absolute beginning of matter. In considering evolution he could see a design and continuity in the appearance of living forms, but he could also see in the perfection and infinite complexity of each one their radical discontinuity.⁸⁷

One evening, before his conversion, Clément heard a woman declare that the spiritual life could be summed up as destruction and nothingness. Later alone at his desk he felt reduced to nothing; everything was lost in a void. Yet 'Someone' was looking at him, the One in the icon. Everything was silence, words of silence; the silence was from him, he was no longer alone.⁸⁸ Clément remembers, He told me that I existed, that He wanted me to exist. He told me that I needed

⁸² Williams, 'Feather', 14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Thomas Merton, 1915-1968, was baptized in Corpus Christi Church, New York on 16 November 1938.

⁸⁵ Williams, 'Feather', 14.

⁸⁶ Clément, *La Révolte de l'Esprit*, 11.

⁸⁷ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 62.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

to be pardoned, healed and recreated and He pardoned, healed and made renewed me. 'Behold I stand at the door and knock', Clément opened.⁸⁹ Clément observes that in Christ, under the breath of the Paraclete,⁹⁰ the crown of thorns of human existence in death is transformed into a crown of flames, man rediscovers his divine dimension, his total humanity, and his cosmic immensity.⁹¹ Eliot describes this encounter of human frailty with the fire of the Spirit:

All shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flames are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.⁹²

Christ came also at an unexpected moment to Simone Weil. In two of her letters she overcame her natural reserve and wrote, "Christ himself came down and took possession of me" and that she experienced "a real contact, person to person, here below" with God'.⁹³ It is striking that similar concerns and experiences link Weil and Clément's thought: silence, the absence of God that gives freedom to recognize his presence, the quest for truth, the value of purity, beauty, justice, the communion of humanity and care, concern and responsibility for our neighbor.

Reading Berdiaev, curiously, did not alert Clément to the existence of the Orthodox Church; he had thought being a Christian meant being either Catholic or Protestant; Lossky and Evdokimov were to assist in bringing about a fuller understanding. These Russian theologians totally rejected the Soviet dialectical materialism of the Marxist Lenin theory of history, and wrote creatively of their own Russian Orthodox

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 137-138

⁹⁰ *Paraclete* published in 1936, is the second of a trilogy by Sergius Bulgakov; republished (Menn Orthodox Open University Press, 2003).

⁹¹ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 139-140.

⁹² Eliot, *Little Gidding*, 223. The first two lines are taken from Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. by Barry Wineatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Julian, 1342- 1416, an English mystic venerated in the Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran Churches.

⁹³ Bartomeu Estelrich Barcelo, "Le Christ lui-même est descendu et m'a prise": An Approximation of the Irruption of Christ in Simone Weil's Life as Interpreted Through Christian Tradition', *Cahiers Simone Weil: Amitiés et inimitiés de Simone Weil*, IV, Tome XXXI, 3 (2008), 301-336.

tradition in a way that was accessible to French readers.

They both held a theology, inseparable from the liturgy of the Church, of active love, of deepening asceticism and spirituality. Their theology was a celebration of the intellect and of an ecclesial communion that is profoundly personal. Both men belonged to a Christianity of a post-Christian and post-totalitarian era, that took its emphasis from God crucified, the irreducibility of the human being, the salvation of love and the spirituality of the Transfiguration. Both were deeply rooted in the Church, which Clément discovered was neither a moral code, an ideology, nor a social or political influence, but a Church that was deeply eucharistic, where the person was nourished and transformed: the Church Clément realized, was nothing other than Eucharist, the sacramental body of Christ where the Spirit is superabundantly present. Clément accepted that all Orthodox thought, all Christian thought, culminates in apophatic antimony, *l'antinomie apophatique*,⁹⁴ a faith that relates to that which is beyond expression in speech, relating to the method of negative theology which stresses the transcendence of God over all human language and categories, and prefers forms of reference which say what God is not.⁹⁵

An Answer to Secular Nihilism

Clément found in Orthodoxy answers to his questions about the meaning of life, and an answer to the culture of death that he had experienced in atheism and secular society; he recognized for what it was the temptation of mystical atheism both in false gods and in identifying oneself as God, from which the Lord's Prayer asks deliverance in its last two requests.⁹⁶ Michael Meerson points out that Nietzsche, rather than being regarded as an enemy by the creative theologians of the Diaspora, was 'recognized as an authentic brother, a critic of desiccated religion, a lover of freedom and a prophet of the confrontation of Christian tradition and modern consciousness.'⁹⁷ The questions raised by atheism helped Clément towards a perception and experience of the freedom offered by the Resurrected Christ who calls

⁹⁴ Clément, *Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1995), 15.

⁹⁵ Definition of 'apophatic' from David F Ford, *The Modern Theologians*, ed. by David Ford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 734.

⁹⁶ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 133.

⁹⁷ See Michael Plekon, 'Review Essay: Russian Theology and Theologians Revisited, *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* (1999), 416.

all persons to experience transfigured life to the full. While he found Catholicism to have an 'admirable Eucharistic piety' he also found, in a way that paralyzed him, it compartmentalized belief into theology, liturgy, mystery, and the sacrament of love of neighbor that had been taken by atheist Marxism.⁹⁸ He judged, at that time, there was a great difficulty in rendering a theological account of the Eucharist; transubstantiation seemed to him a poor metaphysical '*coup d'État*'. Clément could not understand why the Catholic Church emphasized the crucified figure of Jesus rather than the glorified risen Christ. Neither could he see continuity from the theology of the Fathers, to the Middle Ages and contemporary theology, which he found in Orthodox praxis and tradition; he judged that liturgical life, personal asceticism and social action were inseparable: the sacrament of the altar must extend to the need of the 'other'.⁹⁹ Orthodoxy affirms, he writes, that Christianity opens men and women in the Holy Spirit, to an infinite experience, that the true masters of history are men and women of prayer, that the Church is a mystery of the Transfiguration: only the light and the life that radiates from the Resurrected One can give sense to the modern exploration of the cosmos and of man himself. Later Clément recognized that the Catholic Church had assumed responsibility for the many issues raised by the Reformation and socialism; the next step, he observes in 1975, is to rediscover Orthodoxy, not as a separate confession but as its own ecclesial roots.¹⁰⁰

Clément's major concerns and themes

In the fifties the first of a series of books by Clément on Eastern Orthodox theology was published, including *Vladimir Lossky, un théologien de la personne et du Saint-Esprit* in 1959; he continued to produce a number of successful books in the sixties on the history of religion and Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, enriched by his deep interest and engagement with the Greek Fathers and theologians of the Russian Diaspora in France. His dialogues with Patriarchs Athenagoras¹⁰¹ and

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁰¹ As Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras jointly with Pope Paul VI in 1964 lifted the anathemas which had been in existence since the schism between East and West. Clément cites Yves Congar in expressing the process of

Bartholomew I⁰² were significant milestones in his spiritual interpretation of the political and cultural changes taking place in Europe. The dialogue with Athenagoras in 1968 was important in his reflections on the student revolt in Paris, and with Bartholomew in 1997 after the fall of Communism in Russia, in an era of life-changing technological revolution in the West, and the global rise of radical 'fundamental' movements, particularly in the nexus of the Arab-Israel conflict¹⁰³ for Judaism and Islam. At the invitation of Clément, Bartholomew I makes an address to the contemporary world in which Bartholomew and Clément seek to share with the West knowledge that the Eastern Church, although crushed by history, has nevertheless retained the absolute and central truth of the resurrection; they want all Christians to recover this understanding of the resurrection: God has become man so that man can become God. Issues of significant importance to Clément are discussed with Bartholomew: ecumenism, interfaith dialogue, the need for sacramental ecology, personhood, Islam, Judaism, youth, nation, love, sexuality, New Age, fanaticism and especially freedom.

1972 *Questions sur l'Homme*¹⁰⁴

In the seventies Clément explores the spiritual aspects of the revolt in Paris and produces his spiritual anthropology of the human being, *Questions sur l'Homme*, translated into English in 2000 as, *On Human Being*. Clément is a prophet of his time and for the twenty-first century. He explores what it is to be human and brings fresh understanding to issues of sexuality, politics, the role of humanity in the cosmos, trinitarian anthropology, the power of beauty, as well as society's taboo:

estrangement that led to a tragic separation between the years 1014-1204; see Clément, *Dialogues*, 18.

¹⁰² Clément, *La vérité vous rendra libre: Entretiens avec le Patriarche œcuménique Bartholomée I^{er}* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1977), trans. by Paul Meyendorff, *Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

¹⁰³ On Arab-Israel conflict see Anthony O'Mahony, 'Le Pèlerin de Jérusalem: Louis Massignon, Palestinian Christians, Islam and the State of Israel', in *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics and Society*, ed. by Anthony O'Mahony (London: Melisende, 1999), 166-189.

¹⁰⁴ Clément, *Questions sur l'homme* (Paris: Stock, 1972). Published by (Sainte-Foy: Anne Sigier, 1986), trans. by Jeremy Hummerstone, *On Human Being: a spiritual anthropology* (London: New City, 2000).

death. Clément, as a Professor of Eastern Christian Spirituality in Paris, knew that most Western Christians are unaware of the heritage of the early Church preserved in the spirituality and liturgy of the Eastern Christian Churches. Clément wanted to open up the existential dynamism of Eastern Christianity and the study of Patristic theology to the West – especially the theological anthropology of the Eastern Fathers – but recognizes that Western theology can also contribute to the East, a social consciousness which could lead to a global and universal compassion for people in need.¹⁰⁵

1974 *L'esprit de Soljenitsyne*¹⁰⁶

Clément's profound understanding of atheism and Russian Orthodoxy and his great gifts as a literary critic produced a profoundly intellectual critique of Solzhenitsyn in a richly spiritual rather than political assessment, which illuminates the greatness of this Russian author. He draws from his own deep knowledge and experience of atheism and Christianity to explore the heart of the matter, that death is always present in the midst of life, that existence is nevertheless a state to be regarded with the deepest respect and awe, and that every human face is a way to joy, truth and the Divine. 'Solzhenitsyn speaks for every man; he speaks for us' and the struggle he is involved in is not strictly political: it is prophetic;¹⁰⁷ It is the struggle for justice and truth: not ideological truth, but the truth proper to living beings, and the justice that respects all life in order that it may flourish. 'Marxism has nothing to say about death.'¹⁰⁸ Clément discusses the leitmotif of death and resurrection in Solzhenitsyn's work in a final chapter added in 1976,

¹⁰⁵ George A Maloney, 'Foreword', in Clément, *On Human Being*, 7. G A Maloney, 1925-2005, an American Jesuit whose origins were Irish, Polish-Ukrainian, was ordained a priest of the Byzantine-Slavonic rite as a member of the Society of Jesus in 1957. He founded the Pope John XXIII Ecumenical Centre in New York and the ecumenical journal *Diakonia*. He became a priest of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople and assistant priest at the Eastern Orthodox Church in California where he died: see Constantin Simon, *Pro Russia: The Russicum and Catholic Work for Russia*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 283 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2009), 668-669.

¹⁰⁶ *L'esprit de Soljenitsyne* (Paris: Stock, 1974), with the exception of Part six published for the first time in the English edition trans. by S. Fawcett and P. Burns, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, (London: Search Press, 1976).

¹⁰⁷ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

these are profound themes which have engaged Clément during his entire life.

Literary tributes by Clément to Evdokimov, for his understanding of the wonder of the Eucharist, and to Alexandre Boukarev,¹⁰⁹ followed in the seventies, then theological essays, and his own testimony, *L'autre soleil*. More works appear on spirituality and one on the theme of dialogue of the Russian Orthodox Church with the modern world,¹¹⁰ in collaboration with Elizabeth Behr-Sigel.

1979 *La Révolte de l'Esprit*¹¹¹

Clément's major concerns from the time of his baptism in 1951 in the years leading up to 1979 are expressed in his book *La Révolte de l'Esprit*, these include the position of contemporary Christianity, the meeting of Eastern and Western Christians, history, socialism, dialogue between religions, *l'eros* and *le visage*. It is true he says that the Gospels demand that we love God, with all our intelligence, yet man today has got into the habit of being intelligent about everything except the things of God!¹¹² *The Revolt of the Spirit* expresses the spirit of a time when technologies, sociologies and psychologies would have liked to explain everything in the world and to heal everything, 'à l'intérieur', at the heart of the world, that is, all except death; the Spirit reminds us violently that nobody is of the world, but we are called to live in a communion of persons, and here the Trinity is our example, source and ground.¹¹³

In the 1980s Clément edited and contributed to the *Théophanie* series of books, he produced testimonies to Lossky and Evdokimov, a stirring commentary on Liberation Theology and entered into dialogue with Islamic thinker Mohammed Talbi.

¹⁰⁹ Alexandre Boukarev, nineteenth-century theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹¹⁰ Olivier Clément and Élisabeth Behr-Sigel, *Alexandre Boukharev: un théologien de l'Église orthodoxe russe en dialogue avec le monde moderne*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977).

¹¹¹ Olivier Clément, *La Révolte de l'Esprit* (Paris: Stock, 1979).

¹¹² Clément, *La Révolte*, 10.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

1982 *Sources*: English translation *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*¹¹⁴

Sources followed in the eighties. Clément's strength in producing this masterpiece springs from his desire to love God with all his mind, and the result is a collection of literary observations, essays and spiritual reflections which arise from within the mystery of which he writes, rather than from reflections on it. *Sources* is an anthology of the writings of the first Christian mystics and Fathers, many of which would have been lost without the research undertaken by Clément who desired to gather this storehouse together and make it available to the contemporary world in an accessible form. His great accomplishment in collating the wisdom from the Eastern and Western Christian Traditions, leaps across space and time to impress readers today of the contemporaneous nature of these messages, which many are hungry to hear. He wants to reveal that there is a way of living at a greater depth which has been forgotten or ignored by modernity, that the theandric reality, the divine human reality, which is not fusion or confusion or separation, but intermingling of the human and divine. These writings resonate to the reader the divine energy of God, which in every generation continues to reach out to humankind.

He believes the prayer of contemplation is an act of creative love, and this he actualizes in the commentaries he provides between the texts. Clément wants to alert secular society, which regards Christianity at best as a moral code to enable a good life or a boring exercise involving pointless prayers, or at worst the cause of war and power struggles. While the thirst for mysticism has been lost by our consumer society, there are still those who genuinely thirst for the truth yet seek in the wrong place. Sensing their lost heritage, they search among the latest fads or, like Clément himself in his twenties, seek out Eastern gurus of Indian, Chinese and Tibetan cultures; while mysticism is essential for the human being to flourish, it is Christianity 'that will lead us to the secret of life,'¹¹⁵ and is the most complete religion of the East. He wants to alert the intellectual, the consumer, the person caught up in activity and politics, that these 'are merely the avatars of a much deeper human

¹¹⁴ Clément, *Sources: les mystiques chrétiens des origines* (Paris: Stock, 1982). Reprinted Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008, trans. Theodore Berkeley, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Text and Commentary* (London: New City, 1993).

¹¹⁵ Jean-Claude Barreau, 'Préface', in Clément, *Sources*, 7.

need.¹¹⁶ Jean-Claude Barreau¹¹⁷ judges with Clément, that our roots are religious and artistic; no sooner are our material needs satisfied than we become aware of our 'supra-natural' needs; there is not a superman or revolutionary who is not beset by unappeased desires. The Fathers of the Christian Church understood the human need for prayer: 'Birds fly, fishes swim and man prays.'¹¹⁸

The living God is no longer the Emperor of the World, but crucified Love; we live in the aftermath of Auschwitz, Hiroshima and the Gulag, after the era when Christianity was the dominant ideology, 'to the great detriment of freedom'.

Witnesses and prophets arise in times of persecutions, when society vacillates between a scepticism and *gnosis* that develops into a deep sense of dis-ease within. But there remain those who are 'drunk with God', who will with irreducible nonconformity 'after God, regard his brother as God'.¹¹⁹ Clément has been guided by tradition in his selection of writings from the Fathers of the Early Church up to the twentieth century; for Clément tradition is of great importance in understanding history and the truth of the Church. He regards the twentieth century as a time of great darkness, even a 'dark night' in the mystical sense of St John of the Cross,¹²⁰ 'but teeming with expectations and intuitions, while seeds of fire multiply in the earth beneath.'¹²¹ The 'light and the fire' declared by the witnesses of the Church is meant for all and is offered through the Bible and the Church. The key to understanding all significant processes of change, writes Clément, is the interpretation of the whole of life and the universe in the light of Christ's death and resurrection, and the witness of the Church, the 'mystery' of Him who restores us to life and brings about the transfiguration of the cosmos.¹²² Debates about the Church as an institution fail to see that the real state

¹¹⁶ Barreau, 'Préface', 7. The comments in this paragraph reflect the views of Jean-Claude Barreau.

¹¹⁷ Jean-Claude Barreau, born 1933 into an atheist family, he converted to Catholicism and became a priest. He could not accept the teaching of Paul VI on marriage and left the priesthood. He married and became an editor, journalist, author and politician.

¹¹⁸ Barreau, 'Préface', 7.

¹¹⁹ Clément, *Sources*, 12.

¹²⁰ Clément, *Dialogues*, 9.

¹²¹ Clément, *Sources*, 12.

¹²² *Ibid.*

of 'ecclesial being' is the experience of a person in communion, for whom humanity and the cosmos are by nature 'resurrectional' and paschal'.¹²³

1985 *Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs*¹²⁴

This book was written as an act of homage and gratitude by Clément for two men he considered his masters and friends: Vladimir Lossky and Paul Evdokimov. Both men were born in Russia but became lay Orthodox theologians in France. Evdokimov departed Russia after the defeat of the White Army and Lossky left Russia with his parents as part of the expulsion by Lenin of intellectuals, writers and artists in 1922. Nicolas Berdiaev, Léon Chestov¹²⁵ and Sergei Bulgakov, great intellectual religious émigré Russian philosophers and theologians born between 1870–1880, shared a vocation to decipher culture, society and history from the perspective of the transfiguration of Jesus. These Russians settled in France but continued to write in Russian with the hope of returning to Russia. Lossky's and Evdokimov's theology developed differently, they arrived in France in their twenties, continued their studies, the former at the Sorbonne and the latter at Aix-en-Provence, and wrote on the tradition of the Church in French. They had a profound love of France, its literature, art, thought, Christian and humanist traditions; they were both Russian and European but anti-Soviet. Clément believes Orthodoxy did not enclose them but gave them the freedom to explore everything that was essential, and they witnessed to their faith where God had led them. Others of their age continued to write in Russian but because of their historic circumstances these two became '*les grands passeurs*'. Clément judged that Lossky came to see a contemporary role of Orthodoxy was to help western confessions to retrieve their own specific spiritual and cultural roots in an undivided Church; Evdokimov's theology is both

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Clément, *Orient-Occident: Deux Passeurs: Vladimir Lossky et Paul Evdokimov (ou, Deux témoins)* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1985).

¹²⁵ Leon Chestov, 1844-1936, born in Kiev is the eldest son of a Jewish family. He married a Christian Orthodox in Italy and published the first book of many literary works under the pseudonym Lev Shestov. He returned to Russia and met many philosophers and writers, among whom were Bulgakov and Berdiaev. He settled in Paris in 1921, where he lectured at the Sorbonne and established contacts and friends within French literary circles.

intellectual and a celebration of joyful ecclesial praise.

1990-2009

During the nineties Clément reflected on the Russian French connection of theologian Berdiaev and published many texts on repentance, prayer and mysticism, the Eucharist and liturgical worship, as well as editions 1 and 2 of the Philocalia and an Orthodox Catechism; he has always been interested in the place of art and iconography in prayer as expressions of spiritual reality. His focus was on the Holy Spirit and human formation, and a spiritual vision of the cosmos.

Towards the end of the twentieth century he responded to Pope John Paul II's call to find a way for unity among the Churches and published *Rome autrement*, *Le Chemin de Croix à Rome*, and a series of reflections on his visits to Taizé. He links his own personal search for meaning in life to the experiences of the young people who converge on Taizé by the busload on a similar quest, his talks with the brothers there and the young people themselves. He wants to help others move from the sense of nothingness he once experienced towards joy, trust and an inner life that combines a deep spirituality with an everyday solidarity with others.

In the twenty-first century he continued to produce texts and books on the Church and spirituality, and a book of poems; an important contribution is *Mémoires d'espérance: Entretiens avec Jean-Claude Noyer*,¹²⁶ published during illness and physical decline, yet speaking as a theologian of great stature to the world of the new millennium, he calls Christians to be rooted in a spirituality beyond history, to become witnesses of a prophetic and creative spirituality that is capable of throwing light on history. His last book published in 2008, *Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps*,¹²⁷ is offered as a spiritual compass for those who journey into the twenty-first century. He invites us to find again meaning in prayer, to see the liturgy as a living incandescence but above all to seek a conversion of the heart.

Clément chose to end *L'esprit de Soljenitsyne* with a verse from Solzhenitsyn's poem, *Candle in the Wind*,¹²⁸ an offering in harmony with

¹²⁶ Olivier Clément, *Mémoires d'espérance: Entretiens avec Jean-Claude Noyer* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2003).

¹²⁷ Olivier Clément, *Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008).

¹²⁸ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyne*, 235.

the reality of Clément's own endeavor:

What I should like to do is make sure the
flickering candle of our soul stays alight till
it reaches one more witness. The essential thing is
that it should not be snuffed out in our century, in
this century of steel and the atom,
this cosmic, energetic, cybernetic century of ours ...
And then, in the twenty-first century,
let men do what they will with it.

TRUTH AND BEAUTY IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF OLIVIER CLÉMENT, SIMONE WEIL AND ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

Stefanie Hugh-Donovan^{1*}

This paper seeks to bring into conversation three significant religious figures in modern European history. All three thinkers had to 'discover' Christianity in context of indifference or hostile political and culture contexts - Clément in a divided and secularized southern French context; Weil explored the possibility of Christianity with regard to her own Jewish background; Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet Union in which the Russian Church had been albeit destroyed along with Russia's Christian culture. The idea of Truth was a central pivot for Clément, Weil and Solzhenitsyn as there recovered 'beauty' as a central aspect of their religious thought in ecclesial dialogue with their life and times.

'Beauty will save the world'
Fyodor Dostoevsky

Introduction

Olivier Clément, Simone Weil and Alexander Solzhenitsyn were witnesses to the great ideological tensions of the twentieth century. This Article examines the important significance of their life and thought revealed in their reflections around the themes of truth and

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beauty and the rejection of materialistic idols. An interpretation of the meaning of Dostoevsky's enigmatic phrase, 'Beauty will save the world', cited by Clément, is discussed, and beauty as an essential complement to truth and goodness, that contributes to Clément's testimony and theological corpus,² is affirmed. Clément's thought marks a distinctive change of emphasis from the ethical and philosophical reflection on theo-anthropology, which dominated theology of the twentieth century in the West. Echoing the sentiment of Eliot's poem, there was a need to see afresh the words relating to beauty and the divine; a need to link spirituality and prayer more closely in the study of theology. These three thinkers discern that human creativity expressed in art has a salvific contribution, this conclusion is more remarkable perhaps in the light of the suffering and darkness experienced personally by the three writers, during an era of totalitarianism dominance in Russia and Western Europe. This understanding of art carries an Eastern Christian understanding of the vocational call to men and women to become co-creators with God. Nicholas Zernov regards icons as 'the dynamic manifestation of man's spiritual power to redeem creation through beauty and art'.³ In following this vocation the artist chooses to use creative powers, gratuitously given by the Spirit, but which nevertheless require self-sacrifice from the artist to bring the work of art alive. Allchin notes that the important theological notion of co-creativity was developed by Nicholas Berdiaev.⁴ Beauty portrayed in art is exemplified in the serenity and joy shining from André Roublev's icon of the Trinity, which was painted at a time of 'war, famine, violence and cruelty';⁵ it reveals divine compassion, unity and diversity, that speak across the divides of Christianity.

Clément chose Christianity during a time of near despair at the nothingness of atheistic nihilism, Solzhenitsyn engulfed by Communist totalitarian atheism and the horror of the Gulag returned to Christianity, Simone Weil in the milieu of nihilism that swept through Europe after the First World War explored Christianity but for altruistic

² See Olivier Clément, 'Pour une théologie de la Beauté', in *Sillons de Lumière* (Troyes: Fates, 2002), 103-110.

³ Nicholas Zernov, *The Russians and their Church* (London: SPCK, 1946) cited by A M Allchin, *Praise Above All: Discovering the Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 155.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

reasons, may not, it would seem, have completely embraced it. A quest for truth in the first half of the twentieth century forges links between the thought of Clément, Weil and Solzhenitsyn in which themes of resistance, truth and beauty are strongly represented.

The strong sense of social justice inherited from his grandfather exerted a formative influence on Clément's early years. As a young adult the socialist views of Simone Weil and her quest for truth resonated with Clément's own experience of the Languedoc region, where socialism was regarded as the 'third religion'.

Clément at the age of twenty-seven was drawn towards Christianity and as a mature Christian twenty-five years later, he wrote his great literary critique of Solzhenitsyn's life and work, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*,⁶ identifying with the Orthodox Christian spirituality of Solzhenitsyn in his interpretation of the meaning of life, death and resurrection. Solzhenitsyn's witness, thought and artistic writing were important to Clément; both were writers for whom the only created being to reflect the absolute is the individual person in the image of God.⁷ They had travelled arduous journeys to discover 'existence finds meaning in the communion of persons', in 'the wonderful coincidence of unity and separateness',⁸ which for Clément reflects the paradigm of Trinitarian unity and diversity. It could be said, he sought to be a 'voice' for Solzhenitsyn in the West.

Their profound understanding of the human need for justice, truth and beauty, reflects a justice that respects all life in order that it may flourish; they write of truth identified through the lens of the Gospel, lived in the spirituality of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The Gospel demands love of neighbor and Solzhenitsyn perceives the experience of nationhood as a stage in this process. We need these simple roots, in a people, in a country, in a language, especially in this technological age notes Clément. Faces are a recurring theme of Clément's writing; Solzhenitsyn portrays the beauty of faces, the beauty of the indomitable human spirit, and the beauty of Russia itself as he writes of the sunlight transforming a simple tablecloth into dazzling blue and a girl's hair to gold; of the sun on the Caucasus mountains, 'flooding every inch to the

⁶ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn* (London: Search Press, 1976).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Clément, *Solzhenitsyn*, 111.

very horizon', and of the true heartland of Russia, 'the forest country'.⁹ Nicolas Zernov, in 1945, gives us a moving insight into the connection between Russian landscape and thought; each spring, after six months of immobility and seeming death, life returns to the land. With great power and noise the rivers and lakes burst free from the imprisoning ice; grass and flowers appear overnight in fields which had been deeply mantled with snow for six months, birds sing again. Men and animals feel exhilarated, reborn: the power of the resurrection of nature and history receives full meaning for Russians in Christ's victory over death. Zernov judges the four cornerstones of Russian culture to be universalism, interdependence, humility and belief in the resurrection.¹⁰

Simone Weil

Clément could well have seen a connection between the story recounted by his grandfather of the determined resistance against oppression by the incarcerated young *Cévenole* woman, and the contemporary twentieth century French thinker, Simone Weil. Clément admired the integrity and courage required to resist the oppressor demonstrated by the *Cévenole* girl locked in the tower. Weil's whole life could be said to have been one of resistance. According to John Lukacs, 'one of the great principles she incarnated was that of resistance. This was not only political resistance, but also an intellectual resistance to the fads, accepted ideas and idols of the modern world.'¹¹ In the spirit of their French *Cévenole* ancestor, Clément and Weil worked for the French Resistance during the Second World War; while Clément remained in France, Weil worked with the Free French in wartime London from 1942; it would appear that her spirit of resistance and sense of communion with suffering people of France, particularly her belief in the obligation to help those suffering from hunger,¹²

⁹ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁰ Zernov, *The Russians*, 178-179.

¹¹ John Lukacs, 'Resistance: Simone Weil', *Salmagundi*, 85/86 (1990), 106-118 (106). For Protestant resistance during World War II, see Cabanel, *Résister, voix protestantes*.

¹² Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: prelude towards a declaration of duties towards mankind* (London: Routledge, 1952, Part 1); originally published as *L'Enracinement: prélude à une déclaration des devoirs envers l'être humain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).

ultimately resulted in her death in a hospital in England, because of her refusal to eat more than the ration allocated to a French person in occupied France.

Simone Weil was born in Paris on 3 February 1909, thirteen years before Clément, and died 24 August 1943 in Ashford, England. She records her experience of an unexpected encounter with the living Christ in 1938 while she was reading George Herbert's poem entitled *Love*, it became a prayer in her heart. She was later able to write 'In all that awakens within us the pure and authentic sentiment of beauty, there truly is the presence of God.' Weil's words are quoted by Pope Benedict XVI in his address to artists in 2009;¹³ he adds, 'Authentic beauty [...] unlocks the yearning of the human heart, the profound desire to know, to love, to go towards the Other, to reach for the Beyond. If we acknowledge that beauty touches us intimately, that it wounds us, that it opens our eyes, then we rediscover the joy of seeing, of being able to grasp the profound meaning of our existence.'¹⁴

During and after the Second World War, Clément judged the thought of Simone Weil to be of great significance and, in agreement with other contemporary intellectuals, had considered her ideas to be of more importance than those of Jean-Paul Sartre.¹⁵ Some thinkers deem her to be not only a gifted philosopher, but also a saint;¹⁶ T S Eliot writes in the preface to Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots*, which like all her work was published posthumously, that she had a 'kind of genius akin to that of saints.'¹⁷ Clément recalls Berdiaev's words "that each Christian receives a special genius from the Spirit" and Simone Weil has called for a "sanctity which has genius", something she had already shown she possessed;' he further reflects that 'the Spirit still has his prophets

¹³ Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Artists, 21 November 2009, on the tenth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's letter to artists. https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20091121_artisti.html [Accessed 15.8.15].

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Clément, *L'autre soleil* (Paris: Stock, 1975), 59.

¹⁶ Ashlee Cunsolo Willox, 'The Cross, the Flesh, and the Absent God: Finding Justice through Love and Affliction in Simone Weil's Writings', *The Journal of Religion*, 88 (2008), 53-74.

¹⁷ T S Eliot, 'Foreword', Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, vi, cited in Willox, 73.

among us'.¹⁸ *The Need for Roots* was initially written as a report for the Free French Resistance movement concerning a regeneration of a post-war France, in which Weil expresses her important themes 'spirituality at work' and 'the needs of the soul', 'obligations and rights' and the spiritual nature of physical work. Weil argues that the dominance of the concept of human rights so prevalent in French politics should be preceded by the principal of obligations which correspond to the needs of the human soul. Weil lists fourteen needs of the soul that include liberty, obedience, responsibility, equality, and truth.¹⁹ T S Eliot praised Weil's balanced judgement, shrewdness and good sense.

The Need for Roots explores the causes for social, cultural and spiritual breakdown that she witnessed in twentieth century Europe, but also globally, which she judged resulted from an up-rootedness caused by a diminished sense of connectedness and responsibility towards family and community, breaks with the past and failure of religious and national institutions to engender a shared hope for the future that flowed from a spiritual and cultural rootedness to the past.

Clément also writes of the breakdown of village life and the movement of the rural population into urban environments in his spiritual autobiography, he too addresses 'the needs of the soul' and the whole person through his discernment as a Christian theologian and writer.²⁰

Interesting strands link Weil's lifelong quest for truth with that of Clément: they both appear to be 'outsiders' seeking an ecclesial home, who in a certain sense are without religious roots yet in seeking after truth, are on a quest to become rooted. They both rejected 'false' man-made idols erected by modernity in the name of politics and religion. They shared alike the ideals of early Socialism rooted in Christian ethics and built on justice and respect for the other; the attraction of Christianity; the mystery of beauty; the role of martyrdom and witness; and a need to know a meaning beyond death.

Simone Weil's pursuit of truth and purity led her to empathise with the Cathars, Greek for the 'Pure Ones', who resisted to the point of suffering martyrdom in Languedoc, centuries before a young Protestant

¹⁸ Clément, *On Human Being: a spiritual anthropology* (London: New City, 2000), 47-48.

¹⁹ See Stephen Plant, 'Nationhood and roots: Dostoevsky and Weil on national culture and Europe', *Religion, State and Society*, 26: 3-4, 1998, 279-289.

²⁰ See Clément's *Questions sur l'homme* (Paris: Stock, 1972).

girl scratched her word of conscience on her prison wall in that same region. The Cathars' desire to live a life of poverty and pacifism, simplicity and abstinence were also driving forces for Weil, who wrote, 'The essence of the Languedocian inspiration is identical with that of the Greek inspiration [...] Liberty was loved. Obedience was loved no less. The unity of these two contraries is the Pythagorean harmony in society. But harmony is only possible between things that are pure.'²¹ She spent some time visiting the Cathar region near Carcassonne publishing under a pseudonym two articles in *Cahiers du Sud*, identifying in Joe Bousquet, a local atheist, the spiritual essence of Occitan. She sought in Catharism a way of understanding the evil she saw in the world; like the Cathars she found the God of the Old Testament pitilessly cruel and incompatible with the God of the New Testament. The Languedoc region and history imprinted its mark on both Weil and Clément.

Weil's empathy with the poor and desire for justice led her to work for several periods as an agricultural laborer, and also like Paul Evdokimov, to work in a car factory as a manual laborer. A similar initiative had been undertaken by Catholic Dominican, Fr Jacques Loew,²² who worked at the docks in Marseilles from 1941. His action became the spearhead for the Worker-Priest movement within the French Catholic Church when, with permission from their bishops, priests took industrial jobs in car factories in order to empathize and

²¹ Simone Weil, 'The Romanesque Renaissance' in *Selected Essays* (Oxford: OUP, 1962), 48, 51.

²² Fr Jacques Loew, born 1908, was the only child of a non-believing family of Protestant origin. He converted to Catholicism at the age of twenty, trained as a lawyer, joined the Dominican Order and was ordained a priest in 1939. In 1941 he worked in the Marseilles docks, effectively this was the start of the Worker-Priest movement. Fr Karol Wojtyła visited him in Marseilles in 1947 and admired Loew's pastoral ministry. The Vatican however became concerned at possible Worker-Priest involvement in left-wing politics. Loew wrote a defense of the movement to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Giovanni Montini, later Pope Paul VI, but the movement was closed by Pope Pius XII. Loew in obedience resigned from his job. He visited Africa and worked for three years in the shantytowns of Brazil 1964-1969. He wrote several books and was invited by Pope Paul VI to preach a Lenten Retreat in the Vatican. In his last years he retired to a life of prayer and silence. Information retrieved from the obituary for Fr Loew, *The Times*, 27 February 1999.

experience the everyday life of secularised working class people.²³ Worker-Priests shared their experiences of engagement with the modern world with their bishops and with the papal nuncio in France, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, later to become Pope John XXIII.²⁴

Like Clément, Weil was drawn towards Christianity but could not, at first,²⁵ bring herself to become a baptized Christian as she felt unable to accept the doctrine of the Resurrection, 'The Cross by itself suffices me',²⁶ she wrote. For Clément the Resurrection and transfiguration of Christ is the answer and victory over death. He argues that some modern art, mostly in paintings, is a 'disintegrative experimentation', a descent into hell with no resurrection to follow. However, he concedes that some truly creative artists succeed in using this approach as a means of contemplation, but these are exceptions.²⁷ Simone Weil would seem to be such a person. For Weil, justice was inseparable from faith and love, which she saw in the life and death of Jesus. She was deeply connected to God, Christ and the Cross and believed every human being can rise above the self, and obtain the impersonal, the transcendent realm of the world beyond. She arrived at a belief in a divine order beyond space and time, 'the just man loves', she writes; 'He who is capable not only of listening but also of loving, hears this silence as a word of God. The speech of created beings is with sounds. The word of God is silence. Christ is the silence of God. Just as there is no tree like the Cross, there is no harmony like the silence of God.'²⁸ Clément was not a stranger to this silence and Weil would appear to describe the

²³ See Oscar L. Arnal, *Priests in Working Class Blue: The History of Worker-Priests 1943-1954*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

²⁴ It could be argued that Pope John XXIII had convened the Second Vatican Council partly as a result of the findings revealed by Worker-Priests. The young Polish priest, Karol Wojtyła, admired the 'apostolic work' of Fr Jacques Loew, and had himself undertaken hard labor as a seminarian.

²⁵ There is reason to believe that Simone Weil did receive Baptism. See Diogenes Allen and Eric O Springsted, 'The Baptism of Simone Weil', in *Spirit, Nature and Community: Issues in the Thought of Simone Weil* (New York: University of New York Press, 1994), 3-18.

²⁶ David McLellan quotes Weil in *Utopian Pessimist: The Life and Thought of Simone Weil* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1990), 192.

²⁷ Clément, *On Human Being*, 127.

²⁸ Simone Weil, *On Science*, 197, cited by Willox, 'The Cross', 68.

'silence' recognized by Clément from his childhood that he recorded in his spiritual autobiography.

Yet Weil asks, 'Why is Creation good, seeing that it is inseparably bound up with evil?'²⁹ She writes, 'Relentless necessity, misery, distress, the crushing burden of poverty and of exhausting labor, cruelty, torture, violent death, constraint, terror, disease – all this is but divine love', who could believe in such a God and call him good? Weil struggles to equate this level of negation with the love and hope of the Christian message and the power of the Resurrected Christ. She describes necessity as 'the obedience of matter to God', and perceives, 'Necessity is the screen placed between God and us so that we can *be*. It is for us to pierce through the screen so that we cease to be.'³⁰ God, she judges, 'can only be present in creation under the form of absence – this is a relinquishing of divine control.'³¹ Her negative assessment would appear to miss the divine call of love to union with the Divine made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

However, she writes in *Waiting for God* how God is the one who searches for us: 'We do not walk vertically. We can only turn our eyes toward God. We do not have to search for God we only have to change the direction in which we are looking. It is for him to search for us,'³² as Clément had discovered when he wrote 'He found me.'

Like Clément, Weil faced depression and contemplated suicide. Her prayer, 'Oh God, grant that I may become nothing', could have

²⁹ Simone Weil, *Notebook 1*, 191. This view of the created world is similar to the teaching of the Cathar religion; Cathars believed all matter to be evil. From the Catholic view Catharism was heretical. The religion was founded on the opposition of light and darkness: God and Satan, the spiritual and temporal world; God did not create the world, Christ did not take human form nor suffered the cross, Baptism would not bring salvation. The Cathars believed in a Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the *consolamentum*, received at ordination, or for lay people before death. They wanted to return to values of simplicity and abstinence, poverty and pacifism, values they thought the Roman Catholic Church had forsaken. Information from Emily McCaffrey, 'Memory and Collective Identity in Occitanie: The Cathars in History and Popular Culture', *History and Memory*, 13 (2001). See also McCaffrey, 'Imagining the Cathars in late-twentieth-century Languedoc', *Contemporary European History* (2002), 409-427.

³⁰ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* (London: Routledge, 2004), 109.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 32, 33.

³² Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*.

disturbed Clément who believed that God became man so that man could become god; yet it is the thought of many saints. Willox in his assessment points to Weil's hope for 'divinization' through surrender to the divine will, and judges that she 'understood the problem of spiritual emptiness, affliction, and the soul's yearning for God, perhaps better than any other writer of the twentieth century', pointing to beyond time and space to 'an eternal order that houses the absent God – a God that is waiting for humanity to surrender, to consent to his will and his way so that he may fill their souls with divine love.'³³ This forms a correlation with Clément's mature theological project, which was to provide a 'compass'³⁴ both for Christians and for those who experience spiritual emptiness and quest after the truth; he was able to point towards the transforming life offered to each person, and to the cosmic ramifications for the world that this transformation of persons would bring, achieved by and through the love and resurrection of Christ. An atheistic 'nothingness' after death that caused the seven-year-old Olivier to feel anguish, had given way to knowledge in his heart that 'the silence of God is in reality the silence of His respect, of His suffering, of His love';³⁵ like Dostoevsky's pilgrim he understood the prayer, 'Everything is in you, Lord, I myself am in you, receive me!'³⁶ Olivier Clément is the witness to a faith that does not separate itself from life as it is lived today.³⁷ He recognises that the self must decrease in a kenotic self-emptying, so that Christ may increase; that the apophatic 'way of knowing God that is most worthy of him is to know him through unknowing, in a union that rises above the intellect.'³⁸ He writes in *Sources*, 'The ultimate knowledge, the love-knowledge of the Trinity, takes hold of us by grace alone and we prepare for it by a stripping away of our being until we become nothing but expectation.'³⁹ Weil also knew personal kenosis. Clément accepts 'Simone Weil's admittedly approximate expression, we must "de-create" ourselves, and

³³ Willox, 74.

³⁴ Clément, *Petite Boussole spirituelle pour notre temps* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008).

³⁵ Stan Rougier sums up the witness of Clément in *La Révolte de l'Esprit* (Paris: Stock, 1979), written in collaboration with Olivier Clément, 15.

³⁶ Clément, *L'Autre Soleil*, 10.

³⁷ Stan Rougier, 15.

³⁸ Clément, *Sources*, 275.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

descend even below the level of plants and stones [...] to the waters of baptism, to the waters of creation. Then the Spirit comes as he came upon Mary and the person is created afresh in “an ineffable peace and silence”.⁴⁰

For Simone Weil truth and beauty are synonymous, ‘Under the name of truth I also included beauty, virtue and every kind of goodness,’ she proclaims in *Waiting for God*.⁴¹ A contemporary Catholic view of beauty that echoes Dostoevsky is expressed by O’Leary, ‘It is only beauty that will save the world. Beauty is a sacrament: it is Christ’s tender smile coming through the world.’⁴² The Russian novelist and philosopher, Fyodor Dostoevsky,⁴³ writing in the nineteenth century, allows the enigmatic statement, ‘beauty will save the world’ to be spoken by Prince Myskin, who is represented in the title of Dostoevsky’s novel, *The Idiot*.⁴⁴

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Alexander Solzhenitsyn,⁴⁵ the Russian novelist, historian and critic of Soviet totalitarianism, takes up Dostoevsky’s phrase in his Nobel Prize Lecture in 1970.⁴⁶ He admits that he had dismissed this notion on

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, 64, cited by Willox, ‘The Cross’.

⁴² Daniel J. O’Leary, *Already Within: Divining the Hidden Spring* (New York: Columbia Press, 2007).

⁴³ Fyodor Dostoevsky, 11 November 1821 - 9 February 1881. For discussion on Russian spirituality, philosophy and literature see Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, faith and fiction* (London: Continuum, 2010).

⁴⁴ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. by Alan Meyers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴⁵ Alexander Solzhenitsyn was born three years before Olivier Clément on 11 December 1919 and died one year before him on 3 August 2008. Solzhenitsyn helped to raise global awareness of the Gulag and Soviet Union’s forced labor camp system; the Gulag was the Central Administration of the Corrective Labor Camps. Solzhenitsyn was expelled from Russia to the West in 1974, but returned in 1994 after the fall of the Soviet Union.

⁴⁶ Solzhenitsyn was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature ‘for the ethical force with which he had pursued the indispensable tradition of Russian literature’. His lecture was delivered only to the Swedish Academy. See, *Nobel Lectures: Literature 1968-1980*, ed. by Tore Frängsmyr and Sture Allén (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 1993). Also see: www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1970/solzhenitsyn-lecture.html, [Accessed 2 July 2015].

beauty for years, wondering when such a thing had ever happened in the bloodthirsty history of humankind, but acknowledged 'there is a special quality in the essence of beauty'. Simone Weil saw a synthesis between truth and beauty, and Solzhenitsyn also intertwines the two: he opens his lecture with Dostoevsky's phrase, 'Beauty will save the world', and concludes it with a Russian proverb: 'One word of truth shall outweigh the whole world'. His mature discernment is that Dostoevsky words are a prophecy. He points out that secular materialistic society had long since discarded the trilogy of Truth, Good and Beauty as an outworn formula, but art continues to give us part of that trilogy's 'secret inner light', which we sometimes receive, albeit dimly and briefly, as insights which logical processes of thought cannot attain. Clément and Solzhenitsyn believe the true artist who has a sense of the spiritual harmony of the world with all the beauty and savagery of man's contribution to it, attempts to communicate this poignantly to others. Even in poverty, prison or illness, Solzhenitsyn reflects, the sensation of stable harmony will never leave the artist; the true artist 'realizes that there is a supreme force above him and works gladly away as a small apprentice under God's heaven.'

Solzhenitsyn's own writing is a beautiful and artistic expression with which Clément empathizes in its call to draw the whole of humankind towards unity, 'a one indivisible humanity'.⁴⁷ Solzhenitsyn appeals for 'an irreversible march of the nations of the whole world towards unity.' Only *dypsichia*, the divided heart destroys unity by untruth – the contradiction between what is said and what is done.⁴⁸ It is a march that must be given a spiritual character, reflects Clément, because humanity is becoming materially but not spiritually united. The understanding of both these writers is expressed through the recurring leitmotif of 'death and resurrection'. Clément, who found the 'fathers' of atheistic nihilism had no answer to the question of death – it was not a topic of discourse for Marx, observes that Solzhenitsyn, through his descent into hell during the initiations of the Gulag reached a Christian depth where men are no longer separate, where there is only a single humanity in the 'Homo Maximus': 'one man'.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 209.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁹ Clément, *Ibid.*, 11; 'Homo Maximus' is the phrase of Nicholas of Cusa.

Solzhenitsyn evoked a concept of the Fatherland as a communion of people that includes all persons living and dead, stretching back over centuries, 'woven together by a thread of memory, hope and sacrifice'. This memory is carried in the language of a people that shapes and enriches the soul of a nation;⁵⁰ Clément uses a phrase of Charles Péguy⁵¹ that describes this shared memory as a 'trial run' or the beginning of the communion of saints. Allchin endorses this perception in his recognition of the importance of Welsh poetry, and sees an analogy between the person and the nation expressed by Jacques Maritain and the Welsh poet: 'the nation like the person needs to respect the rights of others, but it has its own rights which also need to be respected.'⁵² To threaten to destroy the language of a people is to threaten their 'identity as a people and as people'. Allchin judges that the gift of tongues at Pentecost that enabled all to hear in their own language, is theologically an 'affirmation of the importance and worth of human diversity against all tendencies to monolithic or imposed uniformity,'⁵³ a belief declared by both Clément and Solzhenitsyn, who writes as editor of a book of dissident writing, *From under the Rubble*,⁵⁴ a person is of vital importance, 'The person is not a part of the whole, he comprehends the whole within itself.' Solzhenitsyn judges the vocation of great literature is to be 'the living memory of a nation. It maintains and reactivates its forgotten history [...] preserves the language and soul of a nation.'⁵⁵ In this sense he believes that twentieth century literature of Russia lost continuity through the intervention of power.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ On this theme see A M Allchin's discussion on nation and language in 'Diversity of Tongues: curse of Babel or gift of Pentecost', in Allchin, *Praise Above All*, 124-141.

⁵¹ Charles Péguy (1873-1914), French poet, essayist and editor. His two main philosophies were socialism and nationalism. He became a devout but non-practicing Roman Catholic by 1906. He died in battle in the First World War.

⁵² Allchin, *Praise*, 136-137.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 130-131. The Soviet Union attempted to force 'Russianisation' of culture and language on its satellite nations.

⁵⁴ Vadim Borisov, 'Personality and National Awareness', in *From Under the Rubble*, ed. by Alexander Solzhenitsyn (London: Collins, 1975); cited in Allchin, *Praise*, 137.

⁵⁵ Solzhenitsyn, Nobel Peace Lecture; Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 212.

⁵⁶ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 212.

In an attempt to touch modern secular man Solzhenitsyn makes an appeal to artists, especially writers, believing only beauty can help humankind to enter more deeply into the experience of being which renews the sense of wonder at the gift of life and compassion for the other. Speaking of the world's different value systems which seem to render us incapable of compassion for distant suffering he sees art and literature have a role in overcoming man's detrimental peculiarity of hearing only from his own personal experience. Nearing the end of the twentieth century, John Paul II makes a similar call to artists, stating 'every genuine art form in its own way is a path to the inmost reality of man and of the world', artists by their nature 'are alert to every "epiphany" of the inner beauty of things;' the Pope goes on to write, 'Beauty is a key to the mystery and call to transcendence.'⁵⁷

Solzhenitsyn's vision for the future of Russia is both Slavophile and Orthodox with an emphasis based on social conviviality and communitarian life – 'an ecclesiology of communion',⁵⁸ Solzhenitsyn rises above Russian polemics between a universality, which can be seen by Russian critics as the West, and the Slavophilism of the nineteenth century, that continues today as nationalism.

Clément judges that Solzhenitsyn is in line with other great Russian writers, 'who have never been more universal than when they are being most Russian.'⁵⁹ It would seem this is true also of Clément who deeply appreciates the French language and France, yet his message is of universal and global importance.

Olivier Clément

Olivier Clément writes poetically of beauty in the landscape of the Languedoc that filled him with awe in his youth when as he describes himself, he was a Mediterranean pagan. This beauty he later identified as Christ himself. He marvels at the splendor of the almond tree springing to life under a free azure sky after winter, when the first spring vine leaves flame gold, and the earth beneath them is the color of ochre. He sees it as an original world in which the transforming light gently condenses on the beauty of the almond blossom, symbol of the

⁵⁷Pope John Paul II, *Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to Artists*, 1999, 6; <http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii LET_23041999_artists.html> [Accessed 25 June 2015]

⁵⁸ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 234.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 210.

secret mystery in the superabundance of an illuminated world.⁶⁰ In the still air on certain days at the end of winter the first almond trees blossoming against the peaceful blue heaven, expressed for him an absolute and fragile beauty.

Flowers, without leaves, emerging directly from seemingly hard, dry, dead, wood resembling black skeletons, come to life at the first breath, like the dry bones in the prophecy of Ezekiel.⁶¹ Clément reflects that in Hebrew the almond tree is called the watchman: his description of it as both the watchman of spring and the awakener evokes Teilhard de Chardin's view that 'the deliberate fusion of Christian life with the natural sap of the world'⁶² discloses God's presence.

In Eastern Christian tradition the philocalic vision is to discover all is beautiful in Christ; the inaccessible God transcends his own transcendence and has many names for the person of Christ: the most loved is the divine name of Beauty.⁶³ God is himself the fullness of beauty in a sense that is inseparably ontological and personal; his being streams from the depth of love, the reciprocal love of the Persons in unity, so beautifully portrayed in the icon of the *Trinity* by André Roublev symbolizing a 'motionless movement of love'.⁶⁴ This is the beauty that produces all communion, since it is itself born of communion. Icons allow us to know God through beauty; 'beauty becomes a way to know God'.⁶⁵ Roublev's icon portrays the three angels with the cup of sacrifice at their center; the rhythm of lines portraying their wings and shoulders suggest to Clément, who compares it to 'a musical silence',⁶⁶ a mystery in which one cannot go without the other.

Glory streams like a river of beauty from the Father to the Word, in the Holy Spirit which is silence at the heart of this Trinity. The light of an icon is always from the interior, everything is as if bathed interiorly

⁶⁰ Clément, *L'autre soleil*, 35.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Henri de Lubac. *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (London: Collins, 1967), 107, note 90.

⁶³ Clément, *Sillons de Lumière* (Paris: Fates Cerf, 2002), 103. Clément cites Denys the Areopagite who, in his treatise on the Divine Names, qualifies Beauty as that which produces all communion.

⁶⁴ Clément, *Sillons*, 103.

⁶⁵ Clément, *Questions*, 191.

⁶⁶ Clément, *Sillons*, 104.

with sunlight; for the iconographer light is the symbol of God.⁶⁷ Clément is in concordance with Maximus the Confessor's thought: the world is called to be set alight by divine fire to become the burning bush in space and time. Genesis, writes Clément, records that God found all created things 'bon et beau', good and beautiful, therefore all created things resonate with an interior word, the *logos* of the *Logos* which is a way of all created things participating in the light and divine beauty by their very existence.⁶⁸ Bulgakov captures this concept: '*Sophia* is revealed to the world as beauty, and this beauty is the sacramentality of the world.'⁶⁹

Clément defines a first beauty as that of paradise, reflected again in the face of a child or the vitality of youth, but humankind interrupted this first beauty and the light of glory became external rather than shining out from the interior of beings. He compares the second beauty to a mauve nostalgia, as depicted by the deposed angel at the left of Christ on a mosaic at Ravenna. Clément's third beauty is 'the cross of light, the glory of Christ, it is the beauty we need, that of Emmanuel: God with us; and the Holy Spirit: us with God.'⁷⁰ Clément sounds a note of warning concerning certain contemporary Western concepts of beauty; only a renewed Christianity could open up the way of beauty again. Some contemporary artists portray images that spread a culture of death, unlike the iconographer whose work is an art of the Transfiguration. Clément notes 'the most striking general characteristic of contemporary art is its rejection of the face.'⁷¹ Dostoevsky again refers to the mystery of beauty in *The Brothers Karamazov*: 'The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man.' In this paradox what appears to be beauty can be a deceit; yet what appears 'terrible' in the death of Christ indicates the true beauty of self-kenosis and love.

Clément argues that Christian witness today must not only be through service, but through art, an art that unifies the heart and spirit, that detects in all people the chance of the third beauty, that discovers that all is sacred; an art that is filled with wonder that the inaccessible

⁶⁷ Clément, *On Human Being*, 136; *Questions*, 194.

⁶⁸ Clément, *Sillons*, 104.

⁶⁹ Clément, *The Spirit of Solzhenitsyn*, 111. See Robert Slesinski, 'Bulgakov on Sophia', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 59 (2007), 131-145.

⁷⁰ Clément, *On Human Being*, 139; see Chapter on 'The Third Beauty', 127-143.

⁷¹ Clément, *On Human Being*, 128.

comes to us to fulfil us, through all the faces and beauty of the world. These are the blessed, because they 'inherit the earth', those who feel the secret of beings and things revealing the light of Christ. The beauty of saints and art are prophetic signs always present in the Church in the world.

Roublev in depicting God has painted youth and beauty in the sacrificial unity of the Trinity; Dostoevsky and Bernanos,⁷² Clément wrote, showed that hell could not satisfy the heart of man; Solzhenitsyn discovered beyond the hell of the camps the tenderness and the unshakable strength of conscience.⁷³ Suffering runs through the lives of Weil, Clément and Solzhenitsyn; the kenosis of Christ is united with a kenosis of self, where the transforming encounter with Christ is life changing revealing 'Christ's steadfast love for us, a love capable of embracing death to bring us salvation';⁷⁴ this is the beauty and love of God shining out. The crucifixion of Christ becomes the Cross of light for Clément and Solzhenitsyn.

Clément explains that Dostoevsky's meaning in 'Beauty will save the world' is revealed in one of his letters in which Dostoevsky defines his own creed: 'There is not, and there cannot be, anything more beautiful than Christ.' This beauty frees our freedom Clément declares.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Faced with social, cultural and spiritual displacement during the twentieth century and increased dependency on technology, Weil, Clément and Solzhenitsyn seek a spiritual renewal which is perceived through the individual experience of beauty and truth that leads to compassion for the other. Christ was the central discovery of their quest: it is Christ himself who is truth and beauty. In Eastern

⁷² Georges Bernanos, 1988-1948, a school friend of Charles de Gaulle, was a French Catholic author and soldier during World War I. His masterpiece, *The Diary of a Country Priest*, brought him recognition as one of the most original and independent Roman Catholic writers of his time. Bernanos also wrote polemical novels against the materialism of the middle classes. He became disillusioned in 1945 with what he perceived as France's lack of spiritual renewal. Vladimir Lossky introduced Clément to Bernanos' writing.

⁷³ Clément, *On Human Being*, 143.

⁷⁴ Pope Francis I, *Lumen Fidei*, Encyclical Letter, 29 June 2013.

⁷⁵ Clément, *Sillons*, 109.

Christianity the spiritual tradition is *philocalia*, love of beauty, where beauty and holiness are inseparable; and the true beauty is Christ.

Atheism and nihilism are recognized as a malaise, a sickness, in Western society, that has also been profoundly, albeit differently, experienced in Communist Soviet Russia. With the extinguishing of the light of faith, following Nietzsche's prophetic warning of the death of God, other lights also fade and dim. This malaise should be combated by a return to the roots of true personhood and community and to an ecclesiology of communion. Jesus 'becomes the central point of reference for an understanding of the enigma of human existence, the created world and God himself,'⁷⁶ John Paul II proclaims in his Letter to artists, in which he also cites Dostoevsky's phrase, 'beauty will save the world'. Artists have an important role in a spiritual and cultural renewal globally, and literary art has a vocation far beyond itself, acting as the memory of a nation it is also endowed with the capability of arousing a sense of awe and wonder at the gift of life. Beauty itself in any form can break through the mundane of the everyday, then 'the desire for power and security of technology and science is suspended' and in that moment we no longer 'possess' but are 'possessed' with a joy that glimpses the 'whole of paradise'.⁷⁷ Beauty has the power to surprise us unexpectedly, enabling us to see the presence of the divine in faces, in people and in creation.

For many today, especially in Europe, Christianity appears to be reduced to a moralizing ideology, split by *dypsichia*, the contradiction between what is said and what is done. Weil described the type of person she believed the world needed in the present and in the future: 'an academic, a teacher, a worker, a revolutionary, a genius and a saint';⁷⁸ a unique person called to act as a compass pointing towards the truth in and for the present time, and for the future: these attributes are shared among Clément, Solzhenitsyn and Weil. Clément believes that beauty that excludes God leads to a dead end that turns to absence and destruction, the beauty we need is that of Emmanuel, 'God with us', and that of the Holy Spirit, 'us with God'. With the failure of the Enlightenment to find truth through reason and Western culture

⁷⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*.

⁷⁷ Clément, *On Human Being*, 126.

⁷⁸ Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, cited by Willox, 'The Cross, the Flesh, and the Absent God', 74.

looking towards a horizon of 'nothingness', the power of beauty as understood by Simone Weil, Olivier Clément, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn is a rediscovery for our time, a profound gift which would seem to be a *kairos* for people of the twenty-first century. They show a different way of looking at the world and at history, to glimpse, if fleetingly, a better way, a rootedness that is profoundly holy.

Pope Francis calls for 'an ecclesial renewal that cannot be deferred.'⁷⁹ He points to a way of beauty, joy and hope for the twenty-first century: 'When all seems to be dead, signs of the Resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force [...] In the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. On razed land, life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly [...] Each day in our world beauty is born anew. Such is the power of the resurrection.'⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Pope Francis I, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* 27-33 (London, Catholic Truth Society, 2013), 19.

⁸⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium* 276, 131.

REPORT ON THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE FRANCOPHONE CHRISTIAN FORUM, LYON, 28 - 31 OCTOBER, 2018

Anne-Marie Petitjean*

Origins of the 'Global Christian Forum'¹

What came to be known as 'the ecumenical movement' culminated, in the twentieth century, in the creation of two great institutions with a global reach: the World Council of Churches (WCC), whose seventieth anniversary we have just celebrated, and, on the Catholic side, the body which was to become the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). Between them, these great international institutions were thought to include more or less the whole Christian world. In the 90s they were forced to admit that this was no longer the case. In fact, the Evangelical galaxy² today represents more than a quarter of world Christianity (640 million out of 2.4 billion Christians) and is undergoing significant growth.³ There are not only more Evangelicals/Pentecostals

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¹ See www.globalchristianforum.org.

² In France 'Evangelicals' is understood in the general sense, to include Evangelicals in the strict sense as well as the Pentecostal world in all its manifestations, hence the name of the 'National Council of French Evangelicals' which welcomes groups of charismatic and Pentecostal Churches. The growth of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches in the West to some extent reflects one of the characteristic traits of modern culture, namely individualism; for in confessing one's faith one witnesses to the 'it's my choice', characteristic of the Western ethos. In the countries of the so-called South, Evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries have helped to implant Churches whose preaching and liturgies are closer to the religious sensibilities and expectations of their members, moreover offering them real community support. Contemporary migrations are allowing these Christians from the South to implant and spread a renewed Evangelical-Pentecostal presence in the West.

³ The project was presented to the Assembly in Harare (1998).

than other Protestants and Anglicans; they also outnumber the totality of all the Churches represented at the WCC. Now for various reasons this component of Christianity distanced itself, and was distanced from the ecumenical movement. Moreover, even within this galaxy, the emergence of Churches seeing themselves as non-denominational, that is, not affiliated to known Evangelical currents, further underlined the fact that numerous Christian groups did not maintain relations with other Christian worlds.

Another fact, of a different nature, added to the situation: namely, the Orthodox malaise within the WCC which found expression at the seventh assembly (Canberra, 1991), a malaise which later led to the decision of a 'restricted participation' at the following assembly. All of which animated a search for a means by which a Christian world, so much more diverse than had previously been thought, could still open itself in confidence to mutual encounter. At the eighth assembly (Harare, 1998) the WCC expressed a desire for a 'Forum of Christian Churches' at which the Orthodox would not have the unfortunate impression of being at the mercy of a Protestantism considered too liberal, and which would be open to those Evangelical, Pentecostal and independent Churches, at present distanced from ecumenical relations. Subsequently, in partnership with the PCPCU and two great worldwide alliances, the WCC sought to establish some kind of platform as a meeting place between its members, the Catholic world, and this Evangelical/Pentecostal world. This platform led to the creation of the 'Global Christian Forum' which made its aim 'to create an open space wherein representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organizations, which confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges' (Guiding Purpose Statement of the Global Christian Forum). To achieve this, participants must root their relationships in trust and respect. This is why they begin their meetings with small groups, in which they each share the story of their journeys, and the journeys of their Churches with Jesus Christ. Daniel Thévenet, the pastor who campaigned to establish this initiative in France, was able to inaugurate it by declaring: 'Be reassured, this forum is not destined to become an institution, but an experience in which we are invited to participate without any fear, placing our Lord Jesus Christ at the heart of our exchanges.' And he added: 'This is truly a grace.'

To this first characteristic of the Forum we should add a second, namely, a care for absentees. When interviewed, its former secretary general was fond of reiterating this concern: 'Who are we still missing?' To make such a welcome possible, every meeting must not comprise more than 50 per cent of old hands of the ecumenical movement, so as to make room for a different half of participants. Such world assemblies took place in Limuru (Kenya, 2017), Madano (Indonesia, 2011), and Bogota (Colombia, 2018).

The first Francophone Forum held in Lyon in October 2018

It was in this spirit, and following the same method, that the first Francophone Christian Forum was held in Lyon, from 28 to 31 October, 2018. Two hundred and twenty church leaders gathered at the Valpré conference centre to live this experience. For three days they were able to pray, meditate and share, taking the calling of the first disciples in Mark 3: 13-15 as their starting point: 'he chose them to be with him and to send them ...' Chosen, to be with, and to be sent, such were the three themes which guided our three days.

Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox, Protestants and Catholics took turns to lead us in prayer, morning and evening, and three bible scholars from these great Christian families led us in meditating on the verse which was the guideline for this meeting. We also shared a *lectio divina* on Luke 5: 1-9 with those sitting next to us. But the strongest experience probably laid in the sharing groups which mixed up our cultures and our ecclesial spiritualities. Each one could say something about his journey with Christ while the rest listened without interrupting. Then, everyone could express what the individual witnesses meant for them. Finally, it became possible to say in what way the other's tradition enriched, questioned and challenged oneself and one's Church. In my group, such and such a charismatic, having allowed himself to be questioned by the sense of continuity revealed to him by the Orthodox universe, dared to acknowledge a lack of historical sense within his Church. A Catholic monk was able to say to his Orthodox friends that certain Evangelicals, often perceived as destroying his Church, really preached the Gospel. One also heard Catholic admiration for Evangelical witnessing, and Evangelical appreciation for the strength which unity among Catholics, in spite of their frequent differences, can represent. An Evangelical admitted to his interest in the intellectual seriousness of the Reformed (which constituted a

healing opportunity for him), and to being aware of how our divisions and mistrust impede his evangelizing efforts. Another person, shocked by certain Marian expressions heard during prayers led by some Orthodox, far from resorting to invective, wanted time to ask them, 'How did you arrive at this?' instead of, as he said, rejecting them, which would have gone against the heart of his message of the Father's unconditional love.

This gradual moving forward in confidence made it possible, on the evening of day two, to go into town for open and friendly discussions in a bar, and above all, to embark together on an evangelical action, by giving a souvenir card of the Forum to someone encountered by chance, and then to cross another footbridge by meeting with some Lyon-based Christian body which itself aims to be a Gospel footbridge: the Salvation Army, a Chemin Neuf community, Baptist Church, plus other local Church initiatives. A footbridge—the very word sums up the Forum's symbolism, its images, songs, its message. Creating and borrowing these footbridge images from the town of Lyon, where they are by no means lacking, such in the final analysis is the experience and commitment which took shape there. Throughout the Forum, the cross of Christ, the cross as symbol of God's great footbridge plan, and whose image greeted us at every meeting, enabled us at least to draw closer to some distant shores—as shown by the Forum's openness to the town, its common witness and public celebration.

And now?

On the third day each denomination held a meeting. The challenge was to tell each other what such an experience was saying to us. Some Catholics spoke of having lived something of the Church of God, not just its 'not yet' but also its 'already here'; others, of an invigorating 'family spirit', or of journeying to the others' country, with the need to keep learning its language, and daring to share its hurt. One could of course compare this special time to a honeymoon, and so envisage some probably more costly further steps. It remains nonetheless true that this friendship and spiritual ecumenism form the basis without which nothing will happen. As soon as one ventures on this territory, then the call to conversion cannot be far away. The 'who are we missing?' resonated as the constant concern for a new ecumenism, giving more space and initiative to the young, with a call for greater simplicity in our own Church (why do we still call bishops

'monseigneur'?), a desire for exchange visits but also for an expansion of where we could meet.

Drafting a 'Message to Christians of all Churches' was certainly envisaged beforehand and tasked in particular to certain individuals. But there were consultations and amendments and I think I can say that it is the fruit of everyone's experience, inviting all to live this spirit, to risk such exchanges, in places we need to rediscover. In my department, the three Protestants and five Catholics have already set down markers to achieve this. They have taken up the 'who are we missing?' challenge. There was a crying need for this, given that at Lyon we were faced with the almost total absence of Churches and Christians of African origin or expression, although they have a large presence around our major towns, notably in my own department of Seine-Saint-Denis. Of the 109 Evangelical Churches listed in the annual national Council of French Evangelicals, 43 belong to unions of African Churches⁴ while the faithful of other Churches come largely from immigration or French overseas territories. Again, the proportion of Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox participants did not reflect their effective presence on the ground. For example, in the 40 towns of my department, during the 2000s we have welcomed 9 Orthodox and 5 Eastern Orthodox parishes.

There is however a challenge inherent in any visit. To invite, is to risk acceptance or rejection. In the latter case, there is the danger of becoming discouraged, though we are called to cultivate 'patience' which does not give up on the 'utopia' of unity,⁵ and we are called also to renounce judgements which exclude anyone on the basis of ancient labels, forgetful that the Lord can improve the soil of any fig tree found to be too dry. In any case, Christ could not be the footbridge to the Father without paying a price: no love can avoid the risk of refusal and rejection. A second danger would be to fall into confusion: thus, a rejection by a particular priest or pastor is not that of all priests or pastors! Inviting those we miss brings us to the fundamentals of living together, and so of ecumenism. It transforms us into seekers after what is possible, into beggars for fraternity, humbly open to visits, to be constantly renewed. More than ever, both in and between Churches, as

⁴ See *Entente et Coordination des Œuvres Chrésiennes* (ECOC) and *Communauté des Églises d'Expressions Africaines de France* (CEAF).

⁵ See Bernard Sesboué's book with its evocative title, *La patience et l'utopie. Jalons œcuméniques* (Paris: DDB, 2006).

between the diverse groups which make up our pluralist societies, fraternity remains both the starting point and the goal directing our living together. If God can see humanity as an objective *adelphotès*, borne out of his divine matrix, he still expects us to respond by loving and nurturing this objective fact, that is, *philadelphia*. This passage which implicates all humanity, and is the sign of becoming human, is a patient pilgrimage in the course of which love and truth are called to meet. All those who proclaim the promise of this good news are, more than ever, called to live it.

Does this mean discounting a more theological dialogue? I don't think so. But it concerns the underlay without which it could not subsist. There is no theological dialogue without fraternity, without trusting what others say of their tradition, without acknowledging the weaknesses and wounds of history, and thereby experiencing a renewed light shed on one's own Christian world. But this nascent fraternity invites one to share one's vital resources and reasons for believing. It is therefore impossible to put the Forum's exchanges in opposition to patient and demanding theological dialogue, even though they could well be at an important stage.⁶

In both cases, a key text such as paragraph 11 of the conciliar Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR), remains an acutely present challenge. Not only is any stated truth unable to exhaust that 'fundamental' mystery it seeks to express, the mystery of God or Truth *par excellence*, but the collection of these stated truths must and can be organized 'hierarchically', according to how they relate, more or less directly, to that 'fundamental' which no words can enclose.⁷ This

⁶ Our concepts and doctrines are rooted in a lived world. They make sense within a coherent system from which they cannot be extracted, so as to compare them 'bare-rooted' with those of another coherent system. Has the time not come for learning to listen to the music of the Christian faith with its coherent parts each attuned to the unattainable mystery? UR11 proposes a hierarchy of stated truths, but also and firstly invites us not to confound any of them with that 'fundamental Christian faith' (*cum fundamento*), which our poor words and theological systems seek to express. See e.g. C. Theobald, evoking 'the specific ethos of a given Church' in 'Le courage d'anticiper un avenir commun' (*POC* 66, 2016, 265-287 = *Irénikon* 90, 2017, 5-31). Here: 274.

⁷ See UR11: 'in Catholic doctrine there exists a "hierarchy" of truths, since they vary in their relation (*nexus*) to the fundamental (*cum fundamento*) Christian faith.'

double precaution provides an indispensable key when comparing concepts and doctrines—it is both permitted and necessary when encountering the other. No ‘differentiated (or differentiating) consensus’ would be possible without such a ‘truth disposition’ (F. Marty). It seems to me that the Francophone Forum, like all global forums, enables one to understand something of this ‘fundamental’, which is confessed by the other, even if each other’s wording may appear strange, even problematic. ‘Make a footbridge of our lives’, is what we sang. We appreciate that we are summoned to use our intellects to construct bridges capable of traversing from one shore to the other, without destroying our hopes, and without wrecking us on the reinforced banks of words and practices which are supposed to safeguard the said mystery.⁸

But Pilate’s question, ‘What is truth?’, remains. I am however sometimes surprised by some of those who refer to it in this context⁹ and so overlook the double precaution of Vatican II. In the last resort, it appears that the greatest challenge encountered in the field of ecumenism, and the area in which the Churches are called to conversion,¹⁰ is in the order of culture and philosophy, that of *Denkformen*—the cultural and philosophical ways of thinking in which we attempt to give an account of our faith. Our doctrinal systems are profoundly structured by these non-doctrinal ways of thinking. They do not all share the same hermeneutic nuances affecting their statements; nor do they all share a concept of truth as horizon.¹¹ Let conversation,

⁸ What is evidently necessary for ecumenism is no less so for the idea and practice of communion within the Catholic Church as a whole. Here the works of Hervé Legrand deserve extensive mention, e.g., ‘Herméneutique et vérité. Des énoncés dogmatiques en contexte œcuménique’, *RSR* (94, 2006), 53-76; and ‘Unité et diversité de l’Orient chrétien contemporain: un regard de théologien’, in Giuseppe Maria Croce (éd.), *L’Œuvre d’Orient: Solidarités anciennes et nouveaux défis* (Paris: Cerf, 2010), 65-88. Likewise Léonard Santedi Kinkupu, e.g. ‘Unité de la foi et pluralisme dans l’expression du dogme. Perspective d’une théologie de l’invention’, *Revue Africaine de Théologie* (20, 1996), 187-200.

⁹ An attitude probably exacerbated in the West where ‘the plurality of convictions ... tends to relativize the question of truth’ or to sideline it ‘in favor of ethical engagement’. See C. Theobald, ‘Le courage ...’, 270-2.

¹⁰ See the Groupe des Dombes, *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC publications, 1993).

¹¹ See François Marty, *La bénédiction de Babel. Vérité et communication* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).

which is the sole antidote to historical violence, allow each and every one to access their own identity, no longer one against the other, but one thanks to the other, and so experience how any identity needs to happen in encounter, and the transformation-purification which this enables.¹² Our differences lead us to a long and laborious learning curve in the matter of differences, and a debate which our societies sorely need. They might constitute a *felix culpa*, revealing how unity is as much a gift as a historical task possible for all.

However we should be careful. The idea of ecumenism-as-witness, of a possible 'living together' might yet land us in the fantasy of a Christianity to construct. But he who is the Salvation of this 'living together' has also revealed himself in the guise of the beggar, who approaches the other and asks for what he lacks: 'Please, give me to drink!' The present crisis could well provide an opportunity for Churches in dialogue,¹³ and so for Christianity itself, to give up anything pretentious and non-evangelical in delivering its witness. And, please, let's also share that part of what we have to give which is our weaknesses, for they shift us from our self-sufficiency; and let's own up to those mortifying incongruencies between what we say and what we do, for this opens us to the humility Jesus sought at the Samaritan well. While it has no monopoly, we can learn this from ecumenism.

If learning, then be-coming. One is not born a Christian, one becomes one, as Tertullian already said. Our life, like Christianity, is being born, or has not even, or scarcely begun.¹⁴ Finally, it's all about the Gospel,

¹² Here one could reference Paul Ricoeur (narrative identity, being oneself as another ...) but also the eschatological dimension of Christian and ecclesial existence.

¹³ See C. Theobald quoted above who, like B. Sesboüé, indeed cautions the need to be patient in discerning the voice of God in our dialogues, but also, by the same token, the need to seize the present favorable moment, and to heed the questions it puts to us, while appealing for 'the courage to anticipate a common future'. If God still speaks to his Church today, it is therefore possible and necessary to reinterpret together the evangelical truth for our times and to draw the consequences. See also by the same author, 'Unification des Églises, une possibilité réelle. Les huit thèses d'Heinrich Fries et de Karl Rahner, relues trente-deux ans après' (*CrSt* 37, 2016), 361-381.

¹⁴ See Dominique Collin, *Le christianisme n'existe pas encore* (Paris: Salvator, 2018), a title which recalls the expression of Soren Kierkegaard (1813-55) and therefore the enriching contribution of the other. For Collin, Christianity will exist when the Churches give up their concern for their own future, for that of

that is to say, about coming into being—being which is necessarily changed and so saved—for each and everyone.

humanity; when they will be less concerned about their own language, in favor of learning the languages of others. For what concerns the meaning of the Gospel and the mission to which it invites, see again C. Theobald, *supra*.

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