BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

Vol. LXXXII, No. 854 *May-June 2006*




Turning Memory Into Resolve

FORTY YEARS AFTER VATICAN II

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

The Official Interdiocesan Bulletin

EDITOR	FR. ROLANDO V. DE LA ROSA, O.P
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	FR. PABLO T TIONG, O.P
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT	ELISA S. OPANO
BUSINESS MANAGER	FR. CLARENCE VICTOR MARQUEZ, O.P
PUBLICATION ASSISTANTS	ANGELITA R. GUINTO ARNOLD S. MANALASTAS

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, the Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published bi-monthly by the University of Santo Tomas and Is printed at UST Publishing House, Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 21, 1946 and Re-entered at the UST Post Office on October 23, 1996.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned. They will, however, be given courteous and scholarly attention. Writers are reminded that the scope of this review is ecclesiastical and broadly archival. While we wish to Inform the whole Church, our readership is largely clerical and this should be borned in mind by prospective contributors. Articles herein published do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editorial Staff. Communications of an editorial nature concerning articles, cases and review should be addressed to the Editor.

Advertising and subscription inquiries should be addressed to the Business Manager.

Subscription Rates (Effective January 2003)

	One Year	*Per Copy*
Philippines	P600.00	P100.00
Foreign: (via Air Mail)	US$50.00	$15.00

Subscriptions are paid In advance. In the Philippines, payments should be made by postal order, telegraphic transfer or check with regional bank clearing only. All check and postal money order payments should be payable to UST Boletin Eclesiastlco. Orders for renewal or change of address should include both old and new addresses, and go into effect fifteen days after notification.

Address all communications to:
BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS
Ecclesiastical Publications Office
University of Santo Tomas
Espana Blvd., Manila 1015 Philippines
Tel. No.: (63-2) 406-1611 local 8251 • Telefax: (63-2) 740-9710
E-mail: eccpubli@mnl.ust.edu.ph

VOL. LXXXII, NO. 854 **MAY-JUNE 2006**

Table OJ Contents

EDITORIAL

How Many People Read the Vatican II Documents?

Let's face it: as vital as the Vatican II documents are, they remain mostly unread by many Catholics, religious, and priests. To some, the documents have become one of the best kept secrets of the Church. Why is this so?

The Event

More than forty years ago, Pope John XXIII surprised everyone when he announced his plans to hold an ecumenical council. He was already diagnosed of having stomach cancer on September 23, 1962, but barely three weeks later, on October 11, 1962 he opened the Second Vatican Council with a stirring speech berating the "prophets of gloom" who saw in the modern world only "prevarication and ruin." With great optimism uncharacteristic of a sick, old man, Pope John saw God's hand guiding the Church to a joyful future. He believed that the Church needs *aggiornamento* - "updating" - not because the Church feels threatened, but because of its great desire to share the joy of Christ. While many people

saw only chaos and darkness in the world and in the Church, the Pope pointed toward the renewal of the Church with the beautiful words, "It is now only dawn."

By the time the Second Vatican Council closed on December 8, 1965, it had seen two popes (John XXIII who died on June 3, 1963 and Pope Paul VI who presided over the Council until its culmination), four sessions (meeting in the autumn months from 1962 to 1965), and 168 daily meetings wherein over 2,500 bishops and other Church leaders took part in the deliberations. Around 2,212 speeches were delivered, more than 4,300 additional comments were submitted in writing, and over 1.5 million ballots - deciding everything from formal approval of final documents to individual words in early drafts - were cast. The end result: 16 documents - 103,014 words in Latin, 600 pages in the latest English translation.

The Documents

The titles of the documents manifest a certain hierarchy in importance. The most important documents are the *Constitutions:* the dogmatic constitutions on the church, on divine revelation, on the Liturgy, and on the Church in the Modern World. The next documents are those entitled *Decrees,* in which the council intended to apply what was taught in the constitutions. Finally there are those documents called *Declarations.* A fruitful approach to understanding the council would be to read the texts in this order, and use the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a guide to their application. The documents of Vatican II were written in continuity with the church's history and

tradition. They are best studied with due respect to their full context, complexity and nuance.

Why Few People Read the Vatican II Documents

Do you ever wonder how many Catholics read Church documents? The Church issues hundreds of documents every year. There are documents from the local hierarchy, the episcopal conferences, international federation of episcopal conferences, local and international synods, ecumenical councils like Vatican II, provincial councils, *pastoral* statements on certain issues, decrees, exhortations, and others. Most of these documents are intended not only for theologians but for every Catholic.

Why do few people read Church documents, like those of Vatican II? It is certainly not because their content has no mass appeal. Perhaps it is because there has developed an enormous gap between the framework of understanding of those who compose it and the framework of understanding of those who read it.

The Illusion of Common Language

The advance of communication is one of the main preoccupations of our modern world. Communication, however, is not just the transmission of knowledge. It is the transmission of *meaning,* a task which requires interpretation and understanding. It is unfortunate that this aspect of communication is seldom taken seriously by those who compose Church documents.

Understanding is tied up with language. Modern hermeneutical theories tell us that understanding is basically

linguistic. We do not understand first, and then we speak. Our mode of understanding is already determined by the linguistic framework we have inherited from our culture. As is obvious, the language of Church documents is inherently tied up with the western philosophico-theological framework of understanding.

During the 1998 Synod of Asia, when the *Instrumentum Laboris* was being discussed, an Asian delegate commented that the document was destined to gather dust in the library. For, while recognizing the fact that Asia is a bubbling pot of cultures and languages, those who composed the *Instrumentum Laboris* seemed to have presumed that people who shall read the document speak the same language. The comment actually echoes what Karl Rahner once predicted, that the attempt to produce an absolutely homogenous theology from the point of view of language, accessible to all theologians, if it could succeed at all, *would end up as the theology of a small sect, unable to address itself to its environment.*

What Karl Rahner deplores is not the impossibility of common understanding, but the illusion of common language which falsely presumes an already achieved common meaning. In Asia, with its multitude of languages, such a presumption can inflict damage, not only on inter-religious dialogue but even the dialogue among Catholics in Asia, and the dialogue between the Asian Church and those in other parts of the world.

Too Ecclesiocentric?

Another criticism raised against Church documents is their overstress on the Church itself, its self-understanding,

its rights, its role, its perspective and judgments on certain issues, and its authority. For example, almost all Roman promulgations, announcements, and decrees of the last few years, except those that appeal for peace and utterances on social and moral questions, come under this heading. When documents are too ecclesiocentric, they make the Church appear to ordinary Catholics as a powerful, self-mirroring, and self-sufficient institution that is no longer capable of being questioned or criticized.

In the recent Provincial Council of Manila held in 1996, there was a general feeling of unease among participants concerning the *Draft Document* which was to be discussed in the Council. The Council focused on Lay Ministry in the Church but the *Draft Document* was perceived by most participants as too centered on *law and authority.* The lay people in the Council preferred a paradigm that stressed *gift and service.* Lay leaders saw in the document an over emphasis on territoriality, while neglecting their concern for partnership. The paper appeared to them as a clinical manuscript, a lexicon of canonical and theological terms, rather than a testament inspiring vision and commitment."

Furthermore, the perspective assumed by those who composed the document was criticized. The paper appeared to have assumed the vantage point of the hierarchy - the view from the top which appeared incomprehensible to those at the base of the hierarchical pyramid. It was suggested that the paper metamorphose from a "them" to a "we" document, from an intellectual thesis to an inspirational guidelight.

These comments point to one thing: the framework of understanding of those who wrote the *Draft Document* did

not correspond to the framework of understanding of those for whom the document was intended. On the fourth day of the Provincial Council of Manila, there was a consensus to set aside the *Draft Document* and compose a new one based on the ongoing dialogue among the participants.

The Parenetic Structure of Church Documents

Another factor that discourages people from reading Church documents is its parenetic structure. A *parenetic* discourse aims to move people to action in a three-fold way. First, an ***ideal postulate*** is presented as the norm. This norm, whether doctrinal or moral, even if it excludes reference to the ordinary world of practical attainment, serves as the foundation for the envisioned personal or collective action. To heighten this ideal, its presentation is coupled with a ***suspicion,*** that the reason why the status quo is such as it is now, is because the norm is not being observed. If ever the ideal fails to inspire people, it is not the fault of the ideal, but due to stubbornness or other human weaknesses. Hence the need for reminders or ***exhortations.***

Let us take one passage of the Vatican II document on Mass Media, *Inter Mirifica* to illustrate this parenetic structure:

"If the media are to be correctly employed, it is essential that all who use them know the principles of the moral order and apply them faithfully in this domain. They should take into account, first of all, the subject matter or content which each medium communicates in its own way. They should also take account of the circumstances in which

the content is communicated — that is to say, the purpose, the people, the place, the time, etc. The circumstances can modify and even totally alter the morality of a production. In this regard, particular importance may be attached to the manner in which any given medium achieves its effect. Its impact may be such that people, especially if they are insufficiently prepared, will only with difficulty advert to it, control it, or if need be, reject it."

We see here a typical parenetical discourse composed of the three elements mentioned above. The first sentence is an *ideal postulate.* The second and third sentences are *exhortations* ("They should...")- And the succeeding sentences are couched with *suspicion.*

Why is it that such a form of rhetorics seldom move people now? For three reasons:

First, the norm, the ideal is presented in a way that its meaning, though preserving its cognitive content, lacks its effective and communicative dimensions. It still means something, but it hardly resonates with man's present concerns.

Second, the suspicion is too preponderant to create a positive framework for development. It paralyzes rather than motivates. And third, the exhortation is just founded on the expected goodwill of the listeners, on the hope that they would mend their ways after they had realized the great difference between what they are now, and what they will be.

Asia is a pluralistic world. Some say that there is a crisis of faith looming ahead, but actually it is a crisis not

of faith, but of the pluralistic mode of understanding of the one faith. Just as understanding evolves, so must its medium. If official Church documents are to be an effective vehicle of instruction, inspiration, and guidance, a change in its language is imperative in the future.

THE EDITOR

FEATURES

Blessed Pope John XXIII and Vatican II*

ARCHBISHOP ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO

ANGELO CARDINAL RONCALL1 was a week shy of 77 [b. Nov. 25, 1881] when he became Pope John XXIII. He was chosen from 53 cardinals who were divided into five groups: Curial Conservatives, Progressive Frenchmen, Minority members of the Curia, Northern-Italian Liberals and a few non-Italian Liberals, and a few non-Italian Cardinals. Roncalli was considered "center-left" in the spectrum. Becoming Pope in October 1958, he showed himself to be a pastor at heart, an historian by scholarly preference, an organizer and diplomat by experience. His papacy lasted for only 1600 days (4 years and 5 months). Everything happened very fast.

Within a month he appointed Msgr. Domenico Tardini, full-fledged Secretary of State, the first since 1944, because

*Keynote Address - Theology Week: University of Santo Tomas, April 18, 2006.

Pope Pius XII acted as his own Secretary of State. John XXIII told Tardini that he would convoke an Ecumenical Council as a "direct inspiration of the Most High", "the flower of an unforeseen spring." Cardinal Tardini almost fell off his chair but was exultant. Let John XXIII call a Council. Tardini will run it and all will be well. According to a Roman saying: "The Pope reigns, but the Secretary of State governs." Even before Roncalli became Pope, the conservative Cardinal Ottaviani of the Holy Office [Sacred Doctrine] had suggested a council, but only to put to rest "errors" circulating in the Church. Roman Cardinals welcomed the plan of an ecumenical council; they felt in part John was their creature, because they elected him. But very soon John XXIII unfolded his own fresh ideas, and reaction and opposition developed. The debate was not about "whether" a Council, but "whither" the Council.

John XXIII's first Encyclical letter *Ad Petri Cathedram* summarized in three words the program of his pontificate and of the forthcoming ecumenical Council: truth, peace, unity. In the Encyclical John argued that knowledge of truth is the basis of a united and peaceful society. It reflected the struggle of two viewpoints within the Church, within the Roman Curia: "one defensive and negative, the other affirmative and positive, a struggle between John's 'fresh air' mentality and the integralist mentality of the Curia." He made it clear what the Second Vatican Council will try to achieve: "The Council's special concerns will be the *growth* of the Catholic Church, the *renewal* of the spirit of the Gospel in the hearts of people everywhere and the *adjustment* of Christian discipline to the exigencies of modern day living." *(Italics mine)*

We celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. If we were there 40 years ago, with the likes of Archbishop Pedro Santos, Archbishop Cesar Ma. Guerrero, Archbishop Teofilo Camomot, Bishop (now Servant of God) Alfredo Ma. Obviar, to name a few, we would appreciate how these bishops grappled and struggled with the new terms: "progress," "renewal," "rejuvenation" *(renovare, instaurare, iuvenescere).* The Councils that they knew among others were the Council of Trent and Vatican I. They had to re-learn phrases like "being church."

The one traditional term which is practically absent from the Council's document is the word "reform" or "reformation". In contrast with the other terms, "reform" connotes a process whereby something which was wrong is corrected. Understandably the Council made great effort to avoid admission of mistake; but it did make real "reversals" in some teachings in the name of "renewal." *Aggiornamento* is the word used at the preparation and at the Council. It remained the clarion call of John and the Council. *Aggiornamento* is the desire and effort to bring the Church up to date and to make it effective in the contemporary world.

For John, the spirit of *aggiornamento* would bring "together all the bishops of the Church in communion with the Holy See as a sort of new Pentecost... which is destined to move both heaven and earth" (May 17, 1959). John paced the Council by the Feast of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. In 1959, it was on Pentecost day that he established the Antepreparatory Commission (Phase I). In 1960, he set up the preparatory commissions and secretariats (Phase II) on Pentecost. In 1961 he set up the Central Preparatory Commission (Phase III) on Pente-

cost. Then in October 11, 1962, the opening of the Council, John focused his attention again on the "new Pentecost" that was to happen in the Church and in the world.

All along Pope John XXIII proved himself a master in balancing the influence of conservative and progressive cardinals. The Chairmanship of the ten Preparatory Commissions he gave to the Cardinals in the Curia; but the Presidency of the Council sessions he gave to mostly Cardinals "in the care of souls" from all over the world. He made it clear that Vatican II would be "practical rather than dogmatic; pastoral rather than theological; concerned with norms rather than with definitions... an internal affair for the good of the Church." John XXII was counting on the 2594 bishops, Cardinal Tardini was counting on the Curia. Where the Preparatory Theological Commission under Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani had a clear conservative majority, the Conciliar commission elected by the bishops, had a clear, but not lopsided, progressive majority. Balance between curial and non-curial membership in appointments was ably maintained by the General [or Executive] Secretary of the Council, Archbishop Felici, appointed by the Pope. "*Obedientia et Pax"* was the Pope's motto, and in this process he saw the bishops as his superiors. His job was to call the bishops together, urging them to take a fresh look at things.

During the Council, at the age of 81, Pope John was active on three fronts: work with the Conciliar bodies, interventions in the Council itself, meetings with various individuals and groups of bishops. He left the General Secretariat and the Council of 10 Presidents to manage their affairs, responding only as needed for decision and

support. John did make 25 public interventions, and many more unofficial interventions. It showed that he was a Pope in a hurry. He told the Council that debate was necessary and that he felt like Jacob watching in silence while his sons argued with each other. He intervened to keep the process moving and to preserve the freedom of the bishops, not to force a direction.

At the end of November 1962 Pope John became seriously sick. He was reported to be dying. John knew he was dying of cancerous internal bleeding. This Pope in a hurry still managed in March 1963 to institute a commission that would reform the Code of Canon Law. He reminded the bishops to continue the work of the Council "unflaggingly" and to keep it as the "apple of their eye" because it was of interest to all of humanity and they are responsible for the salvation of the whole world. Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, a day after Pentecost. The Pentecostal Pontificate of Pope John XXIII (now Blessed) was accomplished.

Permit me to end with some trivia and personal note. I was still a student of theology when Vatican II was held. I was first year in the priesthood when it ended. I struggled to understand Vatican II with my bishop, Bishop Alfredo Maria Obviar. When the Seminary Rector Msgr. Ricardo [now Cardinal] Vidal was not available, the bishop would ask me to read *Lumen Gentium* or *Gaudium et Spes,* either in Latin or Spanish. Of course, Bishop Obviar understood both languages. But it was like undergoing again my "revalida" when he would ask *"Ano'ng ibig sabihin nyan?* (What does it mean?") I learned to foresee the meaning by reading the English version first. I knew that between the

age of 80 and 85, Bishop Obviar was still learning to be comfortable with the theme of *aggiornamento.*

Archbishop Teofilo Camomot attended Vatican II in answer to the call of Pope John XXIII. Unlike most bishops he traveled by sea, one month going to Rome, one month going back. He was found traveling in the fourth class of a luxury liner. When asked by a friend why he had to travel that way, the good archbishop merely replied, "Because there is no more fifth class." Archbishop Camomot did not have a choral red attire for some sessions of the Council. The good Archbishop simply dyed red his white habit; but it looked more pink than red. The Filipino bishops had to chip in their liras to buy Archbishop Camomot the required choral attire. They found later that he did have some money, but he would rather give them to the poor gypsies around Santa Maria Maggiore than buy himself a new choral attire.

The Philippine Church stands to profit from this laudable initiative of returning to the journey of 40 years that Vatican II has made in the Church of the Philippines. While we may see it as a journey to the past, it nevertheless prepares us for the journey to the future yet to be blazed.

A Report Card on the Church: Forty Years After Vatican II

RICHARD R. GAILLARDETZ, Ph.D.*

FORTY. IN THE BIBLE, this number has great symbolic significance. During the Flood the rains came for forty days. The Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years. Jesus prayed and fasted in the desert for forty days. So this year, now that forty years have passed since the close of the Second Vatican Council, it seems an apt time to reflect on how effectively the Church has implemented its teaching. More than ten years ago, Pope John Paul II wrote in his apostolic letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente that the principal task of the Church in preparing for the new millennium was to work toward an authentic assimilation of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

* While this article deals with the impact of Vatican II on the Catholic Church in America, the insights it offers can serve as guideposts in our evaluation of Vatican II's influence on the local Church. Richard R. Gaillardetz, Ph.D., is the Murray/Bacik professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo, Ohio. In 2000 he received Washington Theological Union's Sophia Award for excellence in theological contributions to ministry, and he was a participant in the U.S. Roman Catholic - United Methodist Ecumenical Dialogue (2001-2005). This article was originally published in the *Liguori.* Reprinted with permission from Dr. Gaillardetz.

So where are we in that four-decade-old project? Well, we aren't finished, but then we shouldn't expect to be. The great Dominican ecclesiologist Yves Congar once noted that it takes at least fifty years for the fruits of an ecumenical council to be fully realized. And frankly, the Second Vatican Council was not just any council; it called for the most profound reimagining of the Catholic Church in four hundred years.

Four decades after the close of the Second Vatican Council, it seems to me that the American Catholic Church is due for, if not a final report card, at least a midterm progress report on how successful we have been in implementing conciliar teaching. However, one might well ask, "Who is he to grade the Church?" It is a fair question, and the only proper answer is, "A simple theologian, with whom all are free to differ." The grades offered here are nothing more than a lighthearted exercise intended to begin a lively conversation regarding where the Catholic Church is today.

I will consider council teaching on four topics: (1) our understanding of who we are as Church; (2) the Church's mission in the world; (3) the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church; (4) the structures and exercise of Church leadership. These topics are obviously selective, and many other important themes could well have been considered.

I. Our Understanding of Who We Are as Church

The Second Vatican Council effected a shift in our understanding of the Church. The dominant preconciliar view of the Church was, as one bishop at the council described it, clericalist, juridicist, and triumphalist. It was clericalist because it

defined the Church in terms of the distinction between clergy and laity, focusing on what distinguished Catholics from one another rather than on what united them. It was juridicist to the extent that it stressed Church institutions and canon law, often overlooking ancient biblical, liturgical, and theological understandings of the Church. It was triumphalist in the way that it taught that the Catholic Church was for the most part an institution beyond reform and contended that ecumenical initiatives should be limited to exhorting non-Catholic Christians to admit their error and return to the one true Church.

In contrast, the Second Vatican Council developed the teaching of Pope Pius XII that the Church is the mystical body of Christ.[1] Some Catholics seem to think that the Second Vatican Council arose out of nowhere, failing to realize the extent to which events, movements, and leaders like Pope Pius XII helped prepare for the council. Returning to this ancient image of the Church as the body of Christ allowed the council to stress the interdependence of all the members of the Church and to highlight how the celebration of the Eucharist allows Catholics, as Saint Augustine put it, to "become what you receive."

The council also reflected on the Church as the new "people of God," bringing into the foreground not so much what distinguishes Catholics from one another as the many ways in which all Catholics, clergy and lay, are united by faith and baptism.[2] The bishops taught that the Church is nourished not only through the exercise of ministry in formal ecclesiastical offices (for example, the ministry of priests and bishops) but also

[1] See Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), 7.

[2] See LG 9.

through the many charisms given to all believers by virtue of their baptism.[3]

In addition, the Second Vatican Council taught that the Church was not just a Church of pilgrims, a collection of individual sinners on their way to salvation; it was also a pilgrim Church, a Church that was itself on a journey and would "receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven."[4] This admission opened the door to acknowledging that the Church is a human institution: "Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need."[5]

Finally, the council backed away from exclusively identifying the Roman Catholic Church as the one true Church. While still affirming that the Church "is necessary for salvation,"[6] it referred to other Christian traditions as genuine "Churches and ecclesial communities"[7] and acknowledged that many means of salvation could be encountered in those other Christian traditions.[8] Now we must ask how well the Church has implemented this aspect of the council's teaching.

If there is a silver lining in the recent clerical sexual abuse scandal, it is the sense of outrage felt by many Catholics over what has happened in their Church. This suggests that Catholics have truly grasped what the council taught about the Church's

[3] See LG 4; Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem), 3.

[4] See LG 48.

[5] See Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio), 6.

[6] See LG 14.

[7] See UR 19.

[8] See UR 3.

not being the possession of the clergy. They have understood that all the baptized constitute the Church and have a stake in the Church's well-being.

The flourishing of lay ministry in the Church has been yet another sign of the council's successful implementation. Particularly here in the United States, we have seen a wonderful fulfillment of the council's vision of a Church built up by both Church office and individual charisms exercised by all the baptized. We might think of each local church as a "symphony of charisms" functioning with the bishop/priest as its "conductor."

Important national and international ecumenical dialogues have moved forward, often overcoming centuries of theological misunderstanding. The most visible fruit of these dialogues was the historical signing of the Joint Declaration on Justification with the Lutheran World Federation, which affirms that there are no longer significant doctrinal disagreements between Catholics and Lutherans on this central topic.

Finally, under Pope John Paul II we witnessed a wonderful application of the council's teaching that the Church itself is pilgrim. John Paul II committed himself to the "purification of memories" in which, on more than ninety occasions, he sought forgiveness on behalf of all Christians for sins committed in the name of Christ.

But there is still work to be done. Some of the commitment to the reform and renewal of the Church has waned over the last fifteen years or so. Some Church leaders even suggest that it is time for the Church to shift its focus from ecclesiastical reform to the Church's mission in the world. It is certainly true, as we shall see later, that the Church's mission in the world is central

to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, but it is a mistake to play Church reform and Church mission against each other as if one must choose between the two. Without authentic Church reform, the Church's witness in the world will almost certainly be compromised. One need only think of the extent to which, in the eyes of many, the clerical sexual abuse crisis has undermined the bishops' credibility as moral teachers.

Although lay ministry has been a tremendous gift to the Church, concerns are now being raised that the flourishing of lay ministry has blurred the distinction between lay and clergy, and a movement is under way to limit the scope of lay ministry today. The distinction between the laity and the clergy certainly needs to be preserved, but it is unclear to me how the flourishing of lay ministries need challenge the unique ministry of the ordained. The rise of a new clericalism, particularly among some young clergy, risks undermining important gains that have been made in the implementation of the council's vision.

With regard to ecumenism, even granting the many advances in national and international ecumenical dialogues, many today are disappointed at the lack of tangible fruit coming from these dialogues. Of particular difficulty for many is the failure to advance toward the possibility of sharing Communion with Christians from other traditions.

Grade: B+

II. The Church's Mission in the World

A second shift effected by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerned the Church's mission in the world. For four centuries the Church had been put on the defensive, feeling itself confronted by the Reformation, the emergence of the independent

nation-state, the rise of modern science, the Enlightenment, and the rise of Fascism and Communism. Consequently, by the 1950s Catholicism had adopted a kind of "siege mentality." Seeing itself under attack from all sides, the Church was resolutely defensive toward the world.

With the encouragement of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, the council moved from the fortress mentality and sought to affirm the movements of God's grace in the world at large. The council insisted that the Church had much to offer the world in the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, but it also admitted that it could learn from the world, and it couched the mission of the Church in language of respectful dialogue. The council insisted that the laity play a vital role in the Church's mission in the world. They must take the lead in effecting the world's transformation "from within" as they, rather than the clergy, become the experts in finding ways to apply the gospel to their daily lives.

Over the last four decades the Church has done much to implement the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Church mission. The Church's social teaching continued to develop with the pontificates of Paul VI and John Paul II. In Latin America the Church's commitment to a critical engagement with the world and its determination to preach the message of justice led to the development of liberation theology. Although some forms of liberation theology were justly criticized by Vatican officials for their Marxist slant, Pope John Paul II himself admitted the need for an authentic theology of liberation. Here in the United States the American bishops issued several important pastoral letters on peace and economic justice. The dialogic spirit of the council has continued in the Church's engagement with a plurality of cultures and with its growing involvement in interreligious dialogue.

Here again we cannot consider the work of the council finished. Although Catholicism has offered an increasingly rich and developed body of social teaching over the last century, many Catholics remain ignorant of this teaching. Too many Catholics remain willing to compartmentalize their faith rather than apply it in the workplace, the home, and the political arena. Moreover, the involvement of Church leaders in national, regional, and local political debate is often too selective in putting forward Catholic positions on political issues. In the last presidential campaign in the U.S., for example, we heard a great deal about Catholic teaching on abortion and on opposition to same-sex marriages but much less on the Church's teaching regarding one's obligations to the poor, opposition to the death penalty, and the rights of refugees, including those seeking entrance into the United States.

Grade: A—

III. The Liturgical and Sacramental Life of the Church

In the early nineteenth century a liturgical reform movement emerged that challenged overly mechanistic views of the liturgy and tepid lay participation in Christian worship. This budding liturgical movement bore fruit in the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium). In that document the council offered a liturgical theology which reminded us that the sacraments were not merely grace dispensers but ritual events of the Church that invited believers to enter more fully into spiritual communion with God and one another and called for a more profound participation in the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.[9] It also gave a new emphasis

[9] See Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium), 5-7.

to the full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful in the Church's celebration of the liturgy.[10]

The council bishops also called for a more explicitly communal context for the celebration of all the sacraments. They recognized the culturally diverse reality of the local churches as a genuine gift and accepted the possibility and even desirability of these distinctive cultural contexts being manifested in the liturgy itself.[11] Finally, regional episcopal conferences were given much greater authority in the production of liturgical texts and translations.[12]

Much progress has been made in the achievement of the Second Vatican Council's liturgical vision. The use of the vernacular (the language of the local community) in the liturgy and changes in church architecture have helped increase both liturgical participation and comprehension of the mysteries being celebrated. The new Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, along with the renewed rites for the baptism of children, has successfully highlighted the way in which baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist initiate persons into a community of faith. Other sacraments, such as penance and the anointing of the sick, are also celebrated in more communal forms.

It must be admitted, however, that much of the council's vision has yet to be realized here too. Although the laity's increased participation in the liturgy is undeniable, some liturgical scholars are concerned that too many Catholics still have not grasped the profound liturgical theology that undergirded the

[10] See SC 14.

[11] See SC 37.

[12] See SC 36.

many liturgical reforms enacted in the wake of the council. In the United States, some critics have complained about an emerging "cult of personality" surrounding the priest-presider and express concerns that insular liturgical celebrations have ended up, as the former Cardinal Ratzinger once put it, "celebrating ourselves" rather than the glory of God.

Of equal concern to many liturgical scholars is a disturbing return to an earlier "rubricism" inordinately concerned with rigid adherence to liturgical rules. This focus seems to offer little room for accommodating local customs and cultural diversity in liturgical celebrations. Many find in some recent liturgical documents a hardening of the distinction between the ordained and the nonordained and a diminishment of the symbolic power of the liturgy (as with the prohibition of chalices and patens not made of precious metals). Pastoral practices that have incorporated local cultural elements into the celebration of the liturgy (liturgical dance, for example) are being discouraged by some Vatican officials. Finally, the move to give regional bishops more control over the production of liturgical texts and translations has been largely reversed in the last ten years, to the dismay of many who believe that local bishops have a better sense of the appropriateness of vernacular translations for their communities.

Grade: C+

IV. Structures and Exercise of Church Leadership

Finally, a fourth shift effected by the Second Vatican Council concerned our understanding of Church leadership structures. The characteristic view of authority prior to the council was often preoccupied with questions of power and jurisdiction:

who had power over whom and when and how that power was to be exercised. As Pope Pius X had written in his encyclical Vehementor Nos, the clergy's task was to govern the Church, and the laity's sole task was to docilely follow clerical leadership.

One of the most important consequences of the council's renewed vision of the Church was a renewed vision of Church leadership. The council presented an image of the clergy as pastors and servants more than rulers. Although the clergy possessed a unique responsibility for pastoral leadership in the Church, that authority had limits. It was the province of the laity, for example, to apply Catholic teaching to the issues one encountered in the marketplace.[13]

The council taught that the laity had a right to express their views to the clergy.[14] This consultation had a theological justification because the council also taught that every baptized believer possessed a "supernatural appreciation of the faith" which granted them insight into the received faith of the Church.[15] It follows from this that the clergy should consult the faithful. The council insisted that the faithful also had both a right and an obligation to exercise their charisms in the Church and in the world.[16] The council also made a vital contribution to the Church in restoring the diaconate as a permanent and stable ministry that could be exercised even by mature married men.[17]

[13] See **Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et** Spes), 43.

[14] See LG 37.

[15] See LG 12.

[16] See AA 3.

[17] See LG 29.

Before the council, many Catholics viewed the pope as a veritable monarch. Yet the council was careful to avoid presenting the pope as an imperial or monarchal figure. The council fathers situated the authority of the pope in the context of the authority given to the whole college of bishops, asserting that the pope and bishops shared supreme authority over the whole Church.[18] This is often referred to as the doctrine of episcopal collegiality. The pope remained free, of course, to exercise his supreme authority without the formal and explicit participation of the bishops but never apart from communion with them. The council reminded us that the bishops possessed an ordinary authority that was theirs through episcopal consecration. They were themselves vicars of Christ and were not to be viewed as mere papal representatives.[19]

Much has been done in the last four decades to implement this conciliar teaching on episcopal collegiality. The 1983 Code of Canon Law provided for numerous consultative structures: pastoral councils, diocesan pastoral councils, presbyteral councils, and diocesan and provincial synods. Other consultative structures emerged in the wake of the council. Pope John Paul II himself once quoted Paulinus of Nola, a fifth-century bishop who wrote, "Let us listen to what all the faithful say, because in every one of them the Spirit of God breathes."[20] Pope Paul VI created the synod of bishops to enhance the collegial role of the bishops in cooperation with the pope in his universal pastoral ministry. Regional episcopal conferences have developed as important expressions of episcopal collegiality. The Roman Curia was

[18] See LG 22.

[19] See LG 27.

[20] See Novo Millennio Ineunte, 45.

reformed to give it a more international character. Paul VI also created the International Theological Commission as a means of consulting the world's most respected Catholic theologians.

Important attempts have been made to further diminish the monarchal image of the papacy. Newly elected popes are no longer crowned with the triple tiara. Indeed, most recently, Pope Benedict XVI replaced the imperial-style coronation with a ritual in which the pope receives the pallium, a circular band of wool worn about the shoulders and traditionally given to archbishops. This ritual stressed both the pope's fundamental identity as a bishop among bishops and his obligation as a pastor, for the origins of the pallium lie in the image of the good shepherd placing the lost sheep about his shoulders. Popes no longer speak or write in the "papal we," nor are they carried on the sedia gestatoria, the ancient throne carried on the shoulders of twelve specially chosen members of the papal household.

However, as with each of the three other areas, we must recognize that much remains to be implemented regarding the council's vision for the exercise of leadership and authority in the Church. Many theologians (and privately, not a few bishops!) complain that the structures intended to enhance episcopal collegiality - structures like episcopal conferences and the world synod of bishops - are increasingly being "reined in" by the Roman Curia. Indeed, many are concerned that the Curia, which in theory exists in part to serve the needs of the bishops throughout the world, often ends up telling the bishops how they are to exercise their ministry.

The International Theological Commission, originally intended to make the rich diversity of Catholic theological scholarship available to Church leaders, particularly those in the

Vatican, now has its membership stacked with theologians who support the dominant theological views of the Roman Curia. Even though the council taught that a bishop is the vicar of Christ and not a representative of the pope, the fact that all bishops are papally appointed still gives Catholics and the world at large the impression that bishops are little more than "branch managers" called to implement directives given by the "head office."

Finally, one frequently hears complaints that only the merest of lip service is given to the idea of real consultation with the laity. This disregard for the insight of the laity was perhaps nowhere more evident than in the recent clerical sexual abuse scandal, a scandal as much about failures in episcopal leadership as about the heinous sexual abuses committed by individual clerics.

Grade: D

Conclusion

Now that we have a new pope, I am sometimes asked if the time might be right for the convening of a new ecumenical council. My customary response is that although I believe much could be accomplished by a new council, we are still far from having implemented the bracing vision of a renewed and revitalized Church offered to us in the sixteen remarkable documents of the Second Vatican Council. Admittedly, my determination of grades is very subjective. However, if the assignment of these grades results in more serious conversation about how our Church can move forward in making the vision of the council a reality, I will have accomplished my goal.

Vatican II: Forty Years Later

JOHN THAVIS

FORTY YEARS AFTER the close of the Second Vatican Council, the deep transformation it set in motion continues to reverberate through the church at every level, from the halls of the Vatican to the pews of local parishes.

Pope John XXIII signs the bull convoking the Second Vatican Council December 25, 1961. The document said modern society was advancing with technological and scientific progress for which there was no corresponding advance in morality. He wrote that he would convene the council so that the church would contribute positively to the solution of modern problems.

The council's four sessions from 1962 to 1965 and its 16 landmark documents modernized the liturgy, renewed the priesthood and religious life, enhanced the role of lay Catholics, opened dialogue with other churches and non-Christians, and identified the church as the "people of God" attuned to the problems and hopes of the world.

Although the council defined no new dogma, Catholics who lived through the Vatican II era will never forget the changes - some of them abrupt - that visited their church communities in the mid-1960s.

Altars were turned around so that priests faced the people. The Mass in Latin gave way to Mass in the vernacular. Other sacraments were updated and simplified. Men and women religious adopted a more modern form of dress.

Not all the changes were immediate, however. Church leaders began a long and sometimes contentious process of revising nearly every area of pastoral life, from the teaching of religion to lay ministries.

"The council represented a Copernican revolution for the church, which challenged itself by asking how it could reopen a dialogue with the modern world," said Father Dario Vitali, who teaches church history at Rome's Gregorian University.

"Through the council, the church drew closer to contemporary men and women and made the Gospel meaningful to them. If there had been no Vatican II, I think the church today would be a small minority, closed off in rites incomprehensible to the modern mentality," Father Vitali said.

Not everyone in the church sees the council as a positive thing. Some Catholics are still nostalgic for the old ways of worship, and at times some church officials - including several in Rome - have criticized the way Vatican II has been understood and implemented. In many cases, the ongoing debate reflects issues that were argued heatedly on the floor of the council.

December 8 marks the anniversary of the close of the council in 1965, and this fall Rome and the Vatican are hosting several

commemorative encounters to reflect on how far the church has come over the last four decades.

Pope Benedict XVI, who participated in the council as a theological expert, is expected to speak about the importance of the council's documents. Although he has criticized some postconciliar changes, the pope has made it clear that Vatican II will be the "compass" of his papacy. The compass, of course, sets direction; it will be up to the new pope to provide the details.

The pope also has emphasized that implementation of the council is an ongoing task in the church, not just something that happened 40 years ago. One goal is to make sure Vatican II is not viewed as ancient history by young generations of Catholics.

"Younger Catholics may not be as intellectually aware of the council, but they are continually experiencing its effects," said Alberto Melloni, a church historian of the Vatican II period.

"Thanks to the council, young people have been taught to see the world not simply as a threat to Christian life, but as an opportunity to announce the Gospel," Melloni said.

Vatican II is sometimes described as a revolution, but it did not appear out of the blue. There had been 20 previous ecumenical councils in the church's history, including the First Vatican Council in 1869-1870. Vatican I defined the dogmas of papal infallibility and the primacy of papal jurisdiction, but the council was suspended when war broke out in Europe, and it never resumed.

The theological ferment of the mid-20th century helped lay the groundwork for Vatican II. Pioneering theologians like Dominican Father Yves Congar and Jesuit Fathers John Courtney Murray and Henri de Lubac were trying to build bridges between Christianity's ancient truths and the contemporary world. All three were silenced

in some fashion by the Vatican during the 1950s, but re-emerged to become important voices of the council.

Pope John XXIII surprised almost everyone when, after only three months as pontiff, he announced he was convening the council. The pope spoke of the need to update the church and promote Christian unity; above all, he said, he wanted to show the modern world that the church had been transformed and intellectually reinvigorated.

Pope John said the world was marked by spiritual poverty and needed the church's vitality. But, as he later told the council, the church wanted to offer the modern world the "medicine of mercy" and not severe condemnations.

Preparation for the council took almost three years, and Pope John, already diagnosed with cancer when it began, presided over only the first of four annual autumn sessions in 1962. The invitation to Protestants, Orthodox and other non-Catholics to attend had already made Vatican II a historic event.

Pope Paul VI guided the completion of the council's work, presiding over the other three sessions and directing the important follow-up work in areas of liturgy, ecumenism, religious life and evangelization.

Between 2,000 and 2,500 bishops attended each Vatican II session, and participants have said the debates ranged from free-wheeling to finely tuned, with verbal skirmishes not uncommon. To give just one example, when the first draft of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church ("Lumen Gentium") was presented, it was roundly criticized as triumphal, clerical and legalistic; the document was adopted two years and many amendments later.

From the beginning, bishops recognized that their task was not just updating church practices but also a process of "ressourcement," or going back to the sources of the faith.

There was a sense among participants that they were indeed making history, said Bishop Frank Fernando of Chilaw, Sri Lanka, one of a handful of still-active bishops to have participated in a session of the council.

"The debate was very systematic, with a great exchange of ideas. The documents would come back again and again with amendments, which the bishops would study. That's why these are very polished documents - it was not just a matter of bringing them in one day and passing them the next," Bishop Fernando said.

In the end, the council issued four constitutions: on the liturgy, the church's structure and nature, on the church in the modern world and on divine revelation. It produced nine decrees: on the church and the media, ecumenism, Eastern Catholic churches, bishops, priestly formation, religious life, the laity, priestly ministry and missionary activity. It issued three declarations: on non-Christian religions, Christian education and religious freedom.

Most experts list the council's biggest achievement as a new way of understanding the church - as the "people of God" and not simply a hierarchical structure, and as a "sacrament" to the world with an active mission in all sectors of human society.

"Lumen Gentium" presented the church as a mystery and a communion of baptized believers moving toward heaven as one body that is holy, yet imperfect while on earth.

Although organized hierarchically, the church as a communion is a living body whose individual members are called to holiness and who each have specific roles, rights and responsibilities, the document said.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *("Gaudium et Spes")* was written more for the average reader and was approved in 1965, during the council's last vote.

Bishop Fernando remembers the moment well, and he said he considers "Gaudium et Spes" the most important thing to come out of the council. He said many bishops thought the council had spoken in previous documents primarily to experts and specialists and wanted this document to communicate a message to the whole world.

"Gaudium et Spes" called on the church to engage in dialogue with contemporary society and its problems, bringing church teaching and moral values to bear on a world too often torn by hatred, war and injustice. The document acknowledged that science and culture have things to teach the church, but also said the church has a mission to sanctify the world around it.

In the years after its close, the renewal outlined by the council was refined and codified in a number of decrees, norms and changes in canon law. The church witnessed countless changes:

0 The new Roman Missal was issued in 1970, with a new cycle of readings designed to offer a richer selection of Scripture. The liturgical calendar was simplified. The rites for sacraments were revised, emphasizing the communal aspects of their celebration. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was revived and reformed. As the changes took places, active liturgical participation increased dramatically in many local church communities.

0 Lay ministries multiplied. Lay readers and lay ministers of Communion appeared during Mass. Laity were represented on parish councils and diocesan boards, and lay men and women, many with theology degrees, replaced clerics in a number of administrative church positions.

0 Throughout the church, there was a renewed attention to Scriptures, in liturgy and in individual spirituality.

0 Eastern Catholic churches were encouraged to return to their own traditions, ending a period of Latinization and opening a new appreciation of variety within the universal church.

0 Ecumenism flourished, in formal dialogue between Catholic officials and other Christian churches, and in prayer and fellowship encounters at the local level.

0 After the council acknowledged the possibility of salvation for non-Christians, dialogue also began with other religions.

0 Religious life changed dramatically, as religious orders adopted Vatican norms and rewrote their own constitutions, taking a new look at issues of authority, community and identity.

0 The council restored the permanent diaconate as a ministry and allowed married men to be ordained deacons. Today, there are more than 29,000 permanent deacons around the world.

0 The council's teaching that the pope and bishops together form a single collegial body led to a new appreciation for bishops and bishops' conferences. The Synod of Bishops was formed to meet regularly and advise the pope.

0 Theology was revitalized, especially moral theology, which focused increasingly on biblical sources and the individual conscience, and less on church law or authority.

0 The council underlined the church's solidarity with humanity instead of its separation from the secular world, and this led to a mushrooming of social and charitable activities. Church leaders spoke frequently about the church's identification with the poor and suffering, and the pope became a strong human rights advocate.

At the same time, the church experienced some worrisome developments, including a dramatic drop in vocations and an increase in the number of priests and religious seeking laicization. Mass attendance fell in many places, many Catholics abandoned the sacrament of penance, and dissent on certain teachings, such as birth control, was widespread.

All that has helped fuel a 40-year debate over the proper reading and realization of the council.

Pope Benedict has been a sometimes critical voice in this debate. But he always distinguished between the council and its implementation, saying that what hurt the church in the decade following Vatican II was "not the council but the refusal to accept it."

Vatican II in the History of Church Councils

WALTER BRANDMULLER

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL (1962-1965) was the Council of superlatives. Never before in the history of the Church had a Council been prepared with such intensity. Of course, Vatican I (1868-1870) was well-prepared, and the theological quality of its plans was actually better. But the number of proposals and inputs sent in from around the world, and their incorporation in Vatican II, exceeded anything previously seen.

Vatican II gave visible proof of being the Council of superlatives even simply with the enormous number of 2,440 bishops who entered Saint Peter's Basilica. While Vatican I, with its 642 fathers, had found room in the right transept of the basilica, this time the Council's meeting hall was the entire central nave. In less than one century, the Church had become truly global. Never before had it happened, as it did in 1962, that one thousand journalists from all over the world had registered for the Council.

First published in Avvenire, official newspaper of the Italian Bishops' Conference.

Thus Vatican II also became the best-known Council of all times, becoming a first-rate global media event. Finally, of the 1,135 pages which cover the decrees of all twenty ecumenical Councils, Vatican II in itself takes up 315, well over one quarter.

Other distinguishing attributes of this Council are less obvious. Councils fulfill supreme magisterial, legislative and judicial functions "under and with the pope", who holds these duties even without the Council. However, not all Councils exercise all of these powers. While the first Council of Lyons (1245) formulated laws and acted as a court, with the excommunication and deposition of emperor Frederick II, Vatican I did not pronounce judgments or codify laws, instead concentrating exclusively on issues of doctrine. The Council of Vienne (1311-1312), on the other hand, judged, passed laws and made decisions of faith issues, as did the 15th-century Councils.

By contrast, Vatican II did not pass sentences, nor pass laws, nor did it deliberate in any definite way on questions of faith. It really became a new type of Council - a "pastoral" Council with the purpose of bringing the Bible and the modern world closer together.

Specifically, it did not express doctrinal condemnations, as John XXIII emphasized in his opening speech: "The Church has always opposed heresy, and has often condemned it very harshly," while this time "the Church prefers to make use of the healing powers of pardon," because "it believes this to be better suited to the needs of this era, and because it prefers to show the validity of its doctrines rather than expressing condemnation." Nevertheless, with historic hind-sight it is clear that Vatican II would have been wiser to follow the lead of Pius XII, finding the courage to expressly condemn communism.

The fear to pronounce doctrinal condemnations and dogmatic definitions actually led to wide contradictions amongst the texts produced in the Council. Thus the dogmatic constitution *"Lumen Gentium "* on the Church and *"Dei Verbum "* on divine revelations have all the characteristics and style of doctrinal documents, but without any concrete definitions. And according to the canon law expert Klaus Morsdorf, the declaration *"Dignitis Humanae"* on religious freedom "takes a position without having a clear legal standpoint". The documents of Vatican II therefore have a very different level of obligation, and this too is a new feature in Council history.

Comparing II Vatican Council with the first Council of Nicaea (325), the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and Vatican I, and bearing in mind their respective consequences, it becomes clear that a schism took place after both Vatican Councils. First, in 1871, there were the "old Catholics" protesting against the definitions of the primacy and the infallibility of the pope; then in 1988 there were Archbishop Lefebvre and his supporters. As ideologically opposed as these two movements appear, they both represent the rejection of legitimate developments in the doctrine and life of the Church - a rejection based on a distorted relationship with history. After the Nicaean Council began religious battles that were to grow in bitterness and violence for over a century until the Nicaean doctrine was imposed at the Council of Chalcedon (451). This comparison can also be drawn with the Council of Trent, which produced an extraordinary growth spurt in the missionary, religious and cultural life of those parts of Europe that had remained Catholic - the "miracle of Trent" of which Hubert Jedin spoke. This growth did not come suddenly, however: after the Council ended, more than a century passed before its dogmatic and reforming decrees would show results on a significant scale.

Practically every Council, including Vatican II, has unique elements in its structure, development and content; what they all have in common is the collegial wielding of supreme doctrinal and pastoral authority. From the content perspective it is the presentation, interpretation and application of traditions to which each Council makes its specific contribution. This obviously does not mean an addition of new content to the faith of the Church, nor an elimination of doctrine that until that point was fundamental. Rather, it s a process of development, clarification and distinction, which takes place with the help of the Holy Spirit. Through this process every Council with its definitive doctrinal announcement takes its place as an integral part of the greater tradition of the Church. This is why Councils always look forwards, to a doctrinal announcement that is wider, clearer and more in touch with the times, and never backwards. A Council cannot contradict its predecessors; it can only integrate, clarify and move forwards. The situation is different when the Council is a legislative organ: legislation can and must always fit into the concrete needs of a given historical situation, and so - always within the framework set by the faith, it is subject to change.

All of this also applies to Vatican II. It is no more or less than a Council amongst many others, next to and after others, not above or beyond them but within the series of general Councils of the Church. This is based on the concept that at the heart of the Counciliar institution is the essence of tradition. This genuinely Catholic concept is reflected in this definition from the II Nicaean Council (787): "Since this is the way things are, we have in a certain way chosen the higher road and followed the doctrines of our fathers, inspired by God and the traditions of the Catholic Church, which as we know has its origins in the Holy Spirit which lives within it". The last of this Council's four condemnations is

particularly important: "Anyone who rejects the entire ecclesiastic tradition, be it written or not, shall be excommunicated".

Vatican II is no different in recognizing its place within the foundations of tradition. The number of references to tradition in Vatican II texts is noteworthy. The Council widely embraced tradition, quoting previous Councils and especially the Council of Florence (1439-1442), Trent and Vatican I, the encyclicals of numerous popes, the Church Fathers and great theologians, first and foremost Thomas Aquinas.

Speaking with Chilean bishops in Santiago in 1988, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger spoke of an "obscure singling out of Vatican II", saying:

> "Some descriptions give the impression that everything was different after Vatican II, and that nothing that came before it could still be considered relevant, or could be relevant only in the light of Vatican II. Vatican II is not treated as a part of the greater living tradition of the Church, but as a totally new beginning. Even though it did not issue a single dogma and wanted to be considered a humble pastoral Council, some recount it as though it had been a kind of superdogma which makes everything else irrelevant". But "we can render Vatican II worthy of more faith if we call it what it was: a part of the single and whole tradition of the Church and its faith".

In the years after the Council it was *en vogue* to compare the Church to a building site on which there were demolitions, new constructions and reconstructions. Very often in sermons, God's order to Abraham to leave his country was interpreted as an exhortation to the Church to abandon its past and traditions.

On the contrary: it must be clearly stated that trying to interpret II Vatican Council outside of tradition would go against the essence of faith. It is tradition, not the spirit of the times, which defines the scope of its interpretation. Of course the situation of the times must be considered - there are current problems which need answers. But these can only come from divine revelation, through the Church. This tradition represents the criterion against which any new answer must be conformed, if it is to be true and valid.

Against this backdrop, the fashionable distinction between "pre-Vatican II" and "post-Vatican II" is of dubitable theological and historic basis. A Council is never a point of origin or destination against which the history of the Church or salvation can be measured. A Council is a link in a chain, the end of which no one knows except the Lord of the Church and of history. A Council can never break the continuity in the actions of the Spirit.

Continuity implies continuation. So will there be a Vatican III? It comes as no surprise that a request for this has been put forward - actually from opposing sides.

Some believe that a new Council should meet to finally carry out the democratization of the Church, allowing those who after a failed marriage find a new partner access to the sacraments, opening the door to marriage for priests and female clergy, and bringing about the reunification of divided Christians.

Others think that the confusion and crises of the tumultuous post-Vatican II period necessitate urgently a Vatican II to reestablish order and provide guidance.

One thing is certain: this possible new Council - perhaps in Nairobi or Moscow, Nairobean or Muscovite - would find its place within the framework of tradition and would be just one part in this venerable series.

Vatican II was neither the beginning nor the end of Council history, and we have to grasp this before we can speak of the future.

Open Windows: Why Vatican II was Necessary

GEORGE SIM JOHNSTON

ON THE THIRD day of the conclave - October 28, 1958 - the white smoke signaled to the crowd in St. Peter's Square the election of a new pope, Angelo Cardinal Roncalli, patriarch of Venice, who took the name of John **XXIII.** The Roman crowd was momentarily silenced; it could not put a face to the name of a man who had spent much of his career obediently accepting obscure ecclesial posts. The cardinals who had elected him were quite certain what to expect from the 76-year-old Roncalli: a peaceful, transitional pontificate - maybe even a mediocre one. Roncalli himself, who had arrived at the conclave with a return train ticket, never expected to be pope.

He was a kindly, unassuming man, easy to underestimate. Even when, at an advanced age, he was made archbishop of Venice, there were still high prelates to whom he was simply *il buon Roncalli.* But this son of frugal peasant farmers, whose faith

was utterly traditional, launched a reformation in the life of the Church that in some ways still lies ahead of us. The Second Vatican Council has hardly entered the consciousness of most Catholics.

There is still some mystery about how the council was born in the mind of Pope John. There had been 20 previous ecumenical councils, and most were summoned in response to a serious crisis, either a heresy like Arianism or the threats of emperors. But in 1959, everything seemed fine. The first official notice of the council was hardly electrifying - a short statement in L'Osservatore Romano to the effect that the pope intended to take three steps to meet the errors of the time - hold a diocesan synod of the clergy in Rome, summon an ecumenical council of the universal Church, and bring the Code of Canon Law up to date. The officials in the Roman Curia were mostly appalled. The first reaction of Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini, who as Pope Paul VI would ably steer the council to its conclusion, was that Roncalli had no idea what a "hornet's nest" he was stirring up.

But Pope John always insisted that his call for a council was an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He never gave lengthy explanations for his decision, but he said enough to make it clear that he thought the Church needed to examine herself, to find her footing in the modern world while re-maining faithful to her principles. There is a law of conversion in the life of the Church as well as in individual Christians: If you are not moving forward, you are moving backward. The Church in some respects had become rigid. There was a self-satisfied triumphalism that was the reverse of apostolic. Most Catholics did not understand that the Church is not just an institution but an evangelical movement. The world was slipping away from religious belief, and Catholics themselves needed a new conversion if they were to bring it back.

Traditionalists who wish the council had never happened point out that the Catholic Church at mid-century was a great success story. But success, as Martin Buber reminds us, is not one of the names of God. And even then there were warning signs, especially in Europe, the cradle of Catholicism. Roncalli's last diplomatic post had been in France after World War II, and he was aware of the alarming decline in church attendance and a nominal Catholicism that prompted two young priests in 1943 to publish a book asking if France had not become a mission territory. The Church had lost the allegiance of almost every segment of society, from the workers to the intellectuals, and the remnant of loyal Catholics included a few too many monarchists whose faith had more than a whiff of Jansenism.

Once he launched the council, it was never the intention of Pope John to control or manipulate it; he simply gave it direction. He did not know precisely what the council would do, treating it, in the words of one historian, as an "empty container" waiting to be filled. There were to be no new definitions of dogma. But John was convinced that the 2,500 assembled bishops would find their way to a better understanding of the Church and her mission. His serenity during the turbulent preparatory phase of the council was extraordinary. He was clearly taking a gamble. Conservative members of the Curia, like Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, once they saw that they could not stop the council, apparently hoped that the bishops would meet with great pomp and splendor, rubber-stamp a few documents affirming Church dogma, and then go home, thus letting everything return to normal.

But this was not what Pope John intended. In his opening speech, he said that "the main point of this Council... will not

be to discuss one or another article of basic Church doctrine that has repeatedly been taught.... A Council is not needed for this." Rather, it was time for a new approach. Emphasizing that the Church should have an "ever greater fidelity to authentic doctrine," the pope famously went on to say: "The substance of the ancient doctrine is one thing, and its formulation is another." But he was not just looking for new formulas: He was calling the Church out of her Tridentine shell to an active engagement with the modern world. To do this effectively, the Church would have to imitate more closely her Master, drawing nearer to contemporary humanity rather than maintaining a harsh, critical distance.

Although Roncalli was not an intellectual in the manner of his predecessor Pius XII, he was well aware of the "new theology" that for decades had been percolating through the Catholic world. It involved radiant figures like Henri de Lubac, Maurice Blondel, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Yves Congar, along with younger academics like Joseph Ratzinger. These thinkers had become impatient with the "official" post-Tridentine scholasticism, which, although derived from St. Thomas Aquinas, was progressively ossifying into a rationalist caricature. They wanted not only to return to the "sources" - Scripture, the Church Fathers, and indeed Aquinas himself - but also to work with philosophical traditions that had emerged since the breakup of medieval Europe. All these would be the building blocks of a new Christian humanism that could speak to the modern world.

While never openly promoting the new theologians, Pope John gave every indication that he expected the council to embrace their understanding of the Church's mission. And this is what happened. The council met in four sessions between 1962 and 1965. There was, of course, the usual unedifying behavior that has attended every council since Nicea: theological dogfights,

bureaucratic rearguard actions, crafty procedural maneuvers, not to mention the agitation at the edges of the council - the journalists and self-appointed experts who hatched plots and circulated pamphlets in smoky little restaurants near the Vatican. Every council has been like this. All that the Holy Spirit guarantees is the orthodoxy of the outcome, no matter what messy human contingencies may be involved.

Pope John called for an *aggiornamento,* a "renewal" or updating of the Church. And this, too, was nothing new. It has been going on for 2,000 years. Since the Church must become incarnate in every historical epoch, she has always engaged in aggiornamento. She did this in the early centuries when she appropriated the vocabulary of Greek philosophy in order to define dogma, and she did it in the Dark Ages when she adjusted to the collapse of the Roman Empire. On these occasions, there was always a conservative party to tell her she shouldn't change, that there were no problems. Fifty years ago, there were problems; they were noticed by the new theologians, as well as by insightful philosophers like Jacques Maritain and Dietrich von Hildebrand. They were also noticed by the Vicar of Christ.

The following were some of the issues that needed to be addressed if the Church were to evangelize the contemporary world.

The Church and Modernity

Since the Enlightenment, the attitude of the Church toward modernity had been one of unrelieved gloom and pessimism. This morose attitude was understandable given what the Church had experienced since the French Revolution. Consider just the highlights: In 1798, Pope Pius VI was arrested by French

revolutionary troops and later died in captivity. His successor, Pius VII, was kidnapped by Napoleon. In 1848, when another revolution was sweeping through Europe, Pius IX's prime minister was stabbed to death by a mob, and the pope had to flee Rome in disguise. In 1871, the archbishop of Paris was executed by agents of the Commune. In the following decades, modern "democracy" coughed up legions of anticlerical politicians - for example, Emile Combes, the French premier who closed all the Catholic schools, in many cases giving the nuns only a few minutes to pack up and depart.

If the Church's experience of modern politics was unhappy, so too was her experience of the economic revolution. With the shift to an industrial economy, there was a huge migration into the cities, and it seemed that the moment a peasant set foot on the pavement of the train station in Paris or Milan, he lost his faith.

Then there was the modern intellectual onslaught against not only the Church, but Christianity itself. From Voltaire onward, the "best" public minds were generally hostile to the Faith, often basing their attacks on a superficial reading of the natural sciences. Their polemics were magnified by the emerging popular press, where anticlerical journalists asked how anyone in an age of steam engines and telegraphs could believe in God.

In reaction to all this, there was a tendency in the Church simply to retreat to a fortified position and hurl down anathemas on the modern world. The *locus classicus* of this position was Pius IX's famous "Syllabus of Errors" (1864), which condemned the view that the pope "can or should reconcile himself to... progress, liberalism, and modern civilization." But by the middle of the 20th century, Catholic thinkers like Maritain and von Balthasar found this mentality exasperating and counterproductive. There

was a rejection not only of what was bad in the modern world but also of what was good. They believed that the healthy Catholic attitude should be that any truth that is out there is ours. Instead, there was a deep suspicion of wide areas of human endeavor, especially in the arts and philosophy. This defensive attitude made it increasingly difficult for the Church to talk to her contemporaries. The vocabulary of neo-scholastic manuals (written in poor Latin) was inadequate, as were the baroque and stilted communiques of the Roman Curia.

The Church had to learn again how to radiate outward. The way to dissipate error was not simply to condemn it but to make a more convincing presentation of the truth in language that the modern world could understand. And it was undoubtedly better to start a dialogue with Protestants or the Eastern Orthodox with what we share instead of pronouncing anathemas. Henceforth, the Church understands herself to be neither against the world, nor of the world, but for the world.

What is the Church?

Accompanying the old mental rigidity was an institutional rigidity that needed correcting. The institutional model of the Church that had prevailed since the Council of Trent, and in many respects had done good service, was no longer adequate. This model saw the Church as a juridical machine operated by the bishop of Rome. Over the centuries, the Church's government had become top-heavy and centralized. This trend had been fortified by Vatican I, which defined papal infallibility, but (partly due to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War) did not address the role of the bishops, let alone the laity. There was a tendency to regard "Rome," especially the bureaucratic machinery of the

Curia, as the Church. The situation was such that a monsignor in the Vatican could be far more powerful than the bishop of a large diocese.

So the council supplemented and balanced the one-sided ecclesiology of Vatican I. It revived the fraternal element in the hierarchy. It confirmed that, in union with the pope, the bishops have a collegial responsibility for the universal Church and not just the care of their own diocese. As for the pope, no writing in Church history has stronger language about papal authority than Lumen Gentium (n. 25), a document about which dissenters do not like to be reminded. But the Council Fathers were interested in moving beyond the Church conceived primarily as a hierarchy or institution - with its Roman centralism and clericalism - to a Church that is a communion of the faithful. And so the council describes the Church in non-juridical, biblical ways: a sheepfold, a pasture, a pilgrim moving through history.

But the documents go even further and emphasize that the Church is a mystery. She is a mystery because she is a Person. Only as such can she change the world. The French writer Paul Claudel said of the fallen world that Christ had entered: "The problem was so enormous that only the Word could respond to it, bringing not an explanation but a presence." This was the idea of the council. By sanctifying herself and acting as a communion of the faithful, the Church's presence in the world would be not so much that of an organization or a credal formula, but of Christ Himself.

Where are the Laity?

A major problem of pre-Vatican II ecclesiology was its disregard of the laity. The laity was a misplaced object in the

magnificent baroque edifice of the Counter-Reformation Church. They were defined negatively - "not the clergy" - and almost treated as passive bystanders. The message was: If you want to be holy, become a priest or nun; otherwise, take a seat in the bleachers, where you may watch the priests and nuns, who are the true athletes of holiness, and you shall be holy to the extent that you plug in, however distantly, to their holiness. At the council, Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh said: "The faithful have been waiting for 400 years for a positive conciliar statement on the place, dignity and vocation of the layman."

Until Vatican II, there was little sense of calling the laity to serious ascetical struggle and adult intellectual formation. All that was the preserve of the priests and nuns, who were somehow the "real" Church. The council was a clarion call to the laity to share actively in the mission of the Church. They are henceforth to act as leaven in the world and not to leave all the heavy lifting to the clergy. Today, many Catholics (including some bishops) seem to think that Vatican II was about the role of the laity in the Church - eucharistic ministers, lectors, and so forth. But it was really about the role of the laity in the world. The true Catholic life is one of personal conversion and evangelization; it does not involve hanging around the sacristy. Recently, Francis Cardinal George of Chicago said that the biggest failure of the post-Vatican II Church was her failure to get out the council's message about the laity - who, after all, comprise 99 percent of the Church.

The Formation of the Clergy

Then there was the situation in the religious orders - and in the seminaries - where again there was too much narrowness and rigidity. The old seminary system had many strengths, but it

also seemed designed to prolong the immaturity of young men. A priest's education was remote from that of his lay contemporary, so that he had difficulty understanding the secular world. There was also an implicit notion that holiness is achieved by the elimination of natural feeling and that sex drives should not exist in a person consecrated to God. (If you wish to seek the root causes of the recent crisis, start looking here.) There was often strictness where strictness was not particularly helpful. For example, many nuns' orders changed between their winter and lighter summer habits twice a year according to the European calendar, no matter what the weather was actually like in, say, Alabama.

More importantly, there was little connection between theology and the devotional life, the latter of which was often dangerously routinized. And in some seminaries or religious houses, if you wanted to discover the Church Fathers or any Catholic thinking outside of a closed neo-scholastic system that gave only the illusion of completeness, you did so with a flashlight at night. Many good men left Catholic seminaries in the 1940s and 1950s be-cause they found the intellectual and emotional formation stultifying.

Obviously, there were wonderful and holy priests in the old days. But the fact that the "eruption of mediocrity" in the Church (as von Hildebrand put it) after the council was mainly the work of clergy who had received their formation before the council is evidence enough that the council was right to want to update the human and spiritual formation in convents and seminaries.

The Liturgy

Ask most American Catholics what Vatican II was about, and they would say that it changed the Mass from Latin to

English. Actually, it is surprising how little the council said about the use of vernacular in the liturgy. It comes down to two sentences whose modest scope would surprise most Catholics: "The use of the Latin language... is to be preserved in the Latin rites. But since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use of it may be made, especially in the readings, directives and in some prayers and chants."

It is unlikely that the Council Fathers ever envisioned the Mass being said entirely in the vernacular. But they did want to revise the liturgy. The old Tridentine Mass had many strengths and beauties. A problem - not intrinsic to it, but an abuse nonetheless that needed correcting - was the nonparticipation of many of the faithful. People in the pews would say their rosaries or do private prayers and devotions during the Mass. The council wanted to change this. The Mass is the summit of Christian life here on earth, so there should be "full, conscious and active participation." The word "active" in the original text could better be translated as "authentic," and by "participation," they meant mainly interior participation. In other words, silence.

But in the wake of the council, bishops around the world apparently decided that the way to achieve "active participation" was to have the entire Mass said in the vernacular. You could argue that this is a "traditionalist" solution. The first eucharistic liturgy, said by Christ, was undoubtedly in Aramaic. Until the end of the third century, the Mass was said in demotic Greek, because that was the vernacular. Then it was switched to Latin for the same reason.

Latin remains the normative language of the Church, and there are at least two good reasons for this: It is the language of the most beautiful prayers and hymns ever written, from the *Salve Regina to Adoro Te Devote.* And it is a dead language; in other words, its meaning and nuances do not change over the centuries. This is why the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* originally written in French, was officially rendered into Latin. Catholics 500 years from now will know exactly what the Church was saying.

Religious Liberty

The most radical departure from history in the council's teachings concerned religious freedom. A professor somewhere has said that one of the great revolutions of the 20th century was the Catholic Church's strong turn toward human rights. She entered the modern age carrying a lot of baggage from her entanglements with the *ancien regime.* The council made it clear that she no longer wanted a confessional state tied to a monarchy; it was high time to make peace with liberal democracy. Henceforth the Church does not impose but proposes the truth; she will not rely on the coercive machinery of the state. This was the area where the Americans, especially the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray, made their contribution to the council. The Constitution of the United States, which keeps the government out of the chancery, had served the Church well.

Reinventing Moral Theology

Although the council did not issue a decree on moral theology, its documents are shot through with a "personalism" that set a new course for teaching morality. In many quarters

of the Church, moral theology had been reduced to a dry and overly scholastic parsing of sin. Call it legalism or externalism, but many Catholics had the idea that religion is mainly a matter of following rules. Returning to the biblical roots of her moral teachings, the Church henceforth was to get out the message that behind every "no" in the commandments, there is an even greater "yes"; that the commandments are meant to educate our nature and not put a lid on it.

This personalist approach is especially helpful with such issues as contraception and priestly celibacy. The old manualist arguments concerning both do not convince the modern mind; it is more effective to talk in the language of "person" and "gift." It is an interesting historical point that the most mischievous heresy to emerge after the council - the "proportionalism" or "consequentialism" of theologians like Charles Curran and Richard McCormick - derives not from the teachings of the council but from a rationalist perversion of the old scholastic double-effect reasoning.

What is Man?

Some of the major questions addressed by the council were anthropological: What is man? How does he flourish? Previous councils had focused on the truth as an objective fact and how the Church as structure was going to preserve this truth. Vatican II went further and pointed out that the truth is also a subjective experience. Following the trajectory of certain modern philosophical schools, the attention shifted from structure and object to subject. As one theologian puts it, the thinking of Aquinas was complemented by Pascal, who in his Pensees focused on the experience of man before God. In talking to modern agnostics, it

might be easier to start with man's need for God, rather than God Himself. Certainly, the old Thomistic proofs for the existence for God, while intellectually airtight, don't seem to move people anymore. This "personalism" of Vatican II is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church begins with a quotation from St. Augustine: "We were made for thee, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." And it is why a saint has the last word, so to speak, in every section, as a testimony of the lived experience of faith.

At the council, the Church moved to a relational, Trinitarian theology of the human person. Our faith is not simply the intellectual acceptance of a series of creedal statements but a relationship with a Person. It is also our relationship with others. As the council puts it, "Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self." There you have a good theology of marriage - and the priesthood - in a nutshell.

A Crisis of Saints

The council's most important message was the "universal call to holiness." If the Church is going to fulfill her evangelical mission, it will ultimately be the work of saints, lay and clerical. In some ways, the council was calling for a retrieval of the experience of the earliest Christians. The early Church was an enterprise of all the baptized who saw the Faith not as a checklist of obligations but an adventure in grace. The hermeneutical key to the council, then, is the lives of the saints. In fact, you will get a good idea of what the council was about by reading a biography of the (now beatified) pope who called it into being. As one biographer puts it, the "Johannine impact was of a person, not a program." Angelo Roncalli was able to do two things together

that many Catholics find difficult: Remain utterly faithful to the Church's teachings while radiating outward to the world. That is also the lesson of Vatican II.

The council ought to have been followed by a thorough catechesis. This happened in the diocese of Krakow under the future Pope John Paul II, but not much elsewhere. It is to be hoped that a genuine implementation lies in our future. John Paul has told us that the teachings of Vatican II are what his pontificate is all about. They are also the key to a new evangelization of the West. They present a program for Catholic apologetics that avoids both the frozen integralism of the past and the loopy therapeutics of the present. But these texts need to be thoughtfully unpacked. This is a job to be done in study groups, conferences, and Sunday homilies.

Many of the best explanations of Vatican II preceded it - works like de Lubac's *The Splendor of the Church* or von Balthasar's *Razing the Bastions.* But we'll give the last word to the French novelist Georges Bernanos, whose "Sermon of an Agnostic" held a mirror up to preconciliar Catholicism - and is addressed to us, as well. Bernanos asks us to consider the call of St. Francis to the rest of Christendom to follow him: "That advice was addressed to all of you. But not many followed it.... Had you followed that saint instead of applauding, Europe would never have known the Reformation, nor the religious wars.... The purpose of God is impenetrable.... Are you capable of rejuvenating the world or not?"

What Did the Second Vatican Council Do for Us?*

FR. **IAN KER**

IT IS 40 YEARS since the close of the Second Vatican Council. The Council was convoked by Pope John XXIII for two purposes: the renewal or aggiornamento of the Catholic Church and Christian reunion - two goals which are surely integrally related. The Pope expressed the hope that it would be the beginning of a new Pentecost for the Church.

There have, indeed, been substantial achievements. A nineteenth century Catholic would be amazed at the transformation of the papacy. Pius IX, who denounced democracy and progress and who had to be defended against his own subjects in the papal states by foreign mercenaries, would have been surprised at the thought of one of his successors travelling round the world and upholding human rights and justice. In Catholic countries, where formerly the Church was ready to turn a blind eye to political

This article first appeared in the 11th October 2002 issue of *The Catholic Herald.* Reprinted with permission from the author.

abuses in return for a guarantee of its privileges and rights, the Church is, or is expected to be, at the forefront of protest against the infringement of people's freedoms and rights. Similarly, what was once a fortress Church is now seriously engaged in dialogue with non-Christian religions as well as other Christian bodies. Internally, too, there have been significant reforms in a number of areas. There is a new code of canon law. New instruments of collegiality and subsidiarity have been put into place. No one would now say, as a famous English monsignore of the nineteenth century asserted, that the province of the laity was to hunt, shoot, and to fish. The vernacular has been introduced into the Mass and the other sacraments and few would wish to return to a wholly Latin rite.

However, inevitably there have been problems and distortions. The pursuit of justice and peace has sometimes seemed to supersede the preaching of the Gospel. The Council's teaching on the role of the laity has, paradoxically, led to a certain clericalisation of the laity, and bishops have often given the impression that the way to implement the decree on the laity is to build up as large a bureaucracy as possible and set up innumerable committees and commissions. Indeed, at times it seems that human organisation has made the Spirit redundant. This has also affected the search for Christian unity, which is not always best served by proliferating ecumenical structures. There too there have been serious aberrations which, to use the old pre-Vatican II word, can only be termed as encouraging indifferentism. In spite of the Council's call for a renewal of the rite of reconciliation, the practice of confession has catastrophically declined; some claim that the answer is general absolution, but sacraments are personal not collective. Finally, and most serious from the point of view of the ordinary Catholic, the English vernacular translations have

proved less than satisfactory in their banality and infidelity to the Latin original.

It will take time to get the right balance; there were bound to be exaggerations and misinterpretations. In reaction to the Protestant reformation, Trent had emphasised those doctrines that were under attack, which led to the inevitable neglect of those other Catholic doctrines, like the priesthood of all believers, that the Reformers were stressing. That has also happened in the wake of Vatican II. As Cardinal John Henry Newman remarked, one council does one thing and another another. Moreover, what councils don't say is also significant. Thus evangelisation was not a theme of the Council, with the inevitable unfortunate consequences - that is, until Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1974) moved the Church in a new direction.

Few would say it has been a very Pentecostal time. For many, it has seemed more like a Golgotha, with falling Mass attendances and declining vocations, at least in most of the developed world. For others, it has been like a blighted spring, in which high hopes have been dashed by the failure to pursue the progressive agenda.

As a student of Newman, who is often referred to as the "father of the Second Vatican Council", I take comfort from his reflections at the time of the First Vatican Council. There are several points he makes which are I think very relevant to our own post-conciliar situation. First, he warned that patience is called for as time finds remedies for what seem insuperable problems. Second, he pointed out that time is also needed for the implementation of conciliar teachings. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, implementation requires interpretation: texts do not speak for themselves, they have to be read and digested and elucidated.

There was an idea immediately after the Council that bishops could simply return to their dioceses and implement the Council. That was a very simplistic idea. Some obvious changes or reforms can be implemented in this way, others take time and involve a number of different parties. Certainly, authority is involved through the pope and bishops: John Paul II has more than played his part in this, as have other charismatic bishops like Cardinal Lustiger of Paris with his radical reform of the seminary system. But it is not only the magisterium that is involved. Other parts of the Church also have a responsibility for the realisation of Vatican II. Theologians have their role to play as exegetes of the conciliar texts, which have to be understood in relation to the tradition of the Church and to previous councils and magisterial teachings. The grassroots faithful baptised, whether priests or religious or laity, also take part in the process of the reception of a council. And last, but by no means least, those endowed with special charisms - and these charisms are given for the needs of the Church, not least at the time of a council. Thus the Ignatian charism was providential for the implementation of the Council of Trent, since without the Society of Jesus it is hard to see how the Tridentine reforms could ever been carried out.

There is a further clue to be found in Newman's writings about how the post-conciliar Church is likely to develop. At the beginning of his most famous theological work, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, he says that it is not true of a religious idea or belief that "the stream is clearest near the spring". On the contrary, it

> "is more equable, and purer, and stronger, when its bed has become deep, and broad, and full. It necessarily rises out of an existing state of things, and for a time

savours of the soil. Its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary..."

If we can apply this to the teachings of Vatican II, then we have to conclude that the meaning of the Council will become clearer in the course of time and that even those who participated in it are less likely to understand its full significance than later generations. If we are too close to something, we may not see it as it really is. And Newman's expression *"savours of the soil"* reminds us that the soil out of which the Council came was the sixties and that *"its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary."* I believe that what is called "the spirit of Vatican II" is precisely that interpretation of the Council which savours of the Sixties, and until its "vital element" is disengaged from what is essentially *"foreign and temporary"* the Council will not bear the fruit it was intended to.

I remember a newspaper article by Bishop BC Butler in the Seventies to the effect that Vatican II could not be implemented until the older generation that was too set in its ways to really accept the Council had passed away. I am sure that was true, but it is also true of the generations that came to maturity in the Sixties and Seventies and who experienced the Council as though it were a revolution rather than simply another development in the Church's history and tradition. Until all those who saw or see Vatican II as a complete break with the Church's past have disappeared from the scene the Council will continue to be misunderstood.

Finally, as Pope John Paul II has said, one of the most important achievements of the Council was the rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church. The Pope also sees the new ecclesial movements and communities as being an answer

to Pope John's dream of a new Pentecost. This unexpected phenomenon was not planned or predicted by Vatican II, but nevertheless it represents a concrete realisation of the Council's Constitution on the Church, at the heart of which is the idea of communion between all the baptised whatever their state in the Church, whether clerical or religious or lay. That is why the new communities and movements are ecclesial and not lay as they are often called. It is interesting how those who claim to have "the spirit of Vatican II" are the very people in the Church who most dislike this great charismatic outburst, and who even ludicrously try to argue that it is "against Vatican II".

Homily during the First Death Anniversary Mass for the Servant of God John Paul II

POPE BENEDICT XVI

Saint Peter's Square
Monday, 3 April 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In these days, on the first anniversary of his death, the memory of the Servant of God John Paul II is particularly vivid throughout the Church and the world.

With the Marian Vigil yesterday evening, we relived the precise moment of his devout passing one year ago, whereas today we are here in this same St. Peter's Square to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice in suffrage for his chosen soul.

Together with the Cardinals, Bishops, priests and Religious, I greet with affection the numerous pilgrims who have arrived from very many places, especially from Poland, to bear witness to their esteem, affection and deep gratitude. Let us pray for this beloved Pontiff, allowing ourselves to be illuminated by the Word of God we have just heard.

In the First Reading from the Book of Wisdom, we were reminded of the eternal destiny that awaits the righteous: a destiny of superabundant happiness, an incomparable reward for the sufferings and trials they faced during their lives. "God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them" (Wis 3: 5-6).

The term "burnt offering" refers to the sacrifice in which the victim was entirely burned, consumed by the flames; consequently, it was a sign of total offering to God. This biblical expression reminds us of the mission of John Paul II, who made his life a gift to God and to the Church and, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, lived out the sacrificial dimension of his priesthood.

Among the invocations dear to him was one that comes from the *"Litanie di Gesu Cristo Sacerdote e Vittima"* that he chose to place at the end of his book, *Gift and Mystery,* published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood, (cf. pp. 113-116): *"Iesu, Pontifex qui tradidisti temetipsum Deo oblationem et hostiam* - Jesus, High Priest who gave yourself to God as offering and victim, have mercy on us".

How frequently did he repeat this invocation! It expresses clearly the profoundly priestly character of his whole life. He never made a mystery of his desire to become increasingly one with Christ the Priest through the Eucharistic Sacrifice, a source of tireless apostolic dedication.

It was faith, of course, that was at the root of this total offering of himself. In the Second Reading that we have just heard, St Peter too uses the image of the gold tested by fire and applies it to faith (cf. I Pt 1: 7). In fact, in life's difficulties it is especially the quality of the faith of each one of us that is tried and tested: its

firmness, its purity, its consistency with life. Well, the late Pontiff, whom God had endowed with multiple human and spiritual gifts, in passing through the crucible of apostolic labours and sickness, appeared more and more as a "rock" of faith.

To those who had the opportunity to be close to him, that firm and forthright faith was almost tangible. If it impressed the circle of his collaborators, it did not fail during his long Pontificate to spread its beneficial influence throughout the Church in a crescendo that reached its highest point in the last months and days of his life.

It was a convinced, strong and authentic faith - free of the fears and compromises that have infected the hearts of so many people -, thanks partly to his many Apostolic Pilgrimages in every part of the world, and especially thanks to that last "journey", his agony and his death.

The Gospel passage that has just been proclaimed helps us to understand another aspect of his human and religious personality. We might say that among the Apostles, he, the Successor of Peter, supremely imitated John the "beloved disciple", who stood under the Cross with Mary at the moment of the Redeemer's abandonment and death.

The evangelist relates that Jesus, when he saw them standing near, entrusted the one to the other: "Woman, behold, your son!"... "Behold, your mother!" (Jn 19: 26-27). The dying Lord's words were particularly dear to John Paul II. Like the Apostle and Evangelist, he too wanted to take Mary into his home: *"et ex ilia hora accepit earn discipulus in sua"* (Jn 19: 27).

The expression *"accepit earn in sua"* is singularly compact. It indicates John's decision to make Mary share in his own life, so as to experience that whoever opens his heart to Mary is actually

accepted by her and becomes her own. The motto that stands out in the coat of arms of the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II, *Totus tuus,* sums up this spiritual and mystical experience well, in a life completely oriented to Christ through Mary: *"ad Iesum per Mariam".*

Dear brothers and sisters, this evening our thoughts turn with emotion to the moment of the beloved Pontiff's death, but at the same time our hearts are, as it were, impelled to look ahead. We feel reverberating within them his repeated invitations to advance without fear on the path of fidelity to the Gospel, to be heralds and witnesses of Christ in the third millennium.

We cannot but recall his ceaseless exhortations to cooperate generously in creating a more just humanity with greater solidarity, to be peacemakers and builders of hope.

May our gaze always remain fixed on Christ, "the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb 13: 8), who firmly guides his Church. We believed in his love and it is the encounter with him that "gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (cf. *Deus Caritas Est,* n. 1).

May the power of Jesus' Spirit be for you all a source of peace and joy, dear brothers and sisters, as it was for Pope John Paul II. And may the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, help us to be in all circumstances, as he was, tireless apostles of his divine Son and prophets of his merciful love. Amen!

Message for the 43rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations

POPE BENEDICT XVI

Theme: **Vocation in the mystery of the Church**

7 May 2006 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The celebration of the coming World Day of Prayer for Vocations gives me the opportunity to invite the entire People of God to reflect on the theme Vocation in the mystery of the Church. The Apostle Paul writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world... He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ" *(Eph* 1,3-5). Before the creation of the world, before our coming into existence, the heavenly Father chose us personally, calling us to enter into a filial relationship with Him, through Jesus, the Incarnate Word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Dying for us, Jesus introduced us into the mystery of the Father's love, a love which completely envelops his Son and which He offers to all of us. In this way, united with Jesus, the Head, we form a sole body, the Church.

The weight of two millennia of history makes it difficult to grasp the novelty of this captivating mystery of divine adoption, which is at the centre of St Paul's teaching. As the Apostle reminds us, the Father "has made known to us the mystery of his will ... as a plan to unite all things in him" *(Eph* 1:9-10). And he adds, with enthusiasm: "In everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" *(Rom* 8:28-29). The vision is indeed fascinating: we are called to live as brothers and sisters of Jesus, to feel that we are sons and daughters of the same Father. This is a gift that overturns every purely human idea and plan. The confession of the true faith opens wide our minds and hearts to the inexhaustible mystery of God, which permeates human existence. What should be said therefore of the temptation, which is very strong nowadays, to feel that we are self-sufficient to the point that we become closed to God's mysterious plan for each of us? The love of the Father, which is revealed in the person of Christ, puts this question to us.

In order to respond to the call of God and start on our journey, it is not necessary to be already perfect. We know that the prodigal son's awareness of his own sin allowed him to set out on his return journey and thus feel the joy of reconciliation with the Father. Weaknesses and human limitations do not present an obstacle, as long as they help make us more aware of the fact that we are in need of the redeeming grace of Christ. This is the experience of St Paul who confessed: "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 *Cor* 12:9). In the mystery of the Church, the mystical Body of Christ, the divine power of love changes the heart of man, making him

able to communicate the love of God to his brothers and sisters. Throughout the centuries many men and women, transformed by divine love, have consecrated their lives to the cause of the Kingdom. Already on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, many allowed themselves to be won by Jesus: they were in search of healing in body or spirit, and they were touched by the power of his grace. Others were chosen personally by Him and became his apostles. We also find some, like Mary Magdalene and others, who followed him on their own initiative, simply out of love. Like the disciple John, they too found a special place in his heart. These men and women, who knew the mystery of the love of the Father through Jesus, represent the variety of vocations which have always been present in the Church. The model of one called to give witness in a particular manner to the love of God, is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who in her pilgrimage of faith is directly associated with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.

In Christ, the Head of the Church, which is his Body, all Christians form "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him" (1 *Pt* 2,9). The Church is holy, even if her members need to be purified, in order that holiness, which is a gift of God, can shine forth from them with its full splendour. The Second Vatican Council highlights the universal call to holiness, when it affirms: "The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to his own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the Baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way, they are really made holy" *(Lumen Gentium,* 40). Within the framework of this universal call, Christ, the High Priest, in his solicitude for the Church calls persons in every generation who are to care for his people. In particular, he calls to the ministerial

priesthood men who are to exercise a fatherly role, the source of which is within the very fatherhood of God (cfr Eph 3,14). The mission of the priest in the Church is irreplaceable. Therefore, even if in some regions there is a scarcity of clergy, it should never be doubted that Christ continues to raise up men who, like the Apostles, leaving behind all other work, dedicate themselves completely to the celebration of the sacred mysteries, to the preaching of the Gospel and to pastoral ministry. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis,* my venerable Predecessor Pope John Paul II wrote in this regard: "The relation of the priest to Jesus Christ, and in him to his Church, is found in the very being of the priest by virtue of his sacramental consecration/ anointing and in his activity, that is, in his mission or ministry. In particular, «the priest minister is the servant of Christ present in the Church as *mystery, communion and mission.* In virtue of his participation in the 'anointing' and 'mission' of Christ, the priest can continue Christ's prayer, word, sacrifice and salvific action in the Church. In this way, the priest is a *servant of the Church as mystery* because he actuates the Church's sacramental signs of the presence of the risen Christ»" (no. 16).

Another special vocation, which occupies a place of honour in the Church, is the call to the consecrated life. Following the example of Mary of Bethany who "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching" *(Lk* 10, 39), many men and women consecrate themselves to a total and exclusive following of Christ. Although they undertake various services in the field of human formation and care of the poor, in teaching or in assisting the sick, they do not consider these activities as the principal purpose of their life, since, as the Code of Canon Law well underlines, "the first and foremost duty of all religious is to be the contemplation of divine things and assiduous union with God in prayer" (can.

663 §1). Moreover, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* Pope John Paul II noted: "In the Church's tradition religious profession is considered to be a special and fruitful deepening of the consecration received in Baptism, inasmuch as it is the means by which the close union with Christ already begun in Baptism develops in the gift of a fuller, more explicit and authentic configuration to him through the profession of the evangelical counsels" (no. 30).

Remembering the counsel of Jesus: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest" *(Mt* 9,37), we readily recognise the need to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life. It is not surprising that, where people pray fervently, vocations flourish. The holiness of the Church depends essentially on union with Christ and on being open to the mystery of grace that operates in the hearts of believers. Therefore, I invite all the faithful to nurture an intimate relationship with Christ, Teacher and Pastor of his people, by imitating Mary who kept the divine mysteries in her heart and pondered them constantly (cfr Lk 2,19). Together with her, who occupies a central position in the mystery of the Church, we pray:

O Father, raise up among Christians
abundant and holy vocations to the priesthood,
who keep the faith alive
and guard the blessed memory of your Son Jesus
through the preaching of his word
and the administration of the Sacraments,
with which you continually renew your faithful.
Grant us holy ministers of your altar,
who are careful and fervent guardians of the Eucharist,

the sacrament of the supreme gift of Christ
for the redemption of the world.

Call ministers of your mercy,
who, through the sacrament of Reconciliation,
spread the joy of your forgiveness.

Grant, O Father, that the Church may welcome with joy
the numerous inspirations of the Spirit of your Son
and, docile to His teachings,
may she care for vocations to the ministerial priesthood
and to the consecrated life.

Sustain the Bishops, priests and deacons,
consecrated men and women, and all the baptized in Christ,
so that they may faithfully fulfill their mission
at the service of the Gospel.

This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Queen of Apostles, pray for us.

Pastoral Statement on the Alleged "People's Initiative" to Change the Constitution

tANGEL **N. LAGDAMEO, DD**

1. Introduction

"The Church... must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice." *(Deus Caritas Est,* 28) This challenging call of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, impels us to express to you, our beloved People of God, our deep concern over the attempt of certain sectors to make hasty and substantial changes to our Constitution, supposedly through the **"People's Initiative"** provision in our present charter. We speak to you, not as lawyers or politicians, but as Shepherds, applying principles of our Catholic Social Teaching to our present situation, and inviting you to discern, decide and act in the light of the Gospel.

We recognize and respect those many concerned and thoughtful Filipinos who see constitutional reform as necessary remedy to the country's many problems at present. In our pastoral statement of January 2006, we already stated that *"we agree that*

certain aspects of our Constitutions may need amendments and revisions." What we wish to challenge and express unease about is the **process** by which these changes are being brought about.

2. Concerns about the Present Campaign

First, we believe that "changing the Constitution involving major shifts in the form of government, requires widespread participation, total transparency, and relative serenity that allows for rational discussion and debate." (CBCP Statement, 2006) The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* teaches that "the shared participation of citizens in the destiny of their communities calls for work for information and education." (No. 191) The provision for a "People's Initiative" in the present Constitution was precisely an attempt to allow our people this participation.

We view with alarm, however, the present signature campaign endorsed by the government. Signatures are apparently collected without adequate information, discussion and education. The manner in which these signatures are supposedly collected, including door to door campaigns, are not conducive to the kind of informed participation that such fundamental changes demand. The changes that are being proposed for signatures of citizens are dangerously unclear and open to manipulation by groups with self-serving interests. The complexities and variations of the parliamentary system are not adequately explained and have not been sufficiently discussed by our people.

Second, we believe that "the reasons for constitutional change must be based on the common good rather than on self-serving interests or the interests of political dynasties." (CBCP Statement, 2006) The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the*

Church teaches that: "An authentic democracy is ... the fruit of... a commitment to the common good as the purpose and guiding criterion for political life." (No. 407)

In other words, charter change can only be morally justifiable if the revisions being proposed will lead to authentic reforms and development for the nation. Changes must assure shifts towards: principled politics, transparency and accountability, electoral and institutional reform, and more efficient delivery of services to the people, especially the poorest.

However, no such provisions have been clearly specified in the present signature campaign. What form of parliamentary system, how such a parliamentary system will truly serve the common good and the interests of the nation, especially the poor, have not been articulated. Instead, people are given general and sweeping promises of political stability and reform that will allegedly automatically come with a new political system.

This lack of clarity on how the changes will truly benefit our nation raises disturbing questions about who will truly benefit from these changes. It seems that the changes as they are being proposed now will benefit mainly those who already hold positions of power and privilege in the current political system. This raises questions as to the authenticity of this signature campaign and the motives of those who promote it. Is this truly a *"people's initiative"* or the initiative of self-seeking political players wanting to entrench in power? We might further ask the question of the source of funding for this entire operation.

3. Conclusion

A call to discernment and action. In the light of the difficulties connected with the present efforts to change the Constitution, we,

your Pastors, invite the People of God to take up once again the responsibilities of good citizens, who love this country and seek its true good. We remind you of the words of our Holy Father: "The direct duty for a just ordering of society ... is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the state, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. They cannot relinquish their participation ... to promote ... the common good." *(Deus Caritas Est.* 29)

We invite you then to reflect and pray over what we have presented in this statement. If, before God speaking in your conscience, you agree, we call upon you to discern the appropriate actions. As Christians, we cannot be complacent and inactive in the face of this present issue of charter change, which is so crucial to the future of our country and people. Vigilance, education, principled opposition may be necessary steps to take.

As Holy Week draws near, we pray that the self-sacrificing love of Christ, that along brings life to the world, may fill the hearts of all Filipinos and bring about the new life we all desire for our nation.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

tANGEL N. LAGDAMEO
Archbishop of Jaro and
CBCP President
April 7, 2006

The Earth - The One and Only Home We Have Today

tGAUDENCIO B. ROSALES, DD

WHEN GOD WAS said to plan the creations of humans He said "let us make humans in our image, after our likeness, to have dominion over the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the animals on land and everything on earth." (Genesis 1:26). The meaning of lordship is not absolute ownership of earth, for man does not own the earth; he belongs to the earth; he was made of the earth, "and unto dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19).

Unfortunately humans were the only creatures, who when using the fruits or resources if the earth leave a track of destruction and waste following their path. When animals die they even enrich the soil when humans pass they dump poisonous plastics in their tracks and they poison the air with carbon monoxide and other life killing gases. Shall we call this progress, when in the end life is threatened instead of protected in the only home he has, and where the Creator placed humans as the master-stewards.

The earth does not belong to humans; humans belong to the earth. And if they need to protect and prolong their lives, they

must, of necessity, protect and prolong the life of their home, the planet, the Earth.

The resources of nature in this planet can provide for every material need of all human beings on earth. But it cannot provide for any requirement of human greed. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The earth can provide for all human needs but not for one man's greed." Our Lord Jesus Christ once reminded all, "Be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for life does not consist in possessions, even when someone has more than he needs. (Luke 12:15)

It is human greed that destroys the balance in the distribution, sharing and the use of the earth's resources. It is human acquisitiveness and avarice that threaten the supply and availability of resources destined also for the future generations. To destroy and overuse the earth's supply today is like stealing from the mouths of your grand and great grandchildren. They and their needs were also in the mind and plan of God when He created this earth.

In the end, if we want to save our present generation and the next generation from the acute need to balance hunger with nature's resources, or face the grim possibility of having none in the future, let us protect our only home - the planet Earth, now.

Let all people - irrespective of culture, cult or belief - take care of the Earth, by taming their greed. Let discipline take over the careless disposal of waste and garbage. Let humans provide the earth again with stronger lungs, allowing it to breathe healthier by replanting trees. Allow the brooks and the rivers to live again by reviving the watersheds and replenishing the aquifers with replanted trees around. Give the earth its primal strength by respecting the laws of the Nature instead of abusing

its bounty for greed and profit. God has shown humans through tragic experience that Nature has its way of fighting back, if only to protect then and their future.

In living on earth as God's guests humans learn that it is Nature that knows best. In humility let us respect and protect Nature, it was created by God to protect us. Care for the Earth is care for ourselves. This is good ecology. God bless!

tGAUDENCIO B. ROSALES
Earth Day, Resurrection Parish
Smokey Mountain
April 22, 2006

Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue: An Update on the Fifth Round of Discussions

CECIL M. ROBECK, JR.

The International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue is one of the oldest ecumenical dialogues in which the Roman Catholic Church is engaged. It came into existence when, in 1970, the peripatetic South African/American Pentecostal minister, David du Plessis, inquired about the possibility of opening up some kind of discussion between Catholics and Pentecostals.[1] Cardinal Willebrands, then President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, authorized a series of preliminary conversations in 1970-71 to explore this idea. In 1972 the first round of the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue began.[2]

[1] David du Plessis as told to Bob Slosser, *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1977), 199-236; David du Plessis, *Simple and Profound* (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 1986), 173-193.

[2] This round of discussions has been assessed in Arnold Bittlinger, *Papst und Pfingstler: Der romisch katholisch-pfingstliche Dialog und seine okumenische*

At the beginning, the dialogue had no official support from any classical Pentecostal denomination. While the Dialogue had an official status on the part of the Vatican's Secretariat, David du Plessis, who had been defrocked by the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1964 because of his ecumenical activities, was unable to solicit comparable institutional support from within the classical Pentecostal Movement to sustain such a dialogue. He turned to personal, Pentecostal friends and to his many Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Orthodox contacts active in the larger charismatic world to complete his list of "Pentecostal" colleagues.[3] He hoped that these additions would be sufficiently "Pentecostal" to make the points he wanted to make. He believed that the Pentecostal testimony regarding the person of the Holy Spirit was a valuable corrective to the Church's general ignorance of Pneumatology. He believed that the Pentecostal experience of the power of the Spirit might provide a practical corrective to

Relevanz Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978), 484 pp. The first three reports were published in *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 12:2 (fall, 1990), 85-142 and in William G. Rusch and Jeffrey Gros, Eds. *Deepening Communion: International Ecumenical Documents with Roman Catholic Participation* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), 367-422. All four reports have been published in German in Norbert Baumert and Gerhard Bially, Eds. *Pfingstler una[1] Katholiken Im Dialog: Die vier Abschlussberichte einer Internationalen Kommission aus 25 Jahren* (Diisseldorf, Germany: Charisma 1999), 59-95, and in English in Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch, *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical conversations on a World Level 1982-1998,* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company/ Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 2000), 713-779.

[3] His "charismatic" friends included Arnold Bittlinger and Larry Christenson (Lutheran), Jean-Daniel Fisher and J. Rodman Williams (Reformed and Presbyterian), David Collins (Episcopal), Michael Harper (at that time an Anglican), and Athanasios Emmert (Orthodox).

what had traditionally appeared to be a powerless Church. And he believed that the Roman Catholic Church might benefit from a formal exposure to Pentecostals in light of the emergence of charismatic renewal within the Roman Catholic Church.

This first round of discussions was a kind of "get acquainted" round. As many as ten topics were introduced during the week-long meeting.[4] At best, they received only superficial treatment. This first round, however, did four things. First, it set boundaries that would define subsequent discussions, limits that would govern the reception of its reports by the respective denominations. Second, it became clear to both sides that the Pentecostal team, as constructed, was not adequate. Its "Charismatic" members did not always represent Classical Pentecostal sentiments very well.[5] Things would have to change if this Dialogue were to be successful. Third, it alerted the Classical Pentecostal community to the realization that Rome really wanted to talk with *them.* Finally, it gave Du Plessis time. He needed that time to educate the Classical Pentecostal community regarding this controversial and challenging opportunity. And he needed that time to find Pentecostals that he thought might take such a dialogue seriously.

The second round of discussions, which ran from 1977-1982, brought a radically reconstituted Pentecostal team. The result

[4] These topics included baptism in the Holy Spirit, Christian Initiation and the Gifts, Baptism, Scripture, Tradition and Developments, Charismatic Renewal in the Historic Churches, Public Worship, Public Worship and the Gifts, The Human Aspect, Discernment of Spirits, Prayer and Praise.

[5] This became most evident when the discussion turned to baptism. Most of the Pentecostal team drawn from the historic denominations favored infant baptism, while the Classical Pentecostals all rejected it.

was a more mature report that clearly demonstrated Classical Pentecostal participation. Yet the style of the Dialogue was such that it continued to address too many subjects inadequately.[6] It was really the topic chosen in its next to last year of this round that opened the way toward more focused discussions in the future. In 1981, against the better judgment of Rome but at the insistence of the Pentecostals, the Dialogue looked at how these two traditions viewed Mary.

The subject would prove to be every bit as controversial as Rome had expected. It led to the discipline of Jerry L. Sandidge, an Assemblies of God missionary in Belgium, who authored the Pentecostal paper on the subject. Assemblies of God leaders forced him to choose between the revocation of his missionary appointment and breaking all fellowship with David du Plessis and the Dialogue. He chose to leave Belgium.

At the same time, the study of Mary was just as worthwhile as the Pentecostals had hoped. The Pentecostal participants in the Dialogue learned something of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice, and gained a greater appreciation of Mary in the process. This round of discussions also facilitated greater trust between the teams and it demonstrated more broadly, just how important the Dialogue was for dealing with differences.[7]

[6] This document addressed speaking in tongues, faith and experience, Scripture and Tradition, exegesis, biblical interpretation, faith and reason, healing in the Church, community, worship and communion, Tradition and traditions, perspectives on Mary, and ministry in the Church.

[7] The paper presented by Jerry L. Sandidge may be found in his dissertation published in two volumes as, *Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue [1977-1982]: A Study in Developing Ecumenism* Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 44 (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 1987), 2:289-351. His account of his rejection by Pentecostal leaders can be found in 1:332-341. Correspondence

The discussion on Mary was also important because it provided the basis for the third round of discussions (1985-1989) by raising questions about the nature of the *Communio sanctorum,* the communion of saints. This third round of discussions saw greater acceptance of the dialogue by the Classical Pentecostal community. Five Pentecostal denominations chose to grant official recognition of the dialogue, and began to appoint official participants to the discussion. This round developed further, the nature of the communion of saints by exploring the larger subject of ecclesiology through the lens of *koinonia?* The result was a report titled, "Perspectives on *Koinonia."*[9]

Roman Catholic insistence that baptism formed the basis for entry into the *"koinonia* of those saved by Christ" (Perspectives

between the Assemblies of God and Jerry L. Sandidge may be studied at the David du Plessis Archive, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, 91182, USA.

[8] See "Perspectives on *Koinonia"* §7. Cf. David Leon Cole, *"Pentecostal Koinonia: An Emerging Ecumenical Ecclesiology Among Pentecostals,"* unpublished PhD dissertation, Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1998 analyzed this third round within the larger context of ecumenical discussions on *koinonia* from a Pentecostal perspective, while Paul D. Lee, *Pneumatological Ecclesiology in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue: A Catholic Reading of the Third Quinquennium* (1985-1989) (Rome: Pontifica Studiorum Universitas A.S. Thoma Ag. in Urbe, 1994), 364 pp. assessed it from a Roman Catholic perspective. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat: Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972-1989)* (SLAG 42, Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1998), 509 pp. analyzed the first three rounds of discussions.

[9] "Perspectives on Koinonia," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 12:2 (1990), 117-141. The report of the Third Quinquennium of the Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church and some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders, 1989. This document was published in the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity's *Information Service* N. 75 (1990/IV), pp. 179-191 and in Dutch, as "Perspectieven op Koinonia," *Parakleet* 11/39 (Fall 1991): i-xii.

on *Koinonia,* 50), "the Church," (Perspectives on *Koinonia,* 52), and therefore the basis for a "certain, though imperfect" unity between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics *(Decree on Ecumenism,* 3; Perspectives on *Koinonia,* 54-55), was eye-opening for the Pentecostals. That claim, however, gave rise to further reflection on the nature of baptism. The Pentecostals argued that while baptism is very important, a rite that should be followed in obedience to Jesus' command (Matthew 28:19; Perspectives on *Koinonia,* 40-41), most Pentecostals hold that it is actually a prior personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ that gives baptism its true meaning (Perspectives on *Koinonia,* 42,45).[10]

Differences in their respective understandings of baptism led to several further insights. The Pentecostal team argued that by making baptism the entry point into the Christian community, Roman Catholics had undoubtedly contributed to a phenomenon the Pentecostals identified as "nominal" Christianity. Given the Catholic understanding of baptism, they argued, it was possible for a person to be baptized and remain essentially or completely unchurched (Perspectives on *Koinonia,* 59-60). "How could anyone claim that these people were genuine Christians?" they asked. There was no clear indication that these people had ever personally responded to God through faith in Jesus Christ. It seemed only that they had undergone a rite of baptism in which, especially as infants, they were not even willing participants. Splashing water on unbelieving babies certainly did nothing to make them believers. When the Pentecostals claimed to lead

[10] This discussion emerges in "Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness," 69, as an example of why charges of proselytism have emerged between Catholic and Pentecostal communities.

such "nominal Christians" to the Lord, they argued that they were merely "evangelizing" them, often for the first time. They weren't really Christian, after all. These people might have been sacramentalized, but they had hardly been evangelized.

The Roman Catholics countered with theological and pastoral charges of their own. Who gave you the right to determine who is "nominal" and who is not? The Roman Catholic team had a different reading of Pentecostal actions. Those who had been baptized by the Roman Catholic Church had been made part of the Church through baptism. Thus, the actions of those Pentecostals who sought to "lead these people to the Lord" was nothing more than "proselytism." They were stealing sheep by breaking into the sheepfold of the Catholic Church and sowing doubt and fear in the minds of their members even as they wooed them into their own sheepfolds.

Once these Pentecostals had "led these people to the Lord," they had also led them into their own congregations where they were frequently required to be baptized once again as new converts. The Catholics argued that when Pentecostals took such an action, they showed that they did not recognize or respect the prior baptism of their new "converts." They did not recognize the authority of the Church in which they had been baptized. Some even wondered whether the Pentecostals recognized the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian body.

Such difficult questions simply had to be answered as quickly as possible. As a result, the fourth round of discussions (1990-1997) took up the issues of "Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness." Other questions raised by the third round of discussions would have to be shelved as the Dialogue took on this more pressing agenda. The teams attempted to define

together, the terms "evangelization" and "proselytism." Once they had agreed on various definitions or understandings of these terms, they explored a number of possible ways in which Roman Catholics and Pentecostals might actually engage in Christian witness together.[11]

Because of the sensitive nature of this topic, the discussion on "Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness" was extended from five years to eight. Upon completion of this fourth report, the steering committee suggested that the teams return to some of the unexplored but related issues that had been raised in "Perspectives on *Koinonia."* If the two sides could not agree on a single entry point into the Christian life, and if the Pentecostals were confused by Roman Catholic practice that led them to charge Catholics with nominal behavior that in turn led to charges of "proselytism" against Pentecostals, then it seemed that they should continue to explore how one entered the Christian life and became fully incorporated into the ongoing life of the

[1,] "Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness," The Report from the Fourth Phase of the International Dialogue 1990-1997 Between the Roman Catholic Church and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders, has been published in English in *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 21:1 (Spring, 1999), 11-51, has been published in English in The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity's *Information Service* N. 97 (1998/I-II), 38-56; the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2:1 (January 1999), 105-151; and in *One In Christ* xxxv: 2 (1999), 158-190. It has appeared in French in *Service (('information* N. 97 (1998/I-II), 38-57; in Portuguese in *Didlogo Catdlico-Pentecostal: Evangelizacdo, Proselitismo e Testemunho Comum* (Sao Paulo, Brazil: Paulinas, 1999), 77 pp.; and in Spanish in *Didlogo Ecumenico* n. 108(1999), 103-152. This round of discussions is evaluated by Veli Matti Karkkainen, *Ad ultimum terrae: Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1990-1997),* (SIHC 117, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1999), 281 pp.

Church. This has been the focus of the fifth round of discussions that began in 1998.[12]

Choosing the Subject of the Fifth Round of Discussions: 1998-2005

It was Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB, who had served as the Roman Catholic Co-chair of the Dialogue since its inception, that suggested that the Dialogue pursue the topic, "Conversion and Christian Initiation: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives."[13] He did this for several reasons. First, in 1991, he co-authored a book with Fr. George T. Montague titled, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries.* From his Roman Catholic perspective, he understood the subjects of conversion, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and Christian initiation to be linked together. Second, at nearly 80 years of age, he believed that this round of discussions would be the last one in which he would be able to participate, and he wanted to see how the dialogue would assess the basic thesis of his book. Third, his book had cited not only the biblical evidence for Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit; it had also pursued the topic in the writings of the Church Fathers. Roman Catholics had frequently drawn attention to Patristic texts in every round of discussion, but Pentecostals had never done so. By introducing the subject, not

[12] For a brief overview of all rounds through 1998, see Juan Fernando Usma Gomez, "El Dialogo Internacional Catdlico-Pentecostal 1972-1998: Resena Historia, Presentation Final de la Cuarta Fase: Evangelisation, Proselitismo y Testimonio Comun, y Perspectivas," *Medellin: theologi'a y pastoral para America Latina* Vol. 24, no. 95 (September 1998), 449-470.

[13] This was in keeping with some of the concerns raised in "Perspectives on Koinonia" (Cf. 48-49, 59-60).

only in biblical perspective, but also in Patristic perspective, he hoped to help Pentecostals and Catholics to appreciate more fully their common historical roots.

For a century, Pentecostals had been arguing that it was essential for Christians to experience what they call "Baptism in the Spirit," because that experience brings with it an empowerment by the Holy Spirit to be used for effective ministry. Fr. McDonnell had written his book in response to the challenges raised by Pentecostals in earlier sessions of the Dialogue, and he thought that it might provide an opportunity for the Pentecostals as well as Roman Catholics to interact with his thesis that "baptism in the Holy Spirit is an integral part of becoming a Christian." If this thesis were true, he argued, then baptism in the Holy Spirit should not be relegated to the realm of "private piety, but to public liturgy, to the official public worship of the church. And it is normative for all Christians." "Religious experience" and the manifestation of the various "charisms" are merely consequences of this reality, he maintained.[14] In other words, the emphasis upon "baptism in the Spirit" did not belong solely to the Pentecostal Movement or to the Charismatic Renewal. It belonged to the Church as a whole.

By situating the subject of "baptism in the Spirit," as he did, within the context of the debate on "conversion-initiation," he pointed to the validity of arguments set forth by the biblical theologian, James D. G. Dunn, and the systematic theologian, F. Dale Bruner, two decades earlier. Professor James D. G. Dunn had written his groundbreaking volume on *Baptism in the*

[14] Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991, 2nd Revised Edition 1994), 11.

Spirit in 1970, where he linked "baptism in the Spirit" to that of Christian initiation on biblical grounds.[15] Professor Dale Bruner had published *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* that same year, in which he made the theological case for "baptism in the Spirit" as coming at the point of entry into the Christian life. There was no subsequent experience, no subsequent "baptism in the Spirit" toward which Christians had to look in order to obtain the fullness of the Godhead. They received the whole of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, at the time of their conversion.[16]

By placing the subject of "baptism in the Spirit," as he did, within the context of this larger discussion on "conversion-initiation, McDonnell also supported classic Roman Catholic doctrine on the subject, which linked the coming of the Spirit to the newly baptized. At the same time, by underscoring "baptism in the Spirit" as a valid dimension of the Christian life that held charismatic aspects, he also seemed to agree with arguments made by Pentecostals and Charismatics that the Church needed to take more seriously the reality and the power inherent in "baptism in the Spirit." Fr. McDonnell believed that he could argue all of these points if the Dialogue were to take his suggestion seriously.

After considerable discussion, the Steering Committee of the Dialogue agreed that the subject of "Baptism in the Spirit" could be studied under the rubric of "Conversion and Christian Initiation: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives." This topic might provide a fruitful means of exploring how one becomes

[15] James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit,* Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series, 15 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1970 / Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1970), 248 pp.

[16] Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 390 pp.

fully included in the ongoing life of the Church. Pentecostals are comfortable with conversion language, though they tend to think of conversion in punctiliar terms, as the critical time or the precise moment in which a person becomes a believing Christian. But they also speak of subsequent encounters with God such as "baptism in the Spirit," of being continuously filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), and of re-dedicating or re-consecrating their lives to God. While most Catholics do not use the language of "baptism in the Spirit," they tend to talk about conversion in terms of an ongoing process throughout the Christian life, or in terms of multiple "conversions" (Perspectives on *Koinonia,* 48).

As a result, the concepts of Christian Initiation, Conversion, and Baptism in the Spirit all seemed to be promising points of departure for this discussion. Both sides argued that "faith" was critical for any successful conversion to occur. Both argued that religious experience was both legitimate and important in the development of Christian disciples, though the Catholics tended to argue for the inclusion of the idea of "Christian Experience *in Community."* And together, the teams agreed that what they were interested in pursuing included how they understood the Christian formation of new believers.

To give the subject greater focus, five sub-themes were chosen. One of these sub-themes would be studied each year. They included: (1) Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation, (2) Faith and Christian Initiation, (3) Conversion and Christian Initiation, (4) Christian Experience in Community, and (5) Christian Formation and Discipleship. In each case, those who presented papers were to consider not only the relevant biblical material, but for the first time, both teams agreed that they would also consider relevant material from Patristic sources.

For the next few minutes, I would like to try to give you a feel for where the discussion seems to be headed. A small drafting committee met in Rome this past November for a further drafting session and a penultimate discussion of the text. Both teams met again in Prague, Czech Republic, June 30-July 6, 2005. They have scheduled their final meeting of this round for July 2006, with publication of the report to follow reasonably soon thereafter.

At the present time, the report begins with a very brief introduction that tells a bit of the history of the Dialogue. It moves quickly into a short discussion of why the teams have agreed to give special attention not only to the biblical texts, but also to Patristic insights in this round. Clearly, both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics acknowledge the Bible as the inspired Word of God, though clearly with some important nuances, but we currently see the Fathers in very different ways. The Roman Catholic Church grants them an authority that Pentecostals do not. And it is here, even in the introduction that the Dialogue will set the stage for later points of agreement and disagreement. By way of agreement, I think that both teams might speak of a "privileged" role for the Fathers, but the meaning of the term "privileged" will differ. Pentecostals will grant them a "privileged" role in that they stand much closer chronologically than we do, to Christ and the Apostles, and therefore, their insights and practices need to be taken seriously. For the Catholic team the "privileged" position of the Fathers grants their writings a special authority as part of the Tradition of the Church.

Pentecostals and Catholics agree that the Fathers faithfully transmitted the faith as well as their practice from their generation to the next. They were actively involved in the process of enculturation, translating what might be described as a practical

biblical faith by developing the conceptual, philosophical and theological frameworks that made sense of that faith in the various cultures to which they brought the Gospel. The teams will affirm the efforts of the Fathers to make disciples, teach the nations, combat what they believed to be "erroneous interpretations of Scripture," and develop precise theological language that ultimately was approved by the early Councils of the Church. But where Catholics will see a strong degree of direction for these processes being given by God in the decisions made and the words used, Pentecostals will see more human factors at work.

Pentecostals believe that they read the Fathers in the same way that these Fathers read themselves during their own generation and not as later generations of Catholics have come to read them. In their reading, Pentecostals find a deep affinity to the Fathers, in part, because of the deep piety and spirituality one finds there. To the extent that the Patristic writings reinforce the teachings of Scripture, or shed light on the interpretation of Scripture, or speak to issues that confront us in our own time, Pentecostals affirm their work. But they will also argue that many of the decisions that the Fathers reached, were much more pragmatic and contextual than there were normative and universal. Church leaders in the early centuries were no more or less inspired and no more or less pragmatic than they are today. As you can see, we are already in deep water in terms of the issue of authority, a subject which is yet to be addressed by the Dialogue.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation

With this as the backdrop, the report will move on to the knotty problem of "Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation". The study begins with an analysis of the biblical

material, surveying both Old Testament predictions of the Spirit being poured out upon God's people (Ezekiel 36:26-27 and Joel 2:28-29) and various passages drawn from the Gospels and Acts. In light of Fr. McDonnell's book, the report provides a brief survey of some of the Patristic discussion that the teams believed to be relevant. At the conclusion of these two surveys the question is asked whether these Patristic sources actually witness to what is called the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," or to something else, since the phrase, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" is not to be found in these writers.

During the initial round of the Dialogue, the subject of "Baptism in the Spirit" was mentioned, but it was not the subject of definitive definition or extensive discussion.[17] The current report summarizes what it can from the initial report and moves rapidly to a discussion of contemporary understandings in both Pentecostal and Roman Catholic arenas.

Pentecostals, of course, have long argued for the importance of "baptism in the Holy Spirit," though with the exception of Oneness Pentecostals,[18] they generally do not connect it closely to what we have labeled "Christian Initiation," the act or process of "becoming a Christian."[19] Kilian McDonnell argued that

[17] Final Report (1972-1976), §§11-15.

[18] Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Jerry L. Sandidge, "The Ecclesiology of *Koinonia* and Baptism: A Pentecostal Perspective," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 27:3 (summer, 1990), 504-534.

[19] The "accidence" of history takes into consideration the fact that most early Pentecostals did not come to faith through the Pentecostal Movement. Most of them were already Christians, having come from the rolls of the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement. This means that they came into early Pentecostalism with two claims already in place. They had confessed Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior and been baptized in water, and they claimed to have received a second work of grace

"Baptism in the Holy Spirit" is part of the "Conversion - Initiation" process that involves catechesis, baptism, the laying on of hands by the Bishop, and the bestowing of the Holy Spirit. It may or may not have "charismatic" dimensions. As a result, it must be understood as constitutive of the Christian life for the whole Church. If this be true, he argued, then the Catholic Church must take seriously the Pentecostal claim that "Baptism in the Spirit" is important for all Christians, and the Catholic Church must find ways of bringing renewed attention to this reality for its people.

The German New Testament Scholar, Fr. Norbert Baumert, S.J. disagrees with McDonnell on this point. Baumert as a practicing member of the Charismatic Renewal and a member of the Roman Catholic team that worked on "Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness." Unlike McDonnell, Baumert argues that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a "charismatic experience of the Holy Spirit, i.e. something that the Spirit imparts to some or to many as he wills, and that is both in the kind of infilling with the Spirit and in the respective charisms."[20] It is, therefore, *not*

that they identified as "sanctification." When they became Pentecostals, they began with the historical reality that was their experiences of conversion-initiation and sanctification, to which they added their claims to an experience of power on the sanctified life. When they read the Bible in light of their experience, they pointed to the fact that the twelve had been followers of Jesus long before they received the "Promise of the Father" of Acts 1:8 and 2:4, and most of them argued that these disciples had also already been sanctified. Thus their discussion of the doctrine of "Baptism in the Spirit" was neatly separated from that of conversion in their minds, because it was neatly separated from that of conversion in their experience.

[20] For a recent summary of Baumert's position see, Norbert Baumert, " *'Charism*' and *'Spirit Baptism':* Presentation of an Analysis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12:2 (2004), 147-179. Baumert covers this position more fully in Norbert Baumert, *Endzeitfieber? Hutige Prophetien und biblische Texte im okumenischen Dialog,* CE-Praxishilfen Series Band 3 (Munsterschwarzach, Germany: Vier-Turme

constitutive of the Christian life for the whole Church, but rather, it is granted only to those on whom God chooses to bestow it. In a sense, when placed alongside Pentecostal claims, this debate, internal to Roman Catholic circles is a rich one.

The internal Pentecostal discussion is equally rich. On the whole, Pentecostals tend to view the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" as a sovereign action of God that generally comes upon those who wait before God sometime *subsequent* to their conversion. For the most part, they do not view it as a sacramental act, nor as a part of any sacramental act. Some early Pentecostals such as William J. Seymour, pastor of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, believed and taught a sequential time difference between the moments of conversion, sanctification, and baptism in the Spirit.[21] Others, such as William H. Durham, Pastor of the North Avenue Mission in Chicago, believed that a Christian's sanctification came at the time of conversion. When one is placed "in Christ," he or she receives all that Christ has to offer by way of salvation and sanctification.[22] Both Seymour and Durham agreed, however, that baptism in the Spirit always follows conversion. This basic understanding

Verlag, 1997), 174 pp.; and in Norbert Baumert, *Charisma - Taufe - Geisttaufe: Entflechtung einer semantischen Verwirrung* (Wiirzburg, Germany: Echter, 2001) Band 1, 399 pp and *Charisma - Taufe - Geisttaufe: Normantivatdt undpersonliche Berufung* (Wiirzburg, Germany: Echter, 2001) Band 2, 399 pp.

[21] "The Apostolic Faith Movement," *The Apostolic Faith* [Los Angeles] 1:1 (September 1906), 2.1; "Questions Answered," *The Apostolic Faith* [Los Angeles, CA| 1.11 (October-January 1908), 2.2.

[22] William H. Durham, "The Finished Work of Calvary," *Pentecostal Testimony* 2:1 (c. December 1911), 1.

has been codified in most statements of faith adopted by Pentecostal churches worldwide.[23]

By placing the subject of "baptism in the Spirit" at the beginning of the discussion, some Pentecostal participants were concerned that the notion of subsequence would be compromised from the outset. But, it must be asked, what pastor would complain if someone received all three things at one time? They would rejoice! Given this fact, the notion of "subsequence" either becomes moot or it becomes the focus of casuistic explanation. Those committed to the notion of "subsequence" will argue that at least a millisecond must have elapsed between each corresponding event. The rest will argue that if a person receives more than one of these experiences at the same time, the notion of "subsequence" has lost its usefulness. The introduction of such things as "milliseconds" amounts to special pleading. The fact that conversion, sanctification, and baptism in the Spirit might occur in a single moment at the beginning of the Christian life, makes it possible for Pentecostals to entertain them as part of what constitutes "conversion-initiation." This becomes, therefore, a very interesting place for further mutual exploration.

Faith and Christian Initiation: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives

The report on "Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness" had made it clear that many Pentecostals viewed most Roman Catholics as either not being Christian, or being only nominally so. They looked for the ability of Catholics to testify

[23] See for example, *Minutes of the Twenty-Ninth General Council of the Assemblies of God Convened at Portland, Oregon August 23-29, 1961* (Springfield, MO: Office of the General Secretary, 1961), 22.

to a life-changing moment of conversion, and most of them could not do so. They wondered how any person could claim to be a Christian, and then not participate regularly in the ongoing life of the Church. Many of the Catholics they cited seemed to attend their parish only intermittently, perhaps on Easter and Christmas, or for baptisms, weddings, and funerals. As they spoke together, however, both teams readily agreed "that becoming a Christian is not comprehensible apart from faith." As a result, they turned to the study of faith in relationship to "Christian initiation" by looking first at the New Testament, and then again at the Patristic writings.

They found the New Testament to be a rich source of teaching on the subject. They studied Jesus' call to saving faith in the synoptic Gospels and in John. They reviewed the Pauline epistles, citing faith as a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9) and the need for confession with the mouth (Romans 10:8-10). What also emerged from this discussion was the clear connection between faith and baptism, especially in the Book of Acts. When Peter had preached on that first Christian Pentecost, he had summoned his hearers to place their faith in Jesus Christ. When they asked him what they should do, he responded with the words, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39)."

Thus, the teams continued to explore, not only the place of faith in the "conversion-initiation" process, but also the place of baptism. Pentecostals argued that in the Acts of the Apostles,

> becoming a Christian was described within the context of a Church fervently engaged in the apostolic mission of proclaiming the gospel to those who do not yet

know Christ. Such a mission obviously could only be addressed to those old enough to understand the proclamation. (12)

While agreeing with this observation, the members of the Catholic team pointed to the so-called "household baptisms" as examples where it was possible, given the core family structure at that time, that infants had been baptized and that the believers had exercised their faith on behalf of the infants until such a time as they were able to exercise their own faith unto salvation. As they continued to strive together on various biblical texts, however, they were able to arrive at a number of shared conclusions. "These texts confirm our common conviction," they concluded,

> that it would be contrary to the biblical witness to isolate faith from Christian initiation and also that faith and baptism go together. At the same time, our study of the biblical texts has not resolved some of the disagreements which still divide us concerning the nature, timing, stages and communal dimensions of becoming a Christian. Some texts [Cf. 1 Peter 3:20-21; Colossians 2:12; and Galatians 3:26] about baptism suggest to many that it is an effective rite, the transformative power of which actually changes the person who is baptized... This might support a sacramental interpretation of baptism, which acknowledges both its effectiveness and its necessity for salvation, as believed by Roman Catholics. On the other hand, other verses [such as Romans 10:8-10] speak about salvation in Christ without mentioning baptism... This might support a view which sees baptism less as an effective «sacrament» and more as

an ordinance of the Lord which is to be obeyed and which confirms the more fundamental saving event, which is belief and a profession of faith, as believed by many Pentecostals. Perhaps these perspectives and emphases accurately represent the diverse perspectives of the New Testament witness and do not need to be reconciled. If they do, it is not clear to us how they can be reconciled simply by an appeal to Scripture alone. (21)

In summary, the teaching of the New Testament, including the several accounts in Acts of individuals or groups becoming Christians, clearly shows that faith plays a critical and necessary role in Christian initiation. Faith is a gift of God without which one cannot become a Christian. Likewise, faith and baptism are linked. All who would become Christians are called to repentance, baptism for the forgiveness of sins and a reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). At the same time, Pentecostals and Catholics need to further explore the different perspectives they bring to the precise nature of Christian initiation. (22)

The patristic materials seemed to bear out further the connections between faith and baptism. But "the Patristic materials also tended to build upon those scripture passages which came to be interpreted as emphasizing the effectiveness of baptism" (33: i). Many of the catechetical instructions that are found in these materials are "filled with glowing accounts of the marvelous new birth which occurs when one becomes a Christian" (33:i). In spite of this reality, however, there were many Christian parents who made the decision in the early Church, not to baptize their

children. One example of this was the case of St. Augustine. His mother, Monica, did not have him baptized because "she wanted to allow him to grow through the temptations that would assail him in his youth, before encouraging him to undertake the narrow path of Christian discipleship" (33:i).[24] "Becoming a Christian required a transformation of life, which meant also a serious effort to cooperate with God's grace in such a way that one truly lived a morally good and spiritually holy life." These observations led further to the hope that

> In this patristic understanding of the activity of the Holy Spirit as the basis of the salvific power of baptism and the Eucharist, Pentecostals and Catholics may find a path toward greater shared conviction about how Christ may employ the symbolic rites which came to be called sacraments as means for his powerful salvific action in the lives of his people. In particular, perhaps this linkage between sacraments and the Spirit could allow both Pentecostals and Catholics to profess together that, through the reception of baptism, a significant action of God occurs in the life of the one who is baptized. (33:i)

The Dialogue continued to explore the patristic materials on the timing of baptism in the early church, the development of the catechumenate, and the various stages of becoming a Christian, including the profession of Trinitarian faith and triple immersion during baptism followed by the imposition of hands for the imparting of the Holy Spirit and culminating in the celebration of the Eucharist. One important observation was the increasingly

Augustine, *Confessions* 1:11.

clear role that the Christian community played in the preparation and initiation of new members. In the end, however, it was clear that the patristic material, while offering points of contact that Pentecostals and Catholics could both embrace, will "not, on its own, resolve all the disagreements concerning the place of faith in the event of process by which a person becomes a Christian" (34).

What the discussion has enabled the Dialogue to accomplish, then, is this:

> Faith, which is the very heart of discipleship, is God's gift. The individual must receive this gift and believe in order to become a Christian. At the same time, the faith of the individual is related in various ways to the community of believers. Much of the biblical and patristic evidence can be interpreted as suggesting that God uses the church as an instrument for proclaiming Christ and thereby inviting individuals to faith. Both the New Testament and the patristic writings show the believing community as assisting those who accept this proclamation with an open heart to understand more fully the message, to cooperate with God's grace of conversion and to begin to live the new life of Gospel discipleship. In both the New Testament and the Fathers, the believing community not only shares its faith with those becoming Christians but also celebrates with them the rites of baptism, the laying on of hands and the breaking of bread. One does not initiate oneself. Faith in Christ and belonging to the community which he founded and constituted as his Body go together. In that sense, there never could ever be a radically individualized Christianity of believers who isolate

themselves from one another. Furthermore, becoming a Christian requires both the ongoing response of the individual believer to the grace of God as well as his or her commitment to join with the whole community in sharing its faith with yet other persons by means of evangelical and missionary outreach. Reflecting upon biblical and patristic perspectives about the relation of faith to becoming a Christian could allow Pentecostals and Catholics to affirm together that the church is a communion in faith whose nature is essentially missionary, impelling it to foster the profession of faith by each of its members and to invite into this communion of faith others who do not yet know the joy of believing in Jesus Christ. Our dialogue about the relation of faith to becoming a Christian has allowed us to see in new ways the essential nature of the Church as communion (35).

Conversion and Christian Initiation: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives

If faith is important to becoming a Christian, what might we say about that nature of conversion? From the beginning, both teams agreed that conversion is "essential to salvation in Christ, and that its ultimate purpose is a life of committed discipleship" [Section 3 (VI) 1]. The biggest difference between Catholics and Pentecostals on the subject of conversion, however, is whether conversion is an event, the typical Pentecostal position, or whether it is "a series of events or a process," the normal Catholic position. According to Catholic teaching, conversion must be understood as lying within the context of the process of Christian initiation that includes the "proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the

Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion" [Section 3 (VI) 2][25]

> By way of contrast, Pentecostals understand conversion
>
> to include a reorientation of a person's pattern of attitudes, beliefs, and practices (turning away from sin and turning to God), and... incorporation of the individual into a community... Pentecostals do not generally express such concepts as conversion, its recognition by the Church, sanctification, and Spirit baptism together under the category of Christian initiation. Most Pentecostals understand conversion to be distinct from Spirit baptism; also, for most Pentecostals a discussion of the beginning of the Christian life does not include water baptism [Section 3 (VI) 3].

The teams studied the nature of conversion together, working their way through the New Testament and patristic material, but they were also greatly helped by reviewing the current understanding of conversion in the *Lex Orandi,* the current, normative experience of the Church. This was done through an extended discussion of the Roman Catholic "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults," (RCIA) a practice that has been retrieved as part of the liturgical renewal mandated by the Second Vatican Council and is in widespread usage in many Catholic congregations. The Pentecostals on the team were quite

[25] Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1229. Catholics link the "special outpouring of the Holy Spirit" with the sacrament of Confirmation (catechism of the Catholic Church, #1302.)

pleased with this discussion and concluded that this rite holds considerable possibility for agreement, not only on the nature of baptism, but also for their understanding of conversion. In fact, the Pentecostal team was so much in agreement on the benefits of the RCIA that they went on record as strongly encouraging Catholics to make it the "normative approach to the process of conversion." They view it as a much needed corrective to the weaknesses that they see in the practice of infant baptism. They believe that it is much more likely for an adult who has submitted to the call to conversion and subsequent teaching in the RCIA [Section 3 (VI) 26] to remain a faithful Christian than it is for a person baptized as an infant and subjected to some form of child catechesis to do so.

The challenge that the Pentecostal team gave to the Catholics over the RCIA led to further discussion on whether the RCIA might, in fact, provide the necessary corrective to nominal practice among many Roman Catholics, as well as to the notion of a nominal form of cultural Catholicism. The Catholic team responded by linking the notion of conversion and the notion of a Christian or, more specifically, a Catholic culture. The Catholics admitted that "a superficially Catholic culture might include pastoral situations in which individuals with no discernible faith, virtually no connection to the Church, and no commitment to active practice, approach the Church requesting sacraments merely for extrinsic reasons." They went on to acknowledge that "the existence of such nominal practice both in previous centuries and the present day," but they also made it clear that beside this nominal Catholicism there was an "ongoing genuine conversion and vital Catholic life." As such, Catholics would distinguish between the positive elements that come from a truly Catholic culture, and what they labeled, "the less desirable elements" of a merely external culture [Section 3 (VI) 29].

While the nominal behavior of many baptized and catechized Catholics and a reliance upon cultural Christianity may be more evident among Catholics than it is among Pentecostals, it is clear that the Pentecostal Movement is not immune from such things. As a result, both teams agreed that the Gospel has had a transformative role when it has come into contact with both pagan and secular societies over the centuries to such an extent that at times these societies have "embodied a profoundly Christian worldview." But they went on to note that

> In our current pluralistic, post-Christendom society, both sides continue to strive to establish a Christian culture within the larger society and thus to be instruments in God's hands for the kingdom [Section 3 (VI) 29].

Given the long tradition practice of infant baptism, as well as its ongoing commitment to the legitimacy of this practice in the Catholic Church, the Catholic team made it clear that they recognize a clear link between baptism, faith, and conversion whether the subject is an infant or an adult. It went on to explain the difference in the nature of that link. "In both cases," they wrote, "there must be growth in faith and conversion, but baptism itself creates an adoptive relationship as a child of God." The sacramental character of baptism itself guarantees that even an infant begins to share in the divine life of the faithful. If Pentecostals thought that the RCIA would replace the practice of infant baptism they were mistaken. "Catholics would find it inconceivable to deny this grace to an infant," the Catholic team offered, for

> through the priority of grace we see a fundamental identity between infant and adult baptism. In both

> cases Christ is the door, even though individual Christian lives follow differing paths and are realized in diverse moments. The Rite of Baptism of Infants also advises pastors to delay baptism in those cases where there seems to be no reasonable expectation that an infant will be raised in the practice of the faith. Thus, while Catholics view the RCIA as the fullest articulation of the process of initiation, they would not allow that affirmation to discount the importance of infant baptism [Section 3 (VI) 27].

In light of the RCIA, many contemporary examples of conversion frequently parallel those found in the New Testament. There, individuals embraced the Gospel, sometimes through direct proclamation, at other times through healing or deliverance, as well as in other forms. Among both Pentecostals and Catholics such testimonies often include

> an element of restoration to community, the experience of family and a sense of belonging, regardless of social, gender, or ethnic differences. This sense of belonging is associated with an awareness of the restoration of one's dignity. Hence, Catholics and Pentecostals prefer to describe their concept of conversion and initiation in terms of the kinds of testimonies reflected in the New Testament rather than in abstract concepts. For both groups conversion experiences are diverse, and all these experiences are something to be narrated or celebrated and not only to be systematically defined [Section 3 (VI) 30].

This discussion of the RCIA within Roman Catholic circles and the challenge that Pentecostals made regarding its wider

adoption, even in spite of the longstanding Catholic commitment to the validity of infant baptism led to some rather remarkable conclusions that demonstrate how close Pentecostals and Catholics are on the subject of conversion.

> Most Catholics and Pentecostals agree that conversion involves both event and process, and recognize the need for ongoing formation. Both hold to a diversity of ways in which one is converted. Conversions may express varying characteristics, some more affectively oriented than others, some more cognitive, dramatic or volitional. Both recognize different levels of conversion, and conversion in stages (i.e. second and third conversions in the spiritual life for Catholics, or personal re-dedications for Pentecostals), as examples of the ongoing process. Manifestations of conversions are also recognized in their diversity. One may give evidence of conversion through either word or service, depending upon gifts and calling. Catholics and Pentecostals also recognize diversity in the ways evangelization takes place. They both deplore coercive evangelistic methods, although they may not always agree on what constitutes coercion, and although sometimes such methods have been employed by members of the churches.
>
> Catholics are evangelized for life-changing conversions in parish missions, through spiritual retreats and exercises, and through liturgical Rites (e.g. renewal of baptismal vows, sacramentals, sacramental preparation, etc.). At the same time, Catholics see the retrieved RCIA as an example of the Church's growth in its understanding of initiation, evangelization and mission.

> They see this as reflecting the pattern of Acts 2:37-39 by including in one rite the process of conversion (the catechumenate), baptism (regeneration), confirmation (the gift of the Holy Spirit) and eucharistic communion (Acts 2:42). Thus Pentecostals and Catholics share in common a strong commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel, witnessing and evangelism through personal relationships, and missions.
>
> Both Pentecostals and Catholics recognize conversion as the gift of God, although what constitutes a valid experience of conversion remains an issue. They join together in calling for the genuine conversion of people to Jesus Christ [Section 3 (VI) 31-33].

Christian Experience in Community: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives

It is difficult for Pentecostals to talk about conversion apart from some discussion of their expectation that conversion is related to Christian experience. Similarly, "the experience of the presence and power of the Spirit is an important part of their spirituality." For Catholics, the notion of experience is part of the larger tradition of contemplation, mystical experience, and active spiritualities. As a result, the Dialogue spent an entire year working on the nature of Christian experience. Their study led to an acknowledgment that there are

> at least two dimensions of religious experience, one in which the focus is on the religious affections with an emphasis on encounter with the Lord, and the other being more broadly understood as the religious dimension of all experience. The latter includes the

> sense of God's presence or absence in various levels *of human experience including joys and tragedies* and even mundane affairs of daily life. Both of these dimensions may take the form either of event or process [Experience (II) 1].

While I do not wish to dwell long on the subject of experience, I would like to summarize a few of the points where the Dialogue has made some progress in its understanding of this subject. It is interesting to note, for instance, that both teams agreed that "an authentic experience of God comes about when the grace of the Holy Spirit touches the heart and mind, feelings and will of the individual in such a way that a person consciously encounters the Lord [Experience (II) 2]." As a result, the teams concluded that when human beings receive God's grace, they respond in faith, they are converted, and begin the process of discipleship. The faith that both traditions understand this response to have includes an "experiential dimension," although "faith is not limited to experience [Experience (II) 3]." As Kilian McDonnell has written, "Faith gives birth to experience; faith norms experience. But experience gives another dimension of actuality and firmness to faith. Experience is another way of knowing. What is given to experience is not taken away from faith, because experience exists only in faith."[26]

The Dialogue went on to make similar observations about the relationship between experience and conversion and between experience and discipleship. For example, when conversion is understood as the point at which changes take place in an

[26] Kilian McDonnell, OSB, "Spirit and Experience in Bernard of Clairvaux," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997), 16.

individual and he or she turns away from sin and toward God, it "has a strong experiential quality." It may be viewed either as an event or as a process, but in either case it still retains the quality of experience. Similarly, discipleship includes the daily process of experiencing Christ in one's service to God and his or her neighbour, as well as the more eventful moments of Christ's presence and power [Experience (II) 4].

It was the fact that the Dialogue was devoted in this round to some discussion of Baptism in the Holy Spirit that first led the teams to see the need for some discussion of experience. Baptism in the Spirit, at least within Pentecostal thought, is the powerful experience of the Holy Spirit, a "Divine in-breaking" into the daily Christian life that gave rise to the classical Pentecostal churches that participate in this dialogue. From their perspective, it also gave rise to the larger Charismatic Renewal that has graced Protestant, Orthodox, and especially Roman Catholic Christians throughout the world. As a result, the teams evaluated the place of experience in becoming a Christian, as well as the nature of experience in the developing Christian life, both within the individual and as part of the larger community life of the Church.

Christian Formation and Discipleship: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives

As the Dialogue turned its attention to the nature of "Christian Formation and Discipleship," they found much material on which they agreed. Discipleship has at its heart, the following of Jesus. Both Catholics and Pentecostals are concerned with Christian formation and they both have discipleship programs that begin with conversion and continue throughout the Christian life with the purpose of producing mature Christian believers. As you

can see, "Discipleship and Christian formation are related terms and are employed in both of our traditions. They are closely connected with faith, conversion and experience. Together they constitute the foundation of the Christian life. We have defined *discipleship,* as a category of relationship, which expresses in explicit terms,

> the personal relationship with Christ. *Christian formation,* on the other hand, is intended to convey a dynamic process in the power of the Holy Spirit as it extends to the whole of our existence in Christ and therefore to the transformation of all dimensions of human life. Both take place in the context of the church, both in congregational or parish life and in ecclesial or church-related movements [(Section 5 (IV) 2].

Thus, the participants agreed that the process in which they investigated the biblical and patristic material was extremely helpful in coming to a common understanding of these phenomena. More importantly, they affirmed, first from the biblical texts, and then from the patristic texts, the different ways that Christians have demonstrated their discipleship through the centuries. The **martyrdom** to which many Christians have been subjected through centuries of persecution provides "a witness of faith and love at the cost of their lives. Christ was present to the martyrs in their witness to the point of death both as example and as the very strength of their perseverance. Therefore, they fulfilled in their martyrdom his exhortation to follow him by carrying the cross [Section 5 (IV) **18]."**

An equally important means of following Christ has been through the **missionary commitment** that many Christians have made throughout the centuries. Our love for Christ nurtures not

only a commitment to Him as Lord and Savior, but it also elicits from us the desire and commitment to make His love known to others. It is this that drives us to share the Gospel with others. The report, thus, draws from the experiences of such people as Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, and Origen, all of whom wrote of the need to engage in missionary activity, whether through word or deed [Section 5 (IV) 19].

The Dialogue noted a third way of following Christ in the form of the **ascetic and monastic life.** While this may seem strange to some Pentecostals, it must be noted that many Pentecostals have committed their hearts and lives to things such as intercessory prayer for others, indeed, some have pursued this ministry as a fulltime vocation. Some may criticize the monastic or ascetic life as a flight from reality, or an attempt to manifest a perverted form of Christian perfectionism. Yet at the heart of Christian perfectionism lies the *imitatio Christi,* the imitation of Christ. I would view it, like Professor Roberta Bondi as having to do more with *shalom* - wholeness, and hence, with the fulfillment of discipleship, albeit one that may require a specific vocational charism. Roberta Bondi has noted that, "our wholeness as human beings depends upon living out the Great Commandment as the most fundamental of all early monastic convictions." "The starting point of a life of prayer," she continues, "is to know no matter how dimly, that we are created for and called to love: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your strength, and all your mind, and you neighbor as yourself.' Love is the final goal of the life of prayer, and loving and learning how to love are the daily work and pleasure of prayer."[27] Our

[27] **Roberta C. Bondi,** ***To Pray and to Love: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church*** **(Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1991), 28.**

wholeness comes in a life devoted to such things as solitude, asceticism, denial, contemplation, prayer, and ultimately love. It was, thus, the motivation to follow Christ that ultimately led to the expression of Christian discipleship and Christian formation seen in monasticism [Section 5 (IV) 20].

A fourth way of discipleship broadens the understanding of the imitation of Christ to include the whole of the human life. Thus, **following Christ in daily life** has been lifted up as another important means of being a Christian disciple. As the report notes, "One follows Christ in the holiness of one's daily life. In many cases, the prospect of walking every day in the following of Christ has an eschatological perspective as well; one follows Christ in this life in order to follow him through death into heavenly glory [Section 5 (IV) 21]."

The long tradition of the catechumenate within the history of the Church provided many important lessons to the Dialogue. In its survey of the practice of Christian Formation in the catechetical process, they noted that the process has contributed to the doctrinal, biblical, moral, sacramental, and spiritual emphases that many have found to be important in the development of mature Christians [Section 5 (IV) 28-33].

Through the centuries, Christian formation has stressed the suitability and fullness of the contents of the faith according to the rule of faith. Christian formation consists of an ever deeper knowledge of the Scripture, moving from the words to the spirit, a knowledge that is not intellectual in a detached sense, but leading to union with God. Even with many differences of style and cultural background, catechesis has typically been aimed at orienting and motivating the choices and enabling the practical behaviour of Christians in everyday life. It has sought to move the heart, and not only the mind, and to lead to liturgy, to the

sacraments and to service in the ecclesial community and in the world. In the period of formation immediately following baptism, the aim of which is to give the neophytes a deeper understanding of the meaning of the celebrated mystery, the spiritual texts of the Fathers have helped Christians to have a better knowledge of God and of His salvific deeds. They also "assist believers to enter more deeply into communion with him, to penetrate into the spiritual and mystical depth of the faith, to progress in what the Fathers referred to as «deification» in Christ through the Spirit [Section 5 (IV) 28-33]." Thus, the catechumenate has recognized through the centuries the need for a gradual development of Christian formation by which neophytes have been moved into greater levels of Christian maturity, and it has done so in a variety of cultural and historical contexts not unlike our own. The objectives of the catechumenate during the patristic period, which may still inform the life of the Church of today, may be summarized as follows: maturation of conversion and faith, a radical relationship with Jesus Christ, experience of the Spirit and immersion in the mystery of salvation, a closer bond with the Church and community experience, and responsible acceptance of Christian commitments and mission.

Concluding Remarks

I know that this has been a great deal of information to absorb in such a short article, but I hope that it gives you a bit of insight into the status of the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal discussion. I am optimistic that we are laying a foundation from which another generation will be able to build. We ask your prayers in this process, and I look forward to the day when we will be able to view one another through very different eyes as a result of this work.

June-July Sunday Homilies

CHANNELS OF DIVINE LOVE
Fr. Richard Conrad, O.P.
Pentecost Sunday

Today's Preface praises God because he poured out the Holy Spirit on this day, 'and so brought the Paschal Mystery to its completion'. Today's gift is the completion, the purpose, of the Paschal Mystery. Jesus passed over ahead of us, through death to abundant life, so as to purchase the gift of the Spirit. At the Last Supper, Jesus explained, "If I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."

Telling us of Jesus's death, John says, "He bowed His head and handed over the Spirit." And in today's Gospel, the risen Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples. Because Jesus has gone from this world through his death and resurrection, the Spirit is given. Pentecost is the result of Good Friday and Easter; it makes visible, audible, on the public stage, what was achieved fifty days earlier.

The Jewish feast of Pentecost celebrated the harvest and the gift of the Law. For us it celebrates the gathering in of the

harvest Jesus produced by dying, and the gift of the New Law. The Paraclete is the Friend to accompany us with advice and encouragement, the Law we have to follow. He attunes us to Jesus, whose sacrifice is also our Law.

After pointing out how the Spirit comes because Jesus redeemed us on the Cross, Pope John Paul II explains that 'the Spirit is Love and Gift in Person'. This insight is based on the Spirit's work. What the Spirit does at Pentecost gives us a glimpse of his 'personal character'.

As today's Preface puts it: "The Spirit gathered into fellowship the variety of tongues that they might profess a single faith." At Babel, because of pride, human communication was fragmented. Pentecost overcomes Babel - but not by suppressing the rich variety of human language and culture. Rather, the Spirit purifies each culture, and brings it home into a Catholic Church where the same truth is proclaimed in the accents of many places and times.

Likewise, St. Paul tells us, the Spirit makes us one Body. He gives each member gifts to be used for the common good. His great gift is Charity, that love which makes us serve each other, even leave space for others' gifts.

Further, in today's Gospel we hear that the Spirit enables us to forgive sins, to be a community of reconciliation - though we also hear a warning: if we fail to forgive, we get in the way of the forgiveness of which we should be channels.

In the Spirit's power, we live as one - and we go out as heralds of the truth, as ministers of forgiveness. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit." At Pentecost, the Sprit began to impel the Church on her universal mission.

Fr. Richard Conrad is Prior of the Priory of St. Michael, Archangel in Cambridge.

TRINITARIAN LIVES
Fr. Richard J. Ounsworth, O.P.
Trinity Sunday

It may be true that the 'mystery' of the Trinity is not a mystery of the Agatha Christie kind, not something hidden to be puzzled out, but something revealed to be explored ever more deeply. But the fact is that we do find the doctrine on the Trinity baffling, and it can be a source of great anxiety; and with good reason, because it's so easy when talking about the Trinity to say the wrong thing.

We can easily end up either believing in three different Gods, or in saying that the three Persons of the Trinity are nothing more than just three ways of talking about the one God. So if talking about the Trinity is so tricky, so full of snares for the unwary, wouldn't it be better just not to bother?

On the contrary, today's Gospel shows that we have no choice but to talk about the Trinity. It is not an optional extra to be added on to our faith in Christ, but the very heart of our religion: there is no God for us to believe in but the Triune God, no Christ to follow but the incarnate Word, no life for us to live but the divine life breathed into us by the Holy Spirit; and there is no message for us to preach but baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

This is the command that Christ gives us at the end of Matthew's Gospel; his last testament to us amounts to nothing less than a share in his own mission.

Throughout his Gospel, Saint Matthew presents the life and mission of Christ as the re-creation of Israel, the gathering around himself of the chosen People of God, a community of saints. This is what is implied by the word 'disciples', those gathered by Christ to be the new Israel for a new age. So in commissioning the eleven - and through them, us - to make disciples of all the nations, he is giving us a share in his work, the work of the Word made flesh, the work of the Triune God.

The first Israel was set apart from the nations, uniquely privileged and distinguished under the leadership of Moses, and today's first reading is typical of the Book of Deuteronomy in celebrating the distinction of God's chosen people. But Israel always looked forward to the time when God would lead the Gentiles to join her, would make them one flock with Israel at 'the end of the age'.

Now, in his risen body, Christ shows his disciples that the time has come, the new age has dawned; and it is their task to draw the Gentiles, the nations, into the People of God. When he tells us: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," he is claiming to be the fulfilment of the Book of Daniel, in which "One like a son of man came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him.

Jesus Christ, then, has raised humanity to the level of the divine. And because of who Christ is and what he has done - because of the incarnation and resurrection - the old age is over, and it is time for all the nations to be gathered into the People of God. Our identity and our mission as Christians is inseparably intertwined with the identity and mission of Christ.

At the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew tells us that Christ is Immanuel, God-with-us. Jesus himself re-asserts this claim himself at the end of the Gospel when he says, "I am with you always.

In the Greek this 'I am' is an emphatic *ego eimi* - not just 'I am', but I AM, the divine name that God reveals to Moses from the burning bush.

In the life and work of the Church, which is the new Israel, the Holy Spirit brings Christ's presence among us; when we allow the Spirit to dwell in our hearts, and so by the Spirit of God are incorporated into the People of God, we are raised up with Jesus Christ, Son of Man and Son of God, to dwell with the Father. Christ tells us today that our mission as the Church is a Trinitarian one; and so our lives become Trinitarian too, as we share in the life of the Triune God.

Fr. Richard Joseph Ounsworth teaches scripture at Blackfriars, Oxford.

THE POWER OF WORDS
Fr. Euan Marley, O.P.
Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ
(Corpus Christi)

When Pope John Paul II came to Britain, one of the broadsheet papers had a rather unkind cartoon, depicting the Pope speaking to a vast crowd, but with the word balloon full of the word, 'Words', over and over again. More than twenty years later, the same paper praised the Pope for his role in the recent Polish referendum which led to their accepting membership of the European Union.

What was interesting was that the editorial emphasised the power of his phrase 'historic justice' in swinging the people round, a phrase described by the editorial as 'telling'. The Pope spoke and history changed.

Words are powerful, more powerful than any apparent concrete power. Our ability to speak, when we do speak and don't merely babble, is what connects us to the divine, makes us more than other animals, makes us in fact Godlike.

This capacity reaches its heights in Our Lord Jesus, whose speech shows his transcendence over all things, material and immaterial. He silences the demons and the roaring sea with the same power in his words.

As we approach the time of his offering to the Father, he demonstrates that this power is over all human affairs. The exact description of what will happen, the man carrying the water jar, and how the disciples will find the upper room, is fulfilled exactly,

not so much because Jesus predicts it but because his words cause it to happen. It is quite wrong to think that these events unfold because Jesus has made arrangements this way.

As well as saying what will happen, Jesus also tells the disciples what to say. Their words are determined by Christ and so they carry the power of Christ. The disciples are able to take the colt for the procession into Jerusalem and to find a room for the Last Supper because they are speaking as they have been told.

This is exactly what the Church does in the sacraments, speaking words in accordance with the tradition which carry the power of Christ. We say T baptise', T absolve you', 'This is my Body', and the power of God is carried into the world.

This power is in the truth. God cannot deny his own self and so his words cannot but be true. How can we know that the bread and wine are truly the Body and Blood of Christ? Because he said that they were, and we accept it.

A misunderstanding of this crept in around the time of the Reformation, where John 6:63 -

It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life -

was taken to mean that the words of the Eucharist could be true without any material change. This is a grave misunderstanding of the nature of God's speech.

This speech is always creative, whatever God says. It is not said just because it is true, but rather it is true because God says it. God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. Jesus said, 'This is my body,' and it is his body.

This is why a great deal of the Church's work is to engage in true speech. It can be the formal speech of the sacraments which transforms humanity, or the special moments of true speech which are personal to us. This personal speech is heard memorably in the Gospel of Mark, with the Syrophoenician woman who says,

Even the little dogs under the tables can eat from the children's crumbs, and is praised for this word.

In speaking true words, we echo the words of God, which is to say, we share in his creation. This is why we needn't be afraid to admit that the feast of Corpus Christi is a matter of words.

Words are greater than material things, even the material Body of Christ, and the feast shows this. So to the words, 'The Body of Christ,' we answer, 'AMEN'.

Fr. Euan Marley O.P. is Subprior of the Priory of the Holy Cross, Leicester, and Catholic Chaplain to Leicester Royal Infirmary.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURE

Most Reverend Raymond Leo Burke, D.D.
Solemnity of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Through His inspired Word in the Sacred Scriptures, God Himself opens up for the depth of His love for us in Jesus Christ, love symbolized most fully in the Sacred Heart. The official teaching of the Church guides us in applying the Word of God to our daily living, helping us to return a response of love to God for the immeasurable gifts of His love to us.

The Pierced Heart of Jesus

The principal text from the Holy Bible which inspires devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the account of our Lord's Passion and Death. After our Lord Jesus had died on the cross, the soldiers wanted to use the customary means of ensuring that crucified criminals had truly died, namely the breaking of the legs. In fact, the Scriptures tell us that the soldiers broke the legs of the other two criminals crucified with Jesus (Mt 19:32). When they came to Jesus, however, it was clear to them that there was no need to break His legs, for He was already dead. As a result, one of the Roman soldiers thrust his spear into the side of our Lord, from which there immediately flowed blood and water (Jn 19:34). The soldier pierced the Heart of Jesus with his lance. The blood and water which flowed from the Pierced Heart of Jesus is the sign of His life with us in the Church. Once risen from the dead and seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, Christ has

never ceased to pour out, from His glorious Pierced Heart, the grace of the Holy Spirit upon His disciples.

The Preface for the Mass of the Sacred Heart of Jesus expresses the ancient symbolism of the water and the blood:

"Lifted high on the cross,
Christ gave His life for us,
So much did He love us.
From His wounded side flowed blood and water,
The fountain of sacramental life in the Church.
To His open side the Savior invites all men,
To draw water in joy from the springs of salvation"

(The Roman Missal)

The flow of water and blood from the Pierced Heart of Jesus also reminds us of our Lord's words regarding the source of salvation in His Heart:

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me, Let him drink who believes in Me."

Scripture has it: "From within Him rivers of living water shall flow" (Jn 7:37). Our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus leads us to remember always the many ways in which Christ has poured out and continues to pour out His love for us in the Church from the moment of His death on the cross.

Meaning of Heart in the Scriptures

In understanding the meaning of the Scriptural passage referring to the piercing of the Heart of Jesus, it is important to remember the significance of the heart in the Holy Scriptures. In the Bible, the heart is the center of man, wherein is found his fullest being. It is in the heart, in the words of the Holy Scriptures,

that all our thoughts and desires have their origin. When God speaks to us, He speaks to our heart. In the Gospel according to St. Mark, our Lord quotes the Prophet Isaiah to describe our hypocrisy when we claim to love God and, at the same time, disobey His commands: "How accurately Isaiah prophesied about you hypocrites when he wrote, 'This people pays Me lip service but their heart is far from Me'" (Mk 7:6). Later on, in the same passage, our Lord reminds us that our evil thoughts and deeds have their origin in the heart:

"Wicked designs come from the deep recesses of the heart: acts of fornication, theft, murder, adulterous conduct, greed, maliciousness, deceit, sensuality, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, an obtuse spirit" (Mk 7:21-22).

Uniting our heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our heart is at once purified of all wrong thoughts, desires and inclinations and inflamed with love of God and our neighbor. The revelation of the Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary showed the mark of the piercing and the purifying flame of love with the cross within it, which crowns the Divine Heart. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is surrounded by the crown of thorns to signify the entire Passion by which He poured out His life for us.

Heart of Jesus

What the Holy Scriptures understand about the heart of man applies also to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for His heart is the heart of a man. Through the mystery of the Incarnation, God the Son, by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, took a human heart under the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary. In the Litany of the Sacred Heart, there is a most beautiful invocation which is inspired by our reflection upon the Incarnation: "Heart

of Jesus formed by Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, have mercy on us." The invocation which follows reminds us again that the human heart of Jesus was made one with His divine nature: "Heart of Jesus, substantially united to the Word of God." It is to His own Heart that Christ refers in the Gospels: "My heart goes out to My people" (Mt 15:31); and "Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light" (Mt 11:28-29).

The outpouring of Christ's Life for us, represented in the blood and water which flowed from His pierced Heart, continues in the Church, especially through the sacraments. The Church has always seen in the water and blood which flowed from the Pierced Heart of Jesus a sign of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, by which we come to life in the Church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into our souls, and by which the life of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us is nourished by the Heavenly Food which is the true Body of Christ.

Heart of God

The Sacred Heart of Jesus, the forming of the human heart of God the Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary, is the fulfillment of the Word of God spoken through the Prophet Ezekiel. Speaking through Ezekiel, God described His work of Redemption with these words: "I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the stony heart from their bodies, and replace it with a natural heart, so that they will live according to My statutes, and observe and carry out My ordinances; thus they shall be My people, and I will be their God" (Ez 11:19-20).

The "new heart" and the "new spirit" is nothing less than a heart animated by God the Holy Spirit because the Heart of God the Son was pierced and welcomes now every contrite heart into the deep and peaceful recesses of its joy and peace.

The prophet Jeremiah provides a profound and ample reflection upon the heart of the people whom God is coming to save. In speaking about His saving work, through the Prophet Jeremiah, God the Father refers to His own Heart, His deepest being: "I will appoint over you shepherds after my own heart, who will shepherd you wisely and prudently" (Jer 3:15). We see the fulfillment of God's promise to send shepherds to care for us, who are animated by His own divine love, by the grace of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Through the sacramental consecration God transforms a man's heart, in order that he may act in the very person of Christ for the salvation of the people. It is through the Sacrament of Holy Orders that Christ the Good Shepherd continues to lay down His life for the sheep (Jn 10:11-18), faithfully fulfilling the promise of God the Father.

When Christ appeared to St. Thomas the Apostle after the Resurrection, He showed him His wounded hands and feet, and His open side, beneath which lay His pierced Heart. He said to Thomas: "Take your finger and examine My hands. Put your hand into My side. Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe!" (Jn 20:27).

The response of St. Thomas at seeing the wounds of Christ, and especially His open side, has become for us a favorite prayer when the Host and chalice are elevated after the consecration: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28). In the apparition to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, our Lord Jesus invites us, who may have grown weak or cold in faith or who may have abandoned

the faith, to examine his Pierced Heart and to believe in Him, the Incarnation of God's immeasurable and unending love of us.

St. Paul reflects upon the Incarnation of the love of God in the Heart of Jesus in his Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 3:8-19). He writes of the "inscrutable riches of Christ," which open up to us God's plan for our salvation. He, then, prays that "Christ may dwell in (our) hearts through faith," and that "(we) will be able to grasp fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love and experience this love which surpasses all knowledge, so that (we) may attain to the fullness of God himself (Eph 3:18-19). Christ dwells in our hearts through the gift of His life for us, most perfectly in the Holy Eucharist. Christ dwells in our hearts when we respond to His invitation to place our hearts completely in His Sacred Heart, to open our hearts completely to Him in the celebration of the Holy Mass and throughout each day of our lives.

In a wonderful reflection on the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI, expresses the profound significance of the references to the Heart of God and the Heart of Jesus in the Holy Scriptures. He writes: "The pierced Heart of the Crucified is the literal fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the Heart of God, which overturns His justice with compassion and precisely in this way remains just. Only in this concordance between the Old and New Testament can we behold the full extent of the biblical message concerning the Heart of God, the Heart of the divine Redeemer *('The Paschal Mystery as Core and Foundation of Devotion to the Sacred Heart'* in Towards a Civilization of Love [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985], p. 159).

Heeding the Pope's words, we should frequently return to the Word of God, in order that the Word of God may inflame in

us a sorrow for our sins, a desire to make reparation and a new generosity in returning love to God for His immeasurable love for us.

Conclusion

There are many more texts from the Holy Scriptures which refer to the human heart, to the Heart of God and the Heart of Jesus. It is recommended that the Holy Bible be kept on the small table or shelf beneath the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, enthroned in the home. In our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we should take up the Word of God daily, so that God can speak to us from His Heart, so that our Lord Jesus can open up to us all the riches of His Sacred Heart. It will be good to mark the passages which refer to the human heart and the Divine Heart, so that we can easily meditate upon them.

Now, it is important that we look at the Church's teaching regarding the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Next week, I will examine briefly the teaching of the Word of God about the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, have mercy on us.

Most Rev. Raymund Leo Burke is the Archbishop of St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

WITH JESUS THROUGH THE STORMS OF LIFE
Fr. Mark Edney, O.P.
Twelfth Sunday of the Year (B)

St. Mark's words might express the feelings of many people of shaky faith or none. When the storms of life rage overhead, people often can't keep themselves from a word of protest:

Where is God when I need him most?

After all, God is supposed to be at the helm of the ship. That's God's job. Instead, he sometimes seems comfortably sheltered from the maelstrom of human concerns. Perhaps he's just dozing. His captaincy sometimes seems hidden from view.

The disciples ask Jesus,

Do you not care?

Lots of people in our day ask God the same question. Is it any wonder? A captain at rest while his ship is going down would shake anyone's confidence.

Most of us are probably too far removed form the perils of the sea to enter easily into the fear expressed by the disciples. These days the storms of life confront us in different ways. Concern about a sick or dying friend, worries about keeping our jobs and supporting our families, anxiety that we'll just be taken for granted, fear that we'll be left alone, that those whom we love will turn out unfaithful.

Sensitivity to wider world issues only adds to the storms that hover threateningly over human lives: governments that appear unable to tell the truth, wars that cease only to be continued by

other means, racial or religious strife that rises, an environment that groans, people everywhere suffering and going without.

In such stormy conditions, even very faithful believers might want to lodge a protest with God: Do you not care? We are going down!

The psalmist more than once did just that: Rouse thyself! Why sleepest thou, O Lord. Awake! Do not cast us off forever (44:23).

We're not told whether he too received a rebuke from the Lord. But it's not the psalmist's lack of faith that motivates this wake-up call to God. On the contrary, it is because he has a sure confidence that the Lord alone can help him that he calls upon him.

The disciples had to learn who Jesus was, who this one was whom 'even the wind and sea obey'. The Christian believer is not without the same need to learn. So what's lacking if, in our fear, we sometimes feel like God doesn't care?

Perhaps it comes down to the question of what we really want from God. Or better, what God really wants most to give us. Most believers will readily admit that Jesus shows tremendous care for his people. God cares. Just after this scene in Mark's Gospel we see him casting out demons, healing a woman who has been in pain for twelve years, raising Jairus's daughter to life.

He has already gained notoriety for insisting that the law should serve people, not enslave them, for promising freedom to prisoners, for defending the widow and the orphan. This is not a man, nor a God, who remains aloof from the human condition. After all, he too is in the storm-tossed boat with his disciples!

There's always, though, something more to his mission than sheer activism. It's his complete and entire confidence in God the Father. This is perhaps no more beautifully portrayed in the Gospels than in the image we have today of a man of such confidence that in the midst of the storms of life he is able to lay a tired head on a cushion and fall asleep.

When the storms of life rage all round us, which one of us would be so heartless as to deny a child of God that rest which alone comes with complete childlike confidence? That's what God wants to give us.

Of course God cares. Jesus stirs himself from his slumbers, rebukes the wind, and silences the sea. His little boat and its scared passengers reach the other side safely. There remains but the unhappy memory of another failure in faith on the part of the disciples.The wind and the sea receive from the once sleeping Lord a mild rebuke by comparison with the one he saves for his closest followers:

Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?

It must have been little consolation to them that they made it through the storm. 'We failed the test but at least we survived shipwreck.'

Christian faith is about much more than surviving shipwreck through the storms of life. It's about believing confidently that the journey ends well. And that's a cushion we can all sleep on.

Fr. Mark Edney is a member of the Priory of the Holy Spirit, Oxford

A MIRACLE WITHIN A MIRACLE
Fr. Brett Brannen
13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

In the gospel of Mark, we have just read "a miracle within a miracle." A very important man named Jairus, an official in the local synagogue, came up to Jesus to ask for help. His small daughter, only 12 years old, was critically ill and in danger of death. As soon as Jesus begins to walk with Jairus towards his house, the other miracle occurs. A woman with a hemorrhage touches the tassel on his cloak, believing that she will get well if she can do so. And she is healed. But by the time Jesus stops to ask "Who touched my cloak?" the little girl has died. So the Lord goes and raises her up.

There are several elements here that tell us this was a great tragedy. Jairus' daughter lay ill and she was 12 years old. According to Jewish custom, a girl became a woman at 12 years and one day! So here was a child, just on the verge of womanhood, and she was dying.

Her father, Jairus, was a very important man. He was like the manager of the synagogue. He was not a priest. He did not actually lead the worship. But he was in charge of the whole show. He would have been a very powerful man in his community. But he had to forget his dignity! His child was dying. He came to Jesus and "fell at his feet, pleading." He reminds us of Naaman, a powerful Syrian military commander. He humbly went to Elisha to be healed. He had to lose his pride in order to lose his leprosy.

When we know what truly matters in life, we are willing to give up many things, even our pride and our self-respect. The trouble is, many of us focus our attention, not on what is important, but on trivial things. The famous philosopher Diogenes, was once sitting by the roadside, eating a bowl of gruel. One of his rich boyhood friends rode up on a white horse and wearing expensive clothes. He said, "Diogenes, if only you would learn to flatter the king, you would not have to eat that gruel." Diogenes said, "Oh but you have it all wrong. If only you would learn to eat this gruel, you would not have to flatter the king."

The story of Jairus makes us pose the question: "What is really important to us?" If one of our loved ones is sick, we will do whatever it takes to get him healed. No matter how important we are, we all have to come and fall at the feet of Jesus, pleading. This is Christianity. We are indebted to God and we need Him.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus begins to walk away following Jairus and then the second miracle occurs.

There was a woman in this vast throng of people, a woman who had been suffering with a hemmorhage for 12 years. This basically means all of her adult life! Mark says that she had been to many doctors, spent all her money and she only got worse. It is interesting that in the same account of this miracle story in Luke 8:40, he does not mention the doctors. Maybe it was because Luke was a doctor.

To be constantly hemorrhaging was a problem which presented great difficulties for the sufferer. The Jewish Talmud presented eleven remedies for it ridiculous things like: carrying around the ashes of an ostrich egg in a linen rag or carrying a barley corn which had been found in the dung of a white she-ass! This poor woman had likely even tried these desperate remedies. The problem: not only was this a very embarrassing and painful

sickness, but it rendered her unclean by Jewish law. She could not go to worship. Like a leper, she was an outcast.

Mark takes us into this woman's thoughts: "If I can only touch his cloak, I shall be healed." The poor woman would not want to tell Jesus her problem in front of all these people, so her faith told her, "This man is powerful. Just touch Him and you will be healed."

Every devout Jew wore a special outer robe with four tassels, one at each corner. This was done in accordance with the Book of Numbers 15:38-40. This was the badge of a devout Jew. The woman touched one of these tassels and found that she was healed. Jesus felt the healing power go out of Him so He stopped walking with Jairus and asked, "Who touched me?" Finally, " fearful and beginning to tremble, the woman came forward and fell down in front of Him and told Him the whole truth."

Our first lesson is repeated No matter who we are, we must all come and fall down at the feet of Jesus, pleading.

At this point, the first miracle story begins again. Officials from Jairus' house arrive and say, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher further?" And here Jesus gives us our second lesson for the day. He says: "Fear is useless. What is needed is to trust God." Mother Teresa says that trusting God is the first step in the spiritual life.

They had already hired professional mourners. We find this custom very strange in our culture, but in the time of Jesus, they would hire these people who would stand around outside the house and wail! How would you like to do that from 8-5 everyday!

Jewish mourning customs were very vivid and sad. For Christians, a funeral is a time of hope. Christ has risen. But for the Jews, this attitude was totally absent. At the moment of death, a loud wailing began so that all might know that death

had occurred. The mourners hung over the dead body, begging a response from the silent lips. They beat their breasts, tore their hair and rent their garments. There were certain rules and regulations about this rending of garments. Garments were to be rent until the skin was exposed, but not beyond the navel. Now if you were a woman, you had to go rend your garments in private. The rent garment was to be worn for thirty days. After seven days, the rent garment could be roughly sewn up, but so that everyone could see it was rent. Flute players were essential.

So here is Jesus walking up to the house of Jairus, the wail of flutes, the screams of the mourners, professional and otherwise, passionate appeals to the dead, rent garments, torn hair what an awful scene. And even worse, she was a child. Now you have the picture in your mind!

Jesus only let the mother and father and his three disciples into the room. He took her by the hand and said, "Talitha Koum," which means, "Little girl, get up." And she got up from death and began to walk around.

Please notice that Jesus has twice broken Jewish law in these miracles. He touched an unclean woman, or rather, she touched Him. And He touched a dead person's body. Both of these things would have rendered Jesus unclean. Jesus is Lord and Master over uncleanness, sickness, and even death.

As we end today, we repeat the lessons we have learned: First, no matter who we are, we all have to come and fall down at the feet of Jesus, pleading. Secondly, no matter what we face, "Fear is useless. What is needed is trust."

Praised be Jesus Christ. Now and forever. Amen.

Fr. Brett Brannen is the Vocations Director of the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia.

OUT OF CONTROL
Fr. Colin Carr, O.P.
Fourteenth Sunday of the Year (B)

You get a letter telling you to go to the out-patients department of your local hospital. You haven't been there before, and you're not too sure about the procedures, but you get to the right bit of the right clinic - or at least you hope you've done that. And you wait, and it gets beyond the time for your appointment, and you don't quite know if it's all right to ask one of the busy nurses if you are in the right place.

You know the kind of feeling. You aren't in control of your life, and you feel rather helpless and stupid.

We want to be in control of our lives as much as possible, and to know what's going to happen. We find unpredictable people very disturbing, particularly if they can't be relied on to agree with us and with our hard-won certainties about the way the world is or ought to be.

Many people want a predictable God who can be relied on to keep things in order. But the God we discover in the Bible is tiresomely unpredictable. This God neither underwrites our complacencies nor colludes with our despair - contrary, you may say. And many times in the Biblical stories people refused to listen to what this contrary God was saying.

The prophets spoke for God, and were often rejected and persecuted. Ezekiel, whose marching orders we read in today's first reading, had bizarre visions and performed actions which were deliberately crazy as if to say:

unless you change your whole way of thinking, you won't be able to hear what God is saying.

But the really disturbing thing about the prophets was not that they were different, but that they were of the people. Some were 'professional' prophets, others were not. But whether they were professional or not, they spoke from within the society they were addressing, they shared people's lives and tragedies. The message to Ezekiel was not "Go and stand a long way off and yell at these people" but "This set of rebels shall know there is a prophet among them."

Jesus, too, was a prophet, and all the gospels record his comment that prophets are only despised in their own country. The people who heard him acknowledged that he said and did remarkable things, but rather than be delighted, they were scandalised.

They knew him and his family; he had grown up among them; he was ordinary. And here he was doing and saying extraordinary things. It shouldn't happen that way. Why couldn't he stick to his carpentry?

Human beings think that God is contrary. But human beings manage to be pretty contrary where listening to God's word is concerned. If it comes to us from an outsider we can shut it out because outsiders are odd; if it comes to us from one of ourselves, we can reject it because the messenger is too ordinary.

And what is the word that we wish to reject? It is a word about a God who is one of us, and who loves the outsider. The God who inhabits our flesh is frighteningly close, and is a scandal to us because the news is so impossibly good. God is close to us in our weakness, as Saint Paul had to discover, and it is appropriate

that the messenger should be weak so that the power of God can be discovered in frail humanity.

In the outpatients' clinic we are not in control, but usually we find that we don't need to be, because some of our fellow human beings are there to help us discover the truth about ourselves. They are most helpful when they use ordinary language rather than medical jargon. They may not sound so impressive, but we would be stupid to want to be bamboozled rather than hear wisdom simply expressed.

When God is among us as one of us, why don't we listen with relief to the divine wisdom? When people who share our life want to share their faith with us, why should we assume that they can't possibly have anything worth saying?

Fr. Colin Carr lives in St Dominic's Priory, Newcastle, and is theological consultant to the North East Churches.

PROPHET OF JUSTICE
Fr. Peter H. Harries, O.P.
Fifteenth Sunday of the Year (B)

Go away seer, flee away to the land of Judah; earn your bread there, and prophesy there.

Such is the bleak response to Amos's words from Amaziah, the priest of the royal shrine of Bethel in the land of Israel.

We learn very little about the lives of most of the prophets from their poetry and their writings. Amos was not a professional prophet, but a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees. Why sycamore trees needed attending to we, again don't know, but some scholars suggest an alcoholic drink could be produced from their sap. What Amos did know was that God had called him to be a prophet and so prophesy he must.

Amos lived in a time of considerable material prosperity for a few and poverty for most. His message of social justice and the downfall of the royal dynasty did not go down well at the royal sanctuary just over the border in Bethel.

The people were divided into two kingdoms, a more powerful northern kingdom of Israel and a weaker kingdom of Judah, centred on Jerusalem and ruled by kings of David's line. For Amaziah then, Amos was an unwelcome uneducated foreigner from a poor neighbouring state who declaimed words of judgement from God for the evildoers of Israel. No wonder Amaziah wanted rid of him.

Amos' justification was simple. God had called him and so he must speak.

The lion has roared, who will not fear; the Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy.

Amos and the other prophets of his time knew that God called his people to live in justice and peace. The other surrounding peoples also lived unjustly and woe would come upon them. But the people of Israel and Judah had been blessed and chosen by God and so should live accordingly.

Amos denounces in his poetry many injustices. The weights and measures in the marketplaces were false. The poor were treated with contempt by the law-courts. Foreign women were treated as prostitutes.

Amos had a fine ear for satire. The corrupt upper-class women are compared to the fat cows of Bashan. Their husbands' drunken songs are compared to David's psalms. Amos's constant theme is that the powerful people are corrupt and care for nothing but their own pleasure and increased wealth. Their poorer compatriots, equally heirs of God's promise, are fit only for oppression and exploitation. Since that is how they treat God's covenant, God will destroy them and their whole society.

It is much easier and more comfortable for us to assume that such corruption, inequality and contempt for others, if it exists today at all, characterises only other distant 'third-world' societies and not our own. Following the media, as well as living and working in central London, means the daily observing massive inequality and contempt for others, and wondering at the corruption, legal or otherwise, at home or elsewhere. Such observation is usually an uncomfortable option.

Adesire for justice and peace; for a more equitable distribution of the world's resources; a longing for a more compassionate society - these are themes common to many people of good will,

of many faiths and none. Indeed they are part of what it really means to be a human being.

In the gospel Jesus sends out his disciples to preach repentance. They are to live a simple life (without a spare tunic!). This simplicity of life, having only what is needful, is a powerful sign of the message of God's love and of the call to conversion that the disciples preach. It has been and still is part of many forms of the religious life, including Dominican. By the preaching of the apostles and those called to mission today, evil is driven out, the sick are healed and a new community is formed and re-formed.

We, the Church, are that new community. We have listened to the Word of God and rejected injustice, rejected contempt for others, rejected evil. We have sought what is true and have attempted to follow ways of peace. We have rejected the allure of material prosperity at the expense of others.

This is what we should be as Church. However we don't always live up to being who we should be. So God may send us prophets, as he sent Amos and others, long ago. They may come from inside the Church community or from outside, and we will certainly feel uncomfortable with their message.

Uncomfortable because it rings true - it challenges us deeply. It calls us to self-examination and conversion of life. Who are the prophets today? What is their message?

Fr. Peter Harries is chaplain to the University College London Hospitals NHS Trust.

OUR UNITY IN CHRIST
Fr.John P. Kenrick, O.P.
Sixteenth Sunday of the Year

Various conflicts in recent years have reminded us that when civil war breaks out, the normal decencies of life are soon forgotten. The good relations built up between neighbours give way to mutual suspicion and enmity. Even life-long ties can be sacrificed for that mystical sense of belonging to a particular tribe or people, to a particular religion or culture.

What is it that unites people? It may be a common culture, a shared task (such as defending one's country) or perhaps the experience of living under one ruler.

But these are more or less changeable aspects of our lives. The ruler may lose power. The task may end. Even the culture can change and give way to something more pluralistic and less cohesive.

Real unity is based on friendship or love - seeking the good of others. The unity in a loving family is not something transient. It is based on relations of mutual caring that do not diminish with time.

In an ideal world, society as a whole might be bound by similar relations. Good government can make society more just but, unfortunately, no amount of legislation can ensure friendship and love.

The readings today remind us that Christ is the source of all true unity between human beings. In the first reading Jeremiah

laments Israel's lack of good kings. A good king is like a shepherd whose task it is to prevent the flock from being scattered or lost. Jeremiah looks forward to a time when there will be a just and wise king to shepherd his people.

The gospel echoes this metaphor. For Christ is in fact this promised shepherd. St Paul reminds us in Ephesians that the shepherd of Israel is our shepherd too. Christ has removed the barriers between Israel and the Gentiles. The rest of Paul's letter will be concerned with identifying those human sins that threaten our unity in Christ.

The bishops of the Church who follow in Christ's footsteps, obedient to his command to teach and baptize all nations, are the chief shepherds of Christ's flock. But we all share in their task of gathering and uniting God's people. Each meeting with a fellow human being is an opportunity to unite or to divide.

Will our daily contacts with others be divisive or will they serve to unite? Will they increase mutual understanding and strengthen the bonds of friendship or will they add to suspicion, prejudice and antagonism? Will we in our human contacts seek the security of defining ourselves over and against those 'others' who do not belong to our race, religion or culture and have no place in the little worlds we inhabit, or will we be willing to shed the skin of a narrow identity for a truly Catholic social vision, open to the working of God's Spirit in all men and women?

Bringing people together under Christ is no simple matter. It is not only a question of bringing people to the true faith. Faith can only take root in the right kind of soil and the right kind of soil is the knowledge that people are respected and loved.

Even before we teach the truths of our faith there is a need to remove the obstacles that prevent human beings from

experiencing the love of God - poverty, ignorance, prejudice and violence. It is a question of pastoral care, of showing sensitivity to people's needs and sharing peoples burdens.

The building of real community can never be achieved solely by the efforts of a secular society, because a society without faith is a society that places no lasting value on human life and human relations. As history shows, the practice of religion does not alone suffice to produce a truly human society of caring individuals. Religion can all too easily be diverted from its true end. It can become just another culture.

Jesus reminds us that true religion is a question of sharing in the love that the Father offers us through the Son and in his Spirit. The unity that Christ offers us is not just peace on earth but friendship with God and each other for all eternity.

Fr. John Patrick Kenrick was formerly the Vicar General of the Dominican Order's General Vicariate of Russia and the Ukraine, and is now Master of Novices of the English Dominicans.

FOOD IN DUE SEASON
Fr. Vivian Boland, O.P.
Seventeenth Sunday of the Year

Elisha, through the power of God, fed a hundred men with twenty barley loaves and fresh grain, and had some over. Jesus of Nazareth, through the power of God, fed five thousand men (to say nothing of women and children, Matthew adds) with five loaves and two fish, and twelve hampers of scraps were collected afterwards.

The implication is clear and the people draw it immediately: if Elisha was something, then this man is far greater. Not just a prophet, he is the prophet who is to come into the world.

The eyes of all creatures look to God for nourishment, Psalm 144 tells us, and he gives them their food in due season. The eyes of God's human creatures look to him for far more than bodily food because they know that they live not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

The prophets are those human beings chosen by God to carry his word to the people, to speak to them on behalf of God, and so to nourish them in heart and mind and soul. In feeding the people as he does, Jesus is acting as a prophet, doing something traditional while teaching them something radically new about the kind of prophetic service he has come to offer.

The remainder of John 6 is a long interpretation of this sign that Jesus gave and that the people half understood. Not only a prophet, he is 'the bread of life'. In other words he is not only a

bearer of the Word of God, he is himself that Word. Echoing the rich traditions of the wisdom literature of the Bible, Jesus will present himself as Sophia (Wisdom), the one who summons the people to his banquet, to feast with him on the Word of God that nourishes their hearts and minds and souls.

He will go what seems like a step further and invite them to feast not just with him but on him, to eat him as the 'living bread', totally consumed by them, taken inside, appropriated and made to be part of their bodies. A due season not anticipated by human beings has arrived. Ezekiel 34 had prophesied that a time would come when God would feed his people himself. But that God would feed his people on himself: how could anybody have imagined such a thing?

Jesus of Nazareth, more than a prophet, is the Word of God become flesh. Because he is the Word, we live from him. Because he is the Word become flesh, he places himself at our disposal, subject to the vulnerabilities and ambiguities to which all flesh is heir.

Some of his listeners, scandalised at the direction of his interpretation, will leave and stop going with him. They might have continued to follow him if he agreed to be their prophet-king. But they could not continue to follow him as the prophet-servant giving his flesh and blood for the life of the world.

Psalm 144 continues: "you open wide your hand, grant the desires of all who live."

The sign first given at Tiberias continues to be given in the Eucharist. The bread of life is offered to the people as the Word is proclaimed. The living bread nourishes them as they eat his body and drink his blood.

It is a sign, in the first place, of generosity and limitless love. The little boy who makes his brief appearance in this gospel story is remembered for his willingness to share what he had brought. The Son of God is remembered for his great act of love when he opened wide his hands on the cross, gave up his spirit and so granted the desires of all who live.

It is easy for us to understand and admire the imagery, the symbolism, involved in this talk of bread. It is more difficult to realise the mystery it makes present: that we become one with him as we eat his flesh and that we are identified with him as we drink his blood.

Because of this mystery the Letter to the Ephesians can say 'there is one Body', as there is just one Lord and one Spirit. Through living in that Body, which is his Church, we experience the generous love of God and are made able to live in charity and selflessness, in gentleness and patience.

Fr. Vivian Boland is Master of Students of the English Dominicans, and lectures in theology at Saint Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, in London, and at Blackfriars, Oxford.