



# CENTRO PRO UNIONE

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**UT OMNES UNUM SINT**



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

▶ *James F. Puglisi, SA*

With the progressive opening up after the pandemic, the activities of the Centro have been in full force as can be seen from the rich contributions of this issue of the *Bulletin-Centro Pro Unione*.

We kick off this issue with the informative and challenging lecture of Prof. Teresa Berger, who offered last year's annual Paul Wattson/Lurana White Lecture: "All Creation Worships: Re-thinking Liturgy in a Time of Ecological Emergency". Not only has the pandemic caused us to pause and reset how we live but also the ecological drama has serious consequences for how we live in dangerous times and how we will worship. Teresa offers some interesting suggestions on a way forward.

Following up on last year's symposium on synodality, Methodist lay leader Gillian Kingston shared thoughts on how the Methodist tradition lives its synodical reality in her talk during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity's celebration. In her lecture: "'To Serve the Present Age...,'" she illustrated the similarities and differences within the Methodist tradition.

The remainder of this issue's articles come from a study day considering the Malines Conversations Group's (MCG) report: "*Sorores in spe. Sisters in the Hope of the Resurrection*". The MCG's text takes into consideration the possibility of moving forward after *Apostolicae*



*curae* condemnation of Anglican orders by asking some important epistemological questions of how to deal with ecumenical problems of the past today once there is a new context. The papers presented here deal with the the resolution of the remaining issues. The speakers came from the Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox and Catholic ecclesial traditions and were women and men who have been actively engaged in ecumenical and theological research and in official dialogues.

In addition to these lectures, the Centro co-sponsored with the John Paul II Institute for Interreligious Dialogue, a lecture by Prof. Menachem Lorberbaum, "On the Task of Theology. Theological Foundation of Interreligious Dialogue from a Jewish Perspective". This lecture may be heard on of media page

🔗 – [www.prounione.it/webtv/live/24-feb-2022](http://www.prounione.it/webtv/live/24-feb-2022)

In addition to the conferences held over these past six months, we are happy to include the next installment of the *Bibliography of Interchurch and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues* compiled by our librarian, Dr. Loredana Nepi. It is the thirty-seventh supplement. As a remainder you can always have realtime updates to the bibliography by accessing our website at

🔗 – [www.prounione.it/en/library/search](http://www.prounione.it/en/library/search)

### CENTRO PRO UNIONE BULLETIN

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, is an ecumenical research and action center. Its purpose is to give space for dialogue, to be a place for study, research and formation in ecumenism: theological, pastoral, social and spiritual. The Bulletin has been published since 1968 and is released in Spring and Fall.

### IN THIS ISSUE

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- Gillian Kingston
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- Bruce Myers
- Tamara Grzelidze
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- James F. Puglisi, *sa*

### CONTACT

Address  
Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30  
I-00186 · Rome – ITALY

Telephone  
(+39) 06 687 9552

Fax  
(+39) 06 687 9552

Media Network  
@EcumenUnity  
@CentroProUnione



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Three events during the Spring of this year will be covered in the next Bulletin: Dr. Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman spoke on “Newman, Wesley and the Logic of Unity: An Inductive Ecumenism” and Rabbi Jack Bemporad spoke on “Wisdom, Virtues and Vices in the Book of Proverbs. Some Philosophical and Ethical Considerations”. Finally we hosted the book launch of a very timely subject in light of the war in the Ukraine: *The Vatican and Permanent Neutrality* edited by Marshall J. Breger & Herbert R. Reginbogin. The Fall’s program of events will include the completion and publication of the second phase of our program Phase II of *M.A.D. for Ecumenism Mutual Accountability Desk* © which is on Baptism and the launch of the third phase which will have as theme Becoming a Synodical Church.

In October, the Centro will host the presentation of the eleventh report of the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission, “God in Christ Reconciling: On the Way to Full Communion in Faith, Sacraments, and Mission”. Following up later in October, the Centro and the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome will co-sponsor an event “The Heritage of Geoffrey Wainwright as Liturgist, Theologian, and Ecumenist”.

In December the twenty-fifth Paul Wattson/Lurana White annual lecture will be given by Dr. Thomas F. Best, “(In Case You Missed It): The Ecumenical Winter is Over”.

Lastly, we would like to announce the theme for the Week of Prayer 2023: **Do good; seek justice.** (Isaiah 1:17)

In addition to our normal activities, the Centro also welcomed several groups from various organizations: Nashotah House Seminary & The Living Church Institute, led by The Rev’d Matthew S. C. Olver, and Dr Christopher Wells, USA; the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland; Methodist Leaders from England led by Dr. Tim Macquiban; a group of professors and students from Lehrstuhl für Liturgiewissenschaft Kath.-Theol. Fakultät, Würzburg, Germany led by Prof. Martin Stuflesser; an international ecumenical group of leaders led by Dr. Matthew A. Laferty, Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome; classes from several Roman High schools led by Profs. Teodora and Margherita Rossi; two groups of Asian entrepreneurs and the STL classes of our Associate Director, Prof. Teresa Francesca Rossi.

We invite our readers to always check our web site for dates and events as well as the up-dating of our data base on the international theological dialogues and of course our two libraries: pro and dialogo.

This *Bulletin* is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Drive, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago, IL 60606 ([www.atla.com](http://www.atla.com)).

James F. Puglisi, sa · Director

*James F. Puglisi, sa*





ecumenical and liturgical work. For example, an ecumenical text produced in 2012 by the Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue in the United States was dedicated to the theme “Eucharist and Ecology.”<sup>2</sup>

Let me, then, move to the theme proper of my presentation, in which I want to re-think the meaning of “liturgy,” for a time of ecological emergency and planetary peril.

To begin with, I am quite sure that you do not need me to offer statistics and data to substantiate the claim that we live in a time of planetary peril. The statistics, the data, and the images are readily available (Slide 04). The last U.N. Climate Summit (COP26) in the Fall of 2021 highlighted the looming climate chaos, once again and for all to see. However, this made headlines news only for the days of the conference. Sadly enough, the conference itself did not make decisive progress but instead found compromise positions, leading the World Council of Churches to express “disappointment and dismay.” Pope Francis’ appeal for urgent action, ahead of the Climate Summit, was not heeded. His larger vision of the moral imperative to act on climate change still awaits a response. As the Pope had already noted in 2020:

Keynote   
Slide 04 

 Keynote  
 Slide 03

We have just a few years – scientists calculate roughly fewer than 30 – to drastically reduce the emissions of gas and the greenhouse effect in the atmosphere.

... Everything in the world is connected and that, as the pandemic has reminded us, we are interdependent on one another, and also dependent on our mother Earth.<sup>3</sup>

What I am particularly interested in here is Pope Francis’ strong sense of the interconnectedness of everything. In what follows, I want to focus on one element of this vision of Pope Francis, and it is one that is actually is connected to Saint Francis’ vision too. This vision shines forth in particular in Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’*. My own interest in this encyclical – rooted in my scholarly field of liturgical studies – has to do with the church’s liturgical life. Now, people will often say that liturgy is not what *Laudato Si’* is about. Granted, this encyclical is not dedicated to liturgy. But *Laudato Si’* does begins with a prayer

“  
Among many other things, he said to them: ‘my brother birds, you should greatly praise your Creator, and love Him always.’  
”

Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*

and ends with two more prayers. And there is much to glean about worship and liturgy in the encyclical between these two prayers. I will spend this presentation trying to convince you of that.

<sup>2</sup> RCC-Methodist Ecumenical Dialogue in the U.S., “Eucharist and Ecology,” (2012),  <https://bit.ly/3P0rC4R>  
 URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, “Our Moral Imperative to Act on Climate Change – and 3 Steps We Can Take,” (Oct 10, 2020), online at:  <https://bit.ly/3aa9sPD>  URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

The heart of my argument goes something like this: Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'* and other texts, repeatedly gestures toward something like kinship relations between human beings and everything that exists. For example, harkening back to St. Francis, the Pope will refer to our "Sister Earth" or "Mother Earth," although ultimately, he includes everything created in this kinship of creation. In various places in the encyclical, Pope Francis invokes a universal "family" - which might still be taken in an anthropocentric sense, as if he is thinking about the human family alone. But the Pope then goes on to invoke a "sublime communion" or a "universal communion" that clearly includes other-than-human beings alone. I want to hold that notion of a universal kinship between all that exists together with a vision embedded in an ancient liturgical text still in use today, the *Te Deum*. The English translation of the originally Latin text says, in a lovely rendering, "all creation worships You [God]." (Slide 05)

In short, I will argue, based on Pope Francis' sense of a universal communion with everything created and the claim in the *Te Deum* that all creation worships, that we ought to re-think the basics of Christian liturgy.

We might begin by considering liturgy as a way of entering into God's presence in communion with all that is - not only with the nice people who sit, stand, or kneel with us in church, but with everything created by God. After all, our creaturely siblings, and indeed all creation worships too. How might we get to understanding and, more importantly, to living worship like this? This will clearly require a conversion of sorts. "Ecological conversion," a term first used by Pope John Paul II, is a good descriptor for such a new way of seeing, feeling, thinking, acting, and praying. Conversion always involves turning away from something, and turning towards something else. What I want to focus on in particular as something to turn away from is a view of liturgy and worship as what human earthlings offer, and they alone. Instead, I want to find ways of praying and celebrating the liturgy as beings-in-communion, not only with other human beings, or with the angels, but with everything created, too.

Keynote 

Slide 05 

## Turning Away: From Seeing Worship as Something Only Human Beings Offer

To flesh out what this entails, let me take a step back and reflect on where we have come from, particularly since the Liturgical Movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Second Vatican Council, and the work of scholars of liturgy since then. I think it is fair to say that these have championed a particular image of liturgy. And since I have done this myself, I am not accusing anybody here, but simply describing what became the dominant image of worship over the last century or so. This image interprets liturgy as an encounter, specifically a dialogue, between God and human beings gathered for worship. That vision clearly had liberating potential in the twentieth century, coming as it did in response to a tradition that had imaged worship more like a court ceremonial, that is, an audience for lowly subjects who came to pay homage to their Sovereign, as was their duty. Another dominant image of liturgy, one that rose in favor especially during the Age of Enlightenment, was that of liturgy as a school or a classroom, where students gathered for instruction, often of a moralizing kind. Or, to invoke yet another image, this one more contemporary, we might today think of liturgy as a holy hotspot or charging station, where our batteries are recharged for the work of justice. It is important to stress that all of these images hold truth. I am not claiming here that any of them are wrong. They all are windows into a complex reality, each through their own lenses. A problem emerges, however, if and when any of these images become dominant or exclusive.

"After the birds had listened so reverently to the word of God, he began to accuse himself of negligence because he had not preached to them before. From that day on, he carefully exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and also insensible creatures, to praise and love the Creator."

With that caveat, I do want to advocate for one additional image here. This image is more expansive than the previous ones with their focus on God and human beings as dialogue partners in liturgy. To put this in a nutshell, I seek to enlarge the boundaries of the company we see ourselves keeping in worship. The Christian tradition actually holds rich possibilities for this. To begin with, we know ourselves to sing “in the presence of the angels” (Psalm 138:1). We also include those who have gone before, the saints, and our beloved dead. We even gratefully acknowledge that the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest to settle her young in God’s sanctuary (Psalm 84:4), and that birds listen to sermons, at least when St. Francis of Assisi is the preacher. All this goes to show that there is room, in the Christian tradition, to think about creation as a foundational part of the encounter of human beings with the Triune God in worship.

For those interested in constructive theology, here is a quick map of how, theologically, one might argue for this:

Step one: the universe is brought into existence, not by chance, but by the creative energy of God, the Uncreated Creator. – I do not think that there is any Christian who could not consent to that conviction.

Step two: being created and called into existence is gift. Being created means being gifted into existence, loved into existence by God. The ultimate aim of being called into existence is flourishing. This orients everything created to thankful praise.

Step three: creation, although deeply marred by sin, evil, and violence, is continuously God-sustained. God is present to what God has created throughout time.

Step four: God entered this marred world in deepest intimacy by taking on human form in Jesus of Nazareth, living and dying as part of all created reality. It is important here to stress that we have routinely interpreted the Incarnation in very anthropocentric ways: God becomes human. Yes, God does indeed become human in Jesus of Nazareth. But that also means that God becomes the iron that runs through human blood, God becomes the star dust from which all life came, God becomes

materiality. In other words, the Incarnation can be read more deeply than anthropocentrically: God enters material, created reality, all of it.

Finally: everything God has created is on a journey through time to its ultimate fulfillment in God, when the profoundest response of everything created will be joyful adoration and worship.

So much for a snapshot of how one might construct the underlying theological steps that help me get to where I want to go: namely, to think of liturgy in an expansive way, as a creation-wide practice of worship. For here, though, I will root my thinking mostly in Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’*. As I mentioned earlier, key for me is the startling move Pope Francis makes in envisioning kinship relations between human beings and Sister Earth.<sup>4</sup> These are **familial** – not familiar! – categories. To think of human beings as part of a vast family that ultimately includes everything created is revelatory. “Revelatory” does not mean “new” here, but rather a compelling and fresh claim about reality. This claim shifts not only how we think about the cosmos and creation, but how we think about human beings, too. Pope Francis puts it thus:

The created things of this world are not free of ownership: ‘For they are yours, O Lord, who love the living’ (Wis 11:26). This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect.<sup>5</sup>

The notion of a universal communion of everything created, is there in *Laudato Si’* from beginning to end. In the original Latin of the encyclical, the term is simply *universalis communio*.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, Pope Francis did not invent the term.

4 See the opening words of *Laudato Si’*: “Our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us”. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’* on Care for our Common Home (2015), at <https://bit.ly/3OP87Ni> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022, # 1.

5 *Laudato Si’* #89.

6 Cf. *Laudato Si’*, #76 and #11.

It already appears about 100 years earlier, in Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's text, "The Priest." (Slide 06)

Keynote 

Slide 06 

In this meditation, Teilhard de Chardin writes, in his native French, about a "communion universelle" that he experienced in the trenches of World War I (of all places).<sup>7</sup> For a scholar of liturgy, such communion-language speaks loudly, of course. Communion, after all, is a deeply liturgical term: we go to communion; we receive communion; we pray in communion with the Pope, and the living and the dead. I, as a Western-rite Roman Catholic, am in full communion with Eastern-rite Catholics, and in many ways in communion, even if not full communion, with all Christian siblings who are not Roman Catholic.

To return to Pope Francis, his claim is not simply "poetic" exuberance. His language might be poetic, of course, but it is not "merely poetic." On the contrary. There are deep theological insights here. And this notion of kinship with everything created, as it appears in *Laudato Si'* and other texts, has immediate consequences, not only for lived life but also for worship. For example, Pope Francis claims in *Laudato Si'* that the interconnection God has established between us and everything around us forces us to feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical

7 TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, "The Priest," in: *Writings in Time of War*, trans. by René Hague (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 205-224, here 215.

## Re-thinking Liturgy in a Time of Ecological Emergency

ailment, and the rapid extinction of species as a painful disfigurement.<sup>8</sup> The German translation of the encyclical puts it in even starker terms than the English text, in naming this disfigurement something like a maiming or an amputation. That is to say, we should experience the extinction of other species as an amputation, a loss to our own bodily existence and wellbeing. Furthermore, the Pope describes species extinction as a loss of worship-life: "because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence."<sup>9</sup> The same thought also re-appears in a remarkable passage in the post-synodal *Apostolic Exhortation* after the Synod on the Amazon. The text claims:

if we enter into communion with the {Amazonian rain-}forest, our voices will easily blend with its own and become a prayer: 'as we rest in the shade of an ancient eucalyptus, our prayer for light joins in the song of the eternal foliage.' This interior conversion will enable us to weep for the Amazon region and to join in its cry to the Lord.<sup>10</sup> (Slide 07)

This passage gives voice to a chorus, a blending of human voices with the voices of the foliage of the Amazon rainforest. And this blending of voices is not just any sound, it is song, the hymn of the foliage. This vision allows a glimpse of

8 *Laudato Si'*, #89.

9 *Laudato Si'*, #33.

10 Pope Francis, *Querida Amazonia* (2020), # 56.

Keynote 

Slide 07 



what worship calls us into: something infinitely larger than a group of nice human beings gathered in a human-built sanctuary. Rather, this broader vision is one of a vast, natural, shared space of worship, a communion with all that exists. Worship here becomes visible as a way of life of all creation and human beings as part of a creaturely family.

### Turning To: Worship in Communion with Everything Created

If we were to turn away from a vision of worship as the task of human beings alone, what might it look like to appreciate worship in communion with everything created? A first question has to be whether such a seemingly novel vision of worship can be substantiated from within the Christian scriptures and the history of worship through the centuries. My answer to that is simply and emphatically, yes. Both Pope Francis and St. Francis are not eccentric outliers in the Christian tradition. They articulate something that is there, in the tradition, over the centuries. However, this particular element has often been occluded in the ways we display the liturgical tradition, or it has been relegated to “mystical” experiences or “poetic” utterances, as if these are not real, or somehow marginal. Here are some glimpses of what is there in the tradition, beginning with the scriptures. Psalm 148 is particularly poignant:

Praise the Lord!

Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for he commanded and they were created.

He established them forever and ever;

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!  
Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!  
Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!<sup>11</sup>

After this long list of worshippers, human beings are the last to be invited to join in and praise the Lord. If one studies the text closely, the psalmist is actually envisioning an antiphonal cosmic choir here. One side is represented by voices in heaven and above the earth (sun, moon, stars). The other side is made up of voices from the earth (the sea monsters, fire, hail, snow and frost, stormy wind, mountains, hills, fruit trees, cedars, etc.). Human beings sing on that side, with the earthly crowd. Importantly, Psalm 148 does not stand alone in the biblical witness. The Song of the Three Youth in Daniel 3, the so-called *Benedicite* (Dan 3:52-90), which might itself be an elaboration of Ps 148’s list of creaturely worshippers, also situates human prayer within a clearly more-than-human community of praise. So do the hymns in the last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation (Rev 4-5).

And the same theme runs through 2,000 years of Christian history. It is, for example, voiced at the end of Tertullian’s treatise on the Lord’s prayer: “all creation prays” (*orat omnis creatura*).<sup>12</sup> It appears in the so-called *Apostolic Tradition*, in the Anaphora of St. James, and in the *Catechetical Homilies* of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It is sounded again and again in hymnic texts, such as the *Phos Hilaron*, the *Te Deum*, and the *Gloria Laus et Honor*.

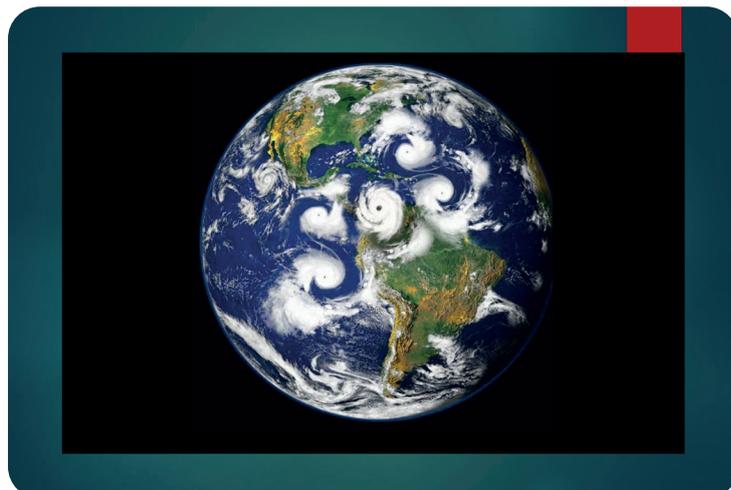
11 Psalm 148:1, 3-13; NRSV.

12 Tertullian, *De Oratione*, # 29.

The theme is present in medieval saints' lives, best known of course from the life of St. Francis of Assisi, (Slide 08) but Francis is not alone. Time, however, does not permit a fuller narrative of how the theme is carried forward across the centuries. Suffice it to say that today, this ancient vision of worship has not only resurfaced but become crucially important for the world we live in. My interest in this is not simply that of a historian. Rather, I am driven by contemporary realities, namely that we live on a planet in peril, human-made peril, no less.

Keynote 

Slide 08 



To bring us to today, from a quick look at the tradition, I want to highlight an interesting text in the current Missal. The text comes from the third Eucharistic prayer (which was drawn up after Vatican II, based on earlier sources). After the Sanctus, the Missal in its current English translation says, "all you have created rightly gives you praise." The Latin text reads: *merito te laudat omnis a te condita creatura*. If one reads through different vernacular translations, it is interesting how some of them do not want to say exactly what the Latin text says; they weaken its clarity and precision. One of the few wonderful things about the current English translation – which was forced to go back to very Latinate ways of praying – is that it made the translators stay with the Latin text: "All you have created rightly gives you praise."

The question now is: How do we get to living that?



## Where to go, from here?

Importantly, a lot is already happening on the (liturgical) ground. Ecological activism has intensified, and with it, creation-attentive liturgical work. We have a Season of Creation in the calendar of many churches now. There are also lots of creation-based rituals celebrated beyond church walls. And most Christian communities have witnessed a flood of new worship materials that are dedicated to creation-themed subjects, from hymns, prayers, intercessions, and sermons to whole thematic prayer services. Often these fall under the umbrella of "let us praise God for creation." This is, of course, important. What interests me even more, however, is a posture deeper than one that praises God **for** everything created. What I seek is a vision of creation praising God **with** us. Supporting evidence for this can come from many different sources, the Christian tradition included, as sketched above. But

Keynote 

Slide 09 

there is also new evidence and support for this vision from contemporary scientific insights. To name only one example here. We now know that human beings share with all other living creatures on planet earth a common genetic ancestry. Not only is our DNA 99% the same as chimpanzees, but roughly a quarter of our ancestry is shared with trees (Slide 09). And if we go back far enough in time, our genetic kinship with everything created can be traced back to a first, single-celled ancestor, standing at the beginning of life on earth, about 4.6 billion years ago. Going back even further in time and deeper into the cosmos, we all come

from stardust. There is, then, a thread of genetic similarity, not only between all human beings but between everything created. My colleague at Yale, Mary Evelyn Tucker from the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, has put it thus:

Our challenge, then, is to see ourselves as part of a vast evolving Universe where the Cosmos, too, is our home. Many cultures have embraced this perspective beginning with Indigenous peoples. Their cosmovisions continue to provide them with a rich sensibility of the stars as relatives and galaxies as luminous living presences.

older, more ancient practice of primordial praise, which first arose “when the morning stars sang together,” as the creation story in Job 38 has it. If we step back from our own time and context for a moment, we will have to admit that human prayers and praise are very much latecomers in this cosmic praise. In terms of the history of the universe, if we imagined life on planet earth condensed into one hour, and then mapped when life emerged, human beings only emerged in the last 30 seconds of that life on earth. Do we really want to claim that nobody praised God until *homo sapiens* stood up? (Slide 11) I do not think so. This raises immediate questions, of course. For example, if you teach the history of Christian worship, where do you begin? Do you begin with the first flaring forth of the universe 14 billion years ago? Or, with the emergence of the first single-celled life on planet earth? Or, with the biblical creation stories? Or with Abraham, or Israel? Or Jesus, or Pentecost? There are choices to be made here.

A second question: It is worth pondering more deeply what “createdness” means. More precisely, what a posture means that recognizes that everything created stands in the same relationship to God as I do, namely in having been created. Minimally, such a posture is a great theological equalizer, because whatever we might then claim about human beings and their status of being “special,” the basic foundation is the same, for all creation: We all stand before God in the posture of having been created.

**Pope Francis**

- ▶ “everything in the world is connected
- ▶ and as the pandemic has reminded us,
- ▶ we are interdependent on one another,
- ▶ and also dependent on our mother Earth.”

speaking at the Global TedX Countdown on Climate Change, in 2020

 **Keynote**  
 **Slide 10**

All humans are descendants of these heavenly bodies... the stars are our ancestors.<sup>13</sup>

These insights are not “poetry” or “mysticism,” but simply what science has to offer today, in terms of insights into the origins of the cosmos and life within it. Some points of theological reflection emerge in conversation with these insights. In what follows, I will raise these points in the form of questions, not least to indicate that my reflections are very much a work in process. (Slide 10)

**Keynote**   
**Slide 11** 

First, what would it look like to situate the emergence of practices of human, and specifically Christian worship within the much

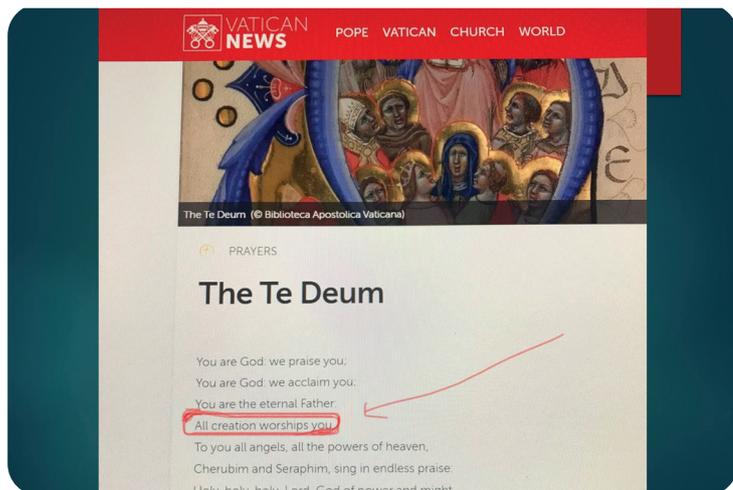
**Question:**

**WHAT DOES LITURGY HAVE TO DO WITH THE ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY OF OUR TIMES?**

13 MARY EVELYN TUCKER, “Cosmos as Home: Evolution as Context” (June 10, 2021),  <https://bit.ly/3PhRkCi>  
 URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

What does that mean for how we conceive of worship, not least if all turning to God is rooted in thankful praise for the gift of existence?

A third question: Is there not something peculiarly inspiring in this vision of worship as more than what human beings offer, especially in and for our own times? I say this because I witness in my own context that ecclesial practices have become deeply suspect.



Many of our contemporaries are not only leaving established ecclesial institutions and practices behind, but – sometimes with incredible faith – turn to a host of diffuse, seemingly ancient, nature based or planetary rituals. Why not break open a path from within the richness of the liturgical tradition to a world around us that thinks of ecclesial practices as suspect, or as simply not life-giving, or as not sufficiently rooted in nature and the cosmos?

## In Conclusion: Ecological Conversion and Environmental Justice

In conclusion, let me return to Father Paul and Mother Lurana and their Franciscan spirituality. I am here thinking in particular of “at-one-ment,” atonement, not only for human beings as they are reconciled with their Creator but also with the whole of creation. I would be amiss if I did not outline a way in which my thoughts on worship and liturgy link directly to issues of environmental justice and at-one-ment with all creation in the liturgy of life.

**Keynote**   
Slide 13 

Very simply, I invite you to reconfigure how you think about places for worship and with whom, and to practice mindfulness. Why not seek to live more attentively into the “universal communion” Pope Francis envisioned, with all that is present in your daily life? Why not commit to practicing compassion towards all that exists? And a bit more lightheartedly: why be afraid to hug a tree? You share a quarter of your genetic material with trees after all. Why, then, not experience “communion” with a tree, your creaturely sibling? (Slide 12)

**Keynote**   
Slide 12 

Pope Francis once again helps us here – and I do not mean by hugging a tree (Slide 13). More importantly, he has again and again presented us with stark challenges to rethink all we do in light of the anguished “cry of Mother Earth”: economics, politics, daily living, and every choice we make related to that. For example, in the season of Advent, we cannot only look ahead to the celebration of God becoming a human being. We also have to confront the reality that this season by now is one of the largest trash producing moments of the year. We have the power to change that, in how we seek to give gifts (and what kind of gifts), how we gift-wrap, and how we dispose of all the Christmas decorations, wrappings, and trees.

As Catholic Christians, after all, we have a commitment to a “seamless garment of life.” That is often translated as a commitment to the sanctity of human life from conception to natural birth. This is crucially important, of course. But there is

## My claim:

- ▶ in our praying,
- ▶ and in our worship,
- ▶
- ▶ we enter into God’s presence
- ▶ in communion with all that is,
- ▶
- ▶ namely, with everything created by God,
- ▶ just as we are.

so much more to the seamless garment of life than human life only. If everything is interconnected, then everything is part of the seamless garment of life. More concretely, the seamless garment of life does not begin with human conception. It begins with the life of everything created.

And, as I hope to have shown in this presentation, the seamless garment of life also includes the life of worship, prayer, and liturgy – not only our own, but that of all creation.

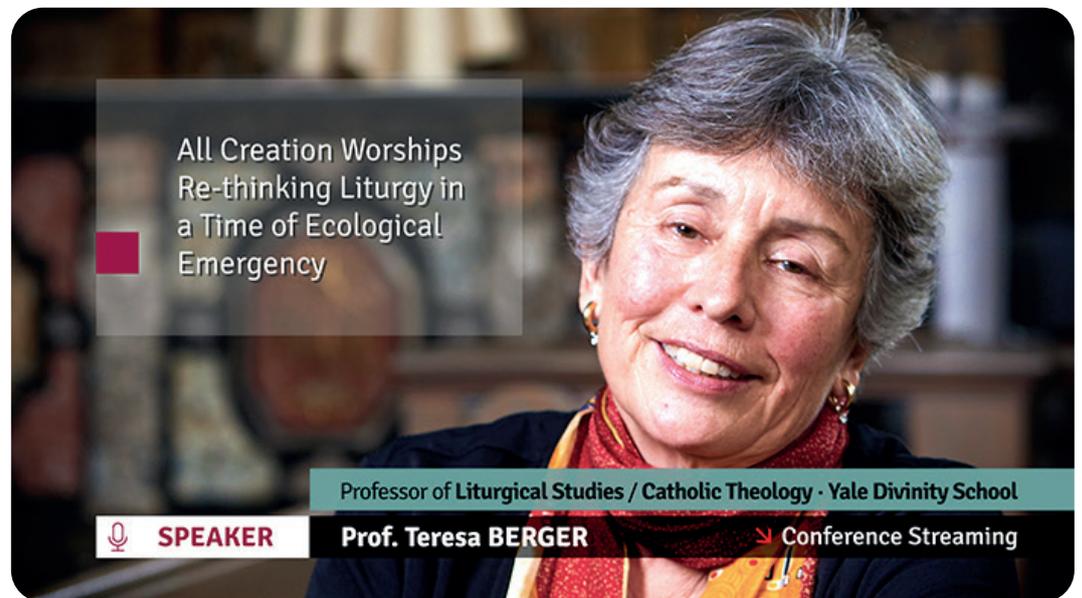


*Prof. Berger presenting the keynote of the lecture, including visual slides*

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All Creation Worships  
Re-thinking Liturgy in  
a Time of Ecological  
Emergency

Professor of Liturgical Studies / Catholic Theology · Yale Divinity School

**SPEAKER**

**Prof. Teresa BERGER**

Conference Streaming

## GILLIAN KINGSTON



Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 20 January 2022

Vice President of the World Methodist Conference  
former Lay Leader of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland and  
member of the Methodist/Roman Catholic International Commission 1986-2006

### To Serve The Present Age...

I bring greetings from...

- MCI - President of Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Dr Sahr Yambasu
- WMC - President of World Methodist Council, the Revd Prof J.C.Park

*To serve the present age / My calling to fulfil;-*

*O may it all my powers engage / To do my Master's will!*<sup>1</sup>

The task before us, all of us, from whichever church tradition we come, is to find how best we may serve the present age and together, ordained and lay, to find ways of spreading the Gospel and of allowing ourselves to be built up in love.

#### The wider context

On January 12, 1982, forty years ago this month, at Lima, Peru, the ecumenical world was presented with the ground-breaking document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.<sup>2</sup> It was the fruit of fifty years' work, stretching back to the first Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne in 1927 - work on three of the most critical issues in the ecumenical life of the member churches of the World Council of Churches together with the Roman Catholic Church and other churches not belonging to the Council.<sup>3</sup>

1 CHARLES WESLEY, *Hymns and Psalms. A Methodist and Ecumenical Hymn Book* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1983) No. 785.

2 FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, *Baptism Eucharist Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper 111 (Geneva: WCC, 1982).

3 *Ibid.*, Preface.

#### MEDIA

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The third section, that on *Ministry*, begins with a reflection on 'The Calling of the Whole People of God'. Paragraph 6 anticipates something of what Pope Francis is asking for in the proposed discussion on synodality...

*Though the churches are agreed as to their general understanding of the calling of the people of God, they differ in their understanding of how the life of the Church is to be ordered. In particular, there are differences concerning the place and forms of ordained ministry. As they engage in the efforts to overcome these differences, the churches need to work from the perspective of the calling of the whole people of God. A common answer needs to be found to the following question: How, according to the will of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the life of the Church to be understood and ordered, so that the Gospel may be spread and the community built up in love?*<sup>4</sup>

Subsequent documents from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches have sought to address that question.

Thirty years on, in 2011, *One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition*, placed participation in the life of the Christian community in the context of baptism...

4 *Ibid.*, 20-21.

*With their admission to the eucharistic community, the newly baptised take their place in the royal, priestly and prophetic community that is the church and so will exercise the spiritual gifts with which they have been endowed for service in the church and the world.<sup>5</sup>*

Two years later, in 2013, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, is significantly more explicit and, indeed, uses the term 'synodality' as it expounds on oversight in the Church and its exercise. The relevant paragraph is lengthy, but worth quoting in full:

*One such exercise of oversight reflects that quality of the Church which might be termed 'synodality' or 'conciliarity'. The word synod comes from the Greek terms syn (with) and odos (way) suggesting a 'walking together'. Both synodality and conciliarity signify that 'each member of the Body of Christ, by virtue of baptism, has his or her place and proper responsibility' in the communion of the church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the whole church is synodal/conciliar, at all levels of ecclesial life: local, regional and universal. The quality of synodality or conciliarity reflects the mystery of the Trinitarian life of God and the structures of the Church express this quality so as to actualise the community's life as a communion. In the local Eucharistic community, this quality is experienced in the profound unity in love and truth between the members and their presiding minister. In crucial situations synods have come together to discern the apostolic faith in response to doctrinal or moral dangers or heresies, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to send after his return to the Father (cf. John 16:7, 12-14). Ecumenical synods enjoy the participation of the entire Church; their decisions are received by all as an acknowledgment of the important service they played in fostering and maintaining communion throughout the Church as a whole.*

<sup>5</sup> FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, *One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition*, Faith and Order Paper 210 (Geneva: WCC, 2011) §48.

*The churches currently have different views and practices about the participation and role of laity in synods.<sup>6</sup>*

This 'participation and role of the laity' is precisely the issue to be addressed in the process initiated by Pope Francis, and to which, it is suggested, sister churches might contribute.

Section 7 of the Synod 2023 Preparatory Document asks specifically for perspectives from other denominations:

*The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one Baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey. What relations do we have with the brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations? What areas do they concern? What fruits have we drawn from this "journeying together"? What are the difficulties?*

### **In the beginning...**

I have been invited to present a Methodist perspective on this 'walking together' and I do so as a member of the Methodist Church in Ireland, whose Conference (that is, governing body) was established by John Wesley himself in Limerick (Ireland) in August 1752.

Let me outline the story of the Revd John Wesley, the initiator of a renewal movement which has become a church tradition, one which now finds itself in some 138 countries round the world and has over 80 million members.

Born in 1703, John Wesley was one of the nineteen children of the Revd Samuel Wesley and Susanna Annesley, of whom only ten survived infancy. Susanna's father, the Revd Samuel Annesley, was a Dissenter, one of those who separated – that is, dissented – from the Church of England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not without cost. His daughter, the

<sup>6</sup> FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper 214 (Geneva: WCC, 2013) §53.

<sup>7</sup> SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD, *Synod 2021-2023. For a Synodal Church. Communion – Participation – Mission*, (Rome: Synod of Bishops, 2021). <https://bit.ly/3NYVU7d>  
URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

twenty-fourth of twenty-five children, inherited his independence of thought and spirit. An extraordinary woman in every way, Susanna devoted time to the individual schooling of each of her children, including her seven daughters, and she had a lasting influence on their lives. It is due in no small measure to her that John Wesley came to appreciate the work of women and of lay people in his evolving movement.

The Revd Samuel Wesley senior was also a person of independent mind; not always agreeing with his superiors, or, indeed, theologically and politically with his wife, he eventually found himself appointed to a small rural parish in Epworth, Lincolnshire.

John Wesley was educated at Charterhouse and at Lincoln College, Oxford. While at Oxford, he became involved with a group of serious-minded young men, among them his younger brother, Charles, the hymn writer.<sup>8</sup> They met to study scripture, to pray, and to visit in the Oxford prison. Known as the Holy Club because of its disciplined and methodical way of prayer and life, this group was a precursor for the societies which were to become the basic units in the Methodist movement.

John and Charles, along with their elder brother, Samuel, followed their father as priests in the Church of England. After a period assisting his father in Epworth, John, with Charles, travelled to Savannah in Georgia in 1735, John as missionary and pastor to the British colonists situated there, and Charles as secretary to Colonel Oglethorpe, founder of the colony.

While undoubtedly formative, this was an unhappy time and John returned to England in early 1738, Charles having left after only six months.

## 'The People called Methodists'

It might be argued that the Methodist movement began on the evening of Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1738, when John Wesley found himself attending a meeting in London – he will speak for himself...

<sup>8</sup> Writer of some 6,000 hymns, including *Love divine, all loves excelling; Hark, the herald angels sing; Christ the Lord is risen today.*

*In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.<sup>9</sup>*

This was a life-changing event. His brother, Charles, had experienced something similar some days earlier. Together, they believed that God was calling them '*not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land*'.<sup>10</sup>

The nation was initially England, the church was the Church of England, and the land was wherever they might travel on horseback – or by ship. John Wesley came to Ireland in 1747 on the first of twenty-one visits, the last being in 1789, two years before he died.

Seventeenth and eighteenth century England saw the formation of many societies of one kind or another, a number of them religious and seeking to enliven the moribund state of the established church. The Aldersgate meeting, to which Wesley had gone on that evening, was one such.

The Wesley brothers were very clear in their wish not to separate from the Church of England, but rather to reform and revive it, to be something of a holiness movement within it – *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*, so to speak. Thus, as people came to a living faith through their preaching and that of their associates, societies were formed in local areas for people to gather, to pray, to reflect on Scripture and to build each other up. Members of these societies were instructed firmly by Wesley to continue to attend their local Anglican Church for worship and for the sacraments.

<sup>9</sup> JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Journal, 2, May 24, 1738 in W. REGINALD WARD & RICHARD P. HEITZENRATER (eds.), Vol. 8: *Journal and Diaries*, I, 1735-38 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988) 249f.

<sup>10</sup> JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Minutes of Several Conversations, in Vol. 8 (London: Oakley & Mason, 1830) 299.

From the outset, the movement depended to a very significant extent on the leadership of lay people, mainly, though not exclusively, men. Lay men – and some women – were trained to lead the societies, with some nominated as Wesley’s ‘helpers,’ that is, preachers,<sup>11</sup> while others led small groups which met weekly for members to encourage and hold each other accountable in the things of the faith.

Rules and regulations for these societies were drawn up, as indicated in a document dated May 1<sup>st</sup> 1743, *The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies*.<sup>12</sup> Here, while we read that all that was required to join a society was ‘*a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins*’, this should be ‘*shown by its fruits*’ in a life well lived, ‘*by doing no wrong*’, ‘*by doing good*,’ and ‘*by attending on all the ordinances of God*’.

These societies were regarded as being ‘in connexion’ with John Wesley. ‘Connexion’<sup>13</sup> was the term used by many eighteenth century societies as the means by which there was a wider framework for discipline and devotion.<sup>14</sup> The term is still used to indicate that interdependence and relationship which Methodists enjoy with each other. In time, the term came synonymous for Methodists with ‘church’ or ‘denomination’.

In 1744, Wesley found it desirable to call a meeting of his preachers, consisting of his brother, Charles, and four other Anglican priests, with four laymen later invited to join them. Their business was to determine ‘*what to teach, how to teach and what to do ie. how to regulate our doctrine,*

*discipline and practice*’.<sup>15</sup> Following that event, the Conference, as the gathering became known, was called annually, and was increased in size.

Methodism arrived in America with Irish immigrants in the 1760s and developed along rather different lines. Without ordained ministers, and with the failure of the then Bishop of London to ordain someone to serve those communities, Wesley, believing that ‘bishops and presbyters were essentially of one order’,<sup>16</sup> ordained two men in 1784 to serve in America.<sup>17</sup> In time, an episcopal pattern became established, much to Wesley’s displeasure.

Mission outreach from each of these two polities has led to a situation where, on the world stage, there are Methodist churches with Bishops and others with Presidents of the Conference.<sup>18</sup>

The subsequent history of the Methodist movement would be a fascinating, and lengthy, detour – a temptation to be resisted! Suffice it to say that, following the death of John Wesley in 1791, the movement became more ‘clericalized’ (to use a familiar word!), women were restricted in their ministry and leadership and the movement in Britain became divided around a variety of issues – *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose!* The twentieth century, however, saw a resolution of many of these issues and ‘the people called

11 The Methodist church still uses the term ‘local preacher’ to describe trained and accredited laypersons who lead worship and preach in a given society or group of societies (a circuit).

12 JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 9: *The Methodist Societies. History, Nature and Design*, RUPERT E. DAVIES (ed.) (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989) 69-75.

13 The old spelling of the word ‘connection’ and still used by many Methodist Conferences.

14 Cf. METHODIST CHURCH IN BRITAIN, *Called to Love and Praise*, (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999) 32.

15 JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, in HENRY D. RACK (ed.), June 25, 1744, Vol. 10: *The Methodist Societies. The Minutes of Conferences* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011) 124ff. See also, JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Minutes of some late conversations between the Rev Mr Wesleys and some others, in 1744, in Vol. 8 (London: Oakley & Mason, 1830).

16 JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Journal, 6, January 20, 1746 in W. REGINALD WARD & RICHARD P. HEITZENRATER (eds.), Vol. 20: *Journal and Diaries*, III, 1743-54 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991) 112.

17 JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Journal, 20, September 2, 1784 in W. REGINALD WARD & RICHARD P. HEITZENRATER (eds.), Vol. 23: *Journal and Diaries*, VI, 1776-86 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995) 330 and 497 (Diaries).

18 Each form is found in Europe – Britain, Ireland, Italy and Spain are ‘Presidential’; there are four United Methodist Conference with bishops – Nordic and Baltic, Germany, Russia and Southern Europe and North Africa.

Methodists' legally became one under an Act of Union in 1932.<sup>19</sup>

## Conferring

The Methodist story indicates something of how many of the usages and practices of Methodism derive from its societal origins.

The Methodist/Roman Catholic International Commission noted this in its 2006 report as it reflected on ecumenical dialogue as an exchange of gifts<sup>20</sup> and on what one communion might offer another – a pertinent matter as already noted...

*Some of these ecclesial elements and endowments stem from Methodism's societal origins. For instance, Methodism is endowed with the connexional principle whereby local congregations or churches are visibly united in communion, watching over one another in love through the Conference. Methodist remain committed to Christian conference as a way of discerning God's will for the Church, both as an agent of authority and as an initial sign of reception. Another consequence of the societal origins of Methodism is the prominent role of lay people in the Church. Methodism has always been dependent on the contribution of trained lay preachers and lay leadership remains a hallmark of local Methodist churches. Furthermore, lay people are empowered by their baptism actively to participate with ordained ministers in the Church's instruments of authority. Theologically, Methodism's reliance upon the contribution of lay people rests on the conviction that the Holy Spirit generously bestows gifts upon the whole people of God for the sake of the Church's ministry and mission. In obedience to the Holy Spirit, the Christian community is called to discern particular spiritual gifts among its members. While some may seek ordinations as presbyters and deacons, many more are called by God to employ their spiritual gifts as lay people ...Theological reflection has led Methodists to conclude that the Church's mission is properly carried out by the whole people of God, lay*

19 As little divides Christians quite as much as music, a new hymn book, with 984 hymns from all the strands of Methodism was published in 1933: *The Methodist Hymn-Book* (London: Methodist Conference Office, 1933).

20 The description of ecumenical dialogue by Pope John Paul II.

*and ordained together... .*<sup>21</sup>

The Constitution of the Methodist Church in Ireland similarly states that

*...every member of the Church is equal in spiritual privilege, has the same access to God through Christ, and is charged with the duty of establishing His Kingdom upon earth. The knowledge of this spiritual equality in the Methodist Church has led to the recognition of laypersons as being of equal status with ministers in all the Courts of the Church.*<sup>22</sup>

Thus, when an annual Conference gathers, there are, in principle and usually in practice, equal numbers of ordained and lay persons with equal right to confer and to vote. Conference membership is made up of both women and men.

The Conference is the church's legislative body, responsible for its ordering and for the definition and interpretation of doctrine. The President of the Conference is elected from among the ordained. This happens by nomination and by vote of the whole assembly, both ordained and lay. Many Methodist Conferences have a lay Vice President or a Lay Leader.

Conferences are, however, more than simply a means for the administration of a national church community. They represent how collective decision-making is an essential part of being church for 'the people called Methodists.' Wesley, and those who followed him, recognised the strength which comes from such decision-making by a body of people who are in a relationship of mutual accountability. 'Conferencing' is part of Methodist history and tradition. It is how we 'do' church. Listening well and respecting the views of others is how we reach consensus and make decisions.

21 JOINT COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church*. Report of the International Commission for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council, (Lake Junaluska, NC: World Methodist Council, 2006) §115.

22 THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND, *The Constitution of the Methodist Church in Ireland. Manual of the Laws and Discipline of the Methodist Church in Ireland*, 2004 (revised 2011) 4. <https://bit.ly/3OYvjbq> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

This 'conferring' is not confined to the Conference, however. At all levels of the Methodist Church, lay people are involved in decision-making. At local level, in each society and group of societies, the ordained minister will chair a Church council (by whatever name) which will be comprised almost wholly of laypersons. They will make decisions in respect of their society or societies, in keeping with the connexional practice and discipline, as established by the Conference.

### Principles and practice

'The world is my parish,'<sup>23</sup> declared John Wesley, and the Methodist way of being church is to be found in some 138 countries, expressing itself through many cultures and in many languages – *Il mondo è la mia parrocchia*.

However, it is important to note that principles of leadership and decision-making which operate satisfactorily in one place may be challenging, for a variety of reasons, to implement in another. This is to acknowledge cultural and national diversity rather than to judge.

While preparing for this presentation, I listened to the experience of people from various Methodist conferences in Asia, Africa, South America and Europe. It would be invidious to identify them, but those who reflected with me were very conscious of issues round decision-making and of the involvement of lay persons in that process.

1. A senior ordained person in a large Methodist Church on the African continent commented that, though the polity of his church was based on that of the British Methodist Church, the culture in his country was significantly different.

'There is' he said, 'an aura round high ordained offices in the church which discourages lay participation.'

23 "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation". JOHN WESLEY, *The Works of John Wesley*, Journal, 3, June 11, 1739 in W. REGINALD WARD & RICHARD P. HEITZENRATER (eds.), vol 19: *Journal and Diaries*, II, 1738-43 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990) 67.

His church does have a lay Vice President, but s/he only chairs when the President is 'unavoidably absent'.

That said, he noted that, in principle, the Conference is 50% ordained, 50% lay, however, 'the principles and the operational realities do not always match'.

Many roles in the church are open to lay people, he told me, 'were we to implement what is written'. However, he added that lay people are more involved in decision-making at local level.

2. A senior ordained leader in a South American country told me that the National Council of the Methodist Church in that country has a lay Vice President.

There are eight annual Conferences, each of which has equal representation of ordained and lay. He observed that the Methodist Church in a neighbouring country has historically been presided over by a lay person.

While observing that progress has been made on the inclusion of lay people, of women and of youth in leadership roles, he acknowledged that 'We can improve in this direction!'

3. A young minister from an Asian Methodist Church told me that, while lay leaders play an important and essential role in worship and mission as well as in church activities at local level, the Conference of his church has only 20-30% lay people. He was not sure how much of a voice the Conference lay leader actually has. He observed that there is a growing generation gap at all levels and that the church is now trying to position more lay leadership. 'They know the time has come for some change and that they need to have more balanced numbers'.
4. A young minister from a European Conference pointed out that social and economic factors can significantly affect how a church operates in terms of organisation and decision-making. He observed wryly that his church is in danger of becoming clericalised against its wishes on purely practical grounds - many lay people have

less free time than they have had previously and they may have irregular working hours.<sup>24</sup>

**The Present Age**

But how do Methodists confer when they cannot meet in conference? Any reflection on ‘*servicing the present age*’ cannot avoid taking account of what the last two years have done to church community life and its organization. For those with a synodal approach, new ways of communicating and conferring have needed to be created, with appropriate protocols. It is an on-going process.

The Methodist Church in Britain has drawn up recommendations for conferring and decision-making online, acknowledging that ‘*conferring is a means of grace – a gift from God though which we discern, together, God’s presence and purpose for today*’.<sup>25</sup>

It is noted, however, that ‘*it will still be a matter of judgement as to whether more complex business should be deferred until conferring at physical gatherings becomes possible, or whether, as experience of conferring virtually or in hybrid ways develops, trustees can appropriately undertake such business*’.<sup>26</sup>

In Ireland, we too have needed to move online and establish protocols for conferring and decision-making. My guess is that this thinking and strategizing has needed to happen – and is happening – widely.

The British document concludes with a pastoral reflection which neatly sums up the Methodist position on synodality...

*Our current situation is an invitation to remember how we Methodists view our lives together, rooted in how being a ‘Connexion’ has at its heart a distinctive understanding of loving, mutual and interdependent relationships. This quality of relating to one another embraces all our diversity and is enriched by that.*

*It enables us to discern God’s voice and God’s will. It makes our decision-making compassionate and informed. It forms a key part of our witness to the world about God’s grace, revealed in Jesus: but glimpsed also in our common life.*<sup>27</sup>

A good place with which to conclude is with words of Charles Wesley, through whose hymns Methodists have learned – and continue to learn – their theology.<sup>28</sup>

*Christ, from whom all blessings flow,  
Perfecting the saints below,  
Hear us, who thy nature share,  
Who thy mystic body are.  
Join us, in one spirit join,  
Let us each receive of thine;  
Still for more on thee we call,  
Thou, who fillest all in all.*

*Closer knit to thee, our Head,  
Nourished, Lord, by thee, and fed,  
Let us daily growth receive.  
More in Jesus Christ believe.*

*Move and actuate and guide;  
Divers(e) gifts to each divide;  
Placed according to thy will,  
Let us all our work fulfil;*

*Sweetly may we all agree,  
Touched with loving sympathy;  
Kindly for each other care;  
Every member feel its share.*

*Many are we now and one,  
We who Jesus have put on:  
There is neither bond nor free,  
Male nor female, Lord, in thee.*

*Love, like death, has all destroyed,  
Rendered all distinctions void;  
Names and sects and parties fall,  
Thou, O Christ, are all in all.*<sup>29</sup>

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

27 *Ibid.*, 5.

28 Cf. GEORGE HERBERT – From “The Church Porch”: ‘A verse may find him who a sermon flies/ And turn delight into a sacrifice’.

29 CHARLES WESLEY, *Methodist Hymn Book 720 / Hymns and Psalms*, (London : Methodist Publishing House, 1983) 764 / *Singing the Faith*, (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2011) 676.

24 Those to whom I spoke were all ordained persons as it was their contact details which were available to me.

25 THE METHODIST CHURCH (in Britain), *Conferring and Decision-Making during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Reflections and Guidance*, 2. <https://bit.ly/3IJDsid> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

26 *Ibid.*, 3.



**JAMES HAWKEY AND JORIS GELDHOF**



Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

JH · Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey and Chaplain to Her Majesty The Queen Thursday · 17 March 2022  
 JG · Professor of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven, Belgium

## A Presentation of *Sorores in spe* and Its Hermeneutical Presumptions

### 1 A Brief Historical Situation of *Sorores in spe*

Much has been written on Leo XIII's Bull *Apostolicæ curæ*, and the responses to it. The responses began, of course, with a lengthy letter from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York entitled *Sæpius Officio*, in which the Archbishops painstakingly responded in detail to the negative judgement on the question of Anglican Orders, whilst also introducing their own critique of the document's theological method. "In overthrowing our Orders" the Archbishops wrote, "he [the Pope] overthrows all his own, and pronounces sentence on his own Church."<sup>1</sup>

Since then, most scholarly engagement with this text and its judgement has focussed on addressing historical inaccuracies and inadequacies, questions relating to form and intention, and since *Unitatis Redintegratio* and the emerging ARCIC process,<sup>2</sup> a thoroughly changed context in which Catholics and Anglicans have rediscovered an intimate family likeness, and developed a rapprochement of theology and practice.

The document,<sup>3</sup> *Sorores in spe* does not directly address questions of historicity or historical context, which have been explored in much detail elsewhere, for example, in the Anglican

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Benedictine Dom Gregory Dix's *The Question of Anglican Orders* and more recently in Bill Franklin's centenary volume of essays published in 1996.<sup>4</sup> However, the Malines Group's work on this subject certainly has engaged with these issues, not least during its 2015 meeting in Boston, with papers on the sacramentality of the Church, the role of memory and tradition, the Catholic faith and apostolic succession, and indeed the reception and heritage of *Apostolicæ curæ*. One of the papers on that occasion argued that the Anglican ordinal, judged as defective by Pope Leo in terms of 'form', should be seen as but one voice amongst many within a broader humanist conversation about rites and orders prior to and during the Reformation and Counter Reformation periods. No less an authority than St John Fisher believed that the imposition of hands alone, and not the porrection of the instruments, was the essential form of the sacrament of order.<sup>5</sup> A deeper study of history may well still help us wrestle with this topic.

However, *Sorores in spe* springs from the entirely 'new context' in which Catholics and Anglicans now find themselves, to quote the

1 *Sæpius Officio* XX, *Sæpius Officio. The reply of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Letter Apostolicæ curæ of Pope Leo XIII* (London: Church Literature Association, 1977) 39.

2 See <https://bit.ly/3ONH6tp> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022 for the full library of ARCIC texts.

3 The full text is available in English, French, Italian, Spanish and German on the website of the Malines Conversations Group: <https://bit.ly/3yGC0JT> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022. References to the text will be made through the numbers of individual paragraphs.

4 R. WILLIAM FRANKLIN (ed.), *Anglican Orders: Essays on the Centenary of Apostolicæ curæ, 1896-1996* (London: Mowbray, 1996).

5 See RICHARD REX, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) 134-135.

Final Report of ARCIC I, formally endorsed by Cardinal Willebrands in 1985.<sup>6</sup> The Malines Conversations Group has been working since 2013 on the relationship between the reality of life and the truth of faith. Why is it that what we have come to say about one another theologically is so frequently not represented in practice? *Sorores in spe* represents a kind of harvesting of the extraordinary levels of agreement represented by the ARCIC process, and the profound insights of the liturgical and ecumenical movements in the twentieth century which our churches share.

## 2. Title and Content of *Sorores in spe*

The title of the document comes from an inscription on the joint tomb of two English queens in Westminster Abbey. The half-sisters, Mary and Elizabeth Tudor, both daughters of King Henry VIII, lived and reigned during some of the most turbulent years of the sixteenth century. Mary is well known as a deeply pious Catholic monarch, whilst Elizabeth is often described as England's first Anglican queen. Despite the personal, political and religious animosity which characterised their relationship, they were eventually buried in the same tomb on the instruction of King James I, Elizabeth's successor as monarch. James had more than a passing interest in the reunion of Christendom, and as if to explain the implicit symbolism in their joint burial, he commissioned an inscription in Latin on the base of the monument which reads,

*Partners in throne and grave, here we sleep*

*Elizabeth and Mary, sisters in hope of the Resurrection.*

The drafters of the document and the members of the Malines Group decided that an allusion to this could be very helpful. St Paul VI, in his sermon at the canonisation of the Forty English Martyrs in 1970, spoke hopefully of the day when the Catholic Church would be able "to embrace her ever-beloved sister in the one authentic

communion of the family of Christ."<sup>7</sup> Our two churches – with their common roots, and a substantially shared life of faith and service – still live in hope of the Resurrection, a genuinely united ministry through, with, and in Christ *caput et corpus*, alongside one another.

*Sorores in spe* explores how this relates to the question of Anglican Orders in four sections. Whilst it is a deeply theological document, it is not written to be appreciated by professional theologians alone. The first section offers a short history of Anglican-Catholic relations from 1896 onwards. Beginning with the process which culminated in *Apostolicæ curæ* and *Sæpius Officio*, a section on the Malines Conversations (including Dom Lambert Beauduin's famous essay *L'Eglise Anglican: Unie non Absorbee*), it moves to discuss the achievements of ARCIC and IARCCUM, and finally celebrates an ecclesiology of symbols. Since Pope St Paul VI famously gave his episcopal ring to Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966, prior to the first meetings of ARCIC, pectoral crosses, stoles, rings, and most recently a crozier head, have been presented as gifts by Popes to Anglican clergy. Frequently underplayed in formal reflection, this narrative offers a mutually illuminating counterpoint to the formal theological dialogue, which in the words of our document, "reveals a different, deeper reality about mutual recognition which extends beyond the brusque, negative judgement of ordination rites in 1896."<sup>8</sup> The section closes with a question which is formational for the rest of the document, "Can statements which were made about one another's life and identity prior to our rediscovery of such a deep and shared sense of identity and mission, still be deployed as if such growth in mutual recognition, both explicit and implicit, had not taken place?"<sup>9</sup>

The second section is a journey into the hermeneutics of tradition and salvation. More

6 See The Final Report of ARCIC I, *Ministry and Ordination*, 17, <https://bit.ly/3Pkse5w> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

7 <https://bit.ly/3Anfhnt> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

8 *Sorores in spe*, 5.

9 *Sorores in spe*, 6.

about the methodology of this section will be said below, but in many ways this is the ‘engine room’ of the whole document. Harvesting the insights of the ecumenical and liturgical movements, with a substantial series of reflections on the Second Vatican Council, *Sorores in spe* argues that these developments, faithful to the tradition, provide a hermeneutical key for understanding the depth of the new and shared context in which Anglicans and Catholics now know one another. La nouvelle théologie and wider ressourcement currents in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century themselves offered a new kind of language which finds a ready home in the ARCIC process, and which offered a richer and broader lens through which to consider questions including apostolic succession, the foundational reality of baptism, and the topic of priesthood. Our document argues that the topic of ordination should best be analysed through a soteriological lens, rather than relying on one or other more reductive epistemologies. This, we suggest, is a faithful reading of the challenges and opportunities laid down in the documents of Vatican II.

The third section of *Sorores in spe* addresses the essentials of Church, Eucharist, and Ministries. Note the order here: there is an implicit suggestion that Church precedes ministry, and that ministry can only be understood within a wider ecclesiological landscape. This section explores the *lex orandi* of both our communions. Catholics and Anglicans have experienced substantial liturgical reform since 1896, and the Anglican rites of ordination (whilst each member church of the Communion has its own rite) have undergone their own renaissance in the spirit of both the liturgical and ecumenical movements. Indeed, prior to the publication of the *Common Worship Ordinal* in the Church of England, the Chairman of the Liturgical Commission sought the views and advice of Catholic liturgical scholars teaching in Rome. There is now a close correlation between Anglican and Catholic rites, the inner logic of which can be sensed in the consensus expressed in the joint statements of ARCIC on ministry, ordination and eucharist. But perhaps

even more importantly, when seen within the context of the preceding section, *Sorores in spe* pointedly concludes that when there is such a shared pattern of liturgy, eucharist and devotion in ordination rites, “one must conclude there is such a density of sacramental grace that a narrow focus on the question as to whether the form and formula of the ordination rite are precisely correct can actually obscure the mystical reality of what is taking place.”<sup>10</sup> This refers, in the words of St Thomas Aquinas, to that which is the enunciated reality itself, rather than that which is simply enunciated about it (*actus autem credentis non terminator ad enuntiabile sed ad rem*).<sup>11</sup> Throughout the Malines Group’s discussion of these questions, and throughout this document, there has been an insistence that the lived experience of Christian sacramental life must be one criterion by which we judge contested questions.

Importantly, this section does not ignore the reality of the ordination of women as deacons, priests and bishops in many parts of the Anglican Communion. Anglicans are painfully aware of the language of ‘new obstacle’, as articulated by Pope St John Paul in 1994.<sup>12</sup> Anglicans also hope that Catholics appreciate our language of reception, and the theological seriousness with which many Anglican provinces have approached this question. But *Sorores in spe* articulates how the specific historic and contemporary injustice on orders in general terms needs to be addressed before our churches engage on the important topic of ministry and gender. To quote the document, “The fact that women can, in most Anglican provinces, now be ordained, does not in itself mean that the Pope’s condemnation of 1896 must be applied to the present situation.”<sup>13</sup> In short, it is clear that we need a robust, honest and theological dialogue about gender in general, and how gender and ordained ministry relate in particular, but the introduction of a subsequent

10 *Sorores in spe*, 19.

11 ST II-II q. 1, art. 2, ad. 2. Cf. *Sorores in spe*, 21.

12  <https://bit.ly/3yIkRzD>  URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

13 *Sorores in spe*, 20.

further question does not render the primary question invalid. *Apostolicæ curæ* operates on its own ground. And it is that ground that *Sorores in spe* seeks to question. We have grown together in a way which makes the judgement of 1896 untenable on theological and historical grounds, but also in the lived reality of ecclesial and sacramental life. From an Anglican perspective, the negative judgement of 1896 was deeply problematic on grounds of theology and history, but it also failed to appreciate the reality of what was (by then) nearly 350 years of sacramental ministry in Anglican England.

The fourth and final section of *Sorores in spe* introduces two examples of ecumenical progress and the healing of history which would have seemed impossible within the theological worldview of the late nineteenth century. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation is the first of these, illustrating how new insights and a shared language can overcome earlier doctrinal condemnations. The second is the ecclesial recognition by the Catholic Church of the Assyrian Church of the East, and the subsequent judgement that the anaphora of Addai and Mari (which contains no *ad litteram* institution narrative) should indeed be considered a 'valid' and genuine Eucharistic Prayer. Here, the ability to get beyond particular forms of words and therefore to reconcile what had appeared to be a fundamental liturgical anomaly, reveals an extremely flexible application of Catholic theological categories *for the sake of the Church's unity*. Put differently, effective sacramental life can be a sign of authentic ecclesiality, rather than the other way round. It is this effective sacramental life – already part-attested to in that language of grace amongst churches and communities not in full communion with the Holy See celebrated in *Unitatis Redintegratio* – which is another basis for the reconsideration of the negative judgement of 1896. The contemporary life of a particular church is fundamental for assessing that church's apostolicity. And it may well be that a re-examination of the tautologous language of

'ecclesial communities' would be a very helpful step on the road.

As well as the basic conclusion of this document relating to the condemnation of Anglican ordinations, and what this text believes to be the unsustainable theological position of 1896, *Sorores in spe* also suggests that "the implied judgement that the apostolic succession of the Church of England was lost at the Reformation should be re-examined in the light of contemporary ecclesiological and liturgical understandings of the variety of means by which apostolic succession takes place within authentic traditions of Christian life and worship."<sup>14</sup> The image of 'walking together', so confidently espoused by Pope Francis and Archbishop Welby, compels us to an honest re-evaluation and celebration of one another's ecclesiality. As long ago as 1980, Pope St John Paul II praised the methodology of ARCIC as one which would scrutinise together "the great common treasure, to clothe it in a language at once traditional and expressive of the insights of an age which no longer glories in strife, but seeks to come together in listening to the quiet voice of the Spirit."<sup>15</sup> We are no longer nourished by 'enmity and controversy' but by a common life in Christ. We suggest that the implications for a fresh consideration of Anglican ministry are profound and transformative.

### 3. The Hermeneutical Presumptions of *Sorores in spe*

Thoughts about the hermeneutical principles which led us when we were drafting *Sorores in spe* can be said to center around two big clusters. These clusters have to be seen as complementary and cumulative, i.e., they mutually reinforce, undergird, and also nuance each other. It is even possible so see some overlap between both. The first cluster is the inspiration and wisdom drawn from the Liturgical Movement, in particular its

<sup>14</sup> *Sorores in spe*, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Address of John Paul II to ARCIC I, Castelgandolfo, 4 September 1980, available at: [📄 https://bit.ly/3nTMijz](https://bit.ly/3nTMijz)  
🕒 URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

conviction that it is not only possible but also very enriching to construe a theology based on the *lex orandi* or liturgy of the Church. The second cluster is the enormous legacy of the Second Vatican Council, which is not primarily something of the past but something for the future. We will subsequently discuss each of these two clusters. They both consist of four dimensions.

Two times four is eight. Eight is a number which in Christian symbolism refers to the idea of renewal through the redemption of creation. The seven days of God's creative activity and sabbath rest are complemented by the eighth day of renewing everything. Eight means the recapitulation of the entire universe – including all future, present and past generations of its inhabitants – to make it pass through the gates opened by the resurrection, and thereby bring it to completion. The ultimate goal of ecumenism is also to make the militant and peregrinating Church pass through those gates and to present to God an unblemished offer.

However, before entering too much into eschatological speculations, let us refocus the attention on earthly hermeneutics and human finitude. Notwithstanding this jolt towards normality, it is not without meaning that – in a time which has become addicted to the practical, the available, and the immediate, and which cannot but see opportunism and strategy everywhere – we wrote *Sorores in spe* not only for concrete purposes but also in view of a bigger picture. The contours of that picture may not yet be lucid, but neither are they limiting. From within 'the within' we kept an eye on 'the beyond'. We were aware that what we were doing may be both timely and, strangely enough but healthily, *unzeitgemäss*.

### 3.1 Ample Wisdom from the Liturgical Movement

From the beginning of our work as a group, liturgy, thickly understood – i.e., not as a mere series of ceremonies guided by rubrics but as a genuine celebration of God's saving work – has

been on the horizon of our work.<sup>16</sup> It was not always there as a topic, but it shaped our thinking (and praying) together. Put differently, liturgy was not the bricks and timber we fabricated our house with but the very soil on which we built it. Moreover, as is only logical today, we took care of an environmental-friendly construction and an appealing generous architecture in concordance with the landscape and the climate. We hope that our work will be appreciated as not alienating, let alone polluting, its source. In any case, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Liturgical Movement has constituted for us a major source of inspiration, both theologically and methodologically. Not only what it achieved was inspiring to us, maybe even more so the ways in which it operated.

First, the Liturgical Movement developed a distinctive way of theologizing. It substantially contributed to the awareness that theology is so much more than a scholarly commentary on the authoritative faith formulations of the Church. Theology is not to be reduced to *Dogmatik* and *Dogmengeschichte*, no matter how insightful they are and continue to be. Theology is not the art of proving that Christians are right about God's existence and that the doctrines held by the Church make sense as a consequence of the fact that she has consistently followed in the footsteps of the apostles. By *doing* it herself, i.e. not only by reflecting about it from a distance, the Liturgical Movement showed that the *lex orandi* of the Church, the inexhaustible treasure of its liturgical prayer, is directive of what it thinks and how it thinks. Liturgy is not extrinsic to the faith. It is not the case that there is first faith content, independently, and then a ritual or prayerful expression of it. Liturgy shapes the faith, it is not a mere product, outcome or result of it. Worship is not simply doctrine performed ritually. The Liturgical Movement has (so far) not been able to make undone the consequences of the many abounding extrinsicist and expressivist views on liturgy, treating it always as a graspable and

16 Support for a "thick" theological understanding of liturgy could be found in the work of, among others, Aidan Kavanagh, David W. Fagerberg, and Gordon Lathrop.

controllable thing, but it has shown a way out of many deadlocks. Our text is situated in the wake of the Liturgical Movement's strong ontological-and-theological claims about liturgy.

Second, the Liturgical Movement developed a model of *ressourcement* before that notion became associated with an innovative way of doing theology around the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> There are reasons to assume that what the leading examples of the *ressourcement* movement in French theological circles accomplished, was somehow anticipated by the Liturgical Movement. Its representatives, too, went back to the sources, full of expectations, openly, inquisitively, and self-confidently. They somehow jumped from contemporary concerns right into the depths and riches of early Christianity and found there an abundance of intriguing insights unspoiled by post-Tridentine thomisms and scholasticisms. Scholars and pastors associated with the Liturgical Movement hardly hid their amazement and contentment when they ventured to liberate themselves from conceptual rigidity. They had been trained to swim back and forth fixed distances in a swimming pool, but all of a sudden discovered a lake. They had been told that swimming pools were the only places where to swim safely but they found out that they could perform well in the open air as well.

Thoroughly versed in philology, classical languages, historical criticism, capable of doing rigorous conceptual analyses, *nouvelle* theologians and key figures of the Liturgical Movement, rediscovered solid building stones of the Christian tradition, the richness of which they had hardly suspected. They thereupon developed models of thinking and research which subsequent generations did not have to imitate but could use freely and creatively. In this sense, we consider ourselves as standing on the shoulders of what *ressourcement* scholars and scholars from the Liturgical Movement have accomplished.

Third, as a concrete example of what this implies, one could refer to the Liturgical Movement's unpacking of profound layers of meaning contained in the concept of 'sacrament'. The Latin word *sacramentum* does not simply evoke seven rituals that throughout the vicissitudes of contingent history have come to play a privileged role in Roman Catholicism. It also renders the Greek concept of *mustèrion*, which is itself connected to idea of God's unfathomable counsels and their communication to humankind. *Mustèrion* is moreover connected to the idea that this communication is somehow set forth in history.<sup>18</sup> Revelation and incarnation undeniably have a unique and a singular dimension, but not to the extent that they are confined to one identifiable moment only. They are perpetuated in history, passed on, transmitted, especially in the Eucharist, where gratitude for God's *magnalia* or *mirabilia* is expressed and experienced.

Along with this deep understanding of sacrament as mystery, and mysteries, and mystery/ies interwoven with history/ies, came a resistance to locating the core or the essence of a sacrament in one single moment or thing, although this had become customary in sacramental theology, canon law and ecclesial teaching. *Sorores in spe* wholeheartedly embraces a mystery-filled theology of sacraments and sacramentality. In doing that, we deliberately move away from patterns of thinking which try to establish the certainty of faith on the foundations of an absolute control over material or formulaic details. Instead of focusing on one *causa* causing one effect and one *signum* signifying one res, we have confidence in a multiple, multivariuous and symbolic approach to the sacraments, what they mean, and bring about.

17 JÜRGEN METTEPENNINGEN, *Nouvelle théologie – New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

18 Asexemplary illustrations of this scholarly development one could refer to the historical and theological work of Odo Casel as well as to the fine philological investigations of Christine Mohrmann.

Fourth, the Liturgical Movement was also famous for its dealings with active participation.<sup>19</sup> Much more important for us than some of its interpretations along the lines of liturgical activism, is the reality that liturgy indeed is an encompassing action people are invited to participate in, with their bodies and minds, with their will, imagination, passions, intellect, and desires, i.e., with their entire existence, as whole persons. Active participation is unthinkable without an integrative and holistic anthropology; the latter should even promote the former, and vice versa. Active participation is equally unthinkable without a participatory action. In line with what has been said above, the quality of that action is not surprising: it is the work of salvation as concentrated in the paschal mystery, with its universal significance and its singular connection to Jesus Christ. *Sorores in spe* is yet another voice in the choir singing the song of active participation. Its sound is profoundly theological, and it does not play a false ideological note.

### 3.2 The Lasting Legacy of the Second Vatican Council

Vatican II has been an unparalleled historic event. It was so much more than a gathering of responsible church people discussing contemporary concerns. It was not a business meeting with an agenda preparing future policy. In addition, it cannot be properly assessed and appreciated today according to the stereotypical opposing tendencies of continuity and discontinuity with tradition. Vatican II itself *is* tradition. It is part of the long chain of ecclesial gatherings through which something of God's will is passed on to humanity. Correspondingly, we have worked with Vatican II as a point of reference not primarily because of the beautiful texts it produced, but because of its being a

theological and ecclesiological event of sorts.<sup>20</sup> In a way, even if this makes not much sense from a purely chronological point of view, Vatican II was for us a, maybe the, source to which to turn in a true *ressourcement* mode. Itself calling for an *aggiornamento* through *ressourcement*, it delivered us fresh and living water, so dearly desired by deer (cf. Ps 42). Hopefully we won't become a hunted game ourselves, however, to the extent that by drinking and showing where we drunk we naturally let our guard down. Let us hope that our vulnerability will turn out to be our strength.

First, Vatican II emphasized a dynamic, symbolic and dialogical understanding of revelation.<sup>21</sup> Revelation is more about the act of revealing, *revelatio*, than about the promulgation of revealed things, *revelata*. It is God's self-communication in such a way that human beings can grasp it, not fully, but sufficiently, and always provisionally. It is not that one can see everything once the bride's veil is lifted, but it is enough to seal a mystery of love and fidelity. Revelation, moreover, is all about the subtlety of transparency, which helps one remove any obstacles caused by obscurity or, worse, obscurantism. Christ's light doesn't tolerate hiddenness. Revelation shows light in dark places; it assists, supports and accompanies when a way out must be found. God's revelation is there not for its own sake but for the liberation of people from different kinds of enslavement. Revelation saves, redeems, emancipates, enlightens, manifests, clarifies, indicates, educates, shows etc. This outstandingly verbal instead of substantive understanding of revelation, along with its underlying communicative, dialogical, and dynamic theology, replacing a substantialist or essentialist metaphysics, was a great source of inspiration for us.

19 JOZEF LAMBERTS (ed.), *The Active Participation Revisited – La participation active: 100 ans après Pie X et 40 ans après Vatican II* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004).

20 JOHN O'MALLEY, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MS: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008); GERALD O'COLLINS, *The Second Vatican Council: Message and Meaning* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014).

21 AVERY DULLES, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).

Second, and similarly, Vatican II's ecclesiology helped us immensely in finding a theological language adapted to different layers or spheres of ecclesiality. There has been a time in Roman Catholicism when it was almost natural to understand the reality of the Church as constituted solely by a specific class of people ministering it. This ministering of the ordained clergy was paired with administration and an administrative mentality that permeated the deepest fibers of the church fabric. The church resembled a factory managed by professionals interested above all in the growth of the company and the maximization of profit at the expense of its competitors. As a condition for this, a strict control over the production process as well as over the employees on the payroll, their education and their profile was considered a necessity. There wasn't too much room for continuous formation, let alone time for creating a safer work environment and a more pleasant atmosphere on the floor. Diversity, if at all allowed, was mistrusted rather than embraced; pluralism was a threat instead of an opportunity. In sum, it seemed as if the economy of salvation was taken over by single-issued officials. The Church offered services but did not really serve. Or, in the language of the liturgy, it offered services but did not really celebrate. There was a mass production, but not a genuine Eucharistic enthusiasm. Fortunately, Vatican II helped clear the way so that a veritable enthusiasm for the Eucharist could be developed (again). This created options for reconsidering important themes including consecration, communion, community, unity, harmony, real presence, (sacramental) grace, etc. The attention Vatican II had for a Eucharistic ecclesiology was an important motivation for our drafting of *Sorores in spe*.

Third, and more specifically, this was the case particularly for some thoughts about Christ's *triplex munus*. Christ's being and acting as Priest, Prophet, and King greatly shapes the theological imagination when it reflects on important issues and wants to structure variegating ideas. Sharing in Christ's threefold office turned out to be a particularly powerful pattern when we tried to

think about the relationship between common priesthood and ministerial priesthood. The differences between these two do not run parallel with the distinction between laity and clergy, and baptismal priesthood is always already sacramental, royal and prophetic. Moreover, priesthood is both presbyteral and sacerdotal, and it is not just by becoming a priest that one shares in the Church's priesthood. Sharing in priesthood and priesthood as something to share became important focuses of our ideas. We accordingly deepened ideas on deacons and bishops as well, about the pastoral nature of all kinds of priesthood and about the many and divergent ways this reality is lived, explained and experienced, not only by ordained priests but also by other members of Christ's Body.

Fourth, the Second Vatican Council gave rise of course to one of the most comprehensive liturgical reforms in the history of the Church, many of which have arguably not yet been brought to completion.<sup>22</sup> It comprised not only a revision of the books, the rubrics, the prayers and the texts, but a reconsideration of the whole sacramental infrastructure of the Church. It was neither window-dressing nor the building of a new construction. Both the foundations and the façade were tackled; it was in fact a major remodeling of the entire palace, including the gardens. With respect to the reforms of the rites of ordination, this specific room was even done twice, and twice thoroughly, actually; the first time already in 1968, the second time in 1991. The revision of the liturgical books incisively affected the Church's self-understanding. It profiled the role and the meaning of the bishop as well as that of the gathering of the assembly; it was no longer focused on handing over symbols of power but on entrusting chosen people with a special mission.<sup>23</sup> There came an accent on sharing, giving and testifying. All of this and so much more greatly inspired us when we were writing *Sorores in spe*.

22 KEVIN W. IRWIN, *What We Have Done, What We Have Failed to Do: Assessing the Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II* (New York / Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2013).

23 For a comprehensive commentary, see SUSAN K. WOOD, *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000).

4. Concluding Thoughts

In this short essay, we have tried to present something of both the content and style of the document *Sorores in spe*. The document’s methodology has been shaped strongly by the theological renewal currents of the twentieth century, and seeks to break down any perceived boundaries between theo-logy and practice, liturgy and life. Its reliance on the work of the liturgical and ecumenical movements, and on the ecclesiological and sacramental insights of the Second Vatican Council make it a document for our own time. It is our belief that a reassessment of the negative

judgement of 1896 is essential on several grounds, including basic justice and theological integrity, before further work is done on broader questions relating to the ordained ministry.

It is also our sense that an unlocking of this issue could helpfully lead Anglicans



Rev. Dr. James Hawkey delivering his speech at the Study Day

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and Catholics towards a richer, more honest, and more robust ministry together in the world, as we learn to harvest the essential implications of the rich theological language

we so rightly and frequently have learned to use of one another.



**STUDY DAY ON SORORES IN SPE**

**“SISTERS IN HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION”**  
A FRESH RESPONSE TO  
THE CONDEMNATION  
OF ANGLICAN ORDERS (1896)

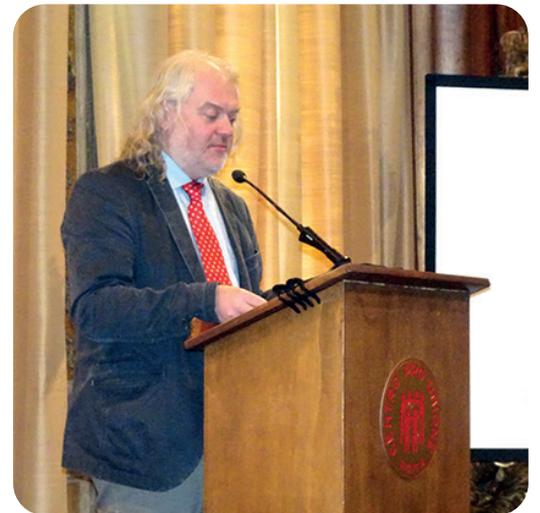




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Prof. Joris Geldhof during his talk

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**THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN** ◀ |

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology, University of Nottingham, UK

Thursday · 17 March 2022

## Locating Contemporary Catholicism in Relation to *Apostolicæ curæ*: What It Can Tell Catholics about Themselves

**O**ne of the most damaging deficiencies in the training of clergy in the nineteenth century was a lack of historical understanding and openness in the historical sense –

Yves Congar.<sup>1</sup>

Few documents – particularly those which are legal decisions handed down by the papacy as the supreme legislative authority within the Catholic Church as distinct from teaching documents such as *Rerum novarum* – from the pontificate of Leo XIII continue to be a source of actual discussion among theologians today, but *Apostolicæ curæ* (13 September 1896) [AP] is one such document. The document's direct object was an issue outside the boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church, and in that respect – in a very different world today from 1896 with regard to relations with other churches – it continues to be a source of rancour, on the one hand, and an encouragement, on the other hand, to those who find distasteful the ecumenical endeavours that began officially in the Catholic Church in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

I well recall at the time of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Britain two reactions to his participation in the liturgy in Westminster Abbey on 17 September 2010. The first occurred a day or two before the visit was to begin when an Anglican theologian expressed disgust at the prospect because it would be 'a fraud unworthy of Christians.' To this theologian the challenge that Archbishop Williams should put to the pope was: 'Am I a brother bishop in a sister church or a confused layman who administers a religious organisation based on Christian principles?'

1 YVES CONGAR, "Moving towards a Pilgrim Church" in A. STACPOOLE, (ed.), *Vatican II: by those who were there* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986) 129-152 at 143.

2 On this movement, and the key role played by the Centro Pro Unione, see THOMAS F. STRANSKY, "The foundation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity" in Stacpoole, 62-87.

### MEDIA

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For otherwise, no one was calling a spade a spade. Worse, while the papal actions in the Abbey might give the impression of fraternity and mutual respect between churches (rather than between 'a church' and what the Vatican refers to as 'an ecclesial community'), the legacy of AP, re-affirmed with complete certainty every time a man in priest's orders in the Anglican communion was ordained 'absolutely' in the Roman Church, was sending the very opposite message. Such 'doublethink' bespoke of the world of lies and was a case of Christian false witness. A couple of days later, and just after the liturgy in the Abbey, I found a message on my phone from a Roman Catholic priest – known to me as one who actively rejected the initiatives of Vatican II across the board – which ran something like this: 'the BBC commentator has just announced that the Pope is wearing Leo XIII's stole. That's a signal: he's telling them they are frauds, they're

only firing blanks!<sup>3</sup> I do not know what the pope wore, whether it has been worn previously, or even if the BBC had so announced it: I recall the anecdote to illustrate the level of latent passion, hurt, and bitterness that are linked to that legal judgement. Given this interest, paying attention to AP is an important part of theological discourse today lest the work of the Gospel, that we credibly present to humanity the vision of love and unity that is the Christ's will for the whole community of the baptised, be compromised. Here lies the importance of the work that has led up to the production of *Sorores in spe*, and the explorations that it is, in turn, generating within the churches.

From that perspective, it is useful for Roman Catholics – and I write as a Catholic – to reflect on what AP might tell us about where we are today in relation to 1896, and ask ourselves if we have anything to learn from the shifts in human and ecclesial culture that have taken place in the century and a quarter since its appearance. I am not concerned, directly, with the letter's question – the validity or otherwise of Anglican presbyteral orders, nor with the ecumenical situation today, but rather what AP might tell us about ourselves as Catholics and how we might need to own or disown what it tells us. If we can learn from it, this, in turn, may help in ecumenical discussion.

<sup>3</sup> This commonly heard terminology among Catholics in Britain can be traced to a story (whose authenticity I have been unable to establish) regarding a meeting between the Anglican chaplain aboard a Royal Navy warship and Thomas Gilby op (the Roman Catholic chaplain, and later famous as the chief editor of the 61-volume bi-lingual edition of Aquinas) during the Second World War. The Anglican wished to reserve the sacrament but did not have tabernacle; Gilby did; and so the Anglican asked if he too could avail of it. Gilby replied that this was not up to him but governed by naval regulations. The perplexed Anglican asked if the navy had any interest in such matters. Gilby cited the regulation that 'live [i.e. ammunition with warheads] and blank ammunition [which is used for practice, makes noise, but does not actually effect what a gun is there for] must not be stored in the same magazine.' Whatever, the origins of the story I have heard it so often that I consider it to be the conventional wisdom among many Roman Catholic clergy on AP. The theology of the eucharist implicit in this story may deserve study as a means of identifying some of the factors that impede ecumenical progress. To the objection that one cannot examine a possibly apocryphal story theologically, I would point, by analogy, to the value of the study of early Christian apocrypha (e.g. the *Protevangelium Iacobi*) as a means of understanding the developments in early Christianity.

## What is history?

All Christian theological statements have an historical dimension in that they invoke a connection to Jesus of Nazareth, the Judaism to which he belonged along with its history, and the documents produced by his early followers. Some churches, which consciously see themselves as part of a tradition, invoke historical material as accumulated wisdom, evidence of continuity, genuine growth and evolution, and as a guarantee of their authenticity. And a few churches, who see themselves as living corporate personalities almost transcending history to the extent that they contain within themselves their history, are so embedded in that history that the lines between historical 'fact' and theological 'assertion' become almost indistinguishable. The Roman Catholic Church falls clearly within this third category. The pope is the 'successor of Peter' and Peter and Paul are here in Rome such that its bishops come to this city '*ad limina apostolorum*'; the claim of the papacy is that Peter is the first pope; and the authority of Pope Francis is that he is Peter today in a direct line of succession. It is this 'historical dimension' of Christianity – irrespective of what contemporary historical scholarship might say about these historical claims – that makes the question of how the author of any specific Christian document understood / understands history a basic question for theological understanding.

So how did the late nineteenth century, and in particular Roman Catholic theologians, conceive history? The starting point is to note the positivism that characterised most history writing in the period. The past was a closed set of facts, and to the extent that these could be known, they could be described. One could, potentially, have an encyclopaedia of all known facts. Thus there would be a 'definitive history' of this kingdom, that church, or that period of warfare. It might not be complete – evidence might be lost, too obscure to understand, or simply not there – but one could make the best of what one had, seek out more, and then write the 'real history.' The endeavour needed would be prodigious, 'drudgery divine' as one writer described their labour,<sup>4</sup> but such 'great historical enterprises' resulted in monuments of

<sup>4</sup> See JONATHAN Z. SMITH, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

scholarship before which we still stand in awe.<sup>5</sup> We have but to name the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, the *Patrologia Latina* and *Graeca*, or the great encyclopaedias and collections such as Pauly-Wissova, Hastings, the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, or the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* to see this desire to collect, document, and arrange all the remains of the past – a belief at its apogee in the 1890s – to see a vision of history as approaching a complete knowledge of the past. This spirit was captured in the Preface to the first volume of *The Cambridge Modern History*, published in 1902, in this expression of confidence:

Ultimate history cannot be obtained in this generation; but, so far as documentary evidence is at command, conventional history can be discarded, and the point can be shown that has been reached on the road from one to the other.<sup>6</sup>

Such a certainty about the past surprises us – the past is a foreign country<sup>7</sup> – and it might alert us to how foreign is the intellectual world of AP with its certainty that it had ‘ultimate’ control of the facts relating to events in the sixteenth century.

However, while the authors of AP could not be immune from a sense of history, they saw themselves as theologians rather than historians and so we might ask how their theological perception may have influenced their historical work in AP? Until well into the twentieth century Catholic ‘dogmatic theology’ – the clue is in the name – was a deductive endeavour. Everything that was needed for a knowledge of salvation was known: we had the revelation of God in its fulness, even if we did not fully understand it. This notion of complete possession of all we

needed to know was not confined to Catholicism. Among Protestants it tended to take the form of the notion of the sufficiency of Scripture: if it was religiously significant, it is already there in the Bible, and ever better scholarship would unearth it. Among Catholics it was the confidence that in the *Depositum fidei* was a completeness of revelation, a process which ended ‘with the death of the last apostle’ (itself a positive historical fact), from which could be deduced by those authorised (in the light of the [first] Vatican Council this was, *de facto*, the pope) all that was needed. Indeed, in Vatican I’s definition of infallibility – a logical quality of arguments – there was an assertion, *de facto*, that theology was a wholly deductive endeavour: it was the processes of deduction that were spared the dangers of false inference (i.e., fallacy), and so error, by this unique Petrine gift. When this deductive vision of theology encountered the notion of complete history, the result was an illusion of a one-to-one correspondence between statements of faith and specific events in time; and whenever this correspondence, in either direction, broke down the result was falsehood, heresy, corruption, and sin.

Likewise, there could be no real change in theology due to shifting historical circumstances, but merely variations in the levels of understanding. So to ask if the event at Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35) was ‘the first Mass’ (i.e., the first after the inception of the Mass at the Last Supper) or the ‘the second Mass’ (i.e., counting the instituting Mass – the Last Supper – as a Mass) was neither an anachronism nor some rhetorical device to promote piety, but an historical question underpinned by a theological certainty. More importantly, it meant that in all such enquiries there was little role for open-ended empirical historical research producing what was understood as the historical picture of a time, a movement, or a situation.

Should any new historical discovery be made it was presumed that it either fitted with what was already known or could be dismissed as irrelevant and the product of heretics. We can actually see this process at work in the lifetime of Leo XIII. AP appeared just as the earliest great discoveries were shaking the whole edifice of ‘early church history.’ The first, and for Catholicism the most significant, shock was the publication of the

5 See DAVID KNOWLES, *Great Historical Enterprises; and Problems in Monastic History* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963).

6 ADOLPHUS WILLIAM WARD, GEORGE WALTER PROTHERO, and STANLEY MORDAUNT LEATHES, *The Cambridge Modern History: I: the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902) vi.

7 The image is taken from opening of LESLIE POLES HARTLEY’S novel *The Go-between* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953); and has become more widely known among historians since DAVID LOWENTHAL’S *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

*Didache* in 1886 with information that could upturn their view of the origins of the sacraments;<sup>8</sup> and then the discovery in that same year by Urbain Bouriant of the *Gospel of Peter*<sup>9</sup> which he published in 1892.<sup>10</sup> If the first document might challenge the basis of sacerdotalism within Catholicism, the latter presented a very different memory of Peter to that of 'the first bishop of Rome.'<sup>11</sup>

The reception of these two documents then, and for several decades afterwards, is an index to the relationship of history and theology that forms the world of AP.<sup>12</sup> If those newly unearthed documents were genuine and orthodox, so the argument went, they would be in complete agreement with what was already known – and be superfluous as they would not add anything to our knowledge. If they did present something unknown, then that would be at odds with the *Depositum fidei* and, consequently, must be a work of human invention – and so they must be the products of heretics. Not surprisingly, both documents were found to be the works of heretical or deviant sects (though there was no agreement as to which sect of heretics or when

that sect existed) which had perished.<sup>13</sup> While heresy had a history that could be investigated and discovered; true theology, in the strict sense, had no history.

In such a world, that the settled position of bishops over a period of three hundred years – when they had treated Anglican orders as void and manifested this by ordaining men such as John Henry Newman as if he had been ontologically a non-priest until 30 May 1847 – could be up-turned was inconceivable. History confirmed inherited positions rather than brought them into question. This position, under the heading of AP's understanding of tradition, was explored some years ago by George Tavard who came to the conclusion that 'Leo XIII was trapped in the theology of tradition with which he was working.'<sup>14</sup> One could say exactly the same with regard to his relationship to history: Leo and virtually all of his collaborators were trapped within the view of history through which they sought to make sense of the past, and one which was inadequate to cope with the complexity of historical evidence.

Their most obvious deficiency was that within their deductive notion of truth, there was virtually no place for empirical enquiry: the principal role for such enquiry within their understanding of historical research concerned what we would call a 'documents search' as conducted by searchers working for lawyers – and this sort of enquiry is noted in AP.<sup>15</sup> But historical research as understood within modern western culture is a radically empirical endeavour through which we seek answers to our questions on the assumption that any answer is an approximation from necessarily inadequate sources read across a cultural chasm. In terms of their view of rationality, history is an inductive rather than a

8 See THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (London: Baker Academic, 2010) 1-5; within months editions / translations had appeared in German, French, and English.

9 See BART D. EHRMAN and ZLATKO PLESE, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 371-377.

10 URBAIN BOURIANT, "Fragments du texte grec du livre d'Énoch et de quelques écrits attribués à saint Pierre," *Mémoires de la mission archéologique française au Caire* 9,1 (1892) 91-147 at 137-142; and then a fuller study with facsimiles in M. ADOLPHE LODS, "Reproductions en héliogravure de manuscrit d'Énoch et de écrits attribués à saint Pierre," *Mémoires de la mission archéologique française au Caire* 9, 3 (1893) 1-61 and plates I to XXXIV. As with the *Didache*, this was soon followed by translations and studies in German and English.

11 See FREDERICK LAPHAM, *Peter: The Myth, the Man and the Writings – A Study of Early Petrine Text and Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).

12 See THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, "Reactions to the *Didache* in Early Twentieth-century Britain: A Dispute over the Relationship of History and Doctrine?" in STEWART J. BROWN, FRANCES KNIGHT, and JOHN MORGAN-GUY (eds.), *Religion, Identity and Conflict in Britain: From the Restoration to the Twentieth Century. Essays in Honour of Keith Robbins* (Farnham: Routledge, 2013) 177-194.

13 This notion continued to affect the study of the *Didache* until well into the twentieth century through the influence of FREDERICK ERCOLO VOKES, *The Riddle of the Didache: Fact or Fiction, Heresy or Catholicism* (London: SPCK, 1938). Details of the various late datings of the *Didache* can be found in THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, "Reactions to the *Didache*..."

14 GEORGE H. TAVARD, "Apostolicæ curæ and the Snares of Tradition," *Anglican Theological Review* 78 (1996) 30-47 at 47 (and see, especially, 37-38).

15 AP, n. 5.

deductive endeavour. That Catholic theology had to struggle in this move from the certainty of deduction to the different kind of certainty that related to inductive knowledge is a well-known trail that occupied much of the first half of the twentieth century: we have only to look to the work of Bernard Lonergan to see how he had to ground empirical endeavours within his overall epistemology<sup>16</sup> to observe just how different our world is in relation to that of Leo XIII. But we need to remind ourselves that in other areas of theology we have now left that deductive world firmly behind and embraced modern historical methods.

The first explicit case of empirical historical research offering an alternative, albeit *sotto voce*, to the inheritance was the reformed rites of Holy Week in 1955.<sup>17</sup> Here a central ritual was refashioned as a deliberate result of taking seriously how historians within the Liturgical Movement, building on a century of research, evaluated the inherited liturgy and then changed it. While the fact of the extent of the change, both in the 1950s and again in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, might have been played down and elements of continuity emphasised – or at least asserted – the reality of empirical investigation was undeniable. The clearest evidence of this is the now very obvious role that history plays in most academic studies of the liturgy. There has been a similar, if more dramatic, acceptance of history within biblical studies. Having spent most of its first five decades rejecting the central role the ‘historical-critical method’ played within modern biblical studies, the Pontifical Biblical Commission did a complete *volte face* in 1964 in its ‘Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels.’<sup>18</sup> In the same year, Pope Paul VI’s great

encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*, appeared.<sup>19</sup> What few notice is that it expects that theological progress will take place with the assistance of empirical historical investigation led by open-ended questions.<sup>20</sup>

While it would be facile to imagine that the older deductive approach has disappeared or that a genuine contemporary view of history is to be found in every document produced by the Holy See or popes writing in their private capacity as theologians, it can safely be said that there is now a complete historical rupture, and in this case this entails an even more significant theological rupture, between statements of the *magisterium* today and that of the time of Leo XIII. When Karl Popper introduced his criterion of falsification – thus rendering our statements inherently open to improvement or rejection through the acquisition of new evidence,<sup>21</sup> he was giving epistemological form to the core notion that inspires historians: tomorrow we might have to revise this statement because we have new evidence, evidence better understood, a better understanding of what we are doing, or because we have different questions we need to pose of the past.

The famous sonorous conclusion of AP would seem to be as clear a statement regarding a matter of history as one can get – and has been so read by many Catholics:

We decree that the present Letter and all of its contents cannot at any time be attacked or impugned ... .. it shall be now and for ever in the future valid and in force ... .. and we declare null and void any attempt to the contrary which may be made wittingly or unwittingly ... by any person, by any authority, or under any pretext whatsoever ... ..<sup>22</sup>

16 BERNARD LONERGAN, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London/New York/Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957) 33-102.

17 See R. KEVIN SEASOLTZ, *The New Liturgy: A Documentation, 1903 to 1965* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966) 209-18.

18 Its formal title, following Vatican convention, is “*Sancta mater ecclesia*”; however, it is invariably known as “The 1964 Instruction” and is most conveniently found at: <https://bit.ly/3R7Zuic> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

19 Found at: <https://bit.ly/3nlfxWk> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

20 See THOMAS O’LOUGHLIN, “Fifty Years after *Ecclesiam suam* and *Sancta mater ecclesia*: the practice of the historical disciplines within the practice of theology,” *New Blackfriars* 99 (2018) 312-31.

21 See KARL R. POPPER, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Routledge, 1959) 78-92.

22 AP, n. 40.

Here is 'history' – unchanging facts! Moreover, this has that clear quality as rhetoric that makes it appealing: 'no ifs, ands or buts'; 'a piece of plain speaking' that can be said 'to call a spade a spade.' However, rhetoric apart, it assumes that in a finite matter regarding contingent historical events, one can conclude with a level of certainty as to some past event akin to the non-temporally affected certainty found in some branches of mathematics. In 1896 the basis of AP's decision was that it had made a careful historical investigation of the facts. However, as we understand history today – a view of history now formally accepted within Catholicism – we cannot consider those investigations as the work of historians.<sup>23</sup>

So perhaps the first lesson we Catholics might draw from a study of AP is that we need to be aware of how our understanding of what we are doing when we investigate the past has changed, fundamentally, since the mid-twentieth century. This implies that we cannot engage with documents such as AP as if it were a document produced within our intellectual culture; to do so would be a form of fundamentalism, namely imagining texts from previous cultures can be understood to share our intellectual framework.

### Sacramentality and Law

It is so obvious that AP is not a teaching document but a legal decision, that it often goes unsaid – and, consequently, un-noticed. But if we do not see this as yet one more document produced by lawyers within a framework of legal practice, we are apt to endow it with a theological significance it is unable to bear and, in truth, should not bear. Bishops and their legal apparatus were, indeed are, continually involved in deciding issues relating to the sacraments in the blunt 'yes / no' manner needed to operate practically any complex organisation: it is, in a sense, their stock in trade. The government of the church must continue, and this requires decisions which are then simply acted on rather than subjected to yet further rounds of debate and questioning. Is that marriage valid or can it be

annulled? Can that nun have permission for X? Has that priest faculties for Y? How many Masses are due in relation to a legacy of money to a priest for the celebration of Masses?<sup>24</sup> Many of these decisions are then brought forward to a higher court by way of appeal, and the highest court – indeed supreme legal authority – is the Holy See. We can see AP, therefore, as the pope acting as the highest judge in the final court of appeal. The decisions originally taken by Cardinal Pole, confirmed by later judges in that they did not overturn them, now come for a final decision – and this was given on 13 September 1896 and was to be duly promulgated.<sup>25</sup>

We must do justice to this necessity presented to Leo XIII – a man with a long familiarity with dispensing judgements as a civil magistrate in the Papal States prior to becoming pope – and give him credit when he acted in this manner rather than as a theological authority *in persona Petri*. This necessity can be seen in this anecdote. In the late-1970s an elderly Catholic gentleman died and left a legacy of £1500 to 'the Parish Priest for the time being' of his parish, at 'the normal rate for stipends at the time of my death.' The solicitor looking after the estate contacted the Parish Priest and asked him 'agree to carry out this request and send him a receipt for the money and specify the number of Masses.' The Parish Priest had qualms about the whole notion of more Masses meaning greater access to greater mercy.<sup>26</sup> He proceeded to write long catechetical letters explaining the theological difficulties in what was proposed. This made the lawyer furious: he was not the least bit interested in theology, but had a job to do: to discharge the will. If the Parish Priest was being uncooperative, he would seek a higher judgement

24 For a valuable example of how the shifts in historical method shape theological appreciation, see JOHN BALDOVIN, "Mass Intentions: The Historical Development of a Practice [Mass Intentions - Part One]," *Theological Studies* 81 (2020) 879-891; and "Mass Intentions: Twentieth Century Theology and Pastoral Reform," *Theological Studies* 82 (2021) 8-28.

25 AP, n. 41.

26 On such clashes between approved lawful practice and theological probity in the context of ecumenical discussion, see THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, "Sacramental Languages and Intercommunion: identifying a source of tension between the Catholic and the Reformed churches," *Studia Liturgica* 47 (2017) 138-150.

23 Incidentally, it is this shift in the methodology of history that makes FRANCIS CLARK'S monumental study *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (second ed., London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1967) far less valuable than the claims made of it by many who cite it in support of the decision of AP as being historical 'definitive.'

and contacted the bishop. The bishop's reply was short and *decisive*: there would be 300 Masses (£5 per Mass), with himself, his two secretaries, and the twelve canons of the cathedral each saying 20 Masses. The lawyer replied that his wife was able to have a Mass said for £3 and his duty to the estate was to get the best value for the estate: to whom should he appeal? By return of post, the bishop replied that on further consultation with his chancellor, the rate would now be £3 and (avoiding complex remainders) each priest would celebrate 34 Masses. The processing of the will was concluded, the monies dispensed, the Masses said. The day-to-day work of the sacramental government of the church proceeds. We have to approach AP from this practical standpoint.

There is a sense of finality in every decision by supreme courts – whether that is in the Vatican, Washington, or, more recently, in London. The debate and disputes are over: life moves on! A contingent matter – and all such matters are historical – has been judged and the judge's word is final. This sense that 'cases' (*causae*) need practical resolution is captured in the dictum: *Roma locuta, causa - a legal dispute - finita*. However, we need to appreciate that the finality inherent in a legal system is not the same as the completeness aimed at in an investigation of the past and especially one involving matters of faith and worship where, of its nature, there is an incompleteness of understanding and language. If a court is asked to pronounce on the validity of a marriage, it not only can gather a wide variety of evidence and question that evidence in the time and culture of the judgement – the constant judicial attempt to get a thorough examination to the facts, but its judgement needs finality so that life can move on. If there is deemed to have been no marriage, an annulment can be promulgated (which is done in the name of God), and one or both parties is free to marry within the Catholic Church. Despite the rather grandiose terms invoking the certainty of the divine name – so distasteful to many in view of our memory of the rejection of such invocations of the holy name judicially in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:34-37) – the certainty is a wilful, assertive certainty: 'we deem it to be so,' rather than the certainty we might derive from complete knowledge. This willed certainty is necessary in any living courtroom: someone wants to remarry and a judgement of nullity allows this. Similarly,

a bishop wants to know what to do with a man ordained as a priest within the Anglican Church who now wants to serve as a presbyter in the Roman Catholic Church: AP gives the bishops a clear decision that he is to be ordained unconditionally.

However, while such precision in legal matters is essential in any society where the rule of law is part of the society – and Leo XIII considered the Catholic Church such a society per excellence<sup>27</sup> – this does not mean the conclusion is correct (in absolute truth) but only that there is an implicit certainty in every judicial action in giving the sentence. In a jury trial, the judge might personally be convinced of an accused's innocence, but must act on the assumption that the jury's verdict of guilty is correct. Even when the witnesses can all be questioned and cross-questioned, and every form of evidence collected, judicial processes err – and we are all too familiar with cases of miscarriages of justice that were only rectified after decades. But law needs its own functional certainty. However, when the evidence is several hundred years old, and we do not have certainty as to whether those who collected the evidence were seeking it for this process or simply seeking a 'quick fix' for a problem, and, moreover, there is a suggestion within the system that the existing judgements should stand, then we cannot see the judgement as having anything other than this wilful value.

But how was such a legal notion of judicial certainty in sentencing allowed to have such prominence in so complex a matter as the validity of someone's ordination? Firstly, we Catholics are so habituated to this understanding the mysteries of faith, the seven sacraments, through the patterns of rubrics and canon law that we forget that the law is secondary to the realities being celebrated, and while these actions have definite legal effects (e.g. the children of a marriage are legitimate) and are regulated by law, they are not creatures of the law. Law follows on sacraments in reality, even if in performance of individual rituals the celebrant is bound to follow the law regarding his/her performance. This limitation of law has been alluded to down the centuries with

<sup>27</sup> This has been explored by YVES CONGAR in "Moving towards a Pilgrim Church," pp. 141-142 and fn. 22 (pp. 149-150).

such dicta as '*sacramenta propter homines*' or '*salus animarum lex suprema*.' Secondly, we Catholics tend to imagine and locate our liturgical events within an overall legal vision. Baptism is a 'pre-requisite' for the other sacraments and makes the baptised person a subject of canon law. There is an obligation to attend Mass on specific days. That man and that woman are free to marry, and so the wedding takes place. Under which conditions can the Sacrament of the Sick be celebrated and by whom and for whom? Has someone faculties to hear confessions? In each case, we hardly distinguish the action from the legal context, and we imagine event/ celebration / sacrament as 'there / not there' in the manner of a legal action. This approach, inherent in AP, has been problematic for the Catholic Church for centuries, but has come to the fore since the reform of the liturgy and the awareness that there is a vast gulf between a valid minimal performance of someone who, in the older language, intends 'to administer the sacraments' and someone who celebrates the liturgy as part of the pilgrim People's journey. This famous statement from the United States' bishops: 'Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations weaken and destroy it.'<sup>28</sup> To someone working within the legal vision, this is meaningless – indeed some see it as proximate to heresy as skirting close to a position of *ex opera operantis* with regards to one or more of the seven sacraments. However, to anyone involved in the actual liturgy in a worshipping assembly of the People of God it is no more than stating the obvious. These two perspectives constantly clash – and they can bedevil ecumenical discussions – and we Catholics need to attend to this problem within our liturgical perception.<sup>29</sup> Observing this difference between the necessary certainty of a legal system can help us understand some of the more blunt assertions regarding AP. Here is an example: in 2015 Cardinal Robert Sarah, former

Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments wrote:

[I]n the Anglican church is it not actually the Eucharist because there is no priesthood. ... [A] Catholic cannot receive communion in the Anglican church, because there is no Communion; there is only bread. The bread is not consecrated, because the priest is not a priest.<sup>30</sup>

Here a statement, that was formulated within a legal notion of certain, is read in an absolute manner such that the actual reality of an act of worship, *coram Deo*, by which a community of the baptised seeks to offer thanks to the Father in the manner of the Christ is declared a non-event. But this reduced an actual celebration of the mystery of our participation in the divine life to the parameters of the administration of a ritual with a legal structure: it is a simple confusion to make, but it does not do justice to the complexity of our theology; and, more importantly, it traduces our recognition of the vitality of worship, a gift of the Spirit, when 'two or three gather in [Jesus's] name' (Mt 18:20).

Whenever we Catholics are tempted to imagine that the mysteries can be described in such an 'open / closed case' manner, or even more unworthily described in terms of 'reality / sham' or by analogy with live / blank ammunition in a warship's magazine, we might recall that the actual reality of worship, from whatever source, can only be known eschatologically in the very depths of the divine by 'the Father who see what is done in secret' (Mt 6:5-8). This distinction between legal and the 'fuller' reality of our thanksgiving sacrifice is eloquently recognised in the 1993 letter from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger:

I count among the most important results of the ecumenical dialogues the insight that the issue of the Eucharist cannot be narrowed to the problem of 'validity.' Even a theology oriented to the concept of succession, such as that which holds in the Catholic and in the Orthodox church, need not in any way deny the salvation-granting presence of the Lord.

28 BISHOPS' COMMITTEE ON THE LITURGY, *Music in Catholic Worship* (Washington, DC: USCC, 1972) 6. This statement had a complex evolution in three other documents: *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebration* (1968); *Music in Catholic Worship* (revised ed., 1983), and *Sing to the Lord* (2007). See the commentary in EDWARD FOLEY, *A Lyrical Vision: The Music Documents of the US Bishops* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009) 22, 32-33, 43 and 61.

29 See THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, "Sacramental Languages...", especially pp. 148-150.

30 This can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3OYAEPW> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022. I am grateful to Prof. John Baldovin sj for drawing my attention to this statement.

If the actions of Lutheran pastors can be described by Catholics as ‘sacred actions’ that ‘can truly engender a life of grace,’ if communities served by such ministers give ‘access to that communion in which is salvation,’ and if at a eucharist at which a Lutheran pastor presides is to be found ‘the salvation-granting presence of the Lord,’ then Lutheran churches cannot be said simply to lack the ministry given to the church by Christ and the Spirit. In acknowledging the imperfect *koinonia* between our communities and the access to grace through the ministries of these communities, we also acknowledge a real although imperfect *koinonia* between our ministries.<sup>31</sup>

Reality – we might say with thankfulness – is richer than the world of law.

A second lesson we Catholics might draw from our attention to AP is that Catholic theological discourse, broadly defined, occurs in a very complex space of discussion and dialogue. It does not use a single ‘language’ but many at the same time. Legal language has a special place with its own grammar – it is always ‘*hodie*’ to the lawyer – and has a very specific set of problems to answer. Historical language is limited just to this day, but it seeks as best it can to speak of a day that is now long past. While the language of the liturgy must be open in a radical way and we must always reckon with the reality of mystery – even the terminology is inherently contradictory – and has an ontological lack of closure because ‘The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit’ (Jn 3:8).

## Creeping infallibility

It is often said that one of the accidents of the First Vatican Council was that there was a creeping infallibility such that every statement of the papacy is given a worth as if the Petrine office were akin to an oracle giving access in its

every word to the truth. This also happens when we take statements – and all language-acts are finite, incomplete and at best we can hope for their having some *adequatio rei intellectus* – of a moment and imagine that these utterances have an absolute value. This matter is further complicated in the case of AP by this statement from Cardinal Ratzinger:

With regard to those truths connected to revelation by historical necessity and which are to be held definitively, but are not able to be declared as divinely revealed, the following examples can be given: the legitimacy of the election of the Supreme Pontiff or of the celebration of an ecumenical council, the canonizations of saints (*dogmatic facts*), the declaration of Pope Leo XIII in the Apostolic Letter *Apostolicæ curæ* on the invalidity of Anglican ordinations.

The context of this statement – so frequently quoted by those who are critical of ecumenical endeavours that AP is to be treated as an infallible statement – is rather complex. It is stated in a commentary by the Prefect upon a paragraph in a formal profession of faith which reads:

With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.<sup>32</sup>

So, we have a commentary, with a certain authority, upon statement, with a certain authority, which forms part of a larger statement which is to be treated as authoritative, but is itself part of the discipline imposed upon certain members of the church in accordance with law. Since un-picking the exact status of this comment would require a very specialist knowledge of canon law, it seems simpler to treat the whole edifice as if it were an infallible statement – which is then assumed to be equivalent to accepting or not-accepting the Church, and to being inside / outside the Church, and indeed to have the clarity of truth / falsehood. Certainly, there are many who find Catholicism

31 “Briefwechsel von Landesbischof Johannes Hanselmann und Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger über das Communio-Schreiben der Römischen Glaubenskongregation,” *Una Sancta* 48 (1993) 347-351 at 348. Once again I am indebted to Prof. Baldovin for drawing my attention to this passage and for the translation given here.

32 The commentary was issued on 29 June 1998 and the Profession of Faith was promulgated *motu proprio* by Pope JOHN PAUL II on 11 May 1998. Both documents are to be found together on the Vatican’s website at <https://bit.ly/3yjFRLH> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

repulsive who would find such a reading – here are their worst suspicions confirmed; while there are many within the Catholic Church who likewise welcome such arguments as putting ‘clear water’ between Catholics and ‘others.’ Religious belonging, indeed faith itself, can easily be construed in such binary terms and become the weaponized stuff of culture wars. Such ‘doctrinal clarity’ attracts a certain sector of the Church today just it did many in the Church in the 1890s who called for similarly clear water between the re-emerging Roman Catholic Church in Britain and the Church of England. However, it also attracts readers, and advertising, to magazines and websites, and this distorts our dialogue within the Church. While the megaphone and the tweet are the tools of a certain type of adversarial politics, they cannot be the methods of community who are bound in love as sisters and brothers (cf. Col 3:14). If we abandon that perspective, then we are no longer Christian searchers after truth, but simply religious protagonists whose behaviour contradicts the faith we claim to hold and defend.

There is also another strain of creeping infallibility less pugnacious in form, but equally liable to lead us towards a confusion and false certainty. The argument runs that ‘to be on the safe side’ (*ad cautelam*) we give the benefit of any doubt to the notion that here is true teaching which is to be held to be irreformable. Now this form of rationality is not inherently false: such ‘fail safe’ procedures are common in our everyday life. Electricians assume all wires are live, and so protect themselves, until the opposite has been positively established; likewise, those who work in biohazard areas in hospitals adopt the worst case scenario as their starting point – and this is the correct procedure in both cases. However, when it comes to matters of faith we cannot proceed in a similar manner for to do so would involve assuming that, since we can never be wholly certain what is not the case, that every statement ever made has an absolute quality. This procedure we find risible when it is applied to every proposition in the bible; and it is equally risible when applied to every sentence in Denzinger. There is an incompleteness in language, in historical research, and in all matters of faith – because it is faith. The incompleteness of language and history is a function of the effluxion of time and the partiality of human knowing.

But as Christians we need to acknowledge a corresponding theological principle: the whole will only be and be known at the Eschaton when ‘God will be all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28).

So the continued debate over AP may have a third lesson for us as Catholics engaged in theology. We have inherited many structures within our theological cultures – our ecology of religious discourse – that gives us a propensity to collapse our probings into the mystery of faith into a string of propositions whose characteristic quality is their conformity with existing strings of propositions. Rarely is this more limiting that when we examine our liturgical mysteries where these overlap with the intentions of individual worshippers. Then instead of reverent silence presuming the good will of a fellow Christian, we tend to fall back on a mechanical view of language and religious truth: that which our system produces, that is to be taken as the truth. This spangles us in our own pursuit of theological awareness, as much as it limits us in dialogue with other Christians. Indeed, it can lull us into a fundamentalism that is destructive of the endeavour of faith seeking understanding. Likewise, it is a healthy discipline to take that basic lesson learned in biblical studies that every document is to be understood in terms of its genre, context, and (to the extent it can be known) its *Sitz-im-Leben* rather than seen under some all-embracing category such as ‘canonical,’ ‘inerrant,’ or ‘inspired,’ and apply it the documents from the Vatican lest we imagine the magisterium as wholly-encompassing in its relationship with truth.

### History and eschatology

For most of the last two millennia we have sought out ‘history’ as that which grounds our theological enterprise showing it to be well founded, with secure warrants, and in continuity with its origins. Eschatology by contrast was simply the future outcome of this present state of affairs. However, the past century has seen a revolution in the place of history in our understanding of Christianity. One of the most significant developments in historical theology in recent decades has been the turn to plurality. For centuries it had been an axiom of scholarship that we could, and should, keep searching until we had identified a single, consistent original.

This original state – be it a text, a practice, or a belief – would have normative status and from it we could trace changes, additions, subtractions and deviations. Whether these mutations were viewed positively ('developments') or negatively ('corruptions'), they might all be traced back, by a process similar to working backwards along a genetic tree, to a moment in the life of Jesus, to an 'apostolic practice,' to the author's pen of a canonical text, or to a moment when doctrine was not yet subject to disputes arising from mistaken interpretations.<sup>33</sup> But Walter Bauer's work presented consistent and explicit doctrines as subsequent to a range of teaching,<sup>34</sup> David Parker – and others – presented New Testament texts as living responses to situations such that seeking 'the original Greek text' came to be seen as a scholarly idol,<sup>35</sup> and Paul Bradshaw presented early liturgies as initially diverse with a standard 'shape' only gradually emerging rather than the reverse.<sup>36</sup> History now shows just how inherently problematic is any theological statement that is framed, as is that in AP, on past experience. History generates for us questions, not answers.<sup>37</sup>

However, it is eschatology that gives theology as a guide to Christian life its focus. Eschatology

now plays the role once assigned to history as our theological compass and guarantee: the eschaton is wholly future (not simply some ideal state that might occur in the course of time<sup>38</sup>), but it also wholly determines the present. It is at the eschatological moment that the pilgrim journey of the Church Catholic will be complete. Only then will its *koinonia* be complete: the *koinonia* of all the baptised. It is at the banquet in the kingdom that eucharistic action will finally achieve its perfection when, through grace and not as a outcome of our processes be they valid or invalid,<sup>39</sup> 'people who come from east and west and north and south and recline at the table in the kingdom of God' (Lk 13:29). It is only in that moment when the sacramental dispensation will cease that it will have reached a perfection unaffected by human limits and sin. In such a scenario, AP ceases to be a piece of our present reality; it become a period piece that we can use as a foil to remind us of those weaknesses in our own past that need to be overcome. Perhaps reading AP should tell us to replace the role 'history' once played in the arguments we have with one another with a vision representing our hope and eschatology; we can then let the messiness of our past, revealed through historical research remind us of how far all of us, all churches, have to travel as the pilgrim People of God.

33 See THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, "Divisions in Christianity: The Contribution of 'Appeals to Antiquity'" in SIMON OLIVER, et al., (eds.), *Faithful Reading: New Essays in Theology and Philosophy in Honour of Fergus Kerr OP* (London: T & T Clark, 2012) 221-241.

34 WALTER BAUER, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1934) [English version of second edition: *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Lutterworth Press, 1971)].

35 DAVID C. PARKER, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

36 PAUL F. BRADSHAW, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of the Early Liturgy* (second ed., London: Oxford University Press, 2002).

37 I have explored this in more detail in "Time-Sensitivity as a Possible Way through Ecclesial Deadlock with Regard to the Eucharist," *Review of Ecumenical Studies* 14 (2022) 1-11.

38 It is this false view of the eschaton as some ideal future moment in the life of the churches as we experience them that confuses many ecumenical discussions in that they imagine there will be a time of perfect ecclesial harmony (akin to what they falsely image was once the case); see THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, *Eating Together, Becoming One: Taking Up Pope Francis's Call to Theologians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2019) 125-140.

39 RUDOLF KARL BULTMANN made the crucial point with regard to Lk 13:28-9 that a place at the eschatological table is not the outcome of ecclesial practice, but 'rather a miraculous eschatological event'; see *Jesus and the Word* (London: Scribner, 1958) 40-42.



Thomas O'Laughlin speaking at the Study Day

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**WILLIAM HENN · OFM CAP** ◀

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Pontifical Gregorian University, Consultor to the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity **Thursday · 17 March 2022**  
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## Epistemological and Hermeneutical Approaches to Deal with the Resolution of Old Problems Now in a New Context

The dense and richly formulated “Abstract” placed at the beginning of *Sorores in spe* closes with the following final sentence: “Taking into account all of this evidence, both historical and theological, the Malines Conversations Group believes it is time for the negative judgment of *Apostolicæ curæ* on Anglican ordinations to be revised so that our two communions can more fully embrace one another as ‘sisters in hope of the Resurrection.’”<sup>1</sup> Leo XIII must have had some premonition of such a proposal for revision, since he closes his encyclical with the following sentence: “We decree that these letters and all things contained therein shall not be liable at any time to be impugned or objected to by reason of fault or any other defect whatsoever ..., but are and shall be always valid and in force and shall be inviolably observed both juridically and otherwise, by all of whatsoever degree and preeminence, declaring null and void anything which, in these matters, may happen to be contrariwise attempted ... by any person whatsoever, by whatsoever authority or pretext...” (paragraph 40). Obviously we have here two texts which are in plain and open contradiction.

The reason for Leo’s forceful statement just quoted can be found in the whole process that led up to the promulgation of *Apostolicæ curæ* in 1896, which devotes a number of paragraphs to describing the process of reexamining the question of the validity of Anglican orders (paragraphs 3-6) “... so that, through extreme care taken in the new examination, all doubt, or even shadow of doubt, should be removed for the future” (paragraph 4). Therefore, the whole aim of the process and of the text was to arrive at a

1 The English text of *Sorores in spe* can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3afl7YG> ↻ URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022; it is available in four other languages at: <https://bit.ly/3NHQBZG> ↻ URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022. Leo XIII’s *Apostolicæ curæ* can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3nFnPyy> ↻ URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

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definitive judgment. Given the topic assigned for this presentation, it is essential to review briefly the content of Leo’s encyclical.

### A. The Content of *Apostolicæ curæ*

After an expression of pastoral care “for the welfare of the noble English nation” and guided by charity (paragraph 1; cf. paragraphs 2-6). the text recounts that “our predecessors, at the request of Queen Mary, exercised their special care for the reconciliation of the English Church” and that various steps were taken during and after her reign by several popes. They sent Cardinal Reginald Pole and others to England to investigate the question of the validity of Anglican Orders. The documents pertinent to those efforts were newly examined in the process that Leo had initiated, leading up to his judgment in *Apostolicæ curæ* (paragraphs 7-21). The conclusion of the examination of these documents was: “Hence it must be clear to everyone that the controversy lately revived had already been definitely settled by the Apostolic See, and that it is to the insufficient knowledge of these documents that we must, perhaps, attribute the fact that any Catholic writer should have considered it still an open question” (paragraph 22).

From this point on, the encyclical changes direction and focuses on the Anglican Ordinal, particularly in the context of considering the validity of sacraments in terms of the categories of “matter and form” (paragraphs 23-35). He states that the revision undertaken during the reign of Edward VI intentionally eliminated any

clear reference to priesthood (*sacerdotium*) with “its grace and power which is chiefly that ‘of consecrating and of offering the true Body and Blood of the Lord’ (Council of Trent, Sess. XXIII, *de Sacr. Ord.*, Canon 1) in that sacrifice which is no ‘bare commemoration of the sacrifice offered on the Cross’ (*Ibid.*, Sess XXII., *de Sacrif. Missæ*, Canon 3)” (paragraph 25). Leo concludes that the true *sacerdotium* of Christ was “utterly eliminated from the Anglican rite” (paragraph 29). “With this defect of ‘form’ is joined the defect of ‘intention’ which is equally essential to the Sacrament,” which means that one intends to do what the Church does (paragraph 33).

All of which leads to his statement “we pronounce and declare that ordinations carried out according to the Anglican rite have been, and are, absolutely null and utterly void” (paragraph 36). The final paragraphs of *Apostolicæ curæ* state that Leo’s intention has been to appeal to those who “seek with a sincere heart the possession of a hierarchy and of Holy Orders” (37), to affirm that Christ “has made the Church the dispenser, and, as it were, the constant guardian and promoter of His redemption amongst the nations” (38), and to invite “those who are ministers of religion in their respective communities ... who have at heart the glory of God and the salvation of souls,” to courageously be led back to the bosom of their Mother, the Church (39).

## B. Epistemological and Hermeneutical Approaches to Leo’s Encyclical

How is one to revisit *Apostolicæ curæ* in such a way as to facilitate the resolution of old problems now in a new context? While related, the approaches of epistemology and of hermeneutics are not exactly the same. Neither of them is strictly a theological discipline; both have firm philosophical roots. Epistemology concerns the exploration of how human beings come to know; hermeneutics concerns the interpretation of texts, symbols, and practices. Beyond their philosophical use, both can have a theological application, insofar as they can be related to faith. Because of the somewhat distinctive natures of theological epistemology and theological hermeneutics, I will treat them separately.

## B.1 Theological Epistemology

Theological epistemology concerns the “knowledge” of revealed truth. One of the most familiar classical expressions of this is perhaps to be found in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. His path to baptism as recounted in that book required him to come to see that faith is not credulity. Faith can be distinguished from mere opinion because one has discovered sound reasons for accepting the word of a trustworthy authority, which leads to further insight under the guidance of the divine teacher speaking to the mind and heart of the believer. Augustine wrote of the “eyes of faith.” He interpreted the text of Isaiah 7:9 – unless you believe, you will not understand – as meaning that faith precedes knowledge of revealed truth. But the knowledge of faith always remains less than the promised knowledge of that vision which the believer hopes one day to receive. Thomas Aquinas captured this same idea of the provisional nature of faith when he affirmed that the Church *in via* is described as the *congregatio fidelium*, while the ultimate goal of the Church is to become the *congregatio comprehendentium*.<sup>2</sup> Two famous slogans concerning faith, which many other scholastic theologians shared, were: *actus credentis terminatur non ad enuntiabile sed ad rem*<sup>3</sup> and *articulus fidei est perceptio divinæ veritatis tendens in ipsam*.<sup>4</sup> The first means that the believer’s faith is not directed ultimately to doctrinal statements, but to the reality ultimately of what Aquinas called “the first Truth,” namely the mystery of God. The second statement affirms that an article of faith is an authentic perception of divine truth, but the participle *tendens* – tending – means that it remains incomplete.

Of course, these examples of theological epistemology ultimately have firm biblical roots. St. Paul writes of our knowledge being now imperfect; then we shall know even as we are known (cf. 1 Cor 13: 9-12). The letter to the Ephesians, when writing about unity in faith, speaks about the ongoing process of maturing in faith (4:13-17) The gospel of John underlines that the Spirit of truth will be imparted to his

2 THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiæ*, III 8, 4 ad 2.

3 *Ibidem*, II-II, 1, 2 ad 2.

4 *Ibidem*, II-II, 1, 6.

followers so as to lead them into all truth (14:15-17 and 16:13). None of these texts intends to promote a kind of skepticism about the ability of the believer to have a certain grasp of revealed truth; after all Jesus himself is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), full of grace and truth (John 1:14). The rejection of skepticism in relation to Christian faith seems to have been the principle motive behind John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et ratio*. But that text itself quotes St. Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, which concludes with a marvelous passage about how wisdom is revealed by the Holy Spirit: “...seek the answer in God’s grace, not in doctrine; in the longing of will, not in the understanding; in the sighs of prayer, not in research; seek the bridegroom not the teacher; God and not man; darkness not daylight; and look not to the light but rather to the raging fire that carries the soul to God with intense fervor and glowing love.”<sup>5</sup>

If these can be said to be important dimensions of theological epistemology, then it is rather obvious that they are absent from *Apostolicae curæ*. As far as I can tell, *Sorores in spe* makes only one reference to epistemology: “... it makes a difference whether one looks at reality only from the standpoint of a reductive epistemology (i.e. through the perspective of what can be stated with absolute certainty as opposed to what is only probable or possible) or whether one approaches reality through a soteriological lens” (paragraph 12). From an epistemological point of view, Leo XIII’s encyclical seeks to establish two principal points: 1) that the documentation from the activity of popes and papal legates during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century concerning the validity of Anglican Orders concurred in a negative judgment and 2) that the wording in the Anglican ordination rites eliminated references to priesthood and sacrifice. Those points were determined simply by historical investigation and, it seems to me, that they were successfully established by the process initiated by Leo. These two historical facts can be said to have been irrefutably and, in that sense, “definitively” established. But what

is the relevance of such historical data for the validity of Anglican orders? The private letters between popes and legates that had to be found and retrieved from archives surely could not in themselves be of sufficient authority to support a negative judgment about the validity Anglican orders. Would it not be that they indicate only the (private?) judgment of the authors of those letters at the time of their composition? Perhaps the “matter-form” argument – supported in *Apostolicae curæ* with two citations from the Council of Trent – could be a more substantial line of arguing. But one must ask whether such a framework is an adequate or even appropriate way of understanding the sacraments. That question will be explored in the next section on theological hermeneutics. But, for the moment, with no reference to the scriptures and to the early traditions concerning ordination, Leo’s encyclical could hardly be considered adequate for the conclusions it makes, when viewed from the perspective of theological epistemology.

## B.2 Theological Hermeneutics

*Sorores in spe* has an entire section entitled “The Hermeneutics of Tradition and Salvation” with six sections (paragraphs 7-12), although the paragraphs outlining the development of relations between Anglicans and Catholics since the time of the Malines Conversations until today are also of hermeneutical value since they have revealed “an intimate family likeness between our traditions which reveals a communion already shared” (paragraph 4), casting our relationship “in a thoroughly new light” (paragraph 5). The six paragraphs in the hermeneutical section focusing on 1) the liturgy, 2) the relation between apostolic succession and mystery, and 3-5) the three fresh approaches of Vatican II to revelation, the Church as the Body of Christ, and the participation of all baptized persons in Christ’s *triplex munus* as members of the prophetic, priestly, and royal people of God – these do seem to present important liturgical and ecclesiological themes worked out with the kind of approach of theological epistemology that I have tried to briefly sketch out in the previous section of this presentation. The sixth and concluding section to this part of *Sorores in spe* notes that “The Second Vatican Council offers a solid theological and hermeneutical basis for questioning the approach

5 BONAVENTURE, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Book VII, paragraph 6, which is the final paragraph of the work. The English translation here is the one I prefer and is taken from *The Liturgy of the Hours*, Vol. III, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1975) 1536.

and judgment of *Apostoliæ curæ*”, indicating “more generously how God’s grace and salvation are operative in the world” (paragraph 12). How, more precisely, can these important historical and theological developments be applied, as it were, to pope Leo’s encyclical of 1896.

First of all, it would be appropriate to give a brief description of theological hermeneutics in general and of what might be called “ecumenical hermeneutics.” Werner Jeanrond opened his celebrated study of “theological hermeneutics” with the words:

By “hermeneutics” we mean the *theory of interpretation*. The word contains a reference to Hermes, the messenger of the gods in Greek mythology. Hermes’ task was to explain to humans the decisions and plans of their gods. Thus, he bridged the gap between the divine and the human realm. Similarly, hermeneutics is concerned with the examining the relationship between two realms, the realms of a text or a work of art, on the one hand, and the people who wish to understand it, on the other.<sup>6</sup>

Thus one needs to try to understand the framework and intention embedded in Leo’s encyclical. I have chosen to apply Jeanrond’s proposal about interpretation to two of the central themes of *Apostolicæ curæ*: what vision of the Church and what vision of sacraments are at the heart of this encyclical?

**Church:** Leo sees the Church as the Mother (1, 39) whom Christ has established as dispenser of salvation, by means of whose sacraments faithful souls have their sins truly remitted and are restored to friendship with God (37). There is an exclusive identification between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, in the sense that by restoring the true Sacrament of Order as instituted by Christ “the way will be smoothed for the return of Anglicans to holy unity” (3). Gregory Baum, writing about the ecclesiological vision of the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II, comments: “The People of God is one; it is *one* in the sense that there is and can be only a single Church, and one in the sense that the faithful constitute a united human family of which God

is the Father.”<sup>7</sup> That this vision is that of Leo XIII is confirmed by another of his encyclicals of the same year (1896) – *Satis cognitum* – which stresses that the unity of the Church requires especially unity in faith, for which purpose “Jesus chose the apostles, specially designating Peter as the rock on which he would found the church, precisely to provide a living teaching office capable of maintaining the apostolic faith throughout history.”<sup>8</sup>

I hope that this is a fair and accurate hermeneutical interpretation of the vision of the Church in *Apostolicæ curæ*. If so, it is obvious that it can immediately be seen as quite incomplete and even incompatible with some aspects of today’s Catholic ecclesiological teaching and understanding. As John Paul wrote in *Ut unum sint*: “It is not that beyond the boundaries of the Catholic community there is an ecclesial vacuum. Many elements of great value (*eximia*) which in the Catholic Church are part of the fullness of the means of salvation and of the gifts of grace which make up the Church, are also found in the other Christian Communities” (13). “Thanks to ecumenism, our contemplation of ‘the mighty works of God’ (*mirabilia Dei*) has been enriched by new horizons, for which the Triune God calls us to give thanks: the knowledge that the Spirit is at work in other Christian Communities, the discovery of examples of holiness, the experience of the immense riches present in the communion of saints, and contact with unexpected dimensions of Christian commitment” (15).

**Sacrament:** As mentioned above at the close of my presentation of theological epistemology, the most crucial theological part of Leo’s argument seems to be found in the second half of the encyclical (23-35), which recounts the examination of the Anglican Ordinal by the group of experts

7 GREGORY BAUM, *That They May Be One: A Study of Papal Doctrine (Leo XII-Pius XII)*, (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1958) 2. For an account of the gradual changing attitude of official Catholic teaching with regard to ecumenism, see WILLIAM HENN, “Tradition: Catholic,” in: GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT and PAUL McPARTLAN, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ecumenical Studies*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2021) 121-136.

8 HENN, 123. Leo’s encyclical *Satis cognitum* of June 29, 1896, is accessible on the internet at: <https://bit.ly/3ymtQoO> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

6 WERNER G. JEANROND, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*, (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 1.

assembled by the pope and assesses that there has been an essential defect in the form of the rite for ordination. Because of the defect of form, the experts advised the pope to conclude that there is also a defect in the intention to do what the Church intends in the sacrament of ordination. It is noteworthy that only one paragraph speaks of this defect of intention and makes this second defect dependent upon the defect of form: "A person who has correctly and seriously used the requisite matter and form to effect and confer a sacrament is presumed for that very reason to have intended to do (*intendisse*) what the Church does" (33). Therefore, the essential "defect" according to *Apostolicæ curæ* is the defect of form. Clearly the foundation of Leo's judgment is his conviction that what is essential to any sacrament causing it to be effective is the correct presence of the matter and form that pertain to each individual sacrament.

Leo's quotation from the Council of Trent (25) implies that one of his sources – perhaps his principal source for this view of sacraments – is the teaching, in response to the council's attempt to counter positions promoted by some Protestant reformers – that sacraments are effective and necessary in themselves *ex opere operato* and that faith alone is not sufficient (DH 1608). Trent speaks about the "matter-form" framework for understanding sacraments (DH 1671), but it is following earlier official teachings that there are three essential elements for the celebration of any sacraments: matter, form, and the intention to do what the Church intends (DH 1312 in *Exsultate Domine* on unity with the Eastern Churches and DH 1262 on the positions of Wyclif and Hus). An adequate interpretation, as urged in Jeanrond's theological hermeneutic, would seem to result in saying that this is the meaning and background to the view of sacraments as proposed in *Apostolicæ curæ*.

There seems to be some consensus among historians of sacramental theology concerning the origins of this conception. Various positions concerning the number of the sacraments (4, 5, 10, 12) had arisen and Peter Lombard in the XII century had proposed clarifying which of the rites celebrated within the Church could truly

be called "sacraments."<sup>9</sup> His solution was to turn to the matter-form (hylo-morphic) framework employed philosophically to describe the causes underlying any particular reality. The material and formal causes explained the efficacy of a sacrament in bestowing grace, a framework which soon led to the determination that there are seven and only seven rites which can truly be called sacraments. Lombard's *Sentences* became an influential point of reference for later theology and, through theology, also had an important influence on subsequent official teaching about the sacraments.

Sacramental theologians have pointed out at least two significant problems with this view.<sup>10</sup> First of all, the history of the celebration and theological understanding of the sacraments existed within the Christian community for over a millennium prior to the use of this matter-form framework to explain the sacraments. Some have noted that patristic writings (the names of Tertullian and Augustine figure prominently here) have their roots already in both the Old and New Testaments. Second, this matter-form framework tends to cosify the sacraments as relating to their reception by individuals, thus separating them from the saving action of God in the life of the community of believers as a whole.

One example of the insufficiency of this approach can be found in an article by Joseph Ratzinger on the theology of baptism.<sup>11</sup> He notes that the celebration of baptism found in the early

9 See SALVATORE MARSILI, "Sacramenti," in *Nuovo dizionario di liturgia*, a cura di DOMENICO SARTORE e ACHILLE M. TRACCIA, (Cinisello Balsamo: Marietti, 1988) 1271-1285 at 1277; ELISEO RUFFINI, "Sacramentaria," in *Nuovo dizionario di teologia*, a cura di GIUSEPPE BARBAGLIO e SEVERINO DIANICH, (Alba: Edizioni Paolini, 1977) 1353-1375, at 1358-1359; and LOUIS-MARIE CHAUVET, "Sacraments," in *Catholicisme hier aujourd'hui demain*, Vol. 13, G. MUTHONE and G.-H. BASEDEY, (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1993) 326-361, at 333-337.

10 See CHAUVET, 346-359 for what follows in the text.

11 See JOSEPH RATZINGER, "Baptism and the Formulation of the Content of Faith Liturgy and the Development of Tradition", in ID., *Principles of Catholic Theology*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987) 101-112 [orig. *Theologische Prinzipienlehre*, (Munich: Erich Wewel Verlag, 1982) Parte I, Capitolo 2, Sezione I,B].

centuries, with its catechumenate culminating in a rite which involved a dialogue of three parties: the community, the person to be baptized, and God. This celebration of baptism suggested that baptism is most of all a celebration of communion, a much more theologically rich and profound way of thinking about the sacrament of baptism that can hardly be conveyed if one simply thinks of baptism in terms of the matter of pouring water and the form of pronouncing the formula “I baptize you....”

Experts in sacramental theology have demonstrated that many held the conviction that the theology of the sacraments based upon the matter-form framework inherited from the Council of Trent was in profound need of renewal in the twentieth century. The rediscovery of the significance of the *actio liturgica*, of the paschal mystery, of the sacramental nature of the Church as a whole, and of pneumatology – to list but a few themes – all called for a rethinking of sacramental theology.<sup>12</sup> An article by Karl Rahner notes that the theology of sacraments needs to be seen in relation to and integrated with the history of salvation as seen in the Old and New Testaments, with ecclesiology, with Christology-soteriology-theology of grace, and with eschatology. Not once in his article does Rahner mention the matter-form framework for understanding sacraments.<sup>13</sup>

Vatican II’s *Unitatis redintegratio*, paragraph 3, points out that the Holy Spirit makes use of Christian communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church as means of salvation. Such language recognizes a degree of “sacramentality” pertaining to those other Churches. If that is so, could it make any sense to say that the saints and martyrs of these churches were so in spite of the service of their ordained ministers or that their ministry was simply invalid in the sense of being without any effect?

## C. Resolving Old Problems Now in a New Context

The Faith and Order Commission’s study entitled *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels* offers a helpful description of the precise activity of “ecumenical hermeneutics”:

Within theological hermeneutics, *ecumenical hermeneutics* serves the specific task of focusing on how texts, symbols and practices in the various churches may be interpreted, communicated and mutually received as the churches engage in dialogue. In this sense it is a hermeneutics for the unity of the church.<sup>14</sup>

I suspect that a “revision” of *Apostolicae curæ*, as called for in the quotation from the “Abstract” of *Sorores in spe* with which this presentation began, would not be very successful if it amounted to an outright rejection of everything contained in that encyclical. What could be “interpreted, communicated, and mutually received,” as the quotation above from *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels* calls for, from that document. I suppose that the tasks of interpretation and communication could develop some of the points made in the earlier sections of my talk. It is the third task that strikes me a particularly challenging. Is there anything in *Apostolicae curæ* that can be “mutually received” from that text. Regarding the adverb “mutually,” First of all, I think it advisable for the revisiting of *Apostolicae curæ* to include also presentations of the Anglican theology of ordination and of the “validity” of the sacraments, perhaps beginning first of all of the Anglican response to the pope’s encyclical – *Saepius Officio* – mentioned in paragraph 2 of the text by the Malines Conversations Group. What might be “mutually received” in Leo’s text – perhaps his emphasis on the value of consensus in faith concerning ordination, on the Eucharist, and on the relation between the two. These are values in the encyclical which the many decades of fruitful

12 See CHAUVET, 345-347.

13 See KARL RAHNER, “Sacramenti, Teologia dei,” in *Sacramentum mundi*, Vol. VII, a cura di KARL RAHNER, (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1977) 271-276.

14 Paragraph 5; the complete text of *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels* can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3nz91kZ> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022. It is also available in PETER BOUTENEFF & DAGMAR HELLER (eds.), *Interpreting Together: Essays in Hermeneutics*, Faith and Order Paper, 189 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001) 134-160, along with nine essays that were written as part of the work that went into this study.

dialogue illustrate that Anglicans and Catholics share. I suppose that the exclusivist ecclesiology and the matter-form sacramental framework are at the heart of *Apostolicae curæ*. Acknowledging the limitations of these notions, is there any of their aspects that could be held in common, such as the unity and sacramentality of the Church and her role in the divine plan of salvation? Would not Anglicans and Catholics agree with Leo that there are proper ways and actions which condition the correct and efficacious celebration of the sacraments, including the sacrament of ordination?

I have found one of John Paul II's statements particularly helpful in thinking about the value of dialogue in service of unity:

... ecumenical dialogue, which prompts the parties involved to question each other, to understand each other and to explain their

positions to each other, makes surprising discoveries possible. Intolerant polemics and controversies have made incompatible assertions out of what was really the result of two different ways of looking at the same reality. Nowadays we need to find the formula which, by capturing the reality in its entirety, will enable us to move beyond partial readings and eliminate false interpretations (*Ut unum sint* 38).

It seems to me that the call by the Malines Conversations Group to revisit the condemnation of Anglican Orders in *Apostolicae curæ* can be seen as a way of putting into practice precisely what John Paul is calling for in this text. My hope is that their efforts may bear much fruit.



**Morning Session**

**Moderator**  
 Prof. Teresa Francesca Rossi  
 Associate Director, Centro Pro Unione



**"Presentation of Sorores in Spe"**

Rev. Dr. James Hawkey · Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey · Chaplain to Her Majesty The Queen and Chair of the Westminster Abbey Institute

09:30



**Prof. Joris Geldhof** · Professor of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven, Belgium · Chair of the Liturgical Institute and Past President, Societas Liturgica

10:15

Discussion



**"Locating contemporary Catholicism in relation to Apostolicae Curæ: What it tells Catholics about themselves"**

Prof. Thomas O'Loughlin · Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology, The University of Nottingham, UK

10:30

Discussion



**"Epistemological and hermeneutical approaches to deal with the resolution of old problems, now in a new context"**

Fr. William Henn, ofm cap · Pontifical Gregorian University · Consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity · Member of the Faith & Order Commission, WCC and Catholic member of several Dialogue Commissions

12:00

Discussion

13:00

13:00 — 12:00

Lunch



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*William Henn*  
 speaking at the Conference

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Regis College, University of Toronto



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## Sorores in spe: How to Resolve the Remaining Issues

Two categories cited by the Malines document, *Sorores in spe resurrectionis* (“Sisters in Hope of the Resurrection): A Fresh Response to the condemnation of Anglican Orders (1896),” offer hope for progress toward the recognition of Anglican orders by Roman Catholics: soteriological criteria and the category of participation. The first points to an effective ministry that achieves a soteriological effect. The second offers a way forward when assessing ministry as related to offering sacrifice, a category associated with the defect of intention in *Apostolicæ curæ*. In addition, I suggest that a more productive methodology begins with recognition of church and then argues to the efficacy of ministry within a method of correlation. Similarly, discerning apostolicity within the life of the church rather than associating it exclusively with episcopal apostolic succession will assist in resolving remaining issues related to the recognition of Anglican orders.

### Soteriological Criteria

A key insight of *Sorores in spe* is its commendation of a soteriological lens through which to evaluate the “desires, hopes and beliefs” of people (p. 14). In other words, we need to look for the evidence of grace in another communion and then trace that back to the ministry that mediates that grace. From the results of ministry, we can discern an authentic ministry that achieves those effects. Even without a reevaluation of the conclusions of *Apostolicæ curæ* in the light of contemporary Anglican liturgy and theology, both the theology articulated by *Unitatis redintegratio* and the consensus achieved in the *Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification* imply a more nuanced approach to the recognition of ministry, church, and sacrament, not only with respect to Anglicans, but also for other ecclesial communities issuing from the Reformation.

### MEDIA

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### 1. Unitatis Redintegratio 22

*Unitatis redintegratio*'s evaluation of the liturgical life of the separated communities begins with an affirmation of the sacramental bond of unity existed among who have been reborn by baptism, but the document adds that “baptism is only a beginning”, an inauguration directed towards the fullness of life in Christ and the “completeness of unity which eucharistic communion gives” (UR 22). Nevertheless, although UR 22 states that these communities “have not regained the authentic and full reality [*integrum substantiam*] of the eucharistic mystery, especially because the sacrament of orders is lacking (*propter sacramenti ordinis defectum*) [because of the defect/lack of the sacrament of orders],” it goes on to affirm that these communities “when they commemorate his death and resurrection in the Lord’s Supper, ... profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ” (UR 22). This must be read in connection with UR 3, which states, “Our separated brothers and sisters also celebrate many sacred actions of the christian religion. These most certainly can truly engender a life of grace in ways that vary according to the condition of each church or community and must be held capable of giving access to that communion in which is salvation.” Moreover, UR 3 concludes that the Spirit uses these communities as means of salvation.

Significantly, UR 22’s statement that although the ecclesial communities separated from the Catholic Church “have not retained the authentic and full reality of the eucharistic mystery,” the

decree refrains from using juridical language, opting instead for language of fullness, which admits of degrees rather than a binary presence or lack of presence. Neither the eucharist nor ministry can be simply lacking because they both function as a means of grace within these communities in keeping these communities in the faith of the Gospel, in engendering a life of grace, and giving access to that communion in which is salvation. Theological reflection has yet to grapple sufficiently with the implications of a shift from the metaphysical categories of traditional sacramental theology with its accompanying juridical category of “validity” to a perspective that discerns a sacramental reality through its efficacy rather than vice versa. Yet, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, when prefect of the Congregation of the Faith, wrote in 1993 to the Bavarian Lutheran Bishop Johananes Hanselmann, “I count among the most important results of the ecumenical dialogues the insight that the issue of the eucharist cannot be narrowed to the problem of ‘validity.’” Even a theology oriented to the concept of succession, such as that which holds in the Catholic and in the Orthodox Church, need not in any way deny the salvation-granting presence of the Lord in a Lutheran Lord’s Supper.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2. Affirmation of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ)

Second, the consensus reached in the JDDJ likewise implies an efficacy of ministry. The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) adopted a Resolution 16.17 on the Doctrine of Justification, which welcomed and affirmed the substance of the JDDJ signed by Lutherans and Roman Catholics in 1999. Affirmation of this document essentially affirms that the ministry in these communities has kept their members in justifying faith. If there were not efficacy in preaching the Gospel, the Catholic Church could never have arrived at a consensus statement, *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with the Lutheran World Federation in 1999. The similarity between Anglican and Lutheran understanding of the

doctrine of justification is evident in Article IX of the Articles of Religion (1571) as well as the three articles treating salvation, XII “Of Good Works”; XIII, “Of Works before Justification”; and XIV, “Of Works of Supererogation” compared with the Confession of Württemberg (1552) as based on Article IV of the Augsburg Confession (1530).<sup>2</sup>

## 3. The need to move beyond binary thinking and categories

Leo XIII’s negative judgment on Anglican ordinations in his apostolic letter *Apostolicae curæ* is an example of binary thinking. Orders are either valid or invalid, present or lacking. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, on the other hand, does not employ binary thinking in its assessment of the ecclesiality of other communions when it employs the category of communion rather than church membership. Christians and churches are in imperfect or full communion with one another, implying degrees of relationality. The question is whether this approach can also be applied to the recognition of ministry. Can an imperfect recognition of ministry be derived from an a recognition of imperfect ecclesial communion? Is a partial recognition of ministry possible on the way to full communion? I suspect that the primary obstacle to such an approach is the close correlation between a recognized ministry and an affirmation of the substantial presence of Christ in the eucharist. Our metaphysics gets in the way since a substance is or is not considered to be present. Nevertheless, can we bracket that second problem as we move toward a partial recognition of ministry as an interim “on the way” status on the way to full recognition? In some ways this is in the spirit of the plea of *Sorores in spe*’s plea to not let “the differing positions taken on the ordination of women by our two communions as a reason not to address the adverse judgment of Pope Leo on the Anglican ordination rites that had been used up to the time of *Apostolicae curæ*. If we refrain from any recognition until we agree on full recognition we do not do justice to the soteriological foundations of the recognition ministry.

1 JOSEPH RATZINGER, “Briefwechsel von Landesbischof Johananes Hanselmann und Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger über das Communio-Schreiben der Römischen Glaubenskongregation,” *Una Sancta* 48 (1993) 348. Cited in U.S. Lutheran -Catholic Dialogue statement, *Church as Koinonia of Salvation*, § 107.

2 WILLIAM H. PETERSEN, “The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: Soteriological and Ecclesiological Implications from an Anglican Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 38 (2001) 50-63 at 54.

## *Theology of Correlation*

The present official teaching of the church is that valid ministry in apostolic succession confers the identity of “church” on an ecclesial body. In its absence, one is left with an “ecclesial community.” The question of the mutual recognition of ministry raises the question whether recognition of ministry should in some measure follow upon recognition of churches rather than precede it. That is, if a ministry maintains a community in the marks of the church, that is a sign of the existence of an authentic ministry. An imperfect communion among churches would correlate with an imperfect recognition of ministry. Ecumenically, this would mean that the acknowledgement of an authentic ministry would depend on the recognition of the churchly character of that ministry’s community and not vice versa. This would lead to a discernment of the elements of the Church of Christ outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church and the fruit and work of the Holy Spirit within that community. There would, no doubt, be additional criteria for full recognition of ministry in terms of understanding its function with respect to proclamation of the Gospel, to its role in the sacraments, and to its service to the apostolicity of the church. Nevertheless, the recognition of the churchly character of the community would play a much larger role in the recognition of ministry than it presently does.

The central idea here is that for Catholics there needs to be a correlation between recognition of ministry and the recognition of an ecclesial community of church that is much more nuanced and discerning of the work of the Spirit within a community than simply concluding to the existence of a church from the presence of an episcopal ministry in historic apostolic succession. Second, this correlation admits of degrees of fullness within an ecclesiology of communion. Furthermore, the methodology of discernment becomes more inductive than deductive as one looks for the fruitfulness of ministry as evidence of an authentic ministry. Finally, this approach honors the first commitment at Lund which is applicable to relations with the Anglican Communion: “Catholics and Lutherans [here Catholics and Anglicans] should always begin from the perspective of unity and not from the

point of view of division in order to strengthen what is held in common even though the differences are more easily seen and experience.”

*Sorores in spes* endorses this approach of moving from ecclesial recognition to sacramental recognition rather than the other way around. It cites the example of the recognition by the Catholic church of the full ecclesiality of the Assyrian Church of the East that led to a careful study of the Assyrian liturgical texts and sacramental theology with the resulting judgment that “the words of Eucharistic institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent narrative way and *ad litteram*, but rather in a dispersed eucharological way, that is, integrated in successive prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession,” (p. 23). Acknowledgment of this Church “as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession led to the recognition of the validity of sacraments. In our current situation, the question is whether Catholics can discern authentic ecclesiality in the Anglican communion and conclude to an authentic ministry. That necessitates an assessment of apostolicity conceived of as being broader and more inclusive than episcopal apostolic succession.

## *Apostolic Succession*

*Leo XIII’s* declaration of the nullity of Anglican orders implied the judgment that the apostolic succession of the Church of England was lost at the Reformation. *Sorores in spe* cites the ARCIC I statement on *Ministry and Ordination*, which speaks of the episcopal responsibility as involving “fidelity to the apostolic faith, its embodiment in the life of the Church today and its transmission to the Church of tomorrow” (9, cited p. 19). Ecumenically, there is strong agreement that a bishop is charged with teaching and safeguarding apostolic faith. Nevertheless, a judgement of a lack of apostolic succession commonly understood as a succession in the laying on of hands has governed a negative assessment of the validity of Anglican orders.

Such an assessment fails to acknowledge that apostolic succession in a continuous chain of ordination does not guarantee apostolic succession in the faith since history bears witness

to apostate bishops, whose apostacy has nullified their role in governance in the church even while their sacramental ministry in terms of a valid eucharist has remained intact. It further fails to acknowledge that the episcopacy is not the only carrier of apostolicity. *Dei Verbum*, The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, states, "Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the peoples of God; and so, the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes." Thus, the Church as a whole is a carrier of apostolicity even though the office of episcopacy is given the special task of oversight of this apostolicity and is both a sign and an instrument of its perseverance in the Church. Apostolicity may achieve a certain visibility in the person of the bishop, but the recitation by the community of the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the celebration of the Eucharist, the diakonia of the church in its service to the poor, the activity of catechetics in passing on the faith to another generation, the witness of people in the holiness of their lives all live out and witness to the apostolicity of the church. In Acts 2:42-46, the early Christian community to the teaching of the apostles, the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers and shared their possessions among all in need." All these activities constituted the apostolic life. Thus, assessment of the apostolicity of a church is more encompassing than the assessment of a continuous episcopal succession, although the latter is significant even though an unbroken continuity in episcopal succession was only possible in the early church once the episcopal office was established.

*The Category of Participation as a Way Forward for the Problem of Defect of Form and Intention*

Prior to Vatican II, it was commonly held that ministry was lacking (the usual official translation of *defectus*) to those groups who had broken apostolic succession at the time of the Reformation. Leo XIII had declared in *Apostolicae curæ* (1896) that Anglican orders were null and void on account of a deficient sacramental form in the ordination rite. Because ordination was considered null for these reasons, the conclusion was that these communities do not possess a valid Eucharist.

The defect of form attributed to the Church of England Ordinals of 1550, 1552 and 1662 pertained to lack of clarity regarding whether the priest received "the power 'of consecrating and of offering the true Body and Blood of the Lord' in that sacrifice which is no 'mere commemoration of the of the sacrifice offered on the Cross.'" (*Apostolicae curæ*, 25) Ecumenical statements between Anglicans and Roman Catholics are showing convergence on our understandings of priesthood and eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> Here one can cite the Canterbury Statement in 1973, *A Statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry*, and its predecessor, the Windsor Statement on *Eucharistic Doctrine*, of 1971.

As *Sorores in spe* notes, much ecumenical progress has been made on the issue of eucharistic sacrifice through the category of *anamnesis* which expresses the sacramental reality that the one-for-all event of salvation becomes effective in the present through the action of the Holy Spirit (*Eucharistic Doctrine, Elucidation 5*, cited in SinS 18). Very helpfully, SinS in citing this text from *Eucharistic Doctrine 5* adds that "the concept of *anamnesis* implies *participation* by means of the sacrament in the original event. To celebrate the Eucharist in obedience to Christ's command is to "enter into the movement of his self-offering." While ecumenical agreement is that the Christ present in the Eucharist is the sacramental Christ who died on the cross, the last disputed question with respect to eucharistic sacrifice was whether we offer Christ in the Eucharist. However, Christ's self-offering is anamnetically present and we offer Christ, not separate nor apart from him, but joined with him as a result of the epiclesis which transforms the assembly into the ecclesial body of Christ, giving us a relationship of participation in Christ as members of his body. So, not only does the sacramental reality of the Eucharist participate in the sacrifice of the cross, so does the assembly by the power of the Holy Spirit participate in Christ's self-offering and in this sense "offer Christ" to the Father. The doxology at the end of the eucharistic prayer expresses this relationship of participation in terms of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving: "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, for ever and ever."

3 ARCIC-1, *The Final Report*, n.17.

Finally, in assessing the relative lack of explicit reference to the eucharist in the ordination prayer, it is important to remember the large number of ordination rites recognized by the Roman Catholic Church which do not mention the power “of consecrating and offering the true Body and Blood of our Lord:” the successive Roman ‘Forms’ of Hippolytus’ *Apostolic Tradition*, the Leonine *Sacramentary*, the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, the *Gregorian Sacramentary*, the Eastern ‘Form’ of Sarapion, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, The Spanish Mozarabic “Form,” and possibly the Byzantine “Form.”

*Conclusions*

Several conclusions can be drawn from these remarkable texts that opened promising paths for ecumenical dialogue after the Council. First, when *defectus* is translated as “lack,” but rather as “deficient,” that which is deficient within the logic of the Council lies within the category of “communion” rather than within a juridical category of validity. In a situation of ecumenical separation, ministry not in communion is deficient in its catholicity, that is, in its communion with the ministry in other traditions, but one can no longer say that ministry is simply absent or

lacking. In a similar vein, ecumenical discussion might be advanced by distinguishing between an “acknowledgement of an authentic ministry” from the more juridical “recognition of a valid ministry.” Could this shift in language be an interim solution on the way to full recognition?

*Sorores in spe* develops the language of symbols in ecumenical relationships, particularly through the exchange of gifts, citing St. Paul VI’s gift of his episcopal ring to Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966, gifts of pectoral crosses to Anglican bishops, the stole given to Henry Chadwick, and the replica of the head of the crozier of Pope St. Gregory the Great given to Archbishop Welby in 2016. These gifts are symbols of governance and priestly office and as *Sorores in spe* comments, they reveal “as different, deeper reality about mutual recognition which extends beyond the brusque, negative theological judgment of ordination rites in 1896” (p. 8). I suggest that although falling short of official recognition of orders, these symbolic gifts represent an oblique acknowledgment of a ministerial reality present in our dialogue partner. It is difficult to imagine that they would be given to a ministerial reality considered to be null and void.



*Dr. Susan Wood  
lecturing at the Centro*

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**BRUCE MYERS**



Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Anglican Bishop of Quebec · Co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada Thursday · 17 March 2022

## When Symbols Speak Louder than Bulls: Present-day Glimpses of a Future Envisioned by *Sorores in spe*

The first Anglican bishop of Quebec (I am the thirtieth) was the Right Reverend Jacob Mountain. After his consecration by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the chapel of Lambeth Palace in July of 1793, Bishop Mountain immediately boarded a ship for his new colonial see, along with his wife, four children, and a half-dozen other relatives, since, as one historical account of Bishop Mountain’s arrival puts it, “coming to Canada in those days was deemed complete exile.”<sup>1</sup>

When Bishop Mountain finally set foot on the shore of Quebec City—no doubt with some relief after a thirteen-week transatlantic crossing—among the first to greet the newly arrived “Protestant bishop” (as he was called) was Monseigneur Jean-Olivier Briand, Quebec’s seventh Roman Catholic bishop. The same historical account reports that Monseigneur Briand “unfeignedly rejoiced at [Mountain’s] arrival and greeting him with the antiquated salutation of a kiss upon each cheek, declared that, ‘It was high time for such a measure, to keep your people in order’.”<sup>2</sup>

I begin with this anecdote in part because it helps illustrate the background against which the relationship between Roman Catholics and Anglicans has developed in my context—Quebec—as opposed to some other contexts, such as England, although to some extent those two contexts are bound up together by history, a history that is by no means unblemished. It was British imperial expansionism, and the Seven Years’ War in particular, that brought Anglicanism to Quebec. Anglican priests were aboard the British warships that bombarded and

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laid siege to Quebec City in 1759, and the first Anglican eucharist was celebrated soon after the defeat of the French forces—in the chapel of a Roman Catholic convent occupied by the British conquerors. Despite Anglicanism’s violent arrival in Quebec—and its inauspicious first encounter with the Roman Catholic Church, which by that point had been present and active in Quebec for a century and a half—the relationship between the two churches rapidly improved. Roman Catholics, who then as now represent the vast majority of Quebec’s population, received freedom of religion (including the right to hold public office and have their own bishops) in 1774—many decades before Catholic emancipation in the United Kingdom. By the time Quebec’s Anglican episcopal see was erected twenty years later, the relationship had healed to the point that a Roman Catholic bishop was on the dock to greet his newly arrived Anglican counterpart with the kiss of peace and even, it seems, with a sense of relief.

It is *that* moment that marks the auspicious beginning of more than two centuries of warm and fraternal relations between the Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops of Quebec—a relationship characterized chiefly by collegiality rather than competition, friendship rather than enmity. And it is out of this context and experience that I would like to offer some reflections on *Sorores in spe* and what the re-evaluation of *Apostolicæ curæ’s*

1 FRED C. WURTLE, *The English Cathedral of Quebec*, (Quebec: Morning Telegraph, 1891) 73-74.

2 *Ibid.*, 74.

*Bishop Bruce Myers (left) and Archbishop Cardinal Lacroix shared not only a residence for one year, but also “a profound experience of Christian communion”*

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Philippe Vaillancourt, Présence Info



judgement on Anglican orders that it proposes might mean for ministry “on the ground,” because I find it is worth repeating out loud from time to time that the hope and goal of all such work of theological ecumenism is that its fruits find expression in the daily lived experience of individual Christian disciples and the incarnational Christian communities of which they are a part.

## A tale of two bishops

*Sorores in spe* compellingly names the power of symbols – whether they be objects or actions – as signs that point to “a deeper reality about mutual recognition which extends beyond the brusque, negative theological judgement of [Anglican] ordination rites in 1896.”<sup>3</sup> If I can put that another way, symbols can speak louder than bulls. I would like to offer some examples of such, once again from my context – not from long-ago history, but rather present day.

When I arrived in Quebec City to take up my charge as bishop in 2016, I was still a coadjutor bishop. The diocesan bishop who I was succeeding still occupied the bishop’s residence with his family, and I needed somewhere to live temporarily.

Fortunately, the local Roman Catholic bishop, Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix, had some spare room in his own official residence, which is situated in the heart of the oldest part of Quebec City, beside the Roman Catholic cathedral, Notre-Dame-de-Québec Basilica, just a short walk away from the Anglican cathedral, Holy Trinity. It was a stop-gap living arrangement that we thought might last at most a few months. It ended up being a profound experience of Christian communion that continued for more than a year, and whose effects are enduring.

The *archevêché* (as the residence is known) is home not only to the cardinal, but also to the Roman Catholic diocese’s two auxiliary bishops, a retired bishop, and a few priests. Each resident has their own individual room, but meals are shared together, *en famille* (“family style”).

Family is just the right word to use because our time living together helped cultivate a true sense of Christian brotherhood. Despite the different ecclesial traditions from which we come (not to mention different linguistic and cultural traditions), we were daily reminded that we are held together by the waters of our common baptism, a sacramental bond even more fundamental than genetics.

<sup>3</sup> MALINES CONVERSATIONS GROUP, *Sorores in spe: A Fresh Response to the Condemnation of Anglican Orders* (1896),  <https://bit.ly/3yi3AvG>  URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

Life together at the *archevêché* was about much more than simply eating and sleeping under the same roof. There were also regular occasions to socialize and, importantly, to pray together. When not travelling, we would gather to pray the divine office and celebrate mass according to the Roman rite, participating as fully as our respective traditions allow.

These moments of common prayer were both a daily discovery and celebration of the deep and rich liturgical heritage Anglicans and Roman Catholics share, and a daily painful reminder of the wound of our existing divisions. Each eucharistic celebration was a tangible expression of what the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission wrote in its 1990 report, *The Church as Communion*: “Paradoxically,” RCIC II

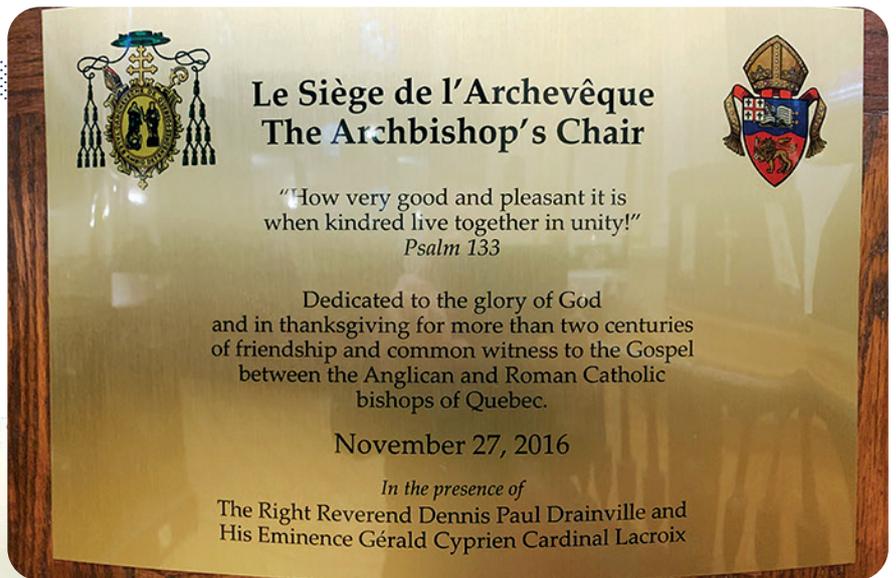
wrote, “the closer we draw together the more acutely we feel those differences which remain.”<sup>4</sup>

The communion we enjoyed as Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops living and praying together has continued to infuse our ministries in the mission field which we share, and in which we are co-workers with one another and with Christ.

Less than a century ago, Quebec was one of the most religiously observant places on earth. Today, societal attitudes toward people and communities of faith are often characterized by ignorance, disrespect, even hostility, and government policies have never been more aggressive in their attempts to limit the place of religion in the lives of Quebec’s citizens, through

“The Archbishop’s Chair” reserved for the Roman Catholic archbishop of Quebec, sits opposite the Anglican bishop’s cathedra in Quebec City’s Cathedral of the Holy Trinity

 Photo Credits  
Bruce Myers



a political program of French-style *laïcité*. Such a climate has drawn us closer together as Christian leaders, not as *episcopis contra mundum*, but rather in recognizing that our current context requires us more than ever to take to heart Pope John XXIII’s insight that “what unites us is much greater than what divides us.”<sup>5</sup>

4 ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION, *The Church as Communion* (1991),  <https://bit.ly/3IgpzaE>  URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022, §58.

5 As quoted by POPE JOHN PAUL II in *Ut Unum Sint*,  <https://bit.ly/3bRyblY>  URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022, §20.

# CONFERENCE

The year that Cardinal Lacroix and I spent living together in what amounts to a form of ecumenical intentional Christian community was perhaps the most incarnational sign of the real if imperfect communion we share as Anglican and Roman Catholic Christians. But other symbolic gestures give expression to this as well.

In Quebec City's Anglican cathedral, for as long as anyone can remember, there has been a chair that sits opposite the cathedra of the Anglican bishop of Quebec. It's a chair of equal size and dignity of the Anglican bishop's chair, and it has customarily been reserved for the Roman Catholic archbishop of Quebec when he is formally present in the Anglican cathedral. In a ceremony in 2016, that custom was made formal, and the "Archbishop's Chair" was officially set apart as a permanent seat in Quebec City's Anglican cathedral for the Roman Catholic archbishop of Quebec.

In doing so, we recognize a few things. First, the Church of Christ was present and active in Quebec long before the arrival of Anglicanism. Second, in the words of Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Pope Francis, we are "brothers and sisters in Christ by reason of our common baptism" called to "work together to give voice to our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring relief to the suffering, to bring peace where there is conflict, to bring dignity where it is denied and trampled upon."<sup>6</sup> And third, despite our differences, our churches are in real, if imperfect, communion, and we seek to make that communion full.

<sup>6</sup> "Common Declaration of His Holiness Pope Francis and His Grace Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury," <https://bit.ly/3ae1lgE> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

A similar gesture of hospitality is extended to me when I am in Notre-Dame-de-Québec Basilica Cathedral for a liturgy, so that when we are formally present in each other's cathedrals, Cardinal Lacroix and I face each other not as historic rivals, but on almost visually equal footing, as partners in the gospel, brothers in Christ, and fellow members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

When I was seated as the diocesan bishop in 2017, I received as a gift from Cardinal Lacroix and his two auxiliary bishops a pectoral cross, an insignia of episcopal ministry for both of our traditions, which was acquired here in Rome during their ad limina visit and blessed by Pope Francis.

At that same seating liturgy in 2017, Cardinal Lacroix



*Cardinal Lacroix receives a blessing from Bishop Myers at the welcoming and seating of the new Anglican bishop of Quebec in 2017*

*Photo Credits* 📷  
Daniel Abel

attended and brought formal greetings. At the conclusion of the distribution of holy communion, the cardinal left the Archbishop's Chair, crossed the chancel, knelt at the centre of altar rail, and asked to receive a blessing, a gesture I often reciprocate when attending Catholic diocesan liturgies at which he presides.

It has become habitual that Cardinal Lacroix invite each other to and attend significant liturgies in the lives of each other's dioceses, such that it has become unexceptional for Anglican faithful to see the cardinal in their cathedral and vice versa.

*Cardinal Lacroix receives a blessing from Bishop Myers at the welcoming and seating of the new Anglican bishop of Quebec in 2017*

**Photo Credits**  
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I have attended a number of Catholic episcopal ordinations since 2016, and although I do not participate in the laying on of hands, I am usually seated among the other bishops and am invited to join them in individually sharing the peace with the newly ordained bishop immediately following the laying on of hands.

This mutual participation in the lives of our respective dioceses is not restricted to public liturgies, however. Cardinal Lacroix spoke to our diocesan clergy at our annual chrism mass and renewal of ordination vows, and a neighbouring Catholic bishop addressed our last diocesan synod on the theme of mission. I have been invited to participate in an upcoming panel discussion the Catholic diocese is hosting in preparation for the synod on synodality, specifically to share about

Anglicanism’s experience of being a synodal church. And the cardinal and I are familiar faces on each other’s diocesan social media feeds, including a kind of online *lectio divina* we shared with the people of both our dioceses during last year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, when places of worship were closed in Quebec because of the pandemic.

Because Cardinal Lacroix and I share a see city (and for a while shared a home), it is this particular episcopal relationship that is perhaps the most cultivated and most visible. However, the Anglican diocese I serve overlaps with eight other Roman Catholic dioceses, whose bishops I also try to be in relationship with, usually at least visiting with them when I’m in their part of Quebec.



*Cardinal Lacroix and Bishop Myers offering online reflections on the gospel together as a part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021*

**Photo Credits** ecdq.tv

Cardinal Gérald C. Lacroix  
Archevêque de Québec

Mgr Bruce Myers, OGS  
Evêque Anglican de Québec

All of this is to affirm – from my context, at least – *Sorores in spe*'s observation that we are indeed experiencing a dissonance between theory and practice. These signs and symbols suggest a level of mutual recognition that blurs or outright transcends the lines laid down by *Apostolicæ curæ*. These signs and symbols, gestures and objects are themselves acts of reception. They give outward and visible expression to the authenticity of the faith and order we recognize in the other.

## The roles of theological and spiritual ecumenism

What makes these significant signs and weighty symbols possible, and on what are they based? I would suggest at least two things. The work of bilateral theological dialogues such as Malines, ARCIC, and IARCCUM have done extraordinary work in revealing the significant level of agreement in faith Anglicans and Catholics share on the Trinity, ecclesiology, scriptures, sacraments, ministry, authority, discipleship, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. I would suggest that having this manifest agreement in faith coherently catalogued by formal, church-sponsored dialogues helps engender a level of confidence for people like bishops to feel secure in engaging in these kinds of ecumenical activities and gestures. From a specifically Catholic standpoint, the recently issued and very fine *vademecum*, *The Bishop and Christian Unity*, is very helpful in this respect.

At least as important, though, is the trust and confidence that is cultivated through personal relationships rooted in the practices of spiritual ecumenism, especially common prayer. Attending and participating as fully as possible in each other's liturgies perhaps draws into the sharpest focus the unity in faith we share. I would describe what Cardinal Lacroix and I experience in attending eucharistic and ordination liturgies presided over by the other as a form of cognitive dissonance. The form and content of our liturgies are so similar – as is the faith that undergirds them – that our incapacity to act on that sense of recognition sometimes provokes an almost

visceral reaction. In discussing this publicly, Cardinal Lacroix has described our inability to participate in one eucharistic fellowship as a kind of “pain” and “suffering.”<sup>7</sup>

It brings to mind Sergius Bulgakov's conviction that, “The way towards the reunion of East and West does not lie through tournaments between theologians [...] but through a reunion before the altar. The priesthood of East and West must realize itself as one priesthood, celebrating the one eucharist; if the minds of priests could become aflame with this idea, all barriers would fall.”<sup>8</sup> What might happen if the minds of Anglican and Roman Catholic priests became aflame with this idea?

The kindling for such a flame might be found in the waters of baptism. Inspired in part by the Second Vatican Council's affirmation that “all who have been justified by faith in baptism are members of Christ's body, and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers [and sisters] by the children of the Catholic Church,”<sup>9</sup> five Canadian churches – including Anglicans and Roman Catholics – affirmed in 1975 a mutual recognition of baptism. This meant that any lingering doubts about the fullness or efficacy of this rite of Christian initiation as practiced by any of the churches involved were laid to rest, and individuals moving from one church to another for whatever reason would not be baptized again (or “conditionally” baptized) by the receiving church.

7 PHILIPPE VAILLANCOURT, “Two priests in a pod: Quebec cardinal, Anglican bishop share home for a year,” *Catholic Register*, April 20, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3OKtDm5> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

8 SERGIUS BULGAKOV, “By Jacob's Well – John 4:23 (Of the Actual Unity of the Divided Church in Faith Prayer and Sacraments)” in MICHAEL PLEKON (ed.), *Tradition Alive: On the Church and the Christian Life in Our Time: Readings from the Eastern Church*, (Lanham, MD: Sheed and Ward, 2003) 60.

9 *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §3.

If Roman Catholics and Anglicans fully recognize each other's baptism, what are the larger sacramental and ecclesial implications of such a recognition? Faith and Order's convergence text on ecclesiology, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, names "the dynamic and profound relation between baptism and the eucharist."<sup>10</sup> The late Geoffrey Wainwright was among those who suggested that if this dynamic and profound relationship is taken seriously, then we must accept and engage with the corollary: "We may wonder whether baptism can have been *recognizably performed without* giving access to Holy Communion. The historic and continuing existence of rival eucharistic communities calls the celebration of baptism into question. If now, in an ecumenical situation, mutual recognition of baptism starts to take place, the possible implication for eucharistic admission across ecclesiastical lines must at least be investigated – and therewith the question of mutual ecclesial recognition gets further opened up and the solution of churchly reconciliation perhaps brought closer."<sup>11</sup> If a mutual recognition of baptism has implications for eucharistic participation, are there also implications for a recognition of ministry, which is linked to baptism and eucharist both?

I realize I am starting to tread outside my territory, so I will return to perhaps safer ground and reflect some more on the personal relationships that I think make the level of communion and recognition that Cardinal Lacroix and I enjoy possible. I once thought that the notion of ecumenical friendship was too nebulous or sentimental to be taken seriously as a theological concept. But I've since come to determine – through my own experience and that

of others – that while ecumenical friendship is a phenomenon that may not be easily quantifiable, it does have theological significance.

Evangelical theologian and pastor Andrew Draper goes as far as to place a higher premium on ecumenical friendships than on shared worship experiences across Christian traditions: "The litmus test of joining is not how much Communion you have had together or how many services of 'Christian unity' you have participated in but who comes to your children's birthday parties and who you call on when burdened and alone."<sup>12</sup>

Another American Protestant, ecumenist Diane Kessler, argues that ecumenical friendships potentially have a kind of multiplier effect because they "provide a strong, safe bond in which people can explore their commonalities, their distinctiveness, and their divisions more deeply, openly, honestly, and safely. These interpersonal encounters can lead to institutional transformations."<sup>13</sup> The late Margaret O'Gara attests to this, attributing to ecumenical friendships "a theological significance that goes beyond anecdote or sentiment."<sup>14</sup> As evidence, she relates her own experiences of participation in bilateral ecumenical dialogues, and how friendships developed among individual dialogue participants sometimes resulted in theological breakthroughs between the communions they represented that might not otherwise have been possible.

10 FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper, 214, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013) §42.

11 GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT, "One Baptism, One Church?" in HANS BOERSMA and MATTHEW LEVERING (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 471-472. Emphasis in original.

12 ANDREW T. DRAPER, *A Theology of Race and Place: Liberation and Reconciliation in the Works of Jennings and Carter*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 289. Draper, following Willie James Jennings, uses "joining" here in the sense of "two unlike bodies in desire for one another becoming one flesh in the body of God."

13 DIANE C. KESSLER, "Heart Change and Head Work: Some Hopeful Signs in Ecumenical Formation," *Ecumenism* 133 (March 1999) 3.

14 MARGARET O'GARA, *No Turning Back: The Future of Ecumenism*, MICHAEL VERTIN, (ed.) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014) 37.

Another Catholic ecumenist, Thomas Ryan, uses biblical imagery to reflect on these intimate interchurch relationships:

“Ecumenical friendships provide a particularly intense experience of both the desire for unity and the foretaste of unity achieved. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, ecumenical friends walk along the road together with Christ as he opens the meaning of the scriptures to them. Because they recognize a common Lord, ecumenical friends recognize one another as his disciples and are again sustained for the long journey ahead. [...] When we get to know each other on a human level, a trust is born that enables us together to broach the most sensitive subjects in a spirit of mutual respect. We are far more influenced by denominational attitudes in our formation than we are willing or able to admit. We have absorbed subtle prejudices toward others. We do not trust each other. And, until we trust, we cannot hear each other.”<sup>15</sup>

I suspect this resonates with most if not all of you, from your own ecumenical experiences. Indeed, it was the ecumenical friendship of Father Étienne Fernand Portal and Lord Halifax that was the catalyst for the Malines Conversations.

What this all points toward is the importance of shared experience and shared humanity as a component in developing a deepening awareness of a shared Christian faith. This recognition of a common inheritance of faith between individuals can help contribute to a wider ecclesial recognition between whole communities and institutions. It is something Cardinal Lacroix and I have reflected on in the wake of our time living together. That personal ecumenical relationship has had implications for the wider life and work of both our churches. I always understood that it was not just me who was housed at the *archevêché*. In a sense I took the entire Anglican Diocese of Quebec

with me. It was an interpersonal relationship, but ecclesial at the same time.

## Recognition revealed in the work of Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues

There are other examples of how this recognition extends far beyond the signs and symbols exchanged between a couple of bishops in Quebec City. For instance, two recent projects of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada (which began its work in 1971) have sought to move beyond the comparative theology and responses to ARCIC texts that has characterized much of its past work, by developing two different genres of ecumenical texts.

*Did You Ever Wonder...* is the title of what’s described as a “common witness project,” and is in effect a multimedia work of Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical apologetics or catechesis. It finds its inspiration in the Roman Catholic Church’s New Evangelization and the Anglican Communion’s Marks of Mission, both of which seek to welcome new Christian believers and nurture existing ones. ARC Canada’s members brainstormed about the basic existential questions that are preoccupying many of our contemporaries: Why is the world the way it is? Will it be okay? What is courage? What is my purpose in life? Religion and science – how do they hold together? Why so many religions? Why believe? Why belong? Why pray? Why the church? Why belong to *this* church? Dialogue members worked together on responses to these “big questions,” drawing on the half-century of convergence Anglicans and Roman Catholics have achieved on many first-order matters. So it wasn’t: Anglicans say this about such-and-such, and Roman Catholics say that; rather it was this is what we as Christians say. These became short, accessible essays and videos, accompanied by discussion questions for use in small groups.<sup>16</sup>

15 THOMAS RYAN, *Christian Unity: How You Can Make a Difference*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2015) 182-183.

16 *Did You Ever Wonder...: A Common Witness Project of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada*, <https://bit.ly/3nRVaGj> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

More recently, ARC Canada produced *New Stories to Tell*, an anthology of nearly twenty anecdotes of Anglican-Roman Catholic collaboration of different kinds – from the witness of interchurch families, to Anglicans and Catholics collaborating in work with refugees, to how Indigenous communities have learned to transcend imported colonial ecclesial divisions to find unity as Anglicans and Roman Catholics through common celebrations of gospel music. *New Stories to Tell* compellingly catalogues how our growth in mutual understanding, and mutual recognition, is finding expression in a variety of ways.<sup>17</sup>

One important way this mutual understanding and recognition can be fostered in future church leaders is through ecumenical ministerial formation. Four centres for the training of ordained leaders in Canada involve some form of collaboration or integration between Roman Catholics and Anglicans: Newman Theological College in Edmonton, the Toronto School of Theology, Saint Paul University in Ottawa, and the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax. The models of collaboration and integration range from the offering of a stream of studies in the other church's tradition, to an ecumenical consortium of denominational colleges, to an organically merged ecumenical institution. Over time, many such ecumenical schemes for ministerial formation have ceased to offer any explicit teaching in ecumenics, seeming to assume that an ecumenical consciousness will be inculcated in their students by some form of osmosis – a risky assumption that puts in jeopardy much of theological ecumenism's gains of the past half century. If ecumenical formation is the key to ecumenical reception, then ecumenism needs to find its way into the explicit and implicit curricula of more centres of ministerial formation – Anglican and Roman Catholic.

I would argue another implicit kind of recognition can be found in an innocuous

sounding and little-known document issued by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops' Dialogue of Canada in 1991 called "Pastoral Guidelines for Churches in the Case of Clergy Moving from One Communion to the Other." The document's tone is more pastoral than its title suggests, but it delivers what its title promises: non-binding suggestions on how Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops can receive clergy from the other tradition in a way that is as pastorally sensitive as possible to everyone involved – the cleric changing churches, as well as the churches and specific local Christian communities that are implicated. In doing so it names much of our two churches' shared understanding of the ordained ministry, drawing in part on ARCIC's early work on ministry and ordination.

While the document acknowledges that an Anglican priest being received into the Catholic Church would be subject to ordination according to Catholic rites, it does so with a tone of regret, implying this is a provisional and not permanent reality, since "the recognition of each other's ministries and the restoration of full communion" remains our abiding goal.<sup>18</sup> The guidelines also assume that the cleric moving from one church to the other will "need to become familiar with the rites and ethos of the receiving community," and that the receiving church will follow its own "policies regarding the admission of persons ordained in another church."<sup>19</sup> However, implicit in the guidelines is a high degree of recognition of the priestly formation and ministry of the presbyter being received. Even if an Anglican priest will be subject to ordination according to Catholic rites, there is no suggestion that he is in some way starting from zero.

18 "Pastoral Guidelines for Churches in the Case of Clergy Moving from One Communion to the Other," in JEFFREY GROS, ROZANNE ELDER, and ELLEN K. WONDRA, (eds.), *Common Witness to the Gospel: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, 1983-1995*, (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1997) §17.

19 *Ibid.*, §5.

17 *New Stories to Tell: Living Ecumenism Today*, (Toronto: General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 2018).

## When partial recognition becomes full communion

So, what then would a re-evaluation of *Apostolicæ curæ* mean for ministry “on the ground”? In Canada at least, we might turn to our full communion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada for some possible indications.

Anglicans and Lutherans also had to reconcile different understandings of ministry before full mutual recognition was possible, the sticking point in that relationship being *episkopé*. While ELCIC Lutherans did have an office of bishop, they did not consider it a ministry to which one was ordained, but rather a position a pastor held for a period of time. To facilitate a mutual recognition of ministry, the Lutherans agreed that going forward, their bishops would be ordained for life, with the outward sign of historic succession being restored through the participation of Anglican bishops in Lutheran episcopal ordinations.

This ecclesiological obstacle having been resolved after years of dialogue and negotiation, the Waterloo Declaration was signed with great jubilation on July 8, 2001, bringing the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada into full communion: a full and mutual recognition and exchange of each church’s ministry and sacraments. On July 9, 2001, Lutheran pastors and Anglican priests did not instantly begin swapping ministerial appointments; Anglican and Lutheran parishes did not suddenly start merging; Lutheran and Anglican faithful did not start flocking to each other’s churches to receive mutually recognized sacraments. Indeed, little changed in the first few years of full communion, which as we know is not a merger of churches but rather a means by which “each [church] maintains its own autonomy while recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to uphold

the essentials of the Christian faith.”<sup>20</sup> It is not about flattening ecclesial differences into a new, lowest common denomination, but rather letting each church hold onto its distinctive traits, some of which the other full communion partner may eventually discern it wishes to receive as gifts.

It took time for the fruits of full communion to ripen, and for Canadian Lutherans and Anglicans to get to know each other better so as to build the bonds of trust that would allow the deeper communion expressed in the written agreement to be truly incarnated in the churches – to be received. And that is what has happened. There are today – 20 years after full communion – no fewer than 80 so-called “Waterloo Ministries” across Canada. These are defined as Anglican and Lutheran communities which in some way share facilities, programs, worship, and/or clergy. Five hybrid “joint Anglican-Lutheran parishes” now exist, and in at least one part of the country there is a tacit agreement that neither full communion partner will initiate a new church plant without doing so in consultation or partnership with the other. At least five congregations in the country have clergy from the other full communion partner serving as their priest or pastor, including an Anglican cathedral. It is not uncommon to see Lutheran pastors allowing their names to stand in Anglican episcopal elections, and there are there have been exploratory conversations about what shared episcopal oversight might look like in regions where there is jurisdictional overlap between Anglican dioceses and Lutheran synods. The Anglican House of Bishops and the Lutheran Conference of Bishops typically meet jointly once a year, and (until the pandemic forced a delay) our General Synod and the ELCIC’s National Convention were to have met this summer as a single, integrated churchwide council known as “the Assembly.”

20 “The Waterloo Declaration,” in RICHARD LEGGETT, (ed.), *A Companion to the Waterloo Declaration: Commentary and Essays on Anglican-Lutheran Relations in Canada*, (Toronto: ABC Publishing, 1999) 13.



That's not to say there have been no bumps on the journey of full communion. Our two churches have, for instance, taken different paths on the question of same-sex marriage, and we remain sharply divided on questions like confirmation and lay presidency. Yet our bonds have held fast through these differences, in part because of our two churches' commitment to focus on the recognition of the essentials of the Christian faith which are the basis of our full communion partnership, and the personal relationships that have developed as a result of that partnership.

That, perhaps, is an image of what an ecclesial landscape without *Apostolicæ curæ* hanging in the background might resemble: not just Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops working in closer partnership for the sake of the gospel, but the local churches they oversee and serve collaborating more closely, too, in a multiplicity of ways.

Some of that happens already, in limited ways. Roman Catholic bishops in at least two remote Canadian dioceses have taken advantage of their church's canonical provisions to offer occasional sacramental ministry to Anglicans with no access to a priest of their own church. During last year's Lenten pandemic lockdown, one Catholic bishop provided small containers of blessed ashes for the faithful to receive at home on Ash Wednesday, and this invitation was extended to Anglicans as well, with the enthusiastic blessing of the local Anglican bishop.

Those are just two small examples of what can *already* be done together, as Anglicans and Catholics, in our current state of real if imperfect communion. And there is so much more we can already do – and do *not* do – even in the absence of the full communion we all earnestly desire and must keep working to achieve. But part of that work involves doing what our current level of unity and agreement already allows, which is a great deal indeed.

IARCCUM's landmark 2007 text, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* is a cornucopia of practical suggestions on what our churches in all their expressions can do "to translate our manifest agreement in faith into common life and mission."<sup>21</sup> The document – and its thirty-four practical suggestions on everything from joint catechesis to common prayer, collaborative evangelism to partnership in diakonia and public witness – deserves a wider reading and engagement, especially among bishops (who are its intended audience) and those preparing for ordination in our two churches.

### A journey along two tracks

Therefore – as others in the ecumenical movement have suggested – the path forward can be said to have two parallel tracks. On one track (where most of you toil), continues the essential theological work of groups like the Malines Conversations and ARCIC, laying bare the essential agreement we share in the faith, and discovering more. On the other track (where people like me walk), we seek to live out *now* the implications of the partial unity revealed by those in the other lane. The two tracks occasionally intersect and therefore inform each other, moving together toward the full communion that we seek, and that God wills, for the church.

This, I believe, is also what it means to live as people in hope of the resurrection: to trust in the promise that the fullness of all things – including God's kingdom and the church's visible unity – will indeed one day be made manifest in Jesus Christ, while labouring each day to reveal the kingdom and unity that is already in our midst.

21 INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON UNITY AND MISSION, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue*, (London: SPCK, 2007), Preface.



**TAMARA GRDZELIDZE**

Professor, Ilia State University, department of Religious Studies and Political Science

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 17 March 2022

## *Sorores in spe* from an Orthodox Viewpoint

From the perspective of examining ecumenical texts, especially bi-lateral ones, *Sorores in spe* is a very good document.

It brings to the surface specifics of the Malines conversations and naturally places those within a framework of some urgent problems of the Christian churches at present. Most of these 'problems' are consequences of unresolved issues of the past that have become more complex throughout the ages and that the Christian churches have been trying to clarify and mend since the beginning of the twentieth century.

During the last one hundred years of ecumenical endeavour the most significant change occurred in the methods and language of the treating of 'problematic' issues. Thus *Sorores in spe* justly points out a very different ecclesial and socio-cultural context today from what it was like in 1896, when Leo XIII's Apostolic Letter expressed 'the negative judgement on Anglican ordinations'.<sup>1</sup> Thus the document touches upon a possibility of the modification of an ecclesial identity as a consequence of the cultural change.

A great deal of the actual 'change' in addressing ecclesial issues in the last 50 years or so, comes as the result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) when the Roman Catholic Church engaged in a substantial reflection on its own self-understanding, refreshed or recharged many areas of church life under the broader understanding of ecclesiality, mystery, and participation. Paragraph 12 in *Sorores in spe* points out the effect globally of human interaction, whether visible or implicit, expressed in language, signs, symbols – for which we have a better access in our age of advanced technologies – that all help churches to express how God's grace and salvation work in the world. This is a significant layer of church life which was not

<sup>1</sup> The quote comes from the Abstract of the document.

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reflected in the making of decisions in the past. However, some questions remain persistent such as – how to deal with decisions taken in the past if today they seem unfair towards the accused party at the time of making the accusation? And, what to do with some new decisions of the 'accused' party that seem unacceptable to the accuser?

(1) It seems to me, under the present circumstances, the Roman Catholic Church, in theory, may find itself in a position to seek the **Hermeneutics** of Reconciliation for church decisions made in the past – without compromising the central message of the salvation. Through teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church is called 'to encourage whatever can contribute to the union of all who believe in Christ', according to the opening paragraph of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. In this respect, comparing its position to the Orthodox Church, for example, one finds the latter's ecclesiology in a much more difficult situation: the Orthodox Church has no means for de-sacralisation of the conciliar decisions of the past but the Catholic Church seems to have the means to do so.

Where does the path of the hermeneutics of reconciliation lie? Could things take a different turn if papal decisions are proved to be driven by a particular context that neither agrees with the current understanding of things in the Roman Catholic Church nor shows signs of being a result of an accurate judgement at that time? Or, could it help if (when) the non-practice

of papal infallibility is being transformed into theory? Churches always face this dichotomy between theory and practice – it is indicated in par. 5, ‘an aggiornamento’ of theory and practice. For example, in spite of its stiff/demanding ecclesiology, the Orthodox Church, on the ground, is much more flexible and attentive to human needs than its formal teaching declares. To begin with, seeking a framework for the hermeneutics of reconciliation is the most urgent problem within the Orthodox Church. Seeking a hermeneutic of reconciliation ecumenically seems to be timely for church relations at this time of history.

(2) A few words about the efforts on the part of the **Orthodox to seek unity with the Anglicans**, in the context of the repudiation of the Anglican ordination rites in 1896.

One small but significant note: from the very beginning, Orthodox initiatives to seek unity with other churches fell short from taking decisive steps into that direction, in spite of prevailing enthusiasm. The same pattern is noted in the case of the search for Orthodox-Anglican ecclesial unity following the repudiation of the Anglican rites. The evidence on the Orthodox endeavour is drawn from George Florovsky’s work.<sup>2</sup> We see that Orthodox reactions from the faculties of Theology at the Universities of Moscow and Kiev were different from the synods of the Orthodox Church of Greece or the Russian Orthodox Church. This process of inquiry into the issue, undoubtedly, led to some significant developments such as establishing friendly relations between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of England. And, perhaps, also motivated the Orthodox in Constantinople for Christian unity so that Patriarch Joachim III in 1902 (during his second enthronement, 1901-1912) issued an encyclical letter to all autocephalous Orthodox churches asking their opinion on the relations with other Christians.

2 GEORGE FLOROVSKY, ‘The Orthodox Churches and the Ecumenical Movement Prior to 1910’, RUTH ROUSE and STEPHEN CHARLES NEILL, (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 1, 1517 - 1948* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004) 171-215.

Thus an unofficial inquiry into the issue of the repudiation of Anglican ordination rites was initiated in Moscow shortly after 1896. Two professors of the theological academies in Moscow and in Kiev, Vasilii A. Sokolov and Athanasius Bulgakov concluded separately from one another that Anglican Orders could be recognized by Orthodox.<sup>3</sup> The synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, however, reacted differently. It claimed the recognition of baptism outside of the Orthodox Church as valid, ‘respecting the sincerity of belief in the Holy Trinity’,<sup>4</sup> but the synod did not give a straightforward answer to the question on validity of the Anglican Ordination rites; it rather proposed that:

“the desire for union with the Eastern Orthodox Church should become the sincere desire not only of a certain section of Anglicanism, but of the whole Anglican community, that the other ... Calvinistic current ...should be absorbed in the above-mentioned pure current, and should lose its perceptible, if we may not say exclusive, influence ...upon the whole Church life of this Confession which, in the main, is exempt from enmity towards us.”<sup>5</sup>

Another suggestion made by the synod reflects the orthodox position which often emerged during the early stages of the ecumenical movement, and perhaps even at later stages: churches must maintain ‘a firm profession of the truth of our Ecumenical Church as the one guardian of the inheritance of Christ and the one saving ark of divine grace’.<sup>6</sup>

In the Greek speaking world of Orthodoxy, under the Ecumenical Patriarch Constantine V (1897 - 1901), together with the Anglican Bishop

3 FLOROVSKY, 211. Quoted from VASILII ALEXANDROVICH SOKOLOV, *One Chapter from an Enquiry into the Hierarchy of the Anglican Episcopal Church*, ([London]: Church Print. Co., [1897]); A. BULGAKOFF, *The Question of Anglican Orders, in respect of the ‘Vindication’ of the Papal Decision* (London: 1899).

4 *Ibid.*, 211.

5 *Ibid.*, 211.

6 *Ibid.*, 211.

John Wordsworth (d.1911) a special commission was established to study the doctrinal position of the Anglicans. Professor of the University of Athens, Christos Androutsos investigated the issue and published an essay 'The Validity of English Ordination, from an Orthodox-Catholic point of view'. The essay, instead of attempting to seek ways of *rapprochement*, suggests reformulation of the ecclesiological position, since intercommunion cannot be separated from the dogmatic union; and the question of orders cannot be separated from the question of the true Church. As a result, Anglican doctrine of ministry seemed ambiguous by Orthodox standards. The essay suggested, the only question to discuss by the Orthodox could be a *practical* one – what to do in case of reception of an Anglican priest into the Church? It *could be* accepted as valid for individual cases of priests wishing to join the Orthodox Church.<sup>7</sup>

(3) An interesting case occurred in the Greek speaking Orthodox world in 1922, when the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis (1921-3) proposed the recognition of the Anglican orders **according to economy/economia**<sup>8</sup> and that was shared, at least, by two other Orthodox churches, in Cyprus and in Romania. Meletios during his very short period of church leadership proposed a few important changes, one of which was an attempt for seeking unity with the Anglicans, which automatically would recognize the Anglican Ordination rites. Being himself a very controversial person, Meletios tried to introduce 'difficult' reforms some of which proved to be long-lasting, like the change of the Julian calendar in 1923<sup>9</sup> but the application of *economia* to solve the problem regarding the Anglican ordination rites did not turn out to be successful. It was the

first time that the concept of *economia* was applied to ecumenical relations but years after there was another attempt to do so.

Can we claim the legitimacy of the recognition of sacraments in virtue of *economia*? *Economia* has never been used as a canonical term but only as a descriptive word; sometimes it is used too freely. In his well-known article on "The Limits of the Church",<sup>10</sup> George Florovsky uses the term *economia* to oppose it to *akrivia*/strictness so that the former gives an opportunity for an exemption from the strict rule under the pastoral direction. "Economy is pastoralship and pastoralship is economy. In this is the whole strength and vitality of the economic principle – and also its limitations."<sup>11</sup> It is a temporary solution for practical arrangements, based on theology, a pastoral tool and has no authority over orders.

During my early days of ecumenical involvement, it was a period of the so called Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches, one distinguished Greek theologian suggested to try and use *economia* for baptism. Then I tried to find sources to strengthen this suggestion but, alas, ended up with an opposite result.

The meaning of the word *economia* was known in the early church and was applied to special circumstances only, not with regard to sacramental theology. In the Orthodox practice, a priest may allow communion to a non-orthodox Christian because he recognizes the baptism of that person who seeks spiritual nourishment under special circumstances. *Economia* is a pastoral approach to modify the strictness of the rule and implies a paramount authority on the

7 *Ibid.*, 212. Quoted from JOHN ALBERT DOUGLAS, *The Relations of the Anglican Churches with the Eastern-Orthodox, Especially in Regard to Anglican Orders* (London, 1921) 17. Reprint by Andesite Press, 2017.

8 The most wide spread use of the term *oikonomia*/economy goes with regard to the whole work of salvation.

9 This reform was not shared by all autocephalous Orthodox Churches so that some until today follow the Julian calendar.

10 GEORGES FLOROVSKY, "The Limits of the Church," *Church Quarterly Review* 117 (1933) 117-131 reprinted in BRANDON GALLAHER & PAUL LADOUCEUR (eds.), *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky. Essential Theological Writings* (London/NY/Oxford/New Delhi/Sydney: T & T Clark, 2020) 247-256.

11 'O *Granitsakh Tserkvi*', *Pravoslavie I Ecumenizm, Dokumenty I Materialy*, 1902-1998 (Moskva: Otdel Vneshnix Tserkovnyx Snoshenii Moskovskogo Patriarkhata, 1999) 180.

**Moderator**  
Rev. Canon Dr. Jeremy Morris  
Cambridge University

**Afternoon Session**

15:00 **“Sorores in Spe: How to resolve the remaining issues”**  
 Dr. Susan K. Wood, SCL · Academic Dean, Regis College, University of Toronto; Professor of Systematic Theology · Past President of the Catholic Theological Society of America and Member of the North American Roman Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation

Discussion 15:45

16:00 **“What might a reevaluation of Apostolicae Curiae mean for ministry ‘on the ground’?”**  
 Rt. Rev. Bruce J. A. Myers, OGS · Anglican Bishop of Quebec · Co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada

Discussion 16:45

Tea Break 17:00 — 17:30

17:30 **Panel Discussion: “What does a reconsideration mean for theology, for the way how we educate people in theology, for parishes and communities, for the Malines Conversation Group (what should be their next step)”**

Dr. Tamara Grdzelidze · Professor, Ilia State University in the Department of Religious Studies as well as in Political Science · Former Orthodox Member of the Faith & Order Commission, WCC · Ambassador of Georgia to the Holy See (2014-2018)

Rev. Dr. Erik Eckerdal · Lutheran Church in Sweden · CEO of Samariterhemmet diakoni, Uppsala, Sweden

Rev. Canon Prof. Sarah Coakley, FBA · Norris-Hulse Professor emerita, Cambridge University · Honorary Professor, Australian Catholic University · Honorary Fellow, Oriel College, Oxford · Honorary Professor, the Logos Institute, St Andrews University

Rev. James F. Puglisi, sa · Director, Centro Pro Unione · Professor of Ecumenism, Ecumenical Institute San Bernardino, Venice · Professor emeritus, Pontificio Ateneo Sant’Anselmo and Pontifical University St. Thomas Aquinas-Angelicum · Past President, Societas Liturgica

Conclusion 18:45

Today the autocephalous Orthodox Churches face a grave problem in staying together, being the one church. They encounter a difficulty to be united among themselves. However, this has been a latent problem for a long time – for centuries, (also) for some historic reasons and has surfaced more vividly in the last 20-30 years. The first generation theologians of the Russian immigration already sensed this, pointed it out intuitively but it took many years to unfold what has been at stake, although even more is expected. The orthodox problem is extremely contextual and extremely overstressing – the same foundational trends work very differently in different places but in each place they achieve the same result – accumulation of political power.

To go back to *Sorores in spe*, one wishes that churches may find means to seek the path of reconciliation in a mystical union of the Body Christ, as paragraph 9 reminds us – ‘the intrinsic relation between the concept of mystery and divine revelation’ needs to be unfolded as fully as churches are prepared to do it today.



part of orthodox hierarchy who is given power for doing so. This was the reason that the Greeks saw a solution in practical arrangement, an opportunity to apply *economia* to individual cases of priests from the Church of England in case they wished to join the Orthodox Church and thus the initial question whether the Anglican rites could be recognized as valid, was miscalculated. The recognition of Anglican orders by the Orthodox Church was considered as a pastoral discretion for individual cases. As it was mentioned, from the very beginning of its ecumenical quest, the Orthodox Church has shown a great enthusiasm for Christian unity, proposing that this quest should be founded on Christian love, but she continually would find it difficult to undertake bold and radical steps to advance in *reprochement*.

Dr. Tamara Grdzelidze  
at the Study Day

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**ERIK ECKERDAL**

Church of Sweden. CEO of Samariterhemmet diakoni, Uppsala, Sweden

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 17 March 2022

## Sorores in spe · Some Comments on Its Content and Possible Reception

In its service for the unity of the Church the Malines Conversation Group has set out the ambitious task to overcome the negative evaluation of Anglican orders by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in the Apostolic Letter *Apostolicæ curæ* of 1896. Based on a positive evaluation of the document's soteriological perspective on church and ordained ministry I will try to offer some suggestions on further elaboration of its perspective. Due to this approach my main concern in this short article will not be the content of the document, rather, I would like to concentrate on a few aspects that could be elaborated and made stronger in the continuing argumentation for a re-evaluation of the 1896 Papal bull.

In short, the document elaborates three main arguments for why the churches should reconsider the verdict of the 1896 declaration. It argues:

1. There are problems in how the *Apostolicæ curæ* argued and established that the Anglican ordained office is "absolutely null and utterly void" based on alleged deficits in the ordinal's *forma* and *intentio*.
2. Since then, due to the liturgical and ecumenical movements, the churches have grown in likeness and communion. After the Second Vatican Council the RCC has adopted a less exclusive and more openminded approach towards other churches or ecclesial communions and recognises that "catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to subsist" in those communions.<sup>1</sup> The documents mention in particular Anglican Churches as such communions. *Sorores in spe* states that considering this growth in likeness and communion there is a "dissonance between

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theory and practice",<sup>2</sup> that needs to be overcome.

3. In contrast the document emphasises a more elaborated soteriological understanding of ecclesiology which changes the basis for a mutual recognition of ordained ministry. This perspective is according to *Sorores in spe* found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, which "offers a solid theological and hermeneutical basis for questioning the approach and judgement of the *Apostolicæ curæ*."<sup>3</sup> This soteriological perspective is emphasised in contrast to a perspective "of what can be stated with absolute certainty as opposed to what is only probable or possible,"<sup>4</sup> which is understood to be the approach of *Apostolicæ curæ*.

The document summarises its result stating "we believe that the condemnation of Anglican ordinations in 1896 needs to be recontextualised in part because, as we have tried to show, the focus of *Apostolicæ curæ* was exclusively on Anglican rites which are now rarely used. The ordination rites of both our traditions have since 1896 been radically revised in the light of the remarkable ecclesiological and liturgical renewal of the twentieth century."<sup>5</sup>

2 MALINES CONVERSATION GROUP, *Sorores in spe*, §5. <https://bit.ly/3yi3AvG> URL Retrieved: 04 July 2022

3 *Sorores in spe*, §12.

4 *Sorores in spe*, §12.

5 *Sorores in spe*, §23.

1 SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §13.

I believe this perspective to be both true and possible. But why is this the case? On this point the document's argumentation could have been worked out more in detail and in order to convince its sceptics that would most likely ask why an office that was judged to be "absolutely null and utterly void" in 1896, suddenly could be evaluated as valid in 2021? Although the shape of the lives of the two ecclesial communions today looks increasingly alike, nevertheless, the issue remains: how could an office that earlier was repudiated suddenly be recognised? This prediction of mine is not pure speculation, but rather was already the reaction to the *Porvoo Common Statement* of 1993 between the Lutheran national Churches of the Nordic and Baltic region and the Anglican churches of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>6</sup> The experience from this reception-process was that the issue of valid or non-valid ordination was explicitly or implicitly present in one way or the other in the debates that followed on the *Porvoo Common Statement's* claim to present "a deeper understanding of apostolicity of the Episcopal office, and of historical succession as 'sign'."<sup>7</sup> In an often un-conscious way, the debate and reception of the *Porvoo Common Statement* and its content came to be defined by the issue of valid or non-valid ordination as well as how ordination and ordained ministry is evaluated as valid or invalid. In contrast, many found it hard to see how the ecclesiological and pneumatological perspective presented in the *Porvoo Common Statement* could alter a more traditional scholastic terminology concerning the validity of ordination and ordained ministry. For obvious contextual reasons, *Sorores in spe* refers to the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. However, the complementary perspective is more pneumatologically developed in the later *Porvoo Common Statement* than in *Gaudium et Spes*, which is still mainly Christologically based.

6 ERIK ECKERDAL, *Apostolic Succession in the Porvoo Common Statement – Unity through a Deeper Sense of Apostolicity* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2017) 267ff, 372ff.

7 *The Porvoo Common Statement in Together in Mission and Ministry: The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe* (London: Church House, 1993) forward §9.

I mention this tension between the traditional scholastic approach in *Apostolicæ curæ* and the more sacramental or soteriological understanding in *Sorores in spe* because the traditional understanding of evaluating a particular ordained ministry still has such an impact – implicit or explicit. Therefore, there is a need to address the method of *Apostolicæ curæ* as well as describe how this scholastic approach to ordination could be embraced and complemented by a more elaborated ecclesiological understanding. Paradoxically there is an absence of a critical treatment of *Apostolicæ curæ* and its method in *Sorores in spe* – an absence that may make its reception more difficult. *Sorores in spe* states that the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council is a solid basis for questioning the approach and judgment of *Apostolicæ curæ*, but the document does not really explain why this is the case or why the approach in *Apostolicæ curæ* is problematic.<sup>8</sup>

A second reason is that the materiality of the church is still an important aspect that shall not be lost in the process of finding a more pneumatological based ecclesiology. Therefore, the church still has a need to explore her sacramental reality given by and in the Holy Spirit. In this perspective, the argumentation in *Sorores in spe* could be elaborated more fully so that the relation between the scholastic method in *Apostolicæ curæ* and the ecclesiological method in *Sorores in spe* may be described and explained.

A third reason for why this perspective is important is that the scholastic method of evaluating the sacramental reality of, for example, an act of ordination or a baptism is still useful as a method to discern different aspects of a sacramental act, as the text of *Sorores in spe* also demonstrates.

In article 19, the document states that

"when baptized Christians gather for the liturgy of ordination (...) when special prayers are said with the laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit to bestow the gifts of the ministries of the diaconate, the priesthood

8 *Sorores in spe*, §12.

or episcopate upon tried, examined and well-selected candidates, and when all share in the Eucharist together, receiving and forming the Body of Christ (cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 27), one must conclude there is such a density of sacramental grace that a narrow focus on the question as to whether the form and formula of ordination rite are precisely correct can actually obscure the mystical reality of what is taking place.”<sup>9</sup>

If those lines are read carefully, it must be asked what this description is, if it does not describe the *materia, forma* and *intentio* of an ordination of a new deacon, presbyter or bishop. The concept of this terminology does not disappear only because the words are not used. Rather they can still be used as a way to demonstrate the continuity as well as the development of ordination and broaden its understanding since the medieval times and since 1896. At the same time, the wording in this quotation does not describe ordination as a static liturgical act but as a sacramental mystery given by the Holy Spirit and performed through a liturgical act with form, matter, and intention.

Its understanding is thus one of complementary perspectives that deepen and realise that ecclesial reality which the Second Vatican Council describes as a revelation that “unfolds through deeds and words bound together by an inner dynamism.”<sup>10</sup> This inner dynamism shall not be understood as something spiritualistic but reveals itself also through material and structural means. Therefore, the scholastic language and method of ritual validation still plays its part, but it is understood in a broader and deeper pneumatological and ecclesiological way which gives ordination and ordained ministry its proper ecclesiological context.<sup>11</sup> The relation between this traditional scholastic language and method, emphasising the materiality and objectivity of the church, is embraced, and complemented by an

elaborated ecclesiological and pneumatological understanding. The relation can be compared to the relation between Newtonian physics and quantum physics, still useful, but at the same time challenged, embraced, and complemented by a deeper understanding of the universe, creation, and physics. When the scholastic method is complemented by a more developed ecclesiological and pneumatological approach the evaluation of ordained ministry is changed from the earlier “all-or-nothing”, “inside-or-outside”, “true-or-false” approach to a search for the fullness of the church, with an openness for less fullness.<sup>12</sup>

### *Materia, forma, and intentio*

The traditional scholastic method to decide the presence or absence of sacramental reality made use of the three concepts *materia, forma* and *intentio*.<sup>13</sup> This method did not evolve in a vacuum but has in itself a history and a development. Since the Council of Florence (1483-1445), the three concepts have been seen as essential characteristics of ordination as requisites for a valid ordination and ordained ministry. The method was developed to discern and secure the objectivity of the sacramental reality and was eventually understood in juridical categories in a situation when this “inner dynamism” of the church was challenged or even partly lost. This means that the method to detect a valid ordination has not been static but has changed through history.

The same is also true of the concept of validity. While the use of *materia, forma* and *intentio* is older, the more elaborated use of the concept of validity broke through as late as the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was used in the discussions at the

9 *Sorores in spe*, §19.

10 Quoted in *Sorores in spe*, §9.

11 For a more elaborated description of ritual validation and ecclesiological validation of ordination see ERIK ECKERDAL, *Apostolic Succession...*, 383ff.

12 ANGELO MAFFEIS, *Il ministero nella Chiesa: Uno studio del dialogo cattolico-luterano (1967-1984)*, Dissertatio. Series romana, 2 (Milano: Glossa, 1991) 13.

13 For a different lens of analysis for ordination, see JAMES F. PUGLISI, *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: A Comparative Study* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996). Puglisi analyses ordination through *vocatio, benedictio* and *missio*, which relate to the *formation, ordination* and *jurisdiction* of the minister.

Council of Trent, but as a kind of new theological terminology. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, during the pontificate of Benedict XIV (1740-1758), *validity* became part of the terminology of the papal magisterium. It might surprise one to know how new, in the history of the church, this approach to ordained ministry was. In the Reformation conflict and with the emergence of confessional identities, the concept of validity (and how it was defined) became a useful tool to establish superiority over the other.<sup>14</sup>

In perspective of this history and in relation to *Sorores in spe*, it is interesting to see how the arguments against and for certain ordination rites has been used. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a commission lead by the Polish cardinal Hosius was given the task to evaluate the episcopal office of the Swedish church province, *ecclesia Svecana*, or as we say today, the Church of Sweden. The commission came to the conclusion that the Swedish office was not valid, because the ordinal did not prescribe the anointing as part of the ordination. According to the commission, anointing was a *materia* necessary for the validity of ordination. The council of Trent was divided on this issue and in the end, the fathers did not say anything about the efficient material sign of ordination. This was fortunate, because already in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the French church historian Jean Morin established that anointing was unknown in Rome as a part of the ordination formula as late as the 9<sup>th</sup> century and it has never been used in the Eastern part of the Church. This means that the conclusion of the Cardinal's commission in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, based on the lack of anointing, was made on false grounds.<sup>15</sup>

This history is interesting, since 300 years later, when *Apostolicae curae* states that Anglican orders

are not valid, it is not based on the deficiency of the *materia*, but on the *forma* and *intentio* of ordination. It was not possible to use the same argumentation as in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Still, it was first in 1947 with *Sacramentum ordinis* that pope Pius XII established that the efficient *materia* is the laying on of hands,<sup>16</sup> which later found its practical realisation in the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. What has happened since 1947 is a shift from a one-dimensional Christological understanding of church and office, to a multi-dimensional and pneumatologically understanding of Church and office which has changed the sacramental understanding of both church and ordained ministry.

#### *Historic irregularities*

From this perspective, it is also possible to understand history with its shifts, controversies, schisms, popular movements, and ideological fashions of the day, as issues of historical weaknesses and even irregularities. Such historical irregularities may be, for example, the weaknesses of the *materia*, or *forma* or *intentio* of a certain tradition of ordained ministry in a particular province of the western church. However, another church, with a solid continuity of ordination regarding its *materia*, *forma* and *intentio*, may still demonstrate many weaknesses, even blasphemous aspects as their historical irregularities.<sup>17</sup> As we know, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Western church – before it was divided into different parts such as Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Reformed and Radicals – could demonstrate many historical irregularities concerning the true *intentio* of ordained episcopal ministry with the devastating consequences for the unity of the church. Many pre-reformation “bishops” were, as an example, in fact, not ordained bishops but exercised only juridical power and economic benefits of one or even several bishoprics.

14 JOHN A. GURRIERI, “Sacramental Validity: The Origins and Use of a Vocabulary,” *The Jurist* 41 (1981) 22ff. See also HARRY J. MCSORLEY, “The Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Competent Minister of the Eucharist in Ecumenical Perspective”, in *Eucharist and Ministry*, Paul C. Empie, T. Austin Murphy (eds.), Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, 4 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publ. House, 1979) 122ff.

15 NILS-HENRIK LINDBLADH, *Anointing as an Ordination Problem* (Lund: Proprios, 1984) 79ff, 108ff, 129ff.

16 POPE PIUS XII, “*Sacramentum ordinis*. Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Order”, AAS 40-5, 30 november 1947.

17 ERIK ECKERDAL, *Apostolic Succession...*, 370.

*History as explanation*

A further perspective to describe the differences between a juridical and more elaborated theological approach is to refer to the ecclesiological differences between the first and the second millennium. In conclusion, I will only touch upon this issue, that would be fruitful to include in a further elaboration of the constructive perspective offered in *Sorores in spe* to overcome the condemnation of Anglican ordain ministry in *Apostolicæ curæ*. While the Church in the first millennium was characterised by a pneumatological, sacramental and eschatological ecclesiology, the ecclesiology of the second millennium became fragmented and to a great extent this perception was lost. Instead, the church was understood as a hierarchical structure that was explained in terms of a rationalistic and juridical approach through a new scholastic theology and a new canon law, with important consequences for the understanding of the ordained ministry.

The difference could be described that, in the first millennium, the church was a function of the Holy Spirit, while in the second millennium, the Spirit became a function of the church. Later on, ordination was not only explored through the new scholastic and juridical terminology, but also defined in a way that often became un-historical, for example, with the history of the anointing of oil in relation to ordination – in the Swedish case – and later defined by the description of the necessary *intentio* in *Apostolicæ curæ*.

In order to overcome the negative verdict of 1896, history, together with the re-discovery of the dynamic spirit-filled ecclesiology of the first millennium, and the great theological, liturgical, and spiritual resources are needed to un-lock the negative statements and history of the post reformation period.



*Erik Eckerdal during his lecture*

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**SARAH COAKLEY**

Cambridge University and Australian Catholic University

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 17 March 2022

## Brief Response to *Sorores in spe* · What does this Mean for Theology, for Theological Education, for Parishes and Communities?

Let me express, with others, the great joy and ecumenical hope expressed by the publication of our text, *Sorores in spe*, and offer, very briefly, just three succinct reflections of my own from the perspective of an Anglican priest and theologian. Here I am focusing especially – as requested for this roundtable – on why I think this historic document is so important, spiritually, theologically, and existentially, for my fellow Anglicans, and especially for life in our parishes and communities.

1. First, as the Anglican Bishop of Québec has already done so memorably today, I point especially in our new document to *The Recognition of What the Spirit has Already Done in Modern Anglican/Roman Catholic Friendships of Mutual Recognition*: Looking backwards through my own lifetime, I want to emphasize what this document says on the manifest ecumenical fruitfulness of Anglican priestly and lay witness in our generation, and its deep and profound mutual interaction with Roman Catholicism in all its variety and richness. This is now an *achieved* spiritual reality, as I see it – as mysterious as it is deep – to which the ecclesiological position of our churches surely now needs to witness officially; and in the *absence* of such an acknowledgement – I dare to say as an Anglican – the ‘Spirit is grieved’ (Eph. 4: 30). Why do I say this? Because I can recall even in my own childhood and adolescence as an Anglican that extraordinary passage between the period before the Vatican Reform and its aftermath: one moment Roman Catholicism was to me something alien, mysterious and slightly to be feared (as I visited, uncomprehendingly, various numinous Catholic shrines on childhood trips to the Continent); and the next moment I was actually marching in solidarity in the streets of Blackheath, South London in

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1967, with my fellow young Anglo-Catholic parishioners, alongside Monsignor Alan Clark, our local Roman Catholic priest and later to be the first co-chair of ARCIC. I was also co-leading, with my eldest brother, a theological discussion group for adolescents in my parish which contained, for the first time, Roman Catholics as well as Anglicans, non-Conformists, sceptics and atheists (and I should add that a remarkable number of these friends went on to be or become devout members of churches). This was a moment of transition and change so powerful that everything that has come after it only makes sense in the light of that Vatican Reform. Now it makes equally perfect sense, 50+ years on, that our deepest mutual friendships, our spiritual directors, our trusted confidantes and prayer partners, and our theological interlocutors all cross the Anglican/Roman Catholic divide: in the words of classic Anglican liturgy, we are already truly together in the ‘blessed company of all faithful people’. In short, *we recognize* each other as fellow-Christians at every level – in the academy, in parishes, in politics, in close ties of family and friends. So the first question I have for myself and for our roundtable is this: how do we go forward, in academic institutions and parishes and more informal networks, to make more official and emphatic *theologically* what has already become a spiritual reality? The fact is that formal ecumenical engagements

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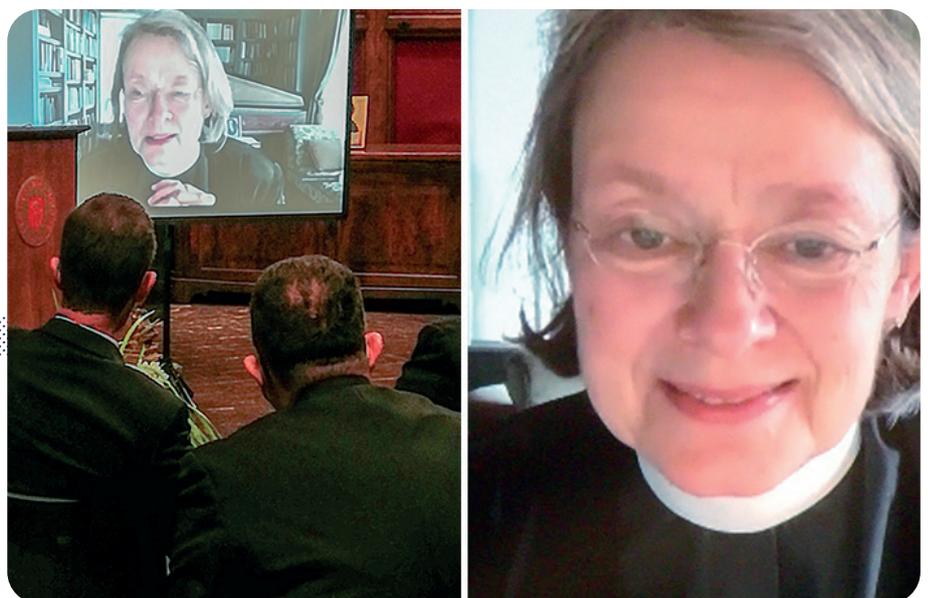
between churches have one style, but now in addition we need another one: one that is equally theologically clear, but with less focus on remaining differences and more on the hope that this achievement should already create in us together?

2. This leads me to my second point, which is the need to focus urgently now on the younger generation in our churches (millennials, Generation Z, and younger still) to begin to work on *What May Lie in our Future(s) Together*: The need in this newer generation, as I know so well from my many students and from my own children, is for a fresh regeneration of ecumenical interest, one which *Sorores in spe* represents so eloquently. I need not tell you that young people, if they have maintained their Christian practice at all, are weary of ecclesiastical divisions which they see as a diversion from the urgent, indeed potentially catastrophic, spiritual and political challenges of our day. Most such young people, I should add, know almost nothing about the remaining official condemnation of Anglican orders by Roman Catholicism, and though of course they *should* know it in principle, and for the sake of historical understanding, it is arguably much better to ‘major in the positive’ that our document commends. Because I am married to an American

Baptist, our own children were not baptized as babies but each had several ecumenical godparents (across the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox spectrum) who have nurtured them from birth and made their baptisms-cum-confirmations-cum-first communions at the age of 13 movingly memorable anticipations of the ‘coming great Church’. Each of these godparents, I would say, contributed something very special to the upbringing of our children. But Anglicans themselves have a particular history of bringing hugely divergent theological opinions to the table in Scriptural, ‘rational’ and ‘traditional’ hope (Richard Hooker) – we have done theological business in this way, in all our frailty, over the generations, even in seemingly hopeless political and religious conditions. We should thus see ourselves as now standing for the *future* generation in mediating this proposed new understanding of our ecumenical ministries together, and we need to find ways in parishes and schools to discuss and commend it. The ‘ecumenical movement’, as such, is not something that consciously excites this younger generation, because so much of it has seemed to run into the sands or meet insuperable obstacles. It is the right time to revive it consciously, especially in seminaries and parishes.

*Sarah Coakley in connection remotely with the Centro for her Study Day live lecture*

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3. And thirdly and finally, and correlatively, *There has to be a Shared Ecclesiastical Witness here for a World in Need More Globally of Aligned Sacrificial Cooperation and Mutual Forgiveness: Sorores in spe* expresses this longing by examining in detail how our own views of ordination have now remarkably converged, yet without any suggestion of the distinctiveness of historic Anglican ecclesiology being erased. And this, I submit, has enormous wider symbolic significance for all of us struggling with political and ecological causes of grave destruction, danger and division. In short, the sober, penitent and yet joyful invitation of *Sorores in spe* to put our earlier differences behind us strikes such an inspiring note and could be made an educational focus and example, fanning out from there, to embrace other possibilities of reconciliation and mutual cooperation.

These are the short, initial, remarks I wanted to make from the Anglican side of this discussion of *Sorores in spe* as an independent document. But I should add that, as an Anglican woman priest who has presented more than one detailed paper to the Malines Conversations group on the issue of women’s ordination, I would be more than happy to say more on that issue if that is where our conversation this evening leads next.



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Brief Response to *Sorores in spe* · What does this Mean for Theology, for Theological Education, for Parishes and Communities?

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**JAMES F. PUGLISI · SA**

Director, Centro Pro Unione

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 17 March 2022

## Response to *Sorores in spe* · What does a Reconsideration of *Apostolicæ curæ* Mean for Theology, for the Way We Educate People in Theology, for Parishes and Communities, and for the Malines Conversation Group – What Should be Their Next Step?

Before responding to the questions posed, I want to begin by making a brief comment on the concluding sections of *Sorores in spe*, followed by what I think needs to be considered as a new approach to further work and hence the next steps.

### Section III. Church, Eucharist and Ministries: Orders and Ordination

I believe that the document missed an opportunity by not being more critically attentive to vocabulary and concepts in this section. First, I do not think that the group was attentive enough to the documents of the Second Vatican Council *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (hereafter PO) and *Christus Dominus* (CD). These Conciliar decrees broke very new ground by returning to a more traditional way of articulating the content of the presbyteral and episcopal ministry. However, in this section of *Sorores in spe*, the text used a more “traditional” of speaking about the content of these ministries by using the category of “priesthood” (*sacerdotium*). Careful attention to the liturgical texts in their Latin original, would have helped since the English translations will almost always use priest or priesthood when the Latin will use *presbyter* or *sacerdotalis*, namely the presbyter and the adverb priestly. This may seem very picky but the theological implication is enormous.

If we were to talk about a theology of priesthood, we would have to talk about baptism, first and foremost, since this sacrament introduces each newly initiated person into the priesthood of Christ (see 1 Peter). Therefore within the context of a priestly people, there are some (*episcopus* and *presbyteroi*) who exercise a ministry of *episkopē* or a ministry of oversight in the building up of the priestly, kingly and prophetic body of Christ. The careful designation of what both bishops and

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presbyters accomplish within the mystical Body of Christ is a charism of *presiding over the edification of the Body of Christ*. This means that together and with the deacons the proper category to speak about these ministries is *diakonia* or service.

The category of *diakonia* is given special importance: it is the service of the gospel, the building up of the Church through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of the power of the keys. The ministry here is seen as the function of a shepherd who remains at the same time one of the flock. But the grace of the gospel endows the minister with a new personal relationship to his fellow Christians. These ministers are *vis-à-vis* the People of God, for through them Christ speaks to his Church as her Lord. But the ministers are also members, subject like the rest of the flock, to the judgment of God. Lastly, they exercise their ministry in the communion of the other charisms and ministries, and along with them.

I could speak at length on the implications of what this could mean for the reconsideration of the ministries of other churches and ecclesial communities but this is not the place here nor do we have the time for this. Allow me to make just one more observation which could prove to be helpful when considering orders and ordination in a new context.

What is needed for the way we educate people in theology requires a different epistemological approach to the question at hand. It will necessitate a serious inductive, application of the adage *lex orandi, lex credendi* in a systematic way. Only in this way will we be able to see the relation between *ecclesia* and ministry. An ecclesiology elaborated from its liturgical base renews, in a convincing manner, the debates such as the articulation between Christology and pneumatology, between order and jurisdiction, confession of faith and succession in the apostolic ministry. This epistemological shift will enable us to have a new starting point which will not begin from “what divides us”. This starting stance is what has traditionally led to a “non-resolution” of the questions that impede communion, such as, the lack of a ‘priestly’ qualification of the ministry, the ‘broken’ apostolic succession and the ministerial ‘invalidity’ that its absence entails. Rather, with a new epistemological approach we will perceive what rich sources the liturgy and the liturgical assembly represent for theology, and how much they reveal of the inherent balances or imbalances in theological discourses. This *locus theologicus* that is the liturgy affords the Churches the opportunity to confront their theological discourse with their actual practice.

Therefore, when we consider a reconsideration of *Apostolicæ curæ* from this perspective we will find a fresh way in which we may educate people in theology, for parishes and communities. So we may affirm that by considering what the churches do when they ordain a minister (*praxis*), illustrates more convergence than what they articulate in their systematics about ordained ministry (*theory*). The importance of the ordination ritual resides in the fact that it is a complex **process** that represents in a demonstrative way the structuring of each concrete church, that is at the same time an *ecclesial act* as well as *confessional, epicletical and juridical*, and in all its aspects, **sacramental**. Christian ordination cannot be reduced to a simple rite of installation or of entrance into a charge, but it is an **ecclesial process** (*traditio-receptio*) in which a Christian receives a charism

for the building up of the Church which puts him/her in a new relationship—personal and lasting—with his/her brethren.

### **Institutional disassociation between ministry and *ecclesia***

In the evaluation of the ministries of other churches and ecclesial communities, the Catholic church has often applied a very rigorous criteria that she often times has overlooked in the historical evaluation of the ministries within her own borders. When the history of the process of access to the ordained ministry is considered, it becomes evident that there are several moments when a *gradual but ultimately, radical shift* occurs not only in the form of the ministries but also in their relation to the *ecclesia*. A growing division is produced between the pastoral ministry and the *ecclesia*, which is illustrated in an increasing autonomy of the ordained in relationship to the faithful. This result may be seen in three principal events in the life of the medieval church namely with ordinations “*ad missam*”, with the transformation of the “ecclesiological title (*titulus*)” to an “economic title” and eventually with the growth of the mendicant religious orders and their exemption from local bishops.<sup>1</sup> Briefly what happened in all three of these examples is the *weakening, and eventual, detachment* of the ordained ministries from their ecclesial point of reference and attributing an *autonomous, personal status* to the person of the minister enabling him to act in the name of a “personal power”, received in ordination. The minister was no longer seen **within** the church but now was placed **above** the church, enabling the minister to act upon the church since he had the *potestas* over the Eucharistic body of Christ and hence over the ecclesial body of Christ. These “deviations” were possible since no longer was the prescription against absolute ordinations (canon 6 of the Council of Chalcedon) observed. The importance

1 I have studied this from the ecclesiological and sacramental point of view in JAMES F. PUGLISI, *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: A Comparative Study* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996) vol. I, pp.171-177.

of this canon is seen in the relationship that was articulated between pastoral ministry and the *ecclesia*. The final result deriving from these three examples allows for the existence of a pastoral ministry independent from a particular community. Ministerial competency is no longer the fruit of a **process** which is *ecclesial, liturgical, confessional, and juridical*, and necessarily linked to the structuring of the local church. Henceforth it arises from a juridical decision resting upon a “personal power over” the universal church.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the central act of the *cheirotomia* and the *epiclesis*, both seen as part of a process involving several different actors (the faithful, the clergy, the neighboring churches in the case of episcopal ordinations, the ordinand and most especially the Holy Spirit) slowly becomes obfuscated by the various “secondary explanatory rites”. These eventually become the classical “matter and form” of the sacrament and what will later be designated as necessary for the validity of the sacrament, namely the *porrectio instrumentorum*. The argumentation in *Apostolicæ curæ* appears to be based on this type of epistemological argumentation which, as may be seen, is far removed from the process and witness of the early church. Prof Henn has outlined the basis of the epistemology of the Papal Bull of Leo XIII and offered some pertinent questions as to this type of argumentation for the Malines Conversations Group.

The Catholic church will have to wait until Pope Pius XII clarifies what is to be considered the actual matter and form of the sacrament of orders, returning to the ancient tradition preserved by the *Catholica*, East and West, namely the imposition of hands and *epiclesis*.<sup>3</sup>

This decision of Pius was the prelude to the liturgical reform promoted by the Second Vatican Council concerning ordination as well as other matters sacramental. Following the Council, once again a sacramental ecclesiology which reflects a Trinitarian equilibrium needs to be developed. Rooted in the early tradition of the church, contrary to a conception of the ministry elaborated at the end of the twelfth century (which defined the ordained ministry, or rather the priesthood, by its “power to consecrate”), the pastoral ministry of the bishop or presbyter is linked to the function of building up and presiding over the *ecclesia* as we have seen above.

To sum up, we may say that the originality of ordained ministries can be understood from their *ecclesial commission*. Inadequate are the starting terms of priesthood (in the technical sense, different from the presbyterate), of mediation, of power, of sign, of status. On the other hand, the starting point of the *ecclesial commission* and the *grace* that is its foundation are pertinent. In fact the non distinction between bishop and presbyter to which the New Testament witnesses could have a positive sense for us to the extent that therein we can see the *episcopē* as the **essential and fundamental function** and thereby situate the presbyterate in the line of the episcopate. The presbyterate shares, at its own level, this function. The function is a pastoral reality, namely, that of *presidency*, i.e., the responsibility in relation to the vitality and to the unity of the Christian assembly and hence in respect to their fidelity to apostolic testimony. The priesthood however remains a **corporate** reality exercised in the assembly by an epicletic act. The assembly does not offer a sacrifice that its president confects but because Christ offers, each member of his body also offers (cf. Guerric d’Igny, end of XII century): “The priest does not consecrate alone, does not sacrifice alone

2 See JOSEPH RATZINGER, “Der Einfluss des Bettelordensstreites auf die Entwicklung der Lehre vom päpstlichen Universalprimat, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des heiligen Bonaventura”, pp. 697-724, in: JOHANN AUER, HERMANN VOLK, (eds.), *Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: Karl Zink Verlag, 1957).

3 *Sacramentum Ordinis*, November 30, 1947 in AAS 40 (1948) 5-7.

but the whole assembly of the faithful consecrate with him (*PL* 185:87).<sup>4</sup>

What I have been describing is what I call a sacramental theological approach to the solution of problems which seem to be unsolvable.

### Sacramental ecclesiology

In this sacramental ecclesiology, the church is structured according to a dynamic which respects the Trinitarian life received in the sacraments of initiation, and the communal dimension of salvation. In addition to the balance between Christology and pneumatology in this manner of treating the ordained ministry, one may also begin to articulate the content of each of the ordained ministries to allow their originality in relation to the diversity of other ministries. This element is important for the realization that the whole church is herself ministerial (see Eph 4). Hence the content of the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate need to be articulated in relation to the whole prophetic, royal and priestly people of God. The three ministries need to be seen as permanent and defined by their authentic original function within the whole body. If we are going to speak of priesthood, the Catholic church will need to begin its reflection with the theology of baptism and **not that of order** since the priestly function is one of the whole church and not just that of the ordained.

4 St THOMAS AQUINAS explains this by speaking of the role of the priest since it is only an instrumental action *in persona Christi*:

“There are two ways of producing an effect; first, as a *principal agent*; secondly, as an *instrument*. In the former way the interior sacramental effect is the work of God alone: [first, because God alone can enter the soul wherein the sacramental effect takes place; and no agent can operate immediately where it is not: secondly, because grace which is an interior sacramental effect is from God alone, as we have established in I-II, 112, 1; while the character which is the interior effect of certain sacraments, is an *instrumental power* which flows from the principal agent, which is God.] In the second way, however, the interior sacramental effect can be the work of man, in so far as he works as a minister. For a minister is of the nature of an instrument, since the action of both is applied to something extrinsic, while the interior effect is produced through the power of the principal agent, which is God. S.T. IIIa, q 64, a1

Let me briefly conclude with a new approach for further work and hence the next steps to be taken.

### An epistemological shift

A necessary change in epistemology in thinking about the use of the category of “priesthood” to qualify the ordained ministry in isolation of its application to all the baptized will be necessary on the part of the Catholic church. This does not mean that we will not speak about a priestly **ministry** (note that the noun is ministry, *munus*). We must recognize, with the Council of Trent, the necessity of a priestly ministry as external, visible ministry, not reducible to the ministry of the word and to baptismal priesthood. According to the tradition, this priestly ministry of the sacraments is conferred with ordination to the presbyterate and episcopate together with a prophetic and kingly ministry. For this, it is not because one would have personally received a priestly qualification that one presides the church, but because one presides the church that he receives the ministry of the sacraments. The binding concept is that of the *presidency of the assembly* of the church and not that of priesthood. LG 28 states 2 times the idea that in the primitive church, presbyters preside the Eucharist because they preside the Christian community.<sup>5</sup>

Conceptually, it is not a happy solution to place next to each other the “common priesthood” and the “ministerial priesthood” as is done in LG 10 citing Pius XII (*Mediator Dei*): “the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood, even though they differ among themselves in essence and not only in degree, are nevertheless ordained one to the other, because each one participates, each one in its own particular manner, to the unique priesthood of Christ”. In fact, the reader of LG does not immediately perceive that for “ministerial priesthood”, Pius XII intended in reality the *pastoral ministry*. The formula only

5 HERVÉ-M. LEGRAND, “The Presidency of the Eucharist according to the Ancient Tradition,” *Worship* 53, 5 (1979) 413-438.

becomes clear if one translates it by saying that the common priesthood and the pastoral ministry are two realities between which there is no true analogy (they differ in essence); one reality is the *common priesthood*, another is the *pastoral ministry* that includes a priestly ministry that would not be a superior degree of the first.

In the ancient church, we have the example of Augustine who articulated the relation between the common and ministerial priesthood when he said: “When I am frightened by what I am to you, then I am consoled by what I am with you. To you I am the bishop, with you I am a Christian. The first is an office, the second a grace; the first a danger, the second salvation”.<sup>6</sup> The distinction that he makes is between what he has received together with all the faithful and what he has been called to be on their behalf.<sup>7</sup>

Returning to the concept of the presidency of the Eucharist and the other sacraments, for example, seen from the liturgical continuum of *vocatio-ordinatio-iurisdictio* of an episcopal ordination, the newly ordained, even if he is the youngest and at the head of the most modest church, immediately presides the Eucharist of his ordination. The presidency is thus revealed as a dimension of his pastoral charge. This balance is not respected when we designate, in a non-reflective theological manner, presbyters as the “priesthood”, making their presidency of the sacraments the englobing reality of the pastorate. In fact, it is not because one receives a “priesthood” that one presides a church but because one receives a charge of *presidency of the construction of a church* that he also receives the charge to preside the sacraments, who on their part, equally construct the church.

6 *Sermon* 340, 1 (PL 38, 1483).

7 Hear what he pronounced on the occasion of an episcopal ordination: “We bishops are your servants and companions because we all have the same Master... . We are at the same time servants and subordinates, ... .

We are at your head only if we are useful... . If a bishop does not realize this program, he is not a bishop except in name only”, *Sermon Guelferb.* 32 (ed. Morin, Rome 1930, p. 563).

Ordination to the episcopate and the presbyterate does not confer the priesthood but a *priestly ministry*. For the priestly ministry, it is appropriate to understand the fact of making sacramentally present the action of salvation of Christ. This can be done only ministerially *since Christ is the author of salvation and the actual holder of the true priesthood*. At the same time this requires a ministry. The priestly ministry is necessary for everyone even to presbyters and bishops. It is a matter of the action of salvation; it is necessary that this action is attested to us and that we receive it because no one can give themselves their own salvation. Of its own nature, this salvation is born by *koinonia* and it is the bearer of *koinonia*. For these two reasons, we do not baptize ourself, we cannot absolve our own sins; even if one is a bishop or presbyter they cannot celebrate the Eucharist alone because this sacramental celebration, as for the others, needs to be done in communion, from whence the necessity, consistently required by law up until canon 906 (1983) [canon 813 (1917)], of the participation of at least one other Christian that answers “Amen” in the Holy Spirit.



Fr. James Puglisi, sa  
Study Day lecture

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What will be necessary on the part of the Catholic church is an authentic recovery of a new epistemological stance when questioning the existence or non-existence of the ministerial reality of another church.

I would propose that this new stance is found precisely in the **discernment of the apostolic quality of the other.**

It should be noted that in all of the dialogues that have gone on now for over 50 years the questions of Baptism, Eucharist, apostolicity and ministry have been discussed and with various levels of convergence toward a common understanding of their relationship to the teaching of the Apostles through the ages<sup>8</sup>.

8 WALTER KASPER, *Harvesting the Fruits: Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue*, (London/New York: Continuum, 2009).



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**ABBREVIATIONS for Confessional Families Churches and Councils**

<b>A</b>	Anglican
<b>AC</b>	Assyrian Church of the East
<b>AIC</b>	African Instituted Churches
<b>B</b>	Baptist
<b>CC</b>	Chaldean Catholic Church
<b>CEC</b>	Conference of European Churches
<b>CCEE</b>	Council of European Episcopal Conferences
<b>CP</b>	Constantinople Patriarchate
<b>CPCE</b>	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe ( <i>formerly Leuenberg Church Fellowship</i> )
<b>D</b>	Disciples of Christ
<b>DOMBES</b>	Groupe des Dombes
<b>E</b>	Evangelicals
<b>FC</b>	Free Churches
<b>FO</b>	Faith and Order
<b>L</b>	Lutheran (includes German 'Evangelische')
<b>M</b>	Methodist
<b>MECC</b>	Middle East Council of Churches
<b>Mn</b>	Mennonite
<b>Mo</b>	Moravian
<b>NCC</b>	New Charismatic Churches
<b>O</b>	Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine)
<b>OC</b>	Old Catholic (includes Polish National)
<b>OO</b>	Oriental Orthodox (Non-Chalcedonian)
<b>Pe</b>	Pentecostal
<b>R</b>	Reformed
<b>RC</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>SA</b>	Salvation Army
<b>SDA</b>	Seventh-day Adventist
<b>U</b>	United Churches
<b>W</b>	Waldensian
<b>WCC</b>	World Council of Churches

## LIST OF DIALOGUES

**A-B:** Anglican-Baptist International Forum

**A-B / eng:** Informal Conversations between the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of England

**A-D / aus:** Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations

**A-L:** Anglican-Lutheran International Commission

**A-L / africa:** All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission

**A-L / aus:** Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia

**A-L / can:** Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue

**A-L / eng-g:** Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England

**A-L / eng-nordic regions:** Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England

**A-L / eur:** Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission

**A-L / usa:** Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA

**A-L-Mo / can:** Trilateral Anglican-Lutheran-Moravian Task Group on Full Communion

**A-L-R / eng-f:** Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France

**A-M:** Anglican-Methodist International Commission

**A-M / eng:** Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain

**A-M / ire:** Church of Ireland / Methodist Church of Ireland Covenant Council

**A-M / usa:** United Methodist-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue

**A-M-R / eng:** Informal Conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church

**A-Mo:** Anglican-Moravian Conversations

**A-Mo / usa:** Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA

**A-O:** Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission

**A-O / usa:** Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA

**A-OC:** Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations

**A-OC / na:** Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group

**A-OO:** Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue

**A-OO / copt:** Anglican-Coptic Relations

**A-Pe / eng:** Anglican-Pentecostal Consultation

**A-R:** Anglican-Reformed International Commission

**A-R / eng-scot:** Church of England-Church of Scotland Joint Study Group

**A-R / usa:** Presbyterian-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue

**A-RC:** Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)

**A-RC:** International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)

**A-RC / aus:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia

**A-RC / b:** Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee

**A-RC / br:** Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission

**A-RC / can:** Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission

- A-RC / eng:** English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
- A-RC / eur:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe
- A-RC / f:** Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France
- A-RC / nz:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission in Aotearoa New Zealand (ARCCANZ)
- A-RC / usa:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
- A-U / aus:** Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- AC-CC:** Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church
- AC-O / rus:** Bilateral Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
- AC-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- AC-OO / syr:** Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church
- AC-RC:** Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
- AIC-R:** Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- B-CPCE / eur:** Dialogue between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the European Baptist Federation
- B-L:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue
- B-L / g:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany
- B-L / n:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway
- B-L / sf:** Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland
- B-L / usa:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
- B-M:** Baptist-Methodist International Dialogue
- B-M-W / italy:** Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy
- B-Mn:** Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations
- B-O:** Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue
- B-O / georgia:** Dialogue between the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Georgia
- B-R:** Baptist-Reformed Dialogue
- B-RC:** Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations
- B-RC / f:** Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France
- B-RC / usa (ab):** American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- B-RC / usa (sb):** Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- CEC-CCEE:** Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences
- CPCE-RC:** Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Roman Catholic Church Consultation
- D-L / usa:** Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
- D-O / rus:** Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue
- D-R:** Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue
- D-RC:** Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue
- D-U / aus:** Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- D-U / usa:** Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA

- DOMBES:** Dialogues des Dombes
- E-RC:** Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission
- E-RC / can:** Canadian Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- E-RC / f:** Evangelical-Roman Catholic Conversations in France
- E-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- FC-O / g:** Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany
- FO:** Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies
- L-M:** International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission
- L-M / n:** Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway
- L-M / s:** Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden
- L-M / sf:** Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland
- L-M / usa:** US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue
- L-Mn:** Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission
- L-Mn / f:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France
- L-Mn / g:** Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)
- L-Mn / usa:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA
- L-Mn-RC:** Lutheran-Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue Commission
- L-Mo / usa:** Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA
- L-O:** Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission
- L-O / g:** Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church in Germany and the Evangelical Church in Germany
- L-O / g-cp:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate
- L-O / g-rom:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church
- L-O / g-rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church
- L-O / sf:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church
- L-O / sf-rus:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church
- L-O / usa:** Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA
- L-O-R / f:** Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France
- L-O-R / na:** Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America
- L-OC / g:** Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany
- L-OC / s:** Commission for Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht
- L-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- L-OO / copt-s:** Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden
- L-OO / g:** Consultations between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Evangelical Church in Germany

**L-OO / india:** Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India

**L-Pe:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Conversations

**L-Pe / s:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Sweden

**L-Pe / sf:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland

**L-Pe-R / f:** Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France

**L-R:** Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission

**L-R / arg:** Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina

**L-R / aus:** Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia

**L-R / can:** Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations

**L-R / f:** Fédération Protestante de France

**L-R / usa:** Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA

**L-R-RC:** Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue

**L-R-RC / f:** Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France

**L-R-SDA / f:** Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France

**L-R-U / eur:** Leuenberg Church Fellowship

**L-RC:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity

**L-RC / arg:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina

**L-RC / aus:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia

**L-RC / br:** National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil

**L-RC / can:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada

**L-RC / g:** Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)

**L-RC / india:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India

**L-RC / jap:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan

**L-RC / n:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway

**L-RC / s:** Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm

**L-RC / sf:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland

**L-RC / usa:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA

**L-SDA:** Lutheran-Seventh-day Adventist Consultations

**L-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

**M-O:** Methodist-Orthodox Commission

**M-Pe-W / italy:** Methodist-Pentecostal-Waldensian Dialogue in Italy

**M-R:** Methodist-Reformed Dialogue

**M-RC:** Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council

**M-RC / eng:** English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee

**M-RC / usa:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA

**M-SA:** International Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the World Methodist Council

- Mn-R:** Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- Mn-R / nl:** Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue in the Netherlands
- Mn-RC:** Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue
- Mn-RC / latin america:** Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue in Latin America
- Mn-SDA:** Mennonite-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Conversations
- NCC-RC:** New Charismatic Churches-Roman Catholic Preliminary Conversations
- O-OC:** Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission
- O-OO:** Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- O-OO / rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- O-OO / rus-armenia:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church
- O-OO / rus-copt:** Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church
- O-Pe:** Orthodox-Pentecostal Academic Dialogue
- O-R:** Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue
- O-R / ch:** Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
- O-R / na:** Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America
- O-R / rus:** Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church
- O-RC:** Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church
- O-RC / can:** Canadian Orthodox and Catholic Bishops' Dialogue
- O-RC / ch:** Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
- O-RC / eng:** Catholic-Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England
- O-RC / f:** Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France
- O-RC / g:** Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany
- O-RC / pol:** Russian Orthodox Church-Catholic Church in Poland Working Group
- O-RC / rom:** Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)
- O-RC / rus:** Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church
- O-RC / rus-g:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference
- O-RC / usa:** North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation
- O-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- OC-R / india:** Old Catholic Church-Malankara Mar Thomas Syrian Church Theological Consultation
- OC-R-RC / ch:** Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
- OC-RC:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations
- OC-RC / ch:** Dialogue e Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland
- OC-RC / g:** Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany

**OC-RC / na:** Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic Dialogue

**OC-RC / nl:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands

**OC-RC / pol:** Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland

**OO-R:** Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue

**OO-RC:** International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

**OO-RC / armenia:** Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission

**OO-RC / copt:** International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church

**OO-RC / eritrea:** Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations

**OO-RC / ethiop:** Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations

**OO-RC / india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

**OO-RC / syr-india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church

**OO-RC / usa:** Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation

**Pe-R:** Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue

**Pe-RC:** Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue

**Pe-WCC:** Joint Consultative Group between the World Council of Churches and Pentecostals

**R-RC:** Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission

**R-RC / a:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria

**R-RC / b:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium

**R-RC / ch:** Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland

**R-RC / nl:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands

**R-RC / scot:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland

**R-RC / usa:** Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA

**R-SDA:** International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

**R-SDA / usa:** Presbyterian Church (USA)-Seventh-day Adventist Church Dialogue

**RC-SA:** Salvation Army - Catholic Informal Conversation

**RC-SDA:** Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church

**RC-U / aus:** Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia

**RC-U / can:** Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada

**RC-W / italy:** Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy

**RC-WCC:** Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches

**SA-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

**SDA-WCC:** Seventh-day Adventist Church-World Council of Churches Conversations

**WCC:** World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

## PERIODICALS SURVEYED

- A** Acta Ecumenica, AFER-African Ecclesial Review, American Baptist Quarterly, Amicizia ebraico-cristiana, Anglican Theological Review, Annales theologici, Apulia Theologica
- B** Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology
- C** Calvin Theological Journal, Catholica; Centro Pro Unione Bulletin, Chemins de dialogue, Chrétiens en Marche, Christian Orient, Concilium, Confronti, Contacts, Courier, Current Dialogue
- D** Diálogo ecuménico, Eastern Churches Journal, Ecclesia Mater, Ecclesiology, The Ecumenical Review, Ecumenical Trends, Ecumenismo Quotidiano, Ekklesia, Exchange
- F/G** Forum Letter, Global Christian Forum Newsletter, Herder
- H/I** Korrespondenz, International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, International Review of Mission, Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift, Irénikon, Istina
- J/K** Journal of Anglican Studies, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, Kerygma und Dogma
- L** The Living Church, Lutheran Forum, Lutheran Quarterly.
- M/N** MD-Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim, Nicolaus
- O** O Odigos, Odos, Ökumenische Rundschau, Oikumene, One in Christ, Oriente cristiano, Orthodoxes Forum, L'Osservatore Romano, Ostkirchliche Studien
- P/Q** Pastoral Ecuménica, Pneuma; Positions luthériennes, Proche-Orient Chrétien, Pro Dialogo, Pro Ecclesia, Protestantesimo, Qîqajôn di Bose.
- R** Reformed World, Il Regno, Reseptio, Review of Ecumenical Studies, Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo
- S** Sobornost, St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Studi di Teologia, Studi Ecumenici, Studia i dokumenty ecumeniczne, Studia Oecumenica, Studia Liturgica, Studies in Interreligious Dialogue
- T** The Tablet, Theological Studies
- U/V** Una Sancta, Unité des Chrétiens, Veritas in caritate: informazioni
- W/Z** dall'ecumenismo in Italia, The Window, Worship, Zeitzeichen



## Key to sub-headings

**INFORMATION**  
**REFLECTION AND REACTIONS**  
**TEXTS AND PAPERS**

*facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports*  
*essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers*  
*documents, reports, statements, official responses*

### GENERAL

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*Compiled by* Loredana Nepi

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Preghere per l'unità dei cristiani · Otto giorni

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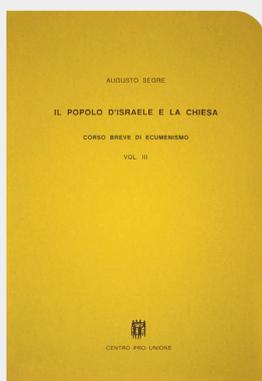
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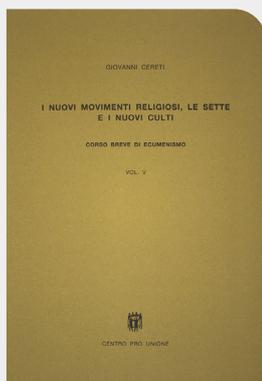
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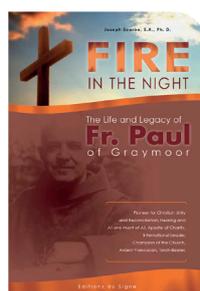
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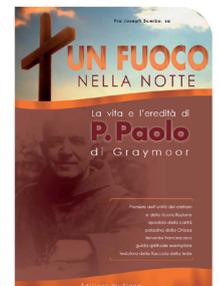
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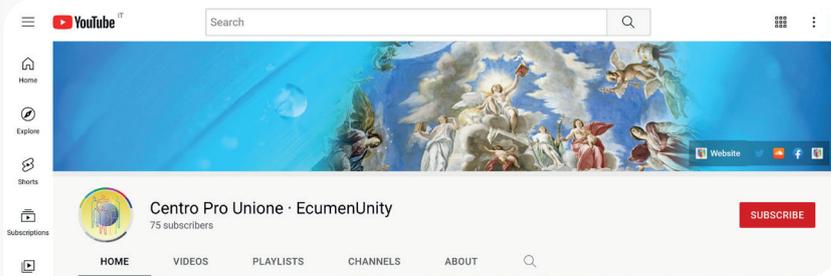
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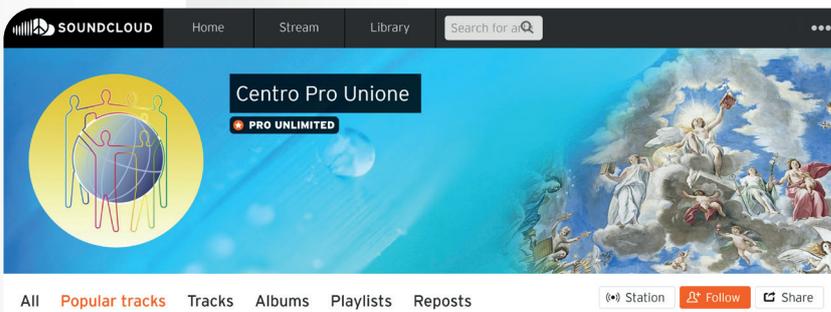
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