



# CENTRO PRO UNIONE

SEMI-ANNUAL BULLETIN

*A publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione***N. 100**  
**FALL 2021****IN THIS ISSUE**

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**IMAGES OF THE SEMESTER ACTIVITIES**

**H.E. Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti** · president of the CEI, at the Centro in occasion of the New Testament Greek-Italian presentation organized by the Biblical Society in Italy (SBI)



**Lecturers and presenters** · Symposium on Synodality organized by the Anglican Centre in Rome and Centro Pro Unione at the beginning of the Synod of Bishops 2021-2023

*Date of publication*  
**29 April 2022***www.prounione.it/bulletin***UT OMNES UNUM SINT**

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

▶ James F. Puglisi, SA

Well we made it to the end of another year and the Centro Pro Unione was able to remain open and continued to minister to its clients. The Fall saw several activities that we are happy to share with our readers in this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of the *Bulletin-Centro Pro Unione*.

This Fall issue opens with the texts of a symposium organized by the Centro and the Anglican Centre in Rome. The timing of this symposium was to correspond to the opening of the Synod 2021-2023 whose theme is "For a synodical Church: communion, participation, mission". Four experts explored the reality of the synodical process from a canonical, theological and pastoral perspective.

The first presentation by the Dominican Hervé Legrand, *Le rôle des évêques dans la synodalité de l'Église* who considered some thoughts on the place of the episcopate in the synodality of the Church. Building on *Lumen gentium* he affirmed that synodal life belongs to the essence of the Church as communion and implemented by the ministry of bishops. He further considered that the reestablishment of the rightful place of bishops in the synodality of the Church with regard to tradition presents a considerable set of responsibilities in the Catholic Church.

Legrand's presentation was followed by the Orthodox theologian Archimandrite Amphilochios Miltos who spoke on *Le développement actuel de la synodalité au sein de l'Église catholique: promesses, difficultés, attentes. Un point de vue orthodoxe*. His paper presented an Orthodox perspective by making some remarks on terminology and on the Orthodox ecclesiological criterion, noting the promises that the pontificate of Pope Francis has created. Three elements should be remembered: the recognition of a theological status of synodality which seeks to articulate *communio ecclesiarum* and *communio episcoporum*; the importance given to the local churches, the antipodes of a Roman centralization and the option for the title "bishop of Rome", that represents another conception of papal primacy.



The afternoon sessions began with a canonical presentation by Prof. Myriam Wijlens, *Walking Together in Discerning the Holy Spirit: Canonical Possibilities, Opportunities and Challenges*.

She presented three different articulations of synodality: first, the style, this is the *modus vivendi* and *operandi* with which the people of God live and work. It touches on an internal disposition. Second, the structures and processes governed by theology and canon law which are to facilitate listening and discerning and finally, the specific synodal events convoked by the competent authority involving all to discern the way forward.

The final presentation by Bishop Christopher Hill presented *Anglican Aspects of Synodality: Walking Together on the Way*. Bishop Hill's observations are very interesting since they trace the synodical experience before and after the break with Rome in the Church of England and as it spread to other Anglican Churches. By sharing this experience, we learn how the laity became an integral part in the synodical process as well as the challenges that the Anglican church has to face.

Finally, I attempt to bring together some remarks by way of conclusion: *Aspects of Synodality: To Make a Beginning*.

Earlier in the year, Prof. Michael Calabria, OFM, Director of the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, St. Bonaventure University (USA) offered a zoom lecture: *The Art of Christian-Muslim Relations*. In this fascinating talk, he illustrated how through the medium of art, Islam and Christianity enrich each other's cultures and traditions. He concludes: the problem is that, for a long time, we have continued to emphasize, publicize and dramatize the violence to the virtual exclusion of the deeply spiritual, intellectual, and artistic relations we have had with one another, those connections that have not merely "added" to our respective cultures and traditions, but have made our societies, our cultures, our communities into what

### 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.

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- Hervé Legrad, *ofm*
- Amphilochios Miltos
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- S.Em. Cardinale Gautiero Bassetti
- Alessandra Trotta
- Luca Mazzing
- Eric Noffke
- Mario Cignoni

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they are today. Without “the other,” however defined, we would not be us. His fully illustrated lecture can be viewed on our Web TV & Media:

🔗 — [www.prounione.it/webtv/live/29-apr-2021](http://www.prounione.it/webtv/live/29-apr-2021)

Two further activities were held at the Centro Pro Unione this Fall. In early December the Centro hosted the Presentation of the Greek-Italian version of the New Testament. The Società Biblica in Italia sponsored the event with the participation of Gualtiero Cardinal Bassetti, President of the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, Deacon Alessandra Trotta Moderator of the Tavola Valdese, Prof. Don Luca Mazzinghi, President SBI / Professor at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Prof. Past. Eric Noffke Facoltà valdese di teologia and Dr. Mario Cignoni, Professor of Greek at the Facoltà valdese di teologia and Secretary General of the Società Biblica in Italia (SBI). Some of their presentations are printed here in this issue of the *Bulletin-Pro Unione*. The full presentation may be seen at 🔗 — [www.prounione.it/webtv/live/6-dec-2021](http://www.prounione.it/webtv/live/6-dec-2021)

The last event of this busy year was the twenty-fourth annual conference to honor the Founders of the Society of the Atonement, Servant of God Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White. This year we were honored to have Prof. Teresa Berger of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the Yale Divinity School. She spoke on the theme: *All Creation Worships. Re-thinking Liturgy in a Time of Ecological Emergency*. The text of her lecture will appear in our Spring 2022 *Bulletin*.

I need to mention several future events. The annual the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-15, 2022 whose themes is *We saw His Star in the East, and we came to worship him* (cf. Mt 2:2-12) will be celebrated by two events. The first, an online prayer vigil to prepare for the week of prayer, by the Directors of the Anglican Centre in Rome, the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome and the Centro Pro Unione, Monday January 17, 2022. Check our web for the link.

The second event is the annual joint celebration together with the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas January 20, 2022. The afternoon will begin with a lecture “*To serve the present age ...*” by Gillian Kingston, Vice President of the World Methodist Council, former Lay Leader of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland and member of the Methodist/Roman Catholic International Commission 1986-2006. This conference will be followed by an ecumenical prayer vigil presided and preached by Rev. Matthew A. Laferty, Director, Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome, his sermon will be available in a podcast at 🔗 — [bit.ly/Laferty-Sermon-Podcast-WPCU2022](http://bit.ly/Laferty-Sermon-Podcast-WPCU2022)

The third event is a conference on the recent publication by the Malines Conversations Group, *Sorores in Spe*. “*Sisters in Hope of the Resurrections*”: *A Fresh Response to the Condemnation of Anglican Orders* (1896).

A fourth interesting lecture on Interreligious Dialogue from a Jewish Perspective will be co-sponsored by the John Paul II Center for Inter-religious Dialogue and the Centro Pro Unione and given by

Prof. Menachem Lorberbaum. An audio podcast of the lecture will be posted at this link

🔗 — [bit.ly/Lorberbaum-Podcast-Lec-plus-QA-Feb-2022](http://bit.ly/Lorberbaum-Podcast-Lec-plus-QA-Feb-2022)

The last event is the return of our Summer course in person(!): *Introduction to the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Movements from a Catholic Perspective*. The course will run from June 27- July 15, 2022. Be sure to check our website for details and to reserve your place for the course.

Other activities which will continue include meetings of Phase II of *M.A.D. for Ecumenism Mutual Accountability Desk*, and the beginning of Phase III which will deal with the theme of becoming a synodal church ecumenically.

In conclusion, this issue of the *Bulletin* is the 100<sup>th</sup> number. The first issue was published in Spring 1969 and may be found at

🔗 — [www.prounione.it/bulletin/pdf-n01-spring1969](http://www.prounione.it/bulletin/pdf-n01-spring1969)

During all of the years of its existence, the Centro Pro Unione fulfilled and continues to fulfill its mandate to be an instrument of information and a laboratory for generating ideas for the promotion of Christian unity. Its development has widened its scope to also include items of interest and support for inter-religious initiatives. The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement are proud to be an agent for change and growth in the awareness and realization of Christ’s prayer «**Ut unum sint**». With the advancement of new technologies, the *Bulletin* has gone from the printed medium to the electronic one. Ten years after the first issue, the *Bulletin* published the first of a long, continuous *aggiornamento* of the project of tracking bibliographically the interconfessional theological dialogues. It has faithfully produced an up-date in each Spring issue of the *Bulletin*. It is with gratitude that I wish to recognize all of the staff, past and present for the help that they have given in making sure that we share the ministry of the Centro through its *Bulletin*. In the early days, the staff did most of the work in preparing the texts for print from composing it, to proof reading and even translating at times. I sincerely hope that our efforts for the promotion of the unity of Christians has been conducted in a truly collaborative and Franciscan manner, with simplicity and love for the Church, the Body of Christ, the People of God and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Enjoy this anniversary edition, our 100<sup>th</sup>!

We invite our readers to always check our web site for dates and up-coming events as well as the updating 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*

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N. 75 / Spring 2009

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Compiled by Espedito Neto

Revised by James Puglisi and Loredana Nepi





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Nevertheless, the artwork we will see comprises objects, structures, symbols and stories that Christians and Muslims have shared over the centuries— knowingly or unknowingly. I'm particularly interested in those objects, symbols and motifs that have moved across religious and cultural boundaries, and then acquired new meaning, appreciation and value. You may regard such movement negatively as "cultural appropriation;" but I will suggest we see it as *appreciation* rather than appropriation. In addition to addressing the religious, historical or cultural contexts that produced this artwork, I will explore the possible meaning, the *truths* they can convey to us now. I believe that such works of art can be an aid to demonstrating what John Paul called "a rich dialogue of life" that Christians and Muslims have shared for centuries, although often drowned out in the past and present by the cacophony and lethal combination of politics, religious and racial prejudice, and the pursuit of power. My selection of objects is necessarily limited by the time available to us, but the list of artwork I might have chosen is in fact endless.

### Textiles

Although textiles generally do not stand the test of time like stone and metal, more than any other medium they provide a useful metaphor for the incredibly intricate manner in which cultures have interacted over the millennia - even more than we generally assume. Think of silk threads. Where was the silk produced, by whom, and who taught the weavers? What about the threads of metal - gold and silver - that were often woven with the silk. Where were the metals mined and by whom? What about the specific weave of the cloth, the dyes, the patterns, the motifs and images used? What are their origins? Looking into an antique textile is like examining a person's DNA. There are often bits from all over the world.

So, I begin with a textile from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a luxurious lampas of silk and gold thread from *al-Andalus* - Islamic Spain. The pattern features large roundels with pairs of lions attacking confronted harpies (mythical human-headed birds). This design is then bordered by the

arced panels, each with a human figure between pairs of griffins. Interstitial panels feature an eight-pointed star surrounded by hares and palmettes. Completing the design are circular Arabic inscriptions reading: "This is among the things made in Baghdad, may God protect it." Most experts would agree, however, that the fabric was not made in Baghdad but is an imitation that was made in Almería on the southern coast of *al-Andalus* which, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century had become the center for silk production in the western Mediterranean.

This is really a fascinating piece because it comprises a dazzling array of decorative elements, many of which are derived from the ancient Near East, from classical Greek, Roman and Byzantine designs, but all rendered and combined in a distinctly "Islamic" style and finished with an Arabic text. Taken by itself, the textile is truly a multi-cultural marvel that is characteristic of Islamic art in general which often synthesizes decorative elements from many cultures and develops them into a new and distinct design.

But this piece has another interesting dimension to it: it was used as a shroud to wrap the remains of San Pedro de Osma, a French monk who became attached to the court of Castile and León, and was named the bishop of Osma in 1101, shortly before he died. What makes this particularly interesting is that the textile was used in the saint's burial at the time of the Reconquista, when Catholic rulers of Iberian kingdoms were waging war against the Muslim powers of *al-Andalus*. This was not a time of *Convivencia*. In fact, the city of Almeria, where the cloth was produced, was conquered by Alfonso VII and a coalition of Catholic forces in 1147, although it was retaken by Muslim forces a decade later. Clearly, the cloth was used - one might even say "appropriated" - because of its extraordinary quality, because it was viewed as a luxury item that befitted the bishop's burial, regardless of its origin in Islamic lands. In fact, it was a common practice in Spain to use textiles from Islamic lands for Christian clerics and kings, whether living or dead.

It is indeed ironic that at the time of such great conflict, often fought along sectarian lines, Christians covered their saints and sovereigns with cloth made by Muslims. Would that the Castilian kings had considered that Christians and Muslims in Iberia were quite literally covered in the same cloth, or as we might say – they were “cut of the same cloth” – *Reconquista* might have become *reconciliación*.

This movement of textiles and other luxury goods between Islamic and Christians realms throughout the period of the Crusades was in fact quite widespread, and challenges widely held assumptions about Western Christian-Muslim interactions as being exclusively antagonistic. Medieval European art demonstrates that fabrics produced in the Islamic east – particularly silks – were well-known, at least among the wealthy noble classes of western Christendom.

It is now well documented that the majority of textiles depicted in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, for example, are of Islamic design. Take this fresco for example – St. Francis appearing to Pope Gregory IX in a dream. Look at the gold cloth behind St. Francis. Examined closely we can see not only that it bears an Islamic decorative design, but the black band running horizontally above the head of Francis replicates a style of Arabic calligraphy known as “knotted kufic” – or in this case, what we call “pseudo-kufic.”

It appears frequently in other works by Giotto including this *Madonna and Child* now in Washington. Mary’s robe and veil, as well as the Christ-child’s wrap is trimmed with a band of pseudo-kufic. As with the shroud of San Pedro de Osma, the fabric represented in the painting is intended to convey the finest of fabrics as befitting the Madonna and Christ-child. But inexplicably, Giotto also puts pseudo-Arabic characters into the nimbuses of holy figures, such as the angels in his *Madonna of San Giorgio alla Costa*.

He does the same in his Crucifix now in *Santa Maria Novella* in Florence, although the pseudo-Arabic design in the nimbuses of Mary and John can only be seen when examined up close. Giotto also used a black band of pseudo-Arabic to frame the Crucifix (see above Christ’s

shoulder on the right. Moreover, Giotto uses a popular Islamic star-and-cross pattern behind the corpus. This is a ubiquitous pattern in Islamic art, and is likewise found in the Assisi frescoes.

(I presented on the use of this design at a conference in Siena in 2015, the papers of which have been published, so I refer you to that volume. In recent decades the study of Islamic motifs in European art and architecture has really grown and is now widely discussed and is well-known. SLIDE I can recommend, for example, Deborah Howard’s *Venice and the East* (2000) Rosamond Mack’s *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1100-1600*, (2001) and the catalog from a 2007 exhibit on Venice and the Islamic World.)

I’d like to end this first part of my presentation with a textile from much further east – from Iran. Woven from silk and silver threads in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was later used in Russia for the body of a chasuble worn by an Orthodox priest during the sacred liturgy. The Persian design depicts *Majnun*, a character from an Arab tale of star-crossed lovers that was rendered into epic poems by Persian authors such as Nizami (12<sup>th</sup> c.) and Jami (15<sup>th</sup> c.) as well as by Turkish and Indian authors. The various versions of the story were among the most widely read and beloved works in the Islamic world from the Balkans to Bengal. In the story, Layla and Majnun fall deeply and intensely in love with one another. When Layla is married off to someone else, her beloved Majnun becomes a hermit who wanders alone in the wilderness forever to pine for his lost love. His only companions are the wild animals, drawn to him by his gentleness and the purity of his love.

The use of the textile in a liturgical vestment is perhaps unusual with its clearly figurative design that repeatedly depicts Majnun cradling a fawn in his arms. Although the mystical metaphors of the story might have universal appeal regardless of religious identity, as it does today, I believe that that the original poetic context was lost among the makers of the chasuble. It is likely that they reinterpreted the figure of Majnun as Christ the Good Shepherd, protecting his flock from the prowling predators that surround him – a suitable image for a priest who serves as the

shepherd of his flock. Whether a mystic tale from the Islamic East or reinterpreted in the Christian East, both begin with the same foundation: the divine love that flows between the lover and the Beloved.

### Crystal

The movement of objects from Islamic lands into Christian culture is not confined to textiles, of course. Whether taken in warfare, acquired through trade, or given as diplomatic gifts, we find objects of stone, wood, ivory, metal, ceramic, glass and paper pass between the Islamic East and the Christian West, and between Christian and Muslim communities within a single land.

Take for example, this rock crystal crescent that was inscribed for the Fatimid Caliph al-Zahir in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. As a symbol, the crescent moon precedes the advent of Islam by millennia, but became increasingly associated with Islam due to the lunar calendar used to measure months in the Islamic year. In time, the crescent was used as finial atop domes of mosques and other structures in Islamic lands. This rock crystal example somehow made its way to Europe and then was repurposed as a reliquary for a Christian saint. Some may regard this simply as an example of cultural appropriation or Christian triumphalism; but I think we can look at it in another way. A symbol drawn from antiquity, adopted by Muslims as a symbol of their faith, sanctified by its use among a worshipping Muslim community, is later used by Christians to contain a sacred relic, a sign of sanctity meant to convey God's blessing upon those who gazed upon it and who touched it. At some basic level, the use of the crystal crescent in both Islamic and Christian contexts exemplifies the common quest of Muslims and Christians for holiness in communal worship and in the veneration of saintly figures.

Moreover, the historical context of the crystal crescent reflects a time when there was a deliberate effort to foster peace between the Fatimid Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire. Al-Zahir concluded a treaty in 1027 CE with the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VIII whereby the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem would be rebuilt in exchange for the repair of a mosque in

the Byzantine capital of Constantinople; moreover, the name of al-Zahir would be proclaimed as Caliph in the mosque of Constantinople. In fact, this is just one example of a Fatimid-Byzantine treaty. The Fatimids were eager to conclude a treaty with the Byzantine Empire, because they were vying with other Islamic powers for control of the Middle East and North Africa. Inscribed with the name of al-Zahir, one wonders if it was included among gifts to Emperor Constantine, perhaps intended to be used in the Constantinople mosque.

### Metal

Our next medium is metal. In this case, it's not the object that is shared by Christians and Muslims, but a symbol and a shared ritual. For this, I've chosen a brass ewer from Syria dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century. A rooster forms the spout, his beak open to release the water within. In Islamic societies, the rooster has significance for prayer, as the bird's cry at daybreak recalls the *adhān*, the call to prayer for *fajr* – the prayer performed at dawn. This ewer was probably used with a basin in performing *wudu'* – the ablution before prayer.

In depictions of Muhammad's journey (*mi'raj*) through the celestial realms, he encounters an enormous white rooster "whose comb grazes the foot of God's throne and whose feet rest on the earth." The angel Gabriel explained to the Prophet that this rooster is actually an angel in charge of counting the hours of the day and night. When the hour for prayer comes, he beats his wings, such that they cover the heavens and the earth, and then he crows proclaiming: "There is no god but god." In turn, all the roosters on earth sing the praises of God.

The rooster also has significance in Christianity as a sign of Peter's betrayal related in the Gospels, crowing each of the three times the disciple denied knowing Jesus. The rooster is not only a sign of sin, however, but also a sign of Christ's mercy and forgiveness. The rooster thus forms the body of this 13<sup>th</sup> century aquamanile from Germany which was perhaps used for the *lavabo*, the ritual purification of priest's hands at mass.

Ritual washings are performed by both Christians and Muslim, each uttering a prayer that God may cleanse them of their sins. The similarities between the Christian and Muslim ablutions would have been much more apparent in past centuries since Christians, particularly in the east, washed their face, hands and feet before going into church - a practice that survives among some Orthodox communities.

Moreover, the fountain (*phiale* or *cantharus*), is often octagonal in shape (like baptismal fonts) as the number eight signifies resurrection. In mosques, pools for ablutions are also often octagonal in shape because, in Islamic tradition, the number similarly has associations with the Eschaton and Afterlife.<sup>2</sup>

## Paper

Although Muslim artists and craftsmen excelled in all media, it is perhaps in the arts of the book that Islamic Art reached its greatest height. The Qur'an, the revealed Word of God, the final revelation given to humanity, was rendered into exquisite forms of calligraphy. On parchment and paper, the verses of the Qur'an were generally rendered in black or brown ink as well as in gold, with intricately decorated titles and borders with floral arabesques and geometric designs in lapis blue and gold.

With the advent of Islam in the Middle East, indigenous languages of Coptic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac survived for liturgical use but beginning in the ninth century biblical texts were increasingly rendered into Arabic which had already become the language of governments throughout the region and increasingly became the spoken language for Muslims, Christians and Jews alike. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Arabic bibles produced after the advent of Islam are virtually indistinguishable from Qur'ans at first glance. This Qur'an from the Mamluk Period and a later copy of the Book of Psalms provides a good

comparison. Like Qur'an, the Psalter uses gold and blue for framing the pages and for decorative elements in elaborately rendered titles, chapter divisions and margin medallions. As in the Qur'an, the text itself floats clearly and legibly in cloud-shaped spaces around which leafy scrolls turn, with golden rosettes to distinguish the verses.

If we look more closely at the Psalter and the Qur'an, we can see that the similarities are more than decorative and aesthetic. Psalm 1 on the right begins in Arabic: *bismillah* - "In the name of God" - just as the chapters of the Qur'an begin. The scribe wrote the formula in the same distinctive way as found in copies of the Qur'an by elongating the Arabic letter *sin*. The *bismillah* is not found in the Hebrew text, but was evidently added by the scribe who was familiar with Muslim practice and Qur'anic calligraphy. It is possible that the scribe who copied the Book of Psalms was Muslim. This is suggested with that follows in the Psalter. After writing *bismillah* - "In the name of God," he added: *al-khāliq al-hayy al-nātiq*: "the Creator, the Living, the Speaker..." This is clearly an alternative to "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" - which Muslims reject. Perhaps in copying the Psalms for a Christian client, a Muslim scribe was looking for a respectful way to introduce the Psalms of David, texts that Muslims consider divine revelation as well. It is perhaps noteworthy that the Psalter uses the same formula that introduces a copy of the *Covenant (Ashtiname) of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World* (1538).<sup>3</sup>

It is an unfortunate and persistent error of our age that many non-Muslims understand Allāh to signify "the Muslim God" - as if Islam has a God that is different from the Christian or Jewish God. This error, of course, does not facilitate interreligious dialogue, so let's be clear: *Allāh* (carved in the circles on this grave marker from India) is simply the Arabic word for God, a word that Arab Jews and Christians use as well

2 See, EVERETT FERGUSON, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, (NY/London: Garland Publisher, 1997) 6. IAN BRADLEY, *Water: A Spiritual History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012).

3 For that text, see: JOHN ANDREW MORROW, *The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World* (NY: Angelico Press, 2013).

as Muslims. It is the word that is used in Arabic Bibles as seen in this passage from Genesis 1...That doesn't mean that Jews, Christians and Muslims all understand God in the same way – of course, there is even theological disagreement within each of these communities – but nevertheless, we must conclude with the Qur'an – as well as the Second Vatican Council – that Jews, Christians and Muslims all worship *Allāh*, the God of Abraham:

“Say: ‘We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma’il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to the Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them; and to Him do we submit.’” (*al-Baqara* 2.136)

Rather unfortunately, government officials and Muslim clerics in Malaysia created a lot of confusion and misunderstanding when in 1986 they banned Christians from using *Allah*. This, of course, would have an absurdity in an Arabic-speaking country. Fortunately, that ban was recently overturned in March 2021.

It's not only Arabic Psalters that imitate Qur'anic manuscripts. This Gospel Book from the 14<sup>th</sup> century uses the same kinds of geometric illumination that we find in ornate copies of the Qur'an. Although they professed different religious creeds, Christians in the Middle East adopted the same language and aesthetics as their Muslim compatriots, and honored the Word of God in sumptuous editions of the Bible. As seen in this 14<sup>th</sup> c. image of Luke the Evangelist, Christians even adopted the Muslim practice of using a stand (or *rahla*) for the Bible, elevating the holy book off the ground as Muslim do with the Qur'an.

Many of the examples of shared objects I have referenced thus far date to the Medieval Period, demonstrating that even during periods of conflict and Crusades, Christians and Muslims could and did find common ground in aesthetics, in their appreciation of beauty – in textiles, in crystal, in metalwork, and in the volumes of their

respective Sacred Scriptures. This sharing of objects, symbols and stories continues in the pre-modern period particularly, in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as seen in paintings from the Mughal Empire of South Asia. This was a time when Portuguese Jesuit missionaries were part of the royal court and appear frequently in paintings of the period – even as subjects of the painting. The Jesuits had brought with them to South Asia Christian artwork that some Mughal emperors greatly admired as evidenced by this portrait of the emperor Jahangir holding a portrait of Mary. Jahangir's reverence for Mary is not surprising as Muslims hold her in great esteem; and his fondness for images of Mary and other religious subjects is characteristic of the multicultural Mughal realm.

In an album of paintings that belonged to Jahangir, we find a painting depicting Sultan Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II (1580-1627) who ruled the Sultanate of Bijapur, south of the Mughal Empire. We see him playing the tambur as accompanists clap the beats (*taal*).

Often overlooked, however, are the two European prints that were mounted above the painting in the album almost as if they are part of the composition. The prints depict the familiar image of St. Francis receiving the stigmata and Catherine of Siena – also a stigmatic. There is no indication of why these images were included here in the album as they do not relate to the image of Sultan Ibrahim. It is likely that Jahangir had acquired the images from the Jesuits at court and simply appreciated them as images of a holy man and woman, regardless of their faith.

Although Mughal relations with the Portuguese were occasionally tense and even flared up into armed conflict on occasion, Mughal artists nevertheless continued to incorporate Christian symbols and elements into their works with the approval of the emperor. In this portrait of Jahangir's son, the emperor Shah Jahan, we see him clad in a purple *jama*, depicted with his father-in-law Asaf Khan who served as his Grand Vizier. We can see that the emperor's head is encircled by a large, radiating golden *nimbus* or halo. This is not necessarily derived from Christian art as it

appears also in early Asian art as well as seen in this statue of the Buddhist Boddhisatva Maitreya.

It is the upper portion of the painting, depicting the heavenly realm, that shows how freely the Mughal artist incorporated Christian elements into his artwork. We see an anthropomorphic God – an image never used in Islam – showering the emperor with a stream of divine grace in which there is a dove and tongues of fire – obviously Christian symbols of the Holy Spirit. God is accompanied by western-style angels, one strumming a lute and another pouring out more blessings. Shah Jahan seems to be telling us: “I am God’s beloved with whom He is well pleased.” Now all of this may seem a bit shocking from the perspective of Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but as Shahab Ahmed describes so well in his 2016 – book *What is Islam?*, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, from the Balkans to the Bay of Bengal, Muslims felt able to be Muslim in explorative, creative and contradictory trajectories”<sup>4</sup> without betraying their faith. They sought meaning, not only in the Qur’an and hadith, but in, with and through popular works of literature and poetry, art and music – including that of European Christians.

## Conclusion

In 1889, Rudyard Kipling published a poem called “The Ballad of East and West.” Its first line is best known: “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” This is often quoted by people who see the world as a dichotomy: Western/Eastern, Christian/Muslim, Developed/Undeveloped, Rich/Poor/, Peaceful/Violent, Civilized/Uncivilized. That dichotomy, I argue, is a false one, even if we accept just the few examples, I have offered in my presentation. Of course, there are countless other examples, that demonstrate how Christians and Muslims have been interacting with another since the 7<sup>th</sup> century – deeply, profoundly, spiritually, intellectually, creatively, artistically, poetically, scientifically, commercially, politically and yes,

at times, violently, as well. The problem is that, for a long time, we have continued to emphasize, publicize and dramatize the violence to the virtual exclusion of the deeply spiritual, intellectual, and artistic relations we have had with one another, those connections that have not merely “added” to our respective cultures and traditions, but have *made* our societies, our cultures, our communities into what they are today. Without “the other,” however defined, we would not be us.

In fact, Rudyard Kipling knew this – because after writing: “Oh, east is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet,” he continued:

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat;  
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,  
When two strong men (people) stand face to face,  
though they come from the ends of the earth!

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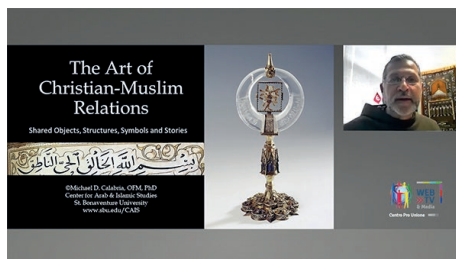
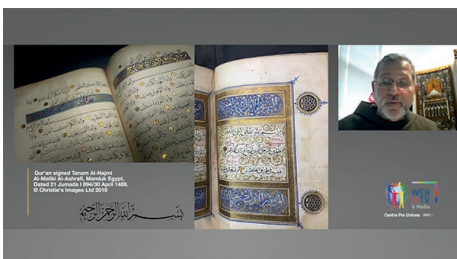
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Conférence donnée au Centro Pro Unione

jeudi · 14 octobre 2021

## Le rôle des évêques dans la synodalité de l'Église

### Introduction

La tâche que le pape François a donnée au synode des évêques de 2023 est d'une portée exceptionnelle, tant par son contenu que par sa méthode. Par son contenu (la synodalité) et par sa méthode homogène au contenu (une consultation de tout le peuple de Dieu à ce sujet), ce synode devrait marquer l'histoire de l'Église catholique. Promouvoir la synodalité comme valeur vécue demande, en effet, des changements structurels et durables, et donc inscrits dans un droit canonique qui attend toujours son aggiornamento, en référence à Vatican II. Vatican II, on s'en rappelle, avait mis l'accent sur l'Église comme Peuple de Dieu et sur la communion ecclésiale comme communion d'Églises au pluriel,<sup>1</sup> deux accents qui ont été négligés par la suite. Jusqu'ici, ils ont surtout fait l'objet de plus de commentaires que de transcriptions institutionnelles, ce qui explique que la synodalité soit restée assez inchoative jusqu'ici dans l'Église latine.

La tâche du synode de 2023 sera d'y remédier, en assurant ainsi une réception plus effective de Vatican II. Si, à moyen terme, tel est l'objectif de ce synode, à court terme, on attend de lui des suggestions pour remédier aux dysfonctionnements du corps épiscopal dans ce qu'on appelle communément "la crise des abus sexuels". Celle-ci a révélé, aux laïcs et à l'opinion publique, les faiblesses d'un régime d'autorité qui attribue aux seuls clercs, petits et grands, un pouvoir autarcique dont ils n'ont à rendre compte à personne,

1 On a gardé le silence sur l'énoncé de *Lumen gentium* 23 selon lequel "c'est dans et à partir des Églises particulières (les diocèses) qu'existe l'Église catholique, une et unique", énoncé nécessaire pour une juste compréhension de la collégialité épiscopale comme enracinée dans le peuple de Dieu. En 1992, *Communio notio* de la SCDF a voulu corriger cet énoncé en enseignant "la priorité ontologique et chronologique de l'Église universelle sur les Églises particulières dont elle est la mère".

### MEDIA

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sauf à l'autorité supérieure.<sup>2</sup> Cela même a conduit à des errements dans le gouvernement épiscopal, qui ont profondément choqué les fidèles; les évêques sont donc priés de recueillir<sup>3</sup> leurs suggestions de réformes relativement aux modes de gouvernement de l'Église et de les transmettre au Secrétariat du Synode.

Le questionnement ne vise pas seulement l'exercice du pouvoir, il s'étend à la qualification de la personne de ses détenteurs. Car, en tant que pouvoir sacré, fondé dans l'ordination, ce pouvoir met ses détenteurs sur un piédestal qui leur assurerait souvent camouflage et impunité, comme les faits le prouvent, conduisant simultanément à l'abandon des victimes à elles-mêmes.

La réflexion en cours sur l'approfondissement de la synodalité ne manquera pas d'y voir un correctif, plus que souhaitable, à un régime d'autorité défaillant.<sup>4</sup> Toutefois, on ne saurait faire droit à cette donnée conjoncturelle, qui se présente certes comme une urgence, sans prendre en

2 Après le Code de 1983, le cardinal Schotte, secrétaire général du synode des évêques, peut encore déclarer: "Ne vous y trompez pas, dans l'Église catholique, un curé de paroisse n'a de comptes à rendre à personne, sauf à son évêque; un évêque n'a de comptes à rendre à personne, sauf au pape. Et le pape n'a de comptes à rendre à personne, sauf à Dieu", *The Tablet*, 17 novembre 2001, p. 163.

3 Dans les documents préparatoires envoyés aux évêques, les expressions "écouter" et "s'écouter" reviennent environ 120 fois.

4 Le site *Bishops'accountability.org* recense plus d'une centaine d'évêques, dont cinq cardinaux, ayant commis soit des abus avec mineurs (90), soit avec des adulte (42).



considération la synodalité comme structure de la vie de l'Église. Telle sera d'ailleurs la nouveauté considérable du Synode de 2023 quant à son objectif et à sa méthode.

### *Un objectif clair: la pratique effective de la synodalité*

Dès le début de la préparation de ce synode, il est demandé aux évêques, après une écoute attentive des fidèles, de proposer des modalités permettant à l'Église de devenir plus synodale. Voilà qui est nouveau et bien autre chose que d'exhorter à la synodalité. Certes, tous les synodes auprès du pape se sont terminés jusqu'ici par des Exhortations apostoliques, mais il est évident à tout un chacun que l'Église ne saurait devenir plus synodale à force d'exhortations. Elle ne le deviendra pas non plus par l'exposé des solides fondements théologiques de la synodalité. Il ne suffira pas davantage d'évoquer les ressources existantes pour surmonter les défis actuels l'Église. Au prochain synode, on ne demandera donc pas aux évêques de se déclarer favorables à plus de synodalité, ni disposés à cultiver un esprit synodal dans leurs diocèses. On attend d'eux, non des discours de conviction, mais de proposer des voies et moyens pour mettre la synodalité en pratique qui seront évalués synodalement avant d'être envoyés au pape pour confirmation. Voilà pour l'objectif.

### *Une méthode neuve, en cohérence avec le but même du synode: la parole est donnée à l'ensemble du peuple de Dieu*

La méthode est sans précédent car elle implique directement tout le peuple de Dieu, et pas seulement les Pères synodaux. C'est pourquoi le questionnaire préparatoire a été envoyé à chacun des trois mille évêques en charge d'un diocèse, non pour recueillir leur opinion mais, comme l'indique le Vademecum qui l'accompagne, pour recueillir la parole des fidèles et des pasteurs de chaque paroisse. Au terme de cette écoute, chaque évêque synthétisera leurs souhaits, en dix pages, tant à l'intention de sa conférence épiscopale qu'à celle du secrétariat du Synode. La préparation du synode de 2023 est donc synodale en elle-même. Dans le cadre de cette consultation, le

rôle de l'épiscopat se révèle décisif tant à l'échelle diocésaine qu'à l'échelle de la conférence épiscopale (qui en fera une nouvelle synthèse à l'intention de ses délégués au synode romain), puis dans le cadre même de ce Synode. Le contenu et la méthode du prochain Synode nos conduisent à centrer la réflexion sur la place que tiennent les évêques dans ce processus qui anticipe sur ce qui va leur être demandé dans un proche avenir. Et tout d'abord à développer le lien entre la synodalité et l'Église comprise comme communion.

### *La synodalité a partie liée avec l'Église comme communion locale et comme **communio ecclesiarum***

Le pape François a une idée claire sur le lien existant entre la synodalité de l'Église et l'Église conçue localement comme communion. Selon lui, l'ecclésiologie de communion, que nous professons, n'est pas vécue, car "le cléricalisme, favorisé par les prêtres eux-mêmes ou par les laïcs, engendre une scission dans le corps ecclésial, scission qui renforce et perpétue beaucoup de maux que nous dénonçons aujourd'hui et notamment les abus".<sup>5</sup> Pour dépasser cette scission, "le renouvellement de la hiérarchie ecclésiale, par elle-même, ne générera pas [...] la transformation à laquelle l'Esprit nous pousse".<sup>6</sup> Frappé par "l'autoréférentialité" des clercs, qui n'ont jamais de comptes à rendre aux fidèles, il indique, sans entrer dans plus de précisions, que la réforme nécessaire devra prendre la voie synodale: "Sans le peuple de Dieu, rien ne peut être fait. [...] J'exhorte tous les fidèles du saint peuple de Dieu à avancer, poussés par l'Esprit, à la recherche d'une Église chaque jour plus synodale et prophétique".<sup>7</sup>

On voit bien donc que les deux accents de Vatican II sur l'Église comme peuple de Dieu et comme communion sont solidaires et c'est aux évêques qu'il revient, à titre principal, de revivifier ce lien qui n'aurait pas dû être distendu. C'est dire aussi qu'avant de réfléchir au rôle crucial que

5 FRANÇOIS, *Lettre au peuple de Dieu sur les abus...*, no 2, § 4, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

6 FRANÇOIS, *Lettre au peuple de Dieu qui chemine...*, no 1, *Ibid.*, p. 98.

7 *Ibid.*

le prochain synode attribue aux évêques à l'échelon local, à celui de leur conférence et au Synode même, il paraît indiqué de distinguer, comme on l'a fait, les composantes conjoncturelles et structurelles de cette requête de synodalité, car tous les évêques ne s'accordent pas là-dessus. Pour tel cardinal, "la question de la pédophilie ne regarde pas l'Église comme institution mais les personnes qui, à travers elle, ont commis ces actes";<sup>8</sup> pour tel autre, elle n'a rien à voir avec le cléricalisme.<sup>9</sup> D'autres évêques attribuent la responsabilité de ces drames aux effets de la révolution sexuelle de mai 68 ou à l'infiltration d'homosexuels dans le clergé,<sup>10</sup> c'est-à-dire à des causalités exogènes. D'autres, enfin, expliquent l'irresponsabilité des évêques par "ce qu'on savait à l'époque".

Ce désaccord reflète des ecclésiologies différentes qu'on peut caractériser brièvement comme suit. Plus on comprend la crise actuelle comme relevant de la morale individuelle et des influences néfastes de la culture séculière, et moins on donnera d'importance doctrinale et pratique à la synodalité. Si, en accord avec le pape François, on pense se trouver devant une crise systémique, on verra d'autant plus la nécessité des réformes structurelles qui sont d'un autre ordre que les conversions personnelles. La mise en œuvre de ce

8 Voir NICOLAS SENEZE, "Pour le cardinal Ferdinando Filoni, les abus 'ne concernent pas l'Église comme institution'", *La Croix* (Paris), 30 novembre 2018, alors qu'il est préfet de la Congrégation pour l'Évangélisation des peuples, après avoir été un remarquable nonce en Irak <https://bit.ly/3s4rUz2> 🕒 consulté le 22 février 2021.

9 Ainsi le cardinal Gerhard Müller, ancien préfet de la Congrégation pour la Doctrine de la foi: "Les racines du mal se trouvent dans l'abandon de la vérité et dans une morale débridée, et non dans le cléricalisme, peu importe ce que l'on entend par là. [Nicht der Klerikalismus, was immer das sein mag, sondern die Abkehr von der Wahrheit und die moralische Zügellosigkeit sind die Wurzeln des Übels.]", extrait de: cardinal GERHARD LUDWIG MÜLLER, "Predigt bei Priesterweihe von Michael Sulzenbacher SJM, in Rom in der Kirche Sant' Agnese in Agone", *kath.net*, 17 septembre 2018.

10 C'est ce qu'écrit Mgr CARLO MARIA VIGANO, le 22 août 2018, dans son *Témoignage* au pape François, appuyé par vingt-quatre évêques des États-Unis. Le texte intégral est disponible sur <https://bit.ly/3h2pNfL> 🕒 consulté le 22 février 2021.

discernement demandera beaucoup de sensibilité pastorale, car on ne réforme pas l'Église par discours ou par décret, mais par des pratiques nouvelles. Ces dernières demandent à être fondées théologiquement, ce qui n'est pas le cas de toutes les suggestions actuelles émanant de l'opinion publique des chrétiens qu'on ne peut faire équivaloir, sans autre considération, au sens de la foi du peuple chrétien de Dieu. Ne risque-t-on pas sinon le populisme dans l'Église, comme dans d'autres instances sociales? Un discernement pastoral est requis à cet égard.

## *Quelques réflexions pastorales utiles avant d'envisager le rôle des évêques dans la synodalité*

La réflexion théologique doit être vigilante devant le danger du présentisme. Signalons trois obstacles que la juste compréhension de la synodalité rencontre dans le cadre des Églises occidentales: le recours au peuple de Dieu conçu comme étant le laïc, l'appel à la démocratisation de l'Église et la surestimation/sous-estimation simultanée des synodes.

### *Les ambiguïtés de l'appel au peuple de Dieu*

En Occident, l'appel au peuple de Dieu est fréquemment ambigu dans le langage courant, soit parce qu'il oppose le peuple à la hiérarchie (alors que les évêques sont eux aussi membres du peuple de Dieu), soit qu'il identifie encore plus couramment le clergé à l'Église.<sup>11</sup> Quelquefois encore, par exemple dans un programme comme "Kirche von Unten", on risque d'attribuer à la base toutes les vertus dont on créditait jadis la hiérarchie. Autre clarification nécessaire: lorsqu'on se réfère à la synodalité au-delà de l'échelon local, la référence est-elle au peuple comme *ethnos*, comme ethnie? Il n'est pas rare, en effet, que des Églises deviennent nationales, voire moteurs de

11 Il arrive aussi à des membres de la hiérarchie de s'identifier à l'Église, par exemple en déclarant qu'on ne demandera pas aux fidèles de participer à l'indemnisation des victimes d'abus en recourant au patrimoine immobilier de l'Église; pourtant ces biens ne sont pas la propriété de l'évêque mais des fidèles. Le droit en vigueur limite d'ailleurs strictement l'aliénation par l'évêque des biens d'Église.

nationalismes exclusifs; ce qui oblige, par exemple, à se demander si les conférences épiscopales *nationales* peuvent devenir les socles de la synodalité supra-diocésaine. Est plus répandu le danger de comprendre l'Église comme *dèmos*. D'où une seconde ambiguïté conceptuelle.

#### *Ambiguïté de l'expression "démocratiser" l'Église*

Certes, dans l'Église, valeurs synodales et valeurs démocratiques ne s'excluent pas; elles convergent même sur certains points qu'il vaut la peine de souligner. En premier un synode diocésain constitue, pour ses membres, une source exceptionnelle d'information sur l'état du diocèse, ses ressources et ses problèmes. Cette information du plus grand nombre caractérise aussi les démocraties. On voit bien, en effet, qu'un dictateur arrivant au pouvoir commence par prendre le contrôle de tous les moyens d'information, voire de communication sociale. Autre trait commun, le canon 465 du Code stipule que "Toutes les questions proposées seront soumises à la libre discussion des membres dans les sessions du synode". Ce canon reprend d'ailleurs un adage bien connu du droit médiéval: "ce qui concerne tout le monde doit être discuté et approuvé par tous".<sup>12</sup> C'est une traduction institutionnelle de la fraternité de tous dans l'Église et de la liberté que l'Évangile leur confère. Sans information et sans libres débats au sein l'Église, on court de grands risques. La mauvaise qualité de la communication de l'Église avec son environnement n'est-elle pas le reflet de l'absence d'une opinion publique formée et informée en son propre sein? Tout débat étouffé au sein de l'Église, l'expérience l'apprend, sera repris dans l'espace public dans les pires conditions, puisque les chrétiens ne seront nullement préparés à y intervenir de façon compétente. Troisième trait commun: la participation à l'élaboration des lois qui nous régissent. En démocratie, en effet, les citoyens sont assujettis aux seules lois qu'ils se donnent à eux-mêmes. On notera ici une nouvelle convergence: les chrétiens peuvent être désormais des membres de plein droit du synode diocé-

sain. Même les fidèles les plus conservateurs n'ont trouvé rien à redire à cette innovation qui se règle sur les sociétés démocratiques. Selon le Code, les synodes diocésains sont, en effet, des organes législatifs, même si "l'évêque y est l'unique législateur, les autres membres du synode n'ayant que voix consultative" (can. 466). Cette norme est à comprendre comme suit: seul l'évêque promulgue les décrets préparés par l'assemblée et leur donne ainsi force de loi. Toutefois, l'évêque ne peut promulguer que les *seuls* décrets élaborés par le synode. S'il corrigeait ces décrets, ils deviendraient des ordonnances et cesseraient par là même d'être des décrets synodaux. Les catholiques en synode participent donc bien à l'élaboration des lois qui les régissent, tout comme en démocratie.

Un dernier trait commun montre que la synodalité peut être plus démocratique que nos systèmes démocratiques. Dans un synode, la procédure d'amendement des textes vise, en effet, à intégrer au maximum les points de vue minoritaires pour atteindre une quasi-unanimité. Vatican II en est un exemple: il s'est laissé guider par la conviction que l'ensemble des dons du saint Esprit ne se trouve que dans l'ensemble de l'Église. On veut avoir raison avec son frère plutôt que contre lui, en recourant à la persuasion respectueuse du débat. Une telle recherche du consensus, exclut la "dictature" des majorités de 51%. Ajoutons donc encore qu'une Église en synode soit une société en débats, comme la démocratie.

Par souci pastoral, on a traité en détail de ces trois compréhensions inadéquates et l'on a montré de l'estime pour la démocratie afin de rappeler que les synodes diocésains se prononcent seulement sur la discipline et non sur la foi elle-même qui est objet de tradition et de réception (selon la formule paulinienne d'I Co 11, 23 et 15, 3: "ce que j'ai reçu, je le transmets"). Ils peuvent seulement se prononcer sur des explications de la foi et veillent en même temps à soumettre ces explications à la réception de l'Église entière, en pratique en les envoyant au siège de Pierre dans le processus en cours.

On peut mentionner plus brièvement une dernière difficulté, la propension à *surestimer en même temps à sous-estimer la vie synodale*. Le be-

12 Voir à ce sujet la monographie d'Y. CONGAR, "Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet", *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, 36 (1958) 210-259.

soin de réformes fondamentales, ressenti du fait des abus, a pour effet, chez certains, de surestimer les attentes relatives à la vie synodale. Certains en viennent à parler de synodalité à tout propos et à voir en elle un remède immédiat, alors que ses effets réels demanderont du temps, et devront s'accompagner d'un retour à l'Évangile. D'autres fidèles ont tendance à sous-estimer les synodes dont ils critiquent les contraintes dénoncées comme bureaucratiques: ils produiraient des montagnes de papier et accoucheraient d'une souris. Pour justifier de s'en détourner, ils évoquent saint François d'Assise qui a fait beaucoup plus pour l'Évangile en Occident qu'une cinquantaine de synodes aujourd'hui oubliés. Mais n'est pas saint François qui veut, comme notre génération en a fait l'expérience, en voyant comment se sont fourvoyés plusieurs dizaines de fondateurs de communautés nouvelles ou de nouveaux mouvements.<sup>13</sup>

## *Le ministère des évêques est au cœur de la vie synodale, expression de l'Église en tant que communion*

Loin d'être une nécessité seulement conjoncturelle, la vie synodale est structurelle à la vie de l'Église comme communion et les évêques en sont les principaux serviteurs. Il existe désormais large consensus entre théologiens catholiques sur ce point.<sup>14</sup> La constitution *Lumen*

*gentium* introduit sa théologie de l'Église en la référant à son enracinement trinitaire: l'Église est le peuple de Dieu le Père, le corps du Christ et le temple du Saint-Esprit, enseignement conclu par une citation de Cyprien pour lequel "l'Église entière apparaît comme un peuple qui tire son unité de l'unité du Père et du Fils et du Saint-Esprit".<sup>15</sup> Si l'Église est le temple de l'Esprit Saint, cela signifie que l'ensemble des dons de l'Esprit, dans leur diversité, ne se trouve que dans l'ensemble du peuple de Dieu. Comme aucun chrétien, ni aucune Église locale ne monopolise ces dons, cela induit un régime d'écoute mutuelle et de coresponsabilité, au sein de chaque Église locale et entre elles toutes. De même, puisque l'Église est le corps du Christ comme l'eucharistie le manifeste, et que ce corps comporte un grande diversité de membres, il en résulte que tous sont appelés à collaborer dans l'unité, comme Paul y insiste, dans un autre contexte. Le peuple de Dieu se réalise ainsi sous forme d'*ekklesiae*, c'est-à-dire d'assemblées qui, tout en étant nécessairement locales, sont pleinement Église. Mais, comme elles ne sont pas toute l'Église, elles se réfèrent nécessairement aux autres assemblées du peuple de Dieu, dispersées par tout l'univers. La communion de l'Église est donc nécessairement une *communio ecclesiarum*, une communion d'Églises au pluriel.

Le premier chapitre de *Lumen gentium* impliquait donc le refus d'une compréhension universaliste de l'Église, si bien entrée récemment dans les mentalités catholiques qu'elle s'est avérée

13 Selon le cardinal JOÃO BRAZ DE AVIZ, préfet de la Congrégation des religieux, 70 de ces fondations posent divers problèmes, cf. <https://bit.ly/3LOdieX> consulté le 22 février 2021

14 Pour une vue d'ensemble, voir HERVÉ LEGRAND, "La sinodalità al Vaticano II e dopo il Vaticano; un'indagine e una riflessione teologica e istituzionale", R. Battocchio -S. NOCETI, (edd), *Chiesa e sinodalità. Coscienza, forme, processi*, Forum ATI, 3 (Milano: Glossa, 2007) 67-108, et tout le livre. Plus récemment dans le symposium tenu à Rome, A. SPADARO-C. GALLI, (edd.), *La Riforma e le riforme della Chiesa*, Biblioteca di teologia contemporanea, 177 (Brescia: Queriniana, 2016), la section intitulée "La comunione sinodale come chiave del rinnovamento del popolo di Dio" a montré que la réception du chapitre 3 de *Lumen gentium* dans le droit canon est théologiquement unilatérale, avec notre contribution "Communio ecclesiae, communio ecclesiarum, collegium episcoporum", 159-188.

15 Cf. LG 4 citant le de *Orat.dom.* 3, avec renvoi à la même doctrine chez s. Augustin et s. Jean Damascène.

difficile à corriger.<sup>16</sup> Est-ce cela, ou une intention délibérée qui explique que le Code de droit canonique de 1983 a élaboré une conception universaliste du collège des évêques, sans lien structurel avec la communion des Églises? Pour ce faire le Code a pris appui sur un *obiter dictum* de LG 22, qu'il faut citer littéralement: "Quelqu'un est fait membre du corps épiscopal [devenu *Collège des évêques*, au canon 336] en vertu de la consécration sacramentelle et par la communion hiérarchique avec le chef du collège et ses membres". Qu'on ait omis de mentionner à cet endroit la préposition des évêques à une Église<sup>17</sup> a paru pure inadvertance aux experts officiels du Concile.<sup>18</sup> Notons, en passant, que les rédacteurs du Code vont délibérément accentuer cet universalisme en imposant arbitrairement de désigner les diocèses comme des Églises *particulières*,<sup>19</sup> ce qui renvoie immédiatement à l'Église universelle, avec les inconvénients théologiques de cet adjectif dans l'en-

semble des grandes langues européennes.<sup>20</sup> Les choix des rédacteurs du Code correspondent à leur théorie qui situe l'évêque catholique *d'abord* comme membre d'un collège de *personnes*, succédant directement au collège des Douze, par l'imposition des mains d'autres membres du collège. Le pape qui l'a nommé pourra éventuellement lui confier une Église locale ou lui donnera une autre tâche.

Un remarquable jeune théologien orthodoxe, Amphilochios Miltos a fort bien analysé cette conception canonique de la collégialité, qu'il considère à juste titre comme non traditionnelle et irrecevable par l'Église orthodoxe.<sup>21</sup> Il faut rendre hommage, sans réserve, à son acribie dans la lecture des textes et dans l'analyse de leur *Wirkungsgeschichte* car, en cohérence, avec le Code de 1983, un certain nombre d'initiatives curiales affirmeront fortement les prérogatives de l'Église "universelle". A titre d'exemple, l'abondant discours sur la collégialité épiscopale aboutira au statut minimal qu'*Apostolos suos* attribue aux conférences épiscopales, et à la dissociation entre le collège des évêques et la communion des Églises.<sup>22</sup>

Rien de cela n'a échappé à A. Miltos. Toutefois au terme de sa recherche, son lecteur a l'impression que l'ecclésiologie catholique est figée dans la forme canonique que Jean-Paul II lui a donnée. Il ne relève aucune pierre d'attente rendant plausible le renouveau synodal en cours dans l'Église catholique. A l'avant-dernière page

16 On en veut pour preuve que presque toutes les éditions francophones de *Lumen gentium* (à l'exception de la nôtre, *Unam sanctam* 51 a) traduisent *ecclesia universa* par *Église universelle* et non par *Église entière*. C'est le cas notamment de la traduction officieuse du Centurion, de celles du Cardinal Renard, et des éditions Fides; il en va de même des traductions italiennes (Paoline et Dehoniane). Une erreur aussi répandue illustre le succès de l'apologétique de la Contre-Réforme qui a compris la catholicité de l'Église comme une réalité territoriale, voir G. THILS, *Les Notes de l'Église dans l'apologétique catholique depuis la Réforme*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937) 239 et sv. Or l'Église, parce qu'elle est catholique, ne saurait être universelle que géographiquement, ce qu'illustre déjà la présence en son sein de plusieurs Églises sui iuris excluant son uniformisation.

17 Les évêques auxiliaires, les nonces et les fonctionnaires de la Curie se voient toujours attribuer le titre d'une Église fictive (in *partibus infidelium*) pour bien attester qu'il ne saurait y avoir d'évêque sans Église.

18 Cette omission ne peut être en rien considérée comme un enseignement conciliaire puisque les *Acta Synodalia* ne comportent aucune remarque relative à cette formulation.

19 L'arbitraire est double: les textes de Vatican II ne l'imposaient nullement et il désigne précisément les Églises orientales catholiques pour lesquelles cet adjectif est pertinent.

20 *Universal* en anglais a le même sens qu'*universel* en français, cf. Merriam Webster: *including or covering all or a whole collectively distributively without limit or exception especially. 2a: present or occurring everywhere. 2b: existent or operative everywhere under all condition. 4a: affirming or denying something of all members of a class or of all values of a variable; 4 b: denoting every member.*

21 Cf. A. MILTOS, *Collégialité et synodalité. Vers une compréhension commune entre catholiques et orthodoxes, Unam Sanctam*, Nouvelle série 7 (Paris: Cerf, 2019).

22 Selon *Apostolos suos* (1998), ces conférences sont des créations de la papauté, privées même de magistère ordinaire. De plus, en affirmant que le collège épiscopal "est une réalité antérieure à la charge d'être à la tête d'une Église particulière" (n. 12), on dissocie l'épiscopat de sa tâche native d'assurer la communion entre les Églises.

de sa thèse, il soupçonne lui-même quelle en serait la raison:

“Les orthodoxes ont des difficultés à comprendre une disjonction entre la doctrine catholique et la pratique, régie par le Code de droit canonique. Par exemple, le concile Vatican II n’a pas légiféré au sujet de la collégialité, laissant cette tâche au nouveau Code de droit paru en 1983, qui, selon des théologiens, s’écarte de la doctrine”.<sup>23</sup>

C’est effectivement cette différence qui permet de comprendre pourquoi le pape François a entrepris de corriger fondamentalement la trajectoire qui a caractérisé le pontificat de Jean-Paul II. Il veut et peut corriger cette distance entre le droit et la théologie, relevée par A. Miltos, non pas parce que ce qu’un pape a fait, un autre peut le défaire (comme on le dit caricaturellement), mais parce qu’avec la communauté théologique, il a constaté que, sur ce point, les orientations de Vatican II attendaient encore d’être mises en œuvre.<sup>24</sup> Il est bon à ce sujet d’analyser le ch. III de *Lumen gentium*.

### **Le ch. III de *Lumen gentium* a remis en valeur la *communio ecclesiae* comme *communio ecclesiarum***

Ce chapitre III ne contient pas moins de cinq énoncés doctrinaux délégitimisant l’ecclésiologie universaliste du Code de 1983. Et surtout, positivement, ces cinq énoncés conçoivent l’Église entière comme étant toujours une communion d’Églises épiscopales.

*Premier énoncé:* LG 23 enseigne par deux fois, et LG 28 de même, que l’Église diocésaine est une portion du peuple de Dieu; cette définition de l’Église diocésaine comme portion de l’Église est

répétée par la *Charge pastorale des évêques* la définit au n. 11 ainsi qu’au n. 28. Cette définition est incompatible avec une ecclésiologie universaliste. En effet, une portion possède toutes les qualités du tout et l’addition des portions ne fait pas nombre. Ce n’est pas le cas de la partie qui ne peut exister en dehors de sa relation au tout, et lui est subordonnée.<sup>25</sup> Quelques théologiens ont contesté cet enseignement parce que LG 13 parlant de la solidarité économique entre les différentes régions de l’Église, utilise à cet endroit le terme de *partes*, mais c’est dans l’oubli qu’en latin *partes* signifie région, comme dans l’expression “*in partibus infidelium*”.

*Second énoncé,* LG 23 enseigne très explicitement que la *communio ecclesiae* est une *communio ecclesiarum*: “c’est dans et à partir des Églises [in quibus et ex quibus] particulières qu’existe l’Église catholique une et unique”, – l’Église particulière désigne ici l’Église locale diocésaine. Ce changement de perspective renoue avec la tradition: la communion des évêques entre eux est une expression de la communion des Églises entre elles. Le *collegium episcoporum* ne saurait être dissocié de la *communio ecclesiarum*, perception théologique capitale de la tradition conciliaire (*concilium episcoporum est*), un axiome que Vatican I n’avait pas ignoré.<sup>26</sup>

*Troisième énoncé,* LG 26 situe l’origine de tous les pouvoirs de l’évêque dans son ordination sacramentelle. Il corrige ainsi à la fois la doctrine thomiste, pour laquelle l’épiscopat était une dignité non sacramentelle,<sup>27</sup> et le magistère de Pie XII qui avait enseigné, dans trois encycliques, que les évêques recevaient leur juridiction du pape, ce qui tendait vers une ecclésiologie universaliste.<sup>28</sup> Pour

25 Une image simple le fait comprendre: dans une part de gâteau, quelle que soit sa taille, je retrouve l’essence d’être gâteau, alors qu’avec une partie de ma voiture, je ne peux aller nulle part.

26 C’est ainsi que Pie IX ne voulut pas d’abord convoquer les évêques titulaires; il ne le fit qu’après une consultation qui lui répondit qu’il ne le devait pas, mais qu’il le pouvait, cf. *Mansi* 49, 492-493.

27 *Comm. in Sent.* IV, dist.VII, q.3, art. 1, qa 2, ad 3um.

28 Cf. *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35(1943) 211-212; *Ad Sinarum Gentem*, *ibid.*, 47(1955) 9 et *Ad Apostolos Principis*, *ibid.*, 50(1958) 618.

23 A. MILTOS, *Collégialité et synodalité...*, *op.cit.*, 674.

24 *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 32: “Ce souhait (de Vatican II) ne s’est pas pleinement réalisé, parce que n’a pas encore été suffisamment explicité un statut des conférences épiscopales qui les conçoivent comme sujet d’attributions concrètes, y compris une certaine autorité doctrinale authentique. Une excessive centralisation, au lieu d’aider, complique la vie de l’Église et sa dynamique missionnaire”.

Vatican II, les évêques reçoivent leurs pouvoirs en recevant leur charge dans leur ordination même, tant pour leur diocèse que pour leur responsabilité à l'égard de toute l'Église, cette dernière étant modulée dans la tradition par le droit coutumier et les conciles.

*Quatrième énoncé:* en cohérente avec LG 26, LG 27 souligne que les évêques sont "des vicaires et des légats de Jésus-Christ [...] et non des vicaires du pontife romain", ce qui assure une place organique à l'évêque diocésain dans l'ensemble de l'Église. En conséquence, le Code de 1983 remplacera le système de la délégation des pouvoirs du pape aux évêques par le système de la réserve de certains pouvoirs au pape, en fonction du bien commun, réforme majeure au plan des principes et au point de vue œcuménique, et qui montre que l'Église est bien une communion d'Églises.

*Cinquième énoncé:* LG 23 légitime les rassemblements de diocèses "en plusieurs groupes organiquement réunis [...] qui jouissent de leur propre discipline, de leur propre usage liturgique, de leur patrimoine théologique et spirituel". Ces regroupements de diocèses en Églises particulières, au sens précis de particulier, peuvent notamment prendre la forme de conférences épiscopales, comme le dit ce même numéro, car la responsabilité de chaque évêque vis-à-vis de l'Église entière s'exerce d'abord vis-à-vis des Églises de sa région. C'est là une perception ecclésiologique fondamentale pour comprendre la relation entre l'Église et les Églises, le pape François souhaitant d'ailleurs le rétablissement de l'équivalent des patriarcats antiques.<sup>29</sup>

La fidélité à *Lumen gentium* sur tous ces points fonde et requiert la mise en œuvre de la synodalité dans l'ensemble de la vie de l'Église et représente un grand pas pour le rapprochement avec l'Église orthodoxe.

***Vers le rétablissement de la juste place des évêques dans la synodalité de l'Église: un cahier des charges considérable dans l'Église catholique***

Sans devoir recourir à la tradition, le renvoi que l'on vient de faire aux cinq énoncés de *Lumen gentium* suffit à montrer que le ministère

épiscopal se trouve au cœur de la synodalité, tant au registre local qu'à celui de la communion entre les Églises. Avant de développer ce point d'ecclésiologie fondamentale, il convient de souligner son importance pastorale.

*Une inquiétude pastorale*

L'ecclésiologie cléricale et autoritaire, qui a caractérisé le long XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui était déjà à bout de souffle dans les sociétés occidentales à la veille de Vatican II, s'est perpétuée au-delà de ce concile. Ce qui était viable dans des sociétés majoritairement rurales, hiérarchiques, simples et peu instruites, se révèle dysfonctionnel depuis le début des années 1960 dans les sociétés occidentales de plus en plus urbanisées, complexes, innovantes, surinformées, facilitant l'émancipation des individus et tout d'abord des femmes. Dans un tel contexte culturel, l'avenir de nos communautés est évidemment lié à l'articulation des responsabilités entre tous, quelques-uns et un seul, selon la formulation bien connue du BEM,<sup>30</sup> c'est-à-dire à une vie synodale active. Faute d'en avoir tenu compte, des évolutions pastorales inquiétantes s'en sont suivies.

*Critères pour redonner leur place aux évêques dans la synodalité de l'Église locale, comme dans la synodalité ou conciliarité de l'Église entière.*

L'Écriture et la tradition ancienne restent largement normatives en leur esprit: nul besoin de le répéter, le statut canonique des évêques, tel qu'il a été façonné par le droit récent, durant le pontificat de Jean-Paul II, ne peut pas être considéré comme l'expression pure et simple de la Tradition. Ce statut constitue même un obstacle à plus de synodalité. Comme le constate le Pape François, il consacre une double scission, d'abord au sein de l'Église diocésaine entre clercs et laïcs, puis entre l'évêque et l'Église entière, ce dont témoigne la faiblesse statutaire actuelle des conférences épiscopales. C'est d'ailleurs au nom de la tradition que la

<sup>30</sup> Ce Document *Baptême, eucharistie et ministère* du Conseil Œcuménique des Églises affirme que l'autorité dans l'Église doit s'exercer à la fois de façon épiscopale, presbytérale et communautaire. Le Conseil Pontifical pour l'Unité des chrétiens en est signataire.

<sup>29</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium* 32 reprend ce vœu déjà exprimé par Vatican II en *Lumen gentium* 23.

théologie orthodoxe récuse ce statut des évêques catholiques. Bref, il faut réviser ces élaborations canoniques récentes et se tourner vers l'Écriture et l'Église ancienne, des sources que nous avons en commun avec les orthodoxes et aussi avec les Églises orientales anciennes.

## L'Écriture

L'Écriture ne propose pas de théologie de l'épiscopat, une institution bien plus tardive. C'est ainsi que le mono-épiscopat ne s'impose pas dans l'ensemble de l'Église probablement avant la fin du second siècle. Cela semble avoir été le cas dans l'Église d'Alexandrie et aussi dans celle de Rome, ce dont témoigne la non-concordance entre les listes des successions épiscopales concernant ce dernier siècle. La monographie de Foi et Constitution, préparatoire à l'accord de Lima, offre une information sur l'épiscopat qui reste excellente.<sup>31</sup> Elle montre qu'on ne peut dissocier l'évêque de son Église.

## La Tradition

La formulation bien connue de saint Cyprien, selon laquelle "l'évêque est dans l'Église et l'Église dans l'évêque", exprime bien l'ecclésiologie traditionnelle. Ce n'est pas là une théologie personnelle de saint Cyprien, c'est le langage même des procédures qui sous-tendent l'accès au ministère épiscopal ainsi que son exercice, même si ce dernier aspect est moins bien attesté que le premier. Ceci jusqu'au milieu du V<sup>e</sup> siècle, au moins en Occident. Dans sa thèse,<sup>32</sup> le Prof. Puglisi a étudié très solidement ces procédures que nous résumons. Elles comportaient le *suffragium* du peuple, le *testimonium* du clergé, et le *iudicium* des évêques voisins ainsi que leur imposition des mains avec une épiclese à laquelle tous s'associent, puis le *consensus* du métropolitain, qui sera

requis dès Nicée. L'ecclésiologie de la première patristique est structurellement synodale. On voit clairement ainsi que l'évêque est vraiment inséré dans son Église locale: il a été élu par le peuple et le clergé qui témoignent de ses qualités et de sa foi droite; tout en étant dans son Église, il est aussi face à elle, car les évêques voisins l'auront constitué comme témoin de la foi de l'Église entière et comme représentant qualifié de son Église auprès des autres Églises. La *Tradition apostolique* prévoit lapidairement "qu'on choisisse comme évêque celui qui a été choisi par tout le peuple". Et les évêques de Rome au milieu du V<sup>e</sup> siècle, s. Célestin et s. Léon prescrivent la même règle. Il faut noter qu'au moins dans le droit écrit, la plupart du temps ineffectif, l'élection de l'évêque par son Église est restée la norme jusqu'au Code de 1917, sauvegardée encore aujourd'hui dans plusieurs diocèses des pays germaniques où le chapitre des chanoines élit l'évêque.

Dans les Églises d'Occident et d'Afrique du Nord, l'insertion de l'évêque dans l'Église locale est manifeste. Signalons ce que saint Cyprien écrit aux chrétiens des Églises d'Astorga et de Merida qui avaient, chacune, déposé leur évêque: "*plebs habet potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi*" (Lettre 67, 3); mais les Églises locales n'arrivent à leurs fins qu'avec le concours des évêques voisins, comme le montre la démarche même de ces espagnol. L'attitude de saint Augustin traduit la même ecclésiologie quand il déclare qu'être évêque est pour lui un péril, tandis qu'être chrétien avec les autres chrétiens est son salut,<sup>33</sup> ou encore lorsqu'il enseigne qu'il faut refuser son accord même aux évêques catholiques s'ils enseignent quelque chose qui contredit les Écritures. Ce qui sera repris par s. Thomas d'Aquin.<sup>34</sup>

*Le cahier des charges contemporain en matière de synodalité*

- Situer l'évêque catholique comme membre de son diocèse et pas seulement situé face à lui

31 *Episkopè and Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspective*, Faith and Order Paper 102 (Genève: WCC, 1980).

32 J.F. PUGLISI, *Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry. A Comparative Study*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) (Notre préface). On verra aussi T. OSAWA, *Das Bischofseinsetzungsverfahren bei Cyprian: historische Untersuchungen zu den Begriffen iudicium, suffragium, testimonium, consensus*, (Frankfurt a. Main: P. Lang, 1983).

33 Ce texte (Sermon 340 1, PL 33, 1483) est cité par *Lumen gentium* 32.

34 *De Veritate* q.14, art. 10 ad 11um.



Si l'on excepte la vingtaine de diocèses d'Allemagne et de Suisse alémanique qui ont conservé la possibilité d'élire leur évêque par le biais du chapitre des chanoines, le droit en vigueur (can. 377, § 1) réserve au pape la nomination de tous les évêques de l'Église latine, ainsi que celle de tous les évêques orientaux résidant hors de leur territoire canonique. Plus éclairant pour notre propos, le droit exclut toute intervention de l'Église concernée dans ces nominations: il interdit aux nonces de consulter toute instance qui pourrait représenter l'Église locale, que ce soit le conseil presbytéral, le conseil pastoral ou le collège des consultants. Ils ne pourront interroger que des individus et chacun d'eux secrètement (can. 377, § 2). Il est pourtant de doctrine commune que la nomination des évêques par le pape ne fait pas partie de ses prérogatives, comme l'ont rappelé des théologiens aussi sûrs que J. Ratzinger et Y. Congar.<sup>35</sup> Aussi rien n'interdirait que les synodes diocésains, les conseils pastoraux et presbytéraux puissent établir des listes d'épiscopales par des procédures tout aussi secrètes. Empiriquement, on éviterait ainsi un certain nombre de nominations malheureuses et surtout que les évêques catholiques n'apparaissent comme des membres du haut personnel dirigeant de l'Église universelle, figure si contraire à la synodalité.

Dans cet esprit, il conviendrait de mettre en valeur les processus de réception des évêques, soit dans la célébration de leur ordination, comme le rituel y invite, soit quand l'évêque, déjà ordonné, "prend possession du siège", une expression du droit en vigueur, héritée du système bénéficiaire, et qu'il faut absolument corriger.<sup>36</sup> En particulier, on devrait mettre en valeur la profession de la foi apostolique par l'évêque devant les fidèles présents et qui en sont les témoins pour faire apparaître qu'eux aussi sont les gardiens de la foi apostolique, avec leur évêque, grâce au *sensus fidei*

*fideliium* qu'ils reçoivent de l'Esprit-saint. On ne peut rétablir les élections, telles qu'elles existaient dans l'Antiquité,<sup>37</sup> mais il conviendrait d'exprimer, de façon symboliquement forte, que l'évêque est bien, à tous égards, un membre de son Église et non un "haut fonctionnaire envoyé par le pouvoir central pour l'administrer" et se situant exclusivement face à elle, comme le Code en vigueur le laisse penser.

- renforcer les structures existantes pour rendre possibles le partage des décisions et l'*accountability* de l'évêque.

Actuellement l'évêque catholique cumule dans son diocèse les pouvoirs législatif, exécutif et judiciaire et n'a autour de lui que des organes consultatifs, qu'il est obligé, par le droit d'entendre, en certaines circonstances avant de prendre sa décision. Mais il n'a besoin de leur consentement que de façon rarissime (C'est le cas en matière économique, cf. 1742, § 1). Ce cumul de pouvoirs est complexe à manier: comment peut-il être à la fois le père des prêtres, leur juge d'instruction et le porteur de la sentence? De plus, il n'a de comptes à rendre à personne, ni à ses diocésains, ni à ses collègues de la province ecclésiastique ou de sa conférence épiscopale. Seulement au pape,<sup>38</sup> qu'il doit obligatoirement rencontrer tous les cinq ans dans sa visite *ad limina*. (can 500).

Comment développer la synodalité locale? Des exhortations n'y suffiront pas. Certes, les résultats du synode de 2023 seront communiqués, selon la coutume, par une Exhortation apostolique. Cette dernière annoncera des réformes

37 Sur ces pratiques, on verra JOHAN LEEMANS *et alii*, *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 119 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2011).

38 Selon G. BIER, *Die Rechtsstellung des Diözesanbischofs nach dem Kodex Iuris Canonici von 1983*, *Forschungen zur Kirchenrechtswissenschaft*, 32 (Würzburg: Echter, 2001) 376, le statut d'un évêque diocésain vis-à-vis du pape est celui d'un vicaire général vis-à-vis de son évêque, statut décrit au can. 480: "Le vicaire général doit rendre compte à l'évêque diocésain tant des principales affaires à traiter que de celles déjà traitées, et il n'agira jamais contre la volonté et le sentiment de l'évêque diocésain".

35 J. RATZINGER, *Le nouveau peuple de Dieu*, (Paris: Aubier, 1971) 68; Y. CONGAR, *Église et papauté: regards historiques*, (Paris: Cerf, 1994) 29.

36 Une dizaine de canons recourent à ce vocabulaire, notamment les canons 388, 404, 409, 413, 418, 420, 430, 501, 527.

structurelles requises par la synodalité, mûries au cours du Synode. Sans les prévoir, on peut décrire leur direction. Ce sera celle de réformes simples d'institutions dont on a fait un premier apprentissage depuis Vatican II. Les synodes diocésains sont restés facultatifs et sans périodicité dans le Code de 1963. On pourrait les rendre obligatoires, par ex., tous les sept ou dix ans, sauf dispense du pape. Ce serait l'occasion pour l'évêque et ses proches collaborateurs de rendre des comptes sur l'état du diocèse. Ne conviendrait-il que les conseils pastoraux diocésains, aujourd'hui facultatifs, deviennent obligatoires eux aussi, tout comme les conseils pastoraux paroissiaux, car ce sont les seuls à comporter des laïcs en nombre? Simultanément, il conviendrait probablement d'étendre le champ de compétences de ces institutions, dans le cadre du droit particulier, car la vie sociale varie d'un continent à un autre. Ce sera là un chantier important pour le droit canonique.<sup>39</sup>

- La synodalité dans l'Église entière ou la responsabilité des évêques dans la *communio ecclesiarum*

Sur ce point, la synodalité devrait progresser considérablement à la suite du synode qui lui est consacré. On devrait dépasser la scission malheureuse entre le *collegium episcoporum* et la *communio ecclesiarum*, c'est-à-dire renoncer à la compréhension du collège des évêques comme collège de personnes succédant au collège des Douze à titre personnel et ayant le pape à leur tête (comme successeur de Pierre), caractéristique du droit post-conciliaire. On devrait aussi dépasser la distinction forgée par Jean-Paul II entre la collégialité affective, quotidienne, et la collégialité effective,

nécessairement universelle,<sup>40</sup> qui ne se réaliserait que dans un concile œcuménique. Si l'on comprend bien que l'Église est catholique et non pas universelle (au sens où on l'a précisé<sup>41</sup>), la synodalité se réalisera de façon régionalisée, car la mondialisation actuelle n'uniformise pas les cultures.

Du point de vue pastoral, l'inculturation se révèle nécessaire, y compris même en Occident. Analogiquement, du point de vue œcuménique, la formule *United but not absorbed* se révèle de plus en plus judicieuse et gagne en plausibilité. On l'a vérifié du côté catholique dans la légitimation d'un consensus différencié en matière doctrinale, par la signature de l'Accord sur la doctrine de la Justification de 1999 à Augsbourg, entre l'Église catholique et la Fédération luthérienne mondiale.<sup>42</sup> On l'a vérifié d'une manière moins remarquée, mais plus significative encore dans le fait que le pape Jean-Paul a reconnu les Églises diocésaines de l'Église assyrienne de l'Orient, comme de sœurs des nôtres alors que nous n'avons en commun ni le même canon des Écritures, ni le septénaire sacramentel et qu'il a encouragé les fidèles chaldéens catholiques à participer à leur eucharistie, alors que leur anaphore principale est dépourvue du récit de l'institution qu'on appelle dans la tradition latine les paroles de la consécration.<sup>43</sup> Le développement de la synodalité ira ainsi de pair avec la catholicité authentique. Un point œcuméniquement important.

40 Cette conception universaliste du collège permettrait de justifier l'ordination épiscopale de personnes qui n'exerceront jamais l'épiscopat. Cela pour des raisons administratives ou protocolaires. Encore récemment des prêtres, nommés cardinaux, ont été ordonnés évêques respectivement à 82 ans (W. Brandmüller), 86 ans (P. Grech) et 92 ans (J. Ries), à leur demande.

41 Cf. supra note 20.

42 Cf. HERVÉ LEGRAND, "Le consensus différencié sur la doctrine de la Justification (Augsbourg 1999). Quelques remarques sur la nouveauté d'une méthode", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 124(2002) 30-56.

43 Cf. l'Accord sur l'admission réciproque à l'eucharistie entre l'Église chaldéenne (donc l'Église catholique) et l'Église assyrienne de l'Orient, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 26 octobre 2001 et *Documentation Catholique* 99 (2002) 213-214.

39 Cette tâche est abordée par H. LEGRAND, "La synodalité est d'ordre pratique: un plaidoyer pour les apprentissages", *Concilium* 57, 2021/2 en ses différentes éditions.

Ce développement prévisible pourra être salué par la théologie orthodoxe, mais celle-ci continuera de craindre les définitions de Vatican I. Leur texte est mal compris, notamment parce que la définition qui reconnaît à la juridiction du pape l'extension qu'on connaît ne comporte nullement qu'il doive l'exercer et encore moins comme l'ont fait souvent les papes du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il n'appartient pas aux théologiens de prévoir l'avenir. Ils peuvent néanmoins maintenir des fenêtres ouvertes. Mentionnons en ce sens quelques évolutions qui pourraient se produire. Dès maintenant, le pape pourrait reconnaître aux conférences épiscopales (si elles ont un certain nombre) de pouvoir mettre des questions à l'ordre du jour; il pourrait aussi accorder au synode autorité décisionnelle, ce qui n'a jamais été fait jusqu'ici.

Il pourrait aussi reconnaître un droit de consultation aux évêques avant une décision doctrinale ou disciplinaire importante, voire fixer un quorum à cette occasion; ou reconnaître à un nombre qualifié d'évêques de proposer un concile œcuménique. Volontairement, on n'en pas mentionné plus, car de même que les Observateurs à Vatican II, y compris les orthodoxes, ont joué un rôle considérable dans l'orientation de débats conciliaires, de même il faut souhaiter que des théologiens d'autres Églises et, en premier lieu, des théologiens orthodoxes aient la *parrhèsia* qui fut celle de Karl Barth à l'époque pour dire "*res nostra agitur!*" et agir en conséquence.



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jeudi · 14 octobre 2021

## Le développement actuel de la synodalité au sein de l'Église catholique: promesses, difficultés, attentes. Un point de vue orthodoxe

### Introduction

Je voudrais tout d'abord exprimer ma profonde gratitude au Père James Puglisi, Directeur du *Centro Pro Unione*, pour l'honneur de cette invitation à participer au symposium de ce Centre historique et important pour l'œcuménisme sur la synodalité. Je suis aussi particulièrement honoré de prendre la parole après le professeur Hervé Legrand, à qui nous sommes tous reconnaissants pour sa contribution majeure à l'ecclésiologie chrétienne.

On considère souvent que nos efforts œcuméniques ne portent pas de fruits et que le dialogue entre catholiques et orthodoxes n'a pas de résultats impressionnants à montrer. On oublie ainsi que nous ne sommes pas seuls dans la voie œcuménique, car Dieu chemine avec nous. C'est Lui qui, pour citer une phrase de saint Paul qui m'est chère, "peut faire, par la puissance qui agit en nous, infiniment plus que tout ce que nous demandons ou pensons" (Eph 3 20). Je crois que la mise en avant de la question de la synodalité est une œuvre du Seigneur qui dépassait nos attentes. En effet, lorsque j'ai choisi le sujet de ma recherche doctorale avec mon directeur de thèse, le regretté Père Laurent Villemin, en 2013, sur *la collégialité épiscopale de Vatican II et la synodalité orthodoxe*, je ne pouvais pas imaginer que quelques années plus tard, la synodalité serait l'une des questions principales de l'agenda ecclésiologique, pastorale et œcuménique de l'Église catholique.

C'est au Pape François que nous devons, sans aucun doute, le développement actuel de la synodalité au sein de l'Église catholique. Considéré auparavant comme un concept plutôt oriental ou orthodoxe, la synodalité, au travers de l'enseignement papal, est bel et bien entré dans le langage théologique et est devenu un mot familier pour un large public catholique.

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Bien que le terme, et même la notion, n'était pas ignoré ou absent dans la littérature théologique, comme en témoigne d'importantes publications,<sup>1</sup> c'est, sans doute sous l'impulsion du nouveau pontificat qu'une réflexion plus approfondie s'est développée. Nous le constatons: organisation de colloques théologiques,<sup>2</sup> nombreuses éditions

1 À titre indicatif: ALBERTO MELLONI, SILVIA SCATENA (éds.), *Synod and Synodality, Theology, History, Canon Law and Ecumenism in New Contact*, Acts of the International Colloquium Bruges 2003, Christianity and History 1 (Münster/Hamburg/Londres: Lit Verlag, 2005); *La Synodalité, La Participation au gouvernement dans l'Église*, Actes du VII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international de Droit canonique, Paris, 21-28 septembre 1990, *L'Année canonique*, Hors série, 2 vol., 1992; RICCARDO BATTOCCHIO et SERENA NOCETI (sous la dir.), *Chiesa e sinodalità, Coscienza, forme, processi*, colloque de l'Associazione Teologica Italiana, Composampiero, 2005 (Milano: Glossa, 2007); GIOVANNI ANCONA (éd.), *Dossier Chiesa e sinodalità*, Atti dei Congressi Zonali preparatori al XIX Congresso Nazionale tenutisi a: Gazzada (VA) 4-5 giugno 2004 (nord), Assisi 6 maggio 2004 (centro), Catanzaro 18 maggio 2004 (sud) (Gorle: Velar, 2005).

2 P. ex. Colloque de l'Université de Fribourg (Suisse) sur "La synodalité et sa mise en pratique - un 'topos' théologique de l'Église en Orient et en Occident", Fribourg (Suisse) 16-18 novembre 2017. LORENZO BALDISSERI, *A cinquant'anni dell'Apostolica sollicitudo, Il Sinodo dei Vescovi al servizio di una Chiesa sinodale*, Atti del Seminario di studio organizzato dalla Segreteria generale del Sinodo dei Vescovi, 6-9 febbraio 2016 (Cité du Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016). Le dossier du numéro 106/3, 2018 de *Recherches de Science Religieuse* sur "La synodalité de l'Église" ainsi que le numéro 107/2, 2019 avec les Actes du colloque de RSR tenu à Paris (novembre 2018) sur le même sujet.

sur le sujet,<sup>3</sup> en particulier le Document de la Commission Théologique Internationale (CTI), intitulé "La synodalité dans la vie et dans la mission de l'Église", préparation pour la prochaine assemblée ordinaire du Synode des évêques prévue pour l'octobre 2023 sur le thème: "Pour une Église synodale: communion, participation et mission".<sup>4</sup>

Dans ce contexte, il m'a été demandé d'apporter à cette rencontre un point de vue orthodoxe sur ce développement de la synodalité dans l'Église catholique. Pour répondre à cette invitation, je vais tenter de vous présenter un regard extérieur qui essaye de suivre, autant que lui est possible, le travail ecclésiologique ainsi que la réalité ecclésiale. Vivant depuis quatre ans en Grèce, je ne suis pas un observateur très averti et il est certain que des évolutions m'échappent. Je fais donc appel à votre compréhension, espérant que je ne vais caricaturer ni la théorie ecclésiologique, ni la pratique.

D'abord, nous présenterons quelques considérations préalables sur la terminologie et sur la perspective ecclésiologique de laquelle nous partons. Ensuite, nous aborderons les promesses que le pontificat du pape François a créées, ainsi que les difficultés qui persistent et qui se résument à une problématique ecclésiologique bien spécifique. Enfin, nous concluons en formulant nos attentes pour le futur de la synodalité dans l'Église catholique.

### Remarques préalables

Synodalité, Conciliarité, Collégialité: de quoi parlons-nous précisément? D'abord le terme synodalité est celui qui gagne de plus en plus du terrain. Il s'agit d'un néologisme qui représente un concept plurivoque. Toutefois, un consensus théologique s'est établi sur la signification de

la synodalité. Comme le note le canoniste belge A. Borrás, théologiens et canonistes "semblent s'entendre pour dire qu'il signifie une propriété de l'Église découlant de sa nature communionnelle".<sup>5</sup> Issue du mot synode, la notion de synodalité ne renvoie pas seulement au phénomène historique des assemblées des responsables ecclésiastiques, des conciles ou synodes mais aussi, sinon d'abord, à une propriété de l'Église elle-même.

Dans ce sens, nous pouvons définir la synodalité, à la fois comme un principe d'organisation ou de gouvernement de l'Église, et comme une caractéristique inhérente à la nature et à la vie de l'Église. On parle ainsi de la synodalité au sens large, la synodalité de l'Église, et au sens strict, de la synodalité des évêques. Comme nous allons le voir, il est très important tant de distinguer les deux significations des synodalité que de ne pas les séparer ou opposer.

Le terme conciliarité, largement utilisée depuis au moins des années quatre-vingt, surtout dans le dialogue œcuménique, est considérée en principe comme équivalent ou synonyme de synodalité, mais il exprime habituellement son sens large. Ainsi, G. Alberigo, en 1981, évoquait "la conciliarité essentielle de l'Église"<sup>6</sup> pour exprimer la nature conciliaire ou communautaire de l'Église, ce que H. Legrand qualifie de "synodalité fondamentale de l'Église".<sup>7</sup> Enfin, le terme collégialité nous renvoie notamment à la doctrine proclamée par le Concile Vatican II, bien que le terme soit absent des textes conciliaires, et il se réfère exclusivement au statut et à l'action des évêques.

5 ALPHONSE BORRAS, "Trois expressions de la synodalité depuis Vatican II", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 90 (2014) 645.

6 GIUSEPPE ALBERIGO, "Institutions exprimant la communion entre l'épiscopat universel et l'évêque de Rome" GIUSEPPE ALBERIGO (éd.), *Les Églises après Vatican II, dynamisme et prospective*, Actes du colloque international de Bologne - 1980, *Théologie Historique* 61 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981).

7 HERVÉ LEGRAND, "La synodalité mise en œuvre par le concile local de l'Église orthodoxe russe de 1917-1918. Réflexions d'un catholique", *Irénikon*, 76 (2003) 507-509.

3 Sauf les éditions déjà mentionnées dans la note précédente, voir p. ex. GIUSEPPE RUGGIERI, *Chiesa sinodale* (Bari: Laterza, 2017). ALPHONSE BORRAS, *Communion ecclésiale et synodalité* (Paris, CLD Éditions, 2018). Pour plus d'éléments bibliographiques voir AMPHILOCHIOS MILTOS, *Collégialité et Synodalité, vers une compréhension commune entre catholiques et orthodoxes, Unam sanctam*, nouvelle série 7 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2019) 19-22 et 127.

4 Voir Document préparatoire sur *vatican.va*.

Soulignons, pourtant, que le terme collégialité est introduit dans le vocabulaire de l'ecclésiologie catholique par Yves Congar, dans les années cinquante, pour traduire le terme russe *sobornost*, car le terme conciliarité ne lui semblait suffisamment pertinent pour cette traduction.<sup>8</sup> À Vatican II, le terme a pris un sens restreint (collégialité épiscopale) qui, cependant, ne fut pas articulé avec le sens communautaire que Congar lui avait donné.

Ayant précisé la terminologie, nous préférons, pour notre part (et en cela suivant d'autres théologiens<sup>9</sup>), utiliser l'expression *conciliarité ecclésiale* pour dire ce que le P. Legrand appelle "une dimension inaliénable de l'essence complexe de l'Église",<sup>10</sup> et l'expression synodalité épiscopale pour décrire l'activité synodale ou conciliaire des évêques. Soulignons que la synodalité épiscopale se fonde sur et doit exprimer la conciliarité ecclésiale, qui est son cadre.<sup>11</sup> Pour

reprendre les paroles de Congar, "les conciles sont en effet une expression de la conciliarité qui, elle, découle de la nature même de l'Église, qui est d'être une communion, *κοινωνία*".<sup>12</sup> Au niveau de l'Église entière, qui est une communion des Églises locales (diocèses), c'est à travers le ministère épiscopal que cette communion est réalisée. Selon Eugenio Corecco, "la sinodalità, essendo la dimensione operativa della 'communio ecclesiarum', si realizza in senso proprio solo nell'esercizio del ministero episcopale".<sup>13</sup> La synodalité épiscopale dépend de la conciliarité ecclésiale, mais cette dernière ne se réalise pas indépendamment de la première. Comme le souligne P. Valdrini,

"la synodalité n'est pas pensable en dehors du ministère épiscopal dont elle est une dimension essentielle. Elle ne peut être réduite au principe exclusif de mise en œuvre de l'idée de la participation. Certes, la synodalité est la forme ecclésiale de participation des fidèles mais ce caractère ecclésial trouve son fondement dans la structure propre à l'Église d'être une *communio ecclesiarum* ou communion des Églises particulières confiées aux évêques".<sup>14</sup>

L'Église locale, à savoir une Église diocésaine, constitue la liaison entre *communio ecclesiarum* et *communio episcoporum*.

Il m'a été demandé de vous présenter un point de vue orthodoxe et je dois d'emblée préciser les modalités de mon approche. Si, d'après le pape François, les catholiques peuvent apprendre quelque chose de plus sur la synodalité de la

8 YVES CONGAR, "Le peuple fidèle et la fonction prophétique de l'Église", *Irenikon*, 24 (1951) 289-312 et 440-466, surtout 446-447. (Étude reproduite dans le volume YVES CONGAR, *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc, Unam Sanctam* 23 (Paris: Cerf, 1953) 367-407). Dans tous ses écrits préconciliaires, le terme collégialité conserve ce sens global: "'Collégialité', qu'est-ce à dire? Il ne serait pas aisé d'en donner une définition, mais on peut essayer d'en préciser le statut. La collégialité nous paraît être une propriété découlant de la nature de l'Église et qui qualifie sa vie. Elle traduit sa nature comme Communion des saints. Elle veut et fait que, dans l'exercice de cette vie, tous les membres soient présents à l'acte d'un autre, en sorte qu'aucun ne peut agir solitairement"; YVES CONGAR, "Conclusion" dans B. BOTTE, H. MAROT et autres, *Le Concile et les Conciles: contribution à l'histoire de la vie conciliaire de l'Église* (Paris/Chevetogne: Cerf, 1960) 301.

9 P. ex., PIERRE L'HUILLIER, "À propos de la collégialité épiscopale", *Le Messager Orthodoxe*, no. 24-25 (1964) 8. MICHEL STAVROU, "Linéaments d'une théologie orthodoxe de la conciliarité", 76 (2003) 485. JOSEPH FAMEREE, "Conciliarité de l'Église. Théologalité, pluralité, historicité", *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 106 (2018) 443-460.

10 HERVÉ LEGRAND, "Le dogme de la juridiction universelle de l'évêque de Rome et la conciliarité inaliénable de l'Église", *Θεολογία*, 86 (2015) 36.

11 ALEXANDER SCHMEMMANN, "Towards a Theology of Councils" dans *id.*, *Church, World, Mission, Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979) 164.

12 YVES CONGAR, "Structure ou régime conciliaire de l'Église" dans YVES CONGAR, *Le Concile Vatican II, Son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, Théologie Historique 71 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984) 34.

13 EUGENIO CORECCO, "Synodalità" dans GIUSEPPE BARBAGLIO, SEVERINO DIANICH (sous la dir.), *Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia*, (Milano: ed. San Paolo, 1988) 1fc455.

14 PATRICK VALDRINI, "La synodalité (Conclusions du Colloque)", dans *La Synodalité. La participation...*, v. II, 852-853.

tradition orthodoxe,<sup>15</sup> je crois que les orthodoxes également ont des choses à apprendre de la recherche des théologiens catholiques menée lors des dernières décennies. Il me semble que la bibliographie catholique sur la synodalité dépasse amplement la littérature orthodoxe sur le même sujet. La synodalité régit certainement le mode de gouvernement des Églises autocéphales, mais l'Église orthodoxe ne peut pas malheureusement fournir un modèle idéal d'une Église vraiment synodale dans tous niveaux de son organisation. Au lieu donc de se donner mutuellement des leçons, il est préférable que catholiques et orthodoxes, avec humilité, sincérité et un esprit d'autocritique, mettent tant leur doctrine que leur pratique à la lumière de l'ecclésiologie de leur tradition commune. C'est cette dernière qui sera le critère de notre approche et non pas une théorie confessionnelle.

Mais de quelle ecclésiologie parlons-nous? Il vaut d'abord se garder d'une idéalisation d'une ecclésiologie considérée originale, mais finalement abstraite ou vague. Comme ecclésiologie de référence ici nous considérons *l'ecclésiologie de communion* qui, comme Congar l'avait identifié avant même Vatican II, était sans aucun doute celle du premier millénaire.<sup>16</sup> L'ecclésiologie de communion est revendiquée par toutes les confessions chrétiennes (protestante, catholique, orthodoxe), avec des interprétations souvent divergentes qui, comme l'a noté le cardinal Kasper, se cachent derrière le même concept de communion.<sup>17</sup> Pour notre part, nous considérons que l'ecclésiologie de communion est celle qu'expriment en général les écrits des Pères de

l'Église et les canons des conciles œcuméniques. Les grands traits théologiques de l'ecclésiologie de communion sont, selon nous, les suivants: son enracinement trinitaire, sa réalisation eucharistique (qui articule communauté et hiérarchie), sa conception d'une réciprocité entre l'unité et la diversité.<sup>18</sup>

On sait bien qu'au deuxième millénaire, en Occident, un autre paradigme a prévalu, celui de l'Église universelle, qui a aussi marqué la synodalité épiscopale.<sup>19</sup> Ce n'est qu'aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles avec le renouveau multiforme (patristique, biblique, liturgique) qui a abouti au Concile Vatican II, que l'ecclésiologie catholique a renoué avec la tradition du premier millénaire. La réception de Vatican II, surtout sur le sujet qui nous occupe, n'était pas sans difficultés. Dans une période cruciale, et qui était à certains égards décevante, l'élection du pape actuel a créé des promesses fondées pour une réception conciliaire dans la ligne de l'ecclésiologie de communion et non pas de l'ecclésiologie dite universaliste.

15 PAPE FRANÇOIS, "Entretien accordé aux revues jésuites", *Études*, (octobre 2013) 18.

16 Voir son étude programmatique: YVES CONGAR, "De la communion des Églises à une ecclésiologie de l'Église universelle" dans YVES CONGAR et BERBARD DUPUY (sous la dir.), *L'Épiscopat et l'Église universelle*, Unam Sanctam 39 (Paris: Cerf, 1964) 227-260. Voir aussi ALIN NISUS, "La genèse d'une ecclésiologie de communion dans l'œuvre de Yves Congar", *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 94 (2010) 309-334.

17 WALTER KASPER, *L'Église catholique. Son être, sa réalisation, sa mission*, *Cogitatio fidei* 293 (Paris: Cerf, 2014) 47.

18 Voir W. KASPER, *L'Église catholique...*, 47-48. JEAN ZIZIOULAS, "L'Église comme communion" dans *L'Église et ses institutions*, (textes réunis par l'Archimandrite GRIGORIOS PAPATHOMAS et HYACINTHE DESTIVELLE, o.p.), *Orthodoxe* (Paris: Cerf, 2011) 109-114.

19 Voir KLAUS SCHATZ, "La sinodalità nella storia della Chiesa" dans A. BALDISSERI, *A cinquant'anni dell'Apostolica sollicitudo...*, 36-41.

## Promesses: une nouvelle ecclésiologie?

Dès le début, plusieurs théologiens ont souligné que le nouveau pontificat pourrait même dynamiser une "nouvelle ecclésiologie".<sup>20</sup> Parmi les gestes extrêmement significatifs du pape François, il faut mentionner son insistance, dès son élection, à se présenter comme évêque de Rome, et non pas comme pape ou souverain pontife, choix qui, comme Laurent Villemin écrivait en 2013, contient en soi "tout un programme" ecclésiologique.<sup>21</sup> En même temps, François a initié des réformes importantes, comme celle de la curie romaine ou de l'institution du synode des évêques. Pour la première, le pape a constitué un Conseil des Cardinaux qui, aux yeux des orthodoxes, rappelle un petit synode, mais ce processus de réforme de la Curie n'a pas encore totalement abouti. Comme vous le savez, la réforme du synode des évêques a donné comme fruit la Constitution *Episcopalis communio*, publié le 15 septembre 2018, rédigée avec le souci d'une Église plus synodale.

Termes récurrents de ses discours,<sup>22</sup> la collégialité et la synodalité prennent pour le pape François une importance toute particulière dans le dialogue avec les orthodoxes, comme il l'a exprimée dans son premier entretien accordé aux revues jésuites:

On doit marcher ensemble: les personnes, les évêques, le pape. La synodalité se vit à différents niveaux. Il est peut-être temps de changer la manière de faire du Synode, car celle qui est pratiquée actuellement me paraît statique. Cela pourra aussi avoir une valeur œcuménique, tout particulièrement avec nos frères orthodoxes. D'eux, nous pouvons en apprendre davantage sur le sens de la collégialité épiscopale et sur la tradition de la synodalité. L'effort de réflexion commune, qui prend en considération la manière dont l'Église était gouvernée dans les premiers siècles, avant la rupture entre l'Orient et l'Occident, portera du fruit en son temps.<sup>23</sup>

Retenons de cette prise de position trois éléments: il ne faut pas imposer à l'autre mais apprendre de l'autre; la question nécessite une réflexion en commun et le critère doit être le premier millénaire de l'Église indivise. Le nouveau vent qui souffle au Vatican a, sans aucun

20 Voir p. ex. LAURENT VILLEMIN, "La constitution *Lumen gentium* et sa réception", *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 45 (2014) 355-358 et JOSEPH FAMEREE, "Le décret *Christus Dominus*. Une reconfiguration du ministère épiscopal?", *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 46 (2015) 508-511. Cf. LUC FORESTIER, "Le pape François et la synodalité. *Evangelii gaudium*, nouvelle étape dans la réception de Vatican II", *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 137 (2015) 597-614. Sur le pape François, la synodalité et l'œcuménisme voir les études de HYACINTHE DESTIVELLE, "Le pape François: un œcuménisme en chemin" et "La synodalité un enjeu œcuménique" dans *Conduis-la vers l'unité parfaite. Œcuménisme et synodalité*, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2018) 115-152 et 373-379.

21 Voir l'analyse éclairante de LAURENT VILLEMIN, "Tout en programme pour l'Église" dans MICHEL COOL, François, pape du nouveau monde, (Paris: Salvator, 2013) 104-109.

22 À titre strictement indicatif, nous pouvons nous rapporter: PAPE FRANÇOIS, "Discours aux membres du XIII Conseil ordinaire de la Secrétairerie générale du Synodes des évêques", le 13 juin 2013: "la synodalité doit prendre une nouvelle direction pour exprimer sa singularité et unité au ministère de Pierre"; "Discours à la délégation du Patriarcat œcuménique", le 28 juin 2013: "Je fais référence par exemple à la réflexion de l'Église catholique sur le sens de la collégialité épiscopale, et à la tradition de la synodalité, si typique dans l'Église orthodoxe. J'ai confiance qu'un effort de réflexion commune si complexe et laborieux donnera des fruits en son temps". De même, son "Homélie pour la fête de saint Pierre et saint Paul", le 29 juin 2013, *Documentation Catholique*, n° 2512 (2013) 103: "Nous devons avancer sur cette voie de la synodalité, grandir en harmonie avec le service de la primauté"; "Homélie à la Messe de la clôture du Synode extraordinaire sur la famille et la béatification du pape Paul VI", le 19 octobre 2014, "Nous avons vécu la collégialité et la synodalité" (les textes sur le site *vatican.va*).

23 PAPE FRANÇOIS, "Entretien accordé aux revues jésuites", *Études*, (octobre 2013) 18.



doute, un écho dans les relations œcuméniques. La "conversion" synodale de l'Église catholique aura des effets œcuméniques plus importants que les discours et les rencontres chaleureuses dont François a déjà souvent fait preuve. Il n'y a pas lieu ici d'évaluer le passage des intuitions dans les actes, pendant les huit du pontificat de François. Il convient cependant d'évoquer trois questions qui nous semblent prometteuses pour le futur du dialogue catholique-orthodoxe.

Premièrement, il est très important que l'on reconnaisse un statut théologique à la synodalité qui cherche à articuler *communio ecclesiarum* et *communio episcoporum*, étant donné que cette articulation faisait défaut dans la doctrine de Vatican II sur la collégialité épiscopale. Parmi les énoncés de pape sur la synodalité, le plus important du point de vue doctrinal est l'idée que "la synodalité est une dimension constitutive de l'Église"<sup>24</sup> qui se vit dans tous les niveaux de l'organisation ecclésiale. Nous n'avons plus à avoir une synodalité floue face à un ministère hiérarchique et à une primauté dogmatiquement définis. Tant l'enseignement du pape que la production théologique sur la synodalité sont un acquis et un jalon pour l'avenir.

La deuxième question à retenir est celle de l'Église locale. François s'est prononcé, de fait, à maintes reprises en faveur d'un gouvernement de l'Église moins centralisé et pour une valorisation de la synodalité et des Églises locales.<sup>25</sup> Il souhaite promouvoir ce "marcher ensemble". Comme H. Legrand l'a analysé, il semble que le pape François articule notamment la synodalité de

l'Église locale avec la collégialité des évêques.<sup>26</sup> "Pour lui, écrit le P. Legrand, dans la communion ecclésiale, la communion des évêques entre eux (collégialité) est inséparable avec la communion dans l'Église locale (synodalité)".<sup>27</sup> L'importance de cette dernière se concrétise dans la demande de la consultation large du peuple de Dieu dans les Églises locales, demande formulée officiellement dans la Constitution *Episcopalis Communio* (n. 7): "De plus, la contribution des organismes de participation des Églises particulières peut se révéler être fondamentale, en particulier le Conseil presbytéral et le Conseil pastoral, à partir desquels véritablement 'une Église synodale peut commencer à prendre forme'."<sup>28</sup> Quelques lignes plus bas, la même Constitution souligne que le peuple de Dieu est le point de départ et le point d'arrivée du processus synodal (EC 7c). À l'encontre de ses deux prédécesseurs, le pape François envisage l'articulation entre collégialité des évêques et communion des Églises, sous l'angle des Églises locales et non pas d'une mise en avant de l'Église universelle.

Troisièmement, l'option pour le titre "évêque de Rome", titre ignoré presque totalement

24 PAPE FRANÇOIS, "Le chemin de la synodalité est celui que Dieu attend de l'Église au troisième millénaire", Discours à l'occasion de la commémoration du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'institution du synode des évêques, Rome, le 17 octobre 2015, *Documentation Catholique*, n° 2521 (2016) 78, thèse repris dans son *Episcopalis communio* n. 6.

25 Voir ainsi les nos 16 et 246 de sa première Exhortation apostolique *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 novembre 2013 (*Documentation Catholique*, n. 2513, 2014).

26 Voir HERVÉ LEGRAND, "Enjeux ecclésiologiques des réformes institutionnelles du pape François" dans Mgr MICHEL DUBOST (sou la dir.), *Le grand tournant. L'an I de la révolution du pape François*, (Paris: Cerf, 2014) 185-210 et 218-231. Cf. HERVÉ LEGRAND, "Réformer la papauté pour mieux servir l'unité entre les Églises", *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 136 (2014) 565-576. HERVÉ LEGRAND, "La primauté romaine de Vatican I au pape François" dans *Le Concile Vatican II et l'Église orthodoxe* (Colloque théologique, Chambésy, 16-19 octobre 2013), *Analecta chambesiana* 5 (Genève: Centre Orthodoxe du Patriarcat œcuménique, 2015) 76-81.

27 HERVÉ LEGRAND, "Enjeux ecclésiologiques...", 187.

28 Voir les remarques d'ALPHONSE BORRAS, "La synodalité ecclésiale: diversité de lieux et interactions mutuelles", *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 107/2, (2019) 292-293.

des textes de Vatican II<sup>29</sup>, corrobore les deux autres points et suggère aussi une autre conception de la primauté papale.<sup>30</sup> Dans son fameux discours si remarqué à l'occasion de la commémoration du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'institution du synode des évêques, le pape François a réaffirmé sa volonté de renouveler la vie synodale dans l'Église en général, mais aussi à l'égard de l'exercice de son ministère:<sup>31</sup> "Je suis persuadé que, dans une Église synodale, même l'exercice du primat pétrinien pourra recevoir une plus grande lumière. Le Pape ne se trouve pas, tout seul, au-dessus de l'Église, mais en elle comme baptisé parmi les baptisés et dans le Collège épiscopal comme évêque parmi les évêques, appelé en même temps - comme Successeur de l'apôtre Pierre - à guider l'Église de Rome qui préside dans l'amour toutes les Églises".<sup>32</sup>

On pourrait formuler deux objections sur ces promesses. D'abord, un observateur remarquerait le problème d'une ecclésiologie qui d'une certaine manière varie au gré des papes et ne permet pas des positions nettes. Ensuite,

29 Le fait que, dans les textes conciliaires, le pape n'est jamais appelé évêque de Rome est indicatif de la conception problématique de Vatican II sur l'épiscopat. D'après une observation de H. LEGRAND: "tout aussi significatif, dans tout Vatican II, qui le mentionne pourtant abondamment, jamais le pape n'est désigné comme l'évêque de Rome, sinon dans une incise historique (LG 22)". "Débat avec Pr Alberigo" dans HERVÉ LEGRAND et CHRISTOPH THEOBALD (sous la dir.), *Le Ministère des évêques au concile Vatican II et depuis, Hommage à Mgr Guy Herbulot*, (Paris: Cerf, 2001) 46. On comprend donc ainsi la signification ecclésiologique, lourde de conséquences, de la pratique du pape actuel de se présenter toujours comme évêque de Rome.

30 Dans sa première Exhortation apostolique *Evangelii Gaudium*, nous lisons: "Je ne crois pas non plus qu'on doive attendre du magistère papal une parole définitive ou complète sur toutes les questions qui concernent l'Église et le monde. Il n'est pas opportun que le Pape remplace les Épiscopats locaux dans le discernement de toutes les problématiques qui se présentent sur leurs territoires. En ce sens, je sens la nécessité de progresser dans une «décentralisation 'salutaire': PAPE FRANÇOIS, *Exhortation apostolique Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 novembre 2013, n° 16, *Documentation Catholique*, n. 2513, (2014) 11.

31 PAPE FRANÇOIS, "Le chemin de la synodalité est celui", 75-80.

32 *Ibid.*, 79,

on peut se demander dans quelle mesure ces prises de position se traduisent en décisions ou en actes qui vont changer vraiment l'image de l'Église catholique. Néanmoins, malgré ces objections légitimes, nos espoirs restent fondés pour deux raisons. La première raison est que la synodalité, même si elle restait une lettre morte, se trouve désormais dans l'enseignement papal, dans les documents du magistère et, comme tel, constitue peut-être une semence pour un développement ultérieur. La deuxième raison est que la dynamique pour une Église synodale a considérablement enrichi la recherche théologique,<sup>33</sup> et restera un jalon prometteur pour un éventuel renouvellement.

## Difficultés: l'ecclésiologie universaliste

Si on parle aujourd'hui de synodalité, jusqu'à quelques années auparavant on ne parlait que de collégialité. Comme vous le savez, selon *Lumen gentium*, les évêques forment un collège qui succède au collège apostolique, ayant comme tête le pontife romain qui lui-même succède au chef du collège apostolique, Pierre. Le collège, dans son intégralité et toujours uni à son chef, détient lui aussi le pouvoir suprême dans l'Église. Selon la Constitution dogmatique, "on est constitué membre du corps épiscopal en vertu de la consécration sacramentelle et par la communion hiérarchique avec la Tête du Collège et avec ses membres"(LG 22).

Dans cette définition, on ne fait pas allusion à la communion des Églises, comme l'aurait souhaité le pionnier du renouveau ecclésiologique, Yves Congar. Écrivant déjà en 1960, le P. Congar

33 À titre d'exemple, outre les nombreuses publications déjà citées, nous pourrions mentionner: DARIO VITALI, *Verso la sinodalità*, Sequela oggi (Magnano: Qiqajon, 2014); ROBERTO REPOLE, *Église synodale et démocratie, Quelles institutions ecclésiales pour aujourd'hui? La part-Dieu*,30, (Paris: Lessius, 2016), (la première édition italienne date certes de 2012, mais un épilogue de l'auteur ajouté à l'édition française tient compte des avancées depuis l'élection du pape François). Pour l'effet du pontificat de François dans les débats autour du Concile Vatican II voir les éléments bibliographiques: Massimo Faggioli, "Vatican II: Bibliographical Survey 2013-2016" dans *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 37 (2016) 675-680.

parle de “collégialité de l’Église”,<sup>34</sup> et dans ses écrits postconciliaires il souligne à différentes reprises qu: “fonder la collégialité dans la réalité de l’Église comme Communion, c’est fonder la collégialité des évêques dans la collégialité des Églises”.<sup>35</sup>

Nous devons au Père Hervé Legrand d’avoir systématiquement relevé et analysé la dissociation entre collégialité des évêques et collégialité des Églises comme une limite conceptuelle fondamentale du texte conciliaire. Selon Legrand, “*Lumen gentium* a accepté une scission assez ruineuse entre le collège des évêques et la communion des Églises”<sup>36</sup> puisque “le concept de collège envisage d’abord le pouvoir d’un groupe de personnes au sein de l’Église universelle, sans l’articuler à la communion des

Églises”.<sup>37</sup> De plus, des interprétations curiales, avec comme exemple représentatif la lettre *Communio notio*, ont poussé à l’extrême une ecclésiologie universaliste, en attribuant une priorité chronologique et ontologique au collège épiscopal et à l’Église universelle. Nous mesurons donc l’importance que le P. Legrand accorde aux gestes et aux paroles du pape François qui se trouvent sous le signe de l’ecclésiologie de communion.

En outre, le document de la Commission Théologique Internationale, *La synodalité dans la vie et dans la mission de l’Église*, semble avoir pris en compte “ce déficit qui affecte la collégialité telle qu’elle a été définie au Concile Vatican II”.<sup>38</sup> Ainsi, la présentation de la notion de collégialité dans le document est accompagnée par des références aux Églises particulières et à la communion.<sup>39</sup>

C’est aussi avec un tel souci et dans une perspective de communion des Églises qu’il

34 Y. CONGAR, “Conclusion” dans B. BOTTE, H. MAROT, et al., *Le Concile et les Conciles...*, 301 (voir 301-314). Notons que J. COLSON, *L’Épiscopat catholique. Collégialité et primauté dans les trois premiers siècles de l’Église*, (Préf. d’YVES M.-J. Congar), *Unam Sanctam* 43 (Paris: Cerf, 1963) 53, parle de “La collégialité ecclésiale chez Irénée”.

35 Y. CONGAR, *Ministères et Communion ecclésiale*, Théologie sans frontière (Paris: Cerf, 1971) 223: issu de texte intitulé “Synode épiscopal, primauté et collégialité épiscopale” publié d’abord en 1969. Dans un autre texte de ce volume (“La collégialité de l’épiscopat et la primauté de l’évêque de Rome dans l’histoire”), brève esquisse historique, Congar, parlant de l’époque avant le IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, note: “Ainsi la collégialité cléricale-épiscopale ne se dissocie pas d’une collégialité des Églises, qui est leur communion profonde: l’unité du corps ou collège des pasteurs correspond à l’unité du troupeau qu’il doit paître (cf. Cyprien, Ep. 68, 3-4 et *De unitate* 5, 1)” (p. 96). L’interprétation du Concile devrait œuvrer dans cette direction. “Le fondement de cette collégialité des Églises qui s’exprime et se renforce dans celle des évêques se trouve dans la théologie de l’Église particulière telle que, fermement esquissée par le Concile, elle se précise et s’enrichit depuis sa clôture”, Y. CONGAR, *Ministères et Communion ecclésiale...*, 223.

36 HERVÉ LEGRAND, “Les évêques, les Églises locales et l’Église entière. Évolutions institutionnelles depuis Vatican II et chantiers actuels de recherche” dans Hervé Legrand et CHRISTOPH THEOBALD (dir.), *Le ministère des évêques au concile Vatican II et depuis, Hommage à Mgr Guy Herbulot*, Théologies (Paris: Cerf, 2001) 208 (voir l’analyse 205-209).

37 HERVÉ LEGRAND, “Collégialité des évêques et communion des Églises dans la réception de Vatican II”, *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 75 (1991) 548.

38 LAURENT VILLEMEN, “Les provinces ecclésiastiques et la théologie de l’Église” dans GILLES ROUTHIER et LAURENT VILLEMEN (sous la dir.), *Nouveaux apprentissages pour l’Église, Mélanges en l’honneur de Hervé Legrand, o.p.* (Paris: Cerf, 2006) 195. Pour une analyse synthétique du problème voir 194-202.

39 Citons un paragraphe de son introduction: “(...) Le concept de collégialité précise le sens théologique et la forme d’exercice du ministère des évêques au service de l’Église particulière qui a été confiée à la sollicitude pastorale de chacun d’entre eux, et de la communion entre les Églises particulières au cœur de l’unique Église universelle du Christ, moyennant la communion hiérarchique du collège des évêques avec l’évêque de Rome. La collégialité est ainsi la forme spécifique sous laquelle la synodalité ecclésiale se manifeste et se réalise à travers le ministère des évêques au niveau de la communion entre les Églises particulières d’une région, et au niveau de la communion entre toutes les Églises dans l’Église universelle. Toute manifestation authentique de synodalité implique, par sa nature, l’exercice du ministère collégial des évêques”. COMMISSION THEOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE, *La synodalité dans la vie et dans la mission de l’Église*, (Paris: Cerf, 2019) n. 7, pp. 22-23. De même, le n. 98, à propos du Concile œcuménique fait aussi ce lien en affirmant que la synodalité ecclésiale s’exprime à travers la synodalité épiscopale.

faut, selon A. Borras, interpréter les dispositions de la Constitution *Episcopalis communio* sur le synode des évêques. D'après lui, le synode des évêques reste un organe au service de primauté pontificale, mais "désormais ce service s'opère non pas à partir *purement et simplement* (du collège) des évêques pour l'Église universelle, mais des Églises particulières dont ils sont les pasteurs dans la communion qui les relie entre elles et le siège de Rome. Ce glissement d'accent mérite d'être relevé. Il suggère un dépassement d'une ecclésiologie universaliste".<sup>40</sup>

Nous nous accordons donc sur le fait que la difficulté principale pour une mise en avant de la synodalité est l'ecclésiologie universaliste. La question que nous voulons poser est la suivante: suffit-il de parler de l'ecclésiologie de communion pour dépasser l'ecclésiologie universaliste? En d'autres termes, est-il suffisant de parler de synodalité pour arriver à une "synodalisation" de l'Église, pour reprendre le néologisme de Borras? Pour répondre à notre question, nous nous tournons d'abord vers la théorie, en revisitant la notion de collégialité et ensuite vers la pratique en considérant successivement le synode des évêques et la réalité locale.

## Collégialité

Les tentatives d'articuler *communio episcoporum* et *communio ecclesiarum* sont à saluer mais il nous semble que cette articulation reste au niveau du langage et que l'on n'en tire pas toutes les conséquences. L'obstacle, selon nous, est la notion de collégialité, qui est en elle-même problématique, et qui ne permet pas une telle articulation. Nous pourrions longuement argumenter sur cette problématique<sup>41</sup> mais nous nous contentons de deux éléments: la base scripturaire de la collégialité et le contexte ecclésiologique de son émergence.

40 A. BORRAS, "La synodalité ecclésiale...", 292.

41 Nous nous permettons d'envoyer le lecteur à notre livre *Collégialité et Synodalité*, et surtout aux chapitres II, IV et aux Conclusions.

## *Les Douze, fondement de la conciliarité ecclésiale*

D'abord, il a été montré que la collégialité apostolique, comme la conçoit aussi *Lumen gentium*, est une construction ou une invention qui ne correspond ni aux données bibliques ni à la tradition.<sup>42</sup> Par ailleurs, la succession du collège épiscopal au collège apostolique, comme F. Chiron l'a aussi remarqué, est une interprétation scripturairement problématique.<sup>43</sup> Selon nous, le problème ecclésiologique est que Vatican II a renversé la signification du "collège apostolique": au lieu de représenter *l'eccllesia*, le rassemblement eschatologique du peuple de Dieu, il a été réduit à l'archétype de la structure hiérarchique de l'Église. Les biblistes et les théologiens soulignent à l'unanimité que la signification de l'institution du groupe des Douze est ecclésiale et eschatologique: le groupe de Douze préfigure et symbolise, au sens le plus fort du mot, *l'Eccllesia*, le nouvel Israël restauré par Jésus. Ainsi, le chef de ce "collège apostolique" étant le Christ et non pas Pierre, il garde toute sa signification seulement du vivant de Jésus.<sup>44</sup> Comme un théologien orthodoxe, P. Nellas, l'a démontré, les Douze, en tant que disciples, sont à l'origine du peuple de Dieu et, en tant qu'apôtres (qui ne sont plus Douze), sont à l'origine des évêques.<sup>45</sup> Dans ce sens, la collégialité apostolique devrait être évoquée dans le deuxième chapitre de *Lumen gentium*, à propos du peuple de Dieu, car la collégialité apostolique

42 RÉGIS BURNET, "La notion d'apostolicité dans les premiers siècles", *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 103 (2015) 185-202. RÉGIS BURNET, *Les Douze Apôtres, Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien, Judaïsme ancien et origines du christianisme* (Turnhout: Brepols 2014).

43 JEAN-FRANÇOIS CHIRON, "Message et communauté: une articulation délicate", *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 103 (2015) 210, n. 21. Aussi, JEAN-FRANÇOIS CHIRON, "Synodalité et ecclésiologie de l'Église universelle", *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 106/3 (2018) 394-399.

44 Pour l'analyse et bibliographie voir A. MILTOS, *Collégialité et Synodalité...*, 265-285.

45 PANAGIOTIS NELLAS, "Collégialité épiscopale: Un problème nouveau?" *Le Messager Orthodoxe*, no 24-25 (1964) 12-21.

fonde la conciliarité ecclésiale, et seulement d'une manière indirecte la synodalité épiscopale.

Cette compréhension ecclésiale du groupe des Douze correspond au caractère communautaire de la succession apostolique, dont chaque évêque est le détenteur par excellence, en tant que celui qui personnifie la communauté. Cet argument biblique met en question une collégialité apostolique réduite au collège des Douze et, à ce titre, considérée comme fondement biblique de la "collégialité épiscopale", dans la mesure où la succession apostolique découlerait uniquement de cet enchaînement entre les deux collèges. En revanche, nous pouvons affirmer que cette "collégialité apostolique" des Douze démontre que les évêques, successeurs des apôtres, et donc leur synodalité épiscopale, ne peuvent exister indépendamment de l'Église locale, réalisation en un lieu de l'Ecclesia que les Douze représentent.

#### *Collégialité, fruit de Vatican I*

Le deuxième élément problématique à souligner à propos du concept de collégialité est son origine. L'idée d'une succession entre le collège des Douze et le corps épiscopal n'est pas née au temps de Vatican II mais de Vatican I. On sait bien que la théorie de collégialité (évidemment sans le terme, absent également de Vatican II) était contenue dans la deuxième Constitution sur l'Église du premier Concile du Vatican, appelé du nom de son rédacteur, le Schéma Kleutgen.<sup>46</sup>

De fait, la constitution *Pastor aeternus*, intitulée "Première Constitution sur l'Église du Christ", devait être suivie par une Seconde qui, à cause du déclenchement de la guerre, ne fut jamais discutée par les pères conciliaires. Le Schéma Kleutgen introduit une analogie entre

d'un côté Pierre et le collège des Apôtres (*collegio apostolorum*), et de l'autre le Pape et les évêques, sans pourtant utiliser le mot "collège" pour les évêques, à cause de sa consonance égalitariste qui ne conviendrait pas, pour les membres de Vatican I, au corps épiscopal. En revanche, à l'époque, l'idée que les apôtres forment un collège était déjà répandue. Ainsi, Kleutgen s'appuie sur le "collège apostolique" pour justifier la participation des évêques au gouvernement de l'Église universelle, en introduisant de même un rapport intrinsèque entre ce collège et l'épiscopat.<sup>47</sup> Un certain parallélisme entre un collège apostolique et un "collège" épiscopal ne devient courant que pendant la période qui sépare les deux Conciles de Vatican.<sup>48</sup> Le schéma enfin adopte la théorie du double sujet, selon laquelle le pouvoir suprême se trouve tant dans le corps des évêques uni à sa tête (le pontife romain) que dans le pape seul.<sup>49</sup> Nous repérons facilement ici les idées principales qui seront reprises par *Lumen gentium* qui cite le Schéma Kleutgen trois fois.<sup>50</sup>

Visant à sauvegarder la primauté papale, avec une insistance que l'on ne trouve ni dans *Pastor aeternus*, Vatican II adopte la collégialité de Vatican I, qui sans aucun doute exprime l'ecclésiologie universaliste. Nous constatons que la perspective de deux premiers chapitres

47 MANSI, 53, col. 310B.

48 Il est très parlant que le P. Guillou, présentant les documents du magistère à ce sujet, ne cite que des documents après Vatican I: MARIE-JOSEPH LE GUILLOU, "Le parallélisme entre le collège apostolique et le Collège épiscopal", *Istina*, 10 (1964) 103-110.

49 MANSI 53, col. 321 B-C. "Cette doctrine, dit-il, est certes délicate, mais elle n'est absolument pas nouvelle et elle est tenue communément (MANSI 53, col. 321 BC). La doctrine du pouvoir suprême du collège des évêques est même tellement sûre aux yeux de Kleutgen qu'il la qualifie de *fidei dogma certissimum*": HERMANN J. POTTMEYER, *Le rôle de la papauté au IIIe millénaire. Une relecture de Vatican I et de Vatican II* (trad. de l'allemand par JOSEPH HOFFMANN), Théologies (Paris: Cerf, 2001) 73-74. Le sujet de l'enseignement infaillible est également dans le Schéma de Kleutgen double: "Le sujet de l'infaillibilité est double, l'épiscopat uni au pontife romain d'une part, et le pontife romain seul, parlant ex cathedra, d'autre part": MANSI, 53, col. 325 A.

50 *Lumen gentium*: 22, 25, 62.

46 Le jésuite Joseph Kleutgen (1811-1883), théologien allemand, a joué un rôle important pour la rédaction de tous les documents de Vatican I. Son schéma de la *Constitutio Secunda 'De Ecclesia Christi'* et aussi sa relation explicative jointe au schéma, publiés tous les deux dans la Collection MANSI seulement en 1927 (53, col. 308 B - 317A), nous donne une image des courants de pensée à l'époque de Vatican I. Voir la présentation que fait JEAN-PIERRE TORRELL, *La Théologie de l'épiscopat au premier Concile du Vatican, Unam Sanctam* 37 (Paris: Cerf, 1961) 247-279.

de *Lumen gentium*, qui est certainement celle de l'ecclésiologie de communion, n'a pas touché la doctrine de la collégialité épiscopale. Par ailleurs, le sens large, voire ecclésial, que Congar avait donné au terme collégialité n'était pas honoré. Par conséquent, il est erroné de dire que la collégialité est une doctrine de Vatican II. En réalité, elle est de Vatican I. C'est pourquoi, sur le fond, Vatican II n'a pas pu équilibrer Vatican I sur ce point, car il se trouve dans la même ligne ecclésiologique. On ne peut pas contrebalancer une chose avec la même chose. Cela peut-être explique aussi les vicissitudes de la réception de la collégialité.

## Le Synode des évêques: un symptôme de l'ecclésiologie universaliste

Nous avons déjà mentionné les évolutions positives à propos de l'institution du Synode des évêques pour un fonctionnement plus synodal. *Episcopalis communio* a valorisé l'écoute et la consultation la plus large possible des fidèles. Nous acceptons volontiers que "Les déplacements d'accents sont des indices d'un passage d'une ecclésiologie universaliste à une théologie de la communion des Églises",<sup>51</sup> comme le dit Borrás. Le problème, selon nous, se situe dans le fait que l'institution du synode des évêques est *en lui-même* un symptôme, voire une expression, de l'ecclésiologie universaliste.

Il vaut la peine de rappeler le *pourquoi* de la création du synode des évêques par le motu proprio de Paul VI *Apostolica Sollicitudo* le 15 septembre 1965.<sup>52</sup> L'histoire de sa création est étroitement liée aux débats du Concile, où la proposition de la constitution d'un organe composé des évêques autour du pape suscita l'intérêt dans le but, comme nous explique G. Alberigo, "de conforter la charge papale...surmontant ainsi l'isolement exacerbé

du pontife, encore accentué depuis Vatican I. (...) Ainsi serait réalisée une instance épiscopale significative qui, toutefois, n'ayant pas de pouvoir délibérant, laisserait irrésolu le problème de la dimension exclusivement personnelle de la fonction papale".<sup>53</sup>

On considérait généralement que cette création "voulait être une première application du principe de la collégialité épiscopale, même si le terme n'était pas utilisé"<sup>54</sup> dans le texte du motu proprio. Toutefois, comme Grootaers l'a montré, cette décision fut une véritable "initiative-surprise" du pape, prise indépendamment du Concile,<sup>55</sup> qui visait non pas à promouvoir la collégialité, mais plutôt à défendre la primauté pontificale, potentiellement menacée par des interprétations de l'institution du Synode. Permettez-moi de citer Grootaers:

Grâce au rapport tardif mais vivant d'un témoin oculaire en la personne de Mgr V. Carbone, nous en savons heureusement davantage aujourd'hui. Alors que le vote final et la promulgation du nouveau schéma "De episcopis" sur la charge des évêques avaient été retardés en novembre 1964, Paul VI était fort préoccupé par le paragraphe 5 (sur le synode) du schéma, qui lui paraissait nettement inacceptable, "pas tellement à cause de son sens littéral mais pour les interprétations que l'on pourrait en donner, comme cela est apparu dans quelques-unes des interventions faites pendant la discussion *in Aula*" (V. CARBONE, *Paolo VI e la collegialità episcopale*, (Brescia: Istituto Paolo VI, 1995) 121). C'était donc parce que le texte de

53 GIUSEPPE ALBERIGO, *Pour la jeunesse du christianisme: le Concile Vatican II 1959-1965*, Histoire (Paris: Cerf, 2005) 94.

54 PHILIPPE CHENAUX, *Le temps de Vatican II, une introduction à l'histoire du Concile*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2012) 89.

55 Selon Grootaers, "Jamais le terme de motu proprio ne fut plus éloquent qu'à cette occasion": J. GROOTAERS, *Heurs et malheurs de la "collégialité"...*, xvi. L'historien soutient qu'il est erroné de croire qu'il y avait une entente entre le pape et la Commission conciliaire qui préparait le schéma sur la charge des évêques, ni un accord avec le Concile. Cette idée a été diffusée par certains historiens et adoptée par un ouvrage de Dupré la Tour (sur le synode des évêques) auquel Grootaers fait le même reproche.

51 A. BORRAS, *Communion ecclésiale et synodalité...*, 194.

52 Voir entre beaucoup d'autres les études à la fois historiques et critiques, très bien argumentées réunies dans le livre de JAN GROOTAERS, *Heurs et malheurs de la "collégialité". Pontificats et Synodes face à la réception de Vatican II*, (préface de BERNARD SESBOÛE, s.j.), (Leuven/Paris: Peeters, 2012) (surtout la deuxième partie qui traite plusieurs Synodes) et A. BORRAS A., "Trois expressions de la synodalité depuis Vatican II...", 658-662.

la Commission conciliaire heurtait le pape que celui-ci décida de promulguer son propre texte à l'insu de cette commission!<sup>56</sup>

La promulgation d'*Apostolica Sollicitudo*, qui annonce un Synode non délibératif et ne fait aucune allusion au principe de la collégialité, a été d'emblée bien accueillie par le Concile "mais quelques jours plus tard, le texte ayant été lu de près, celui-ci occasionna des déceptions".<sup>57</sup> Aussi décevant est caractérisé le fonctionnement de l'institution depuis. B. Sesboüé déplorait en 2012 le fait que cette institution n'a pas porté tous ses fruits.<sup>58</sup> La publication des documents finals en est aussi un exemple. Alors que c'était à l'origine les synodes qui publiaient des documents synodaux, très rapidement, pour des raisons pratiques (meilleure préparation des documents), les résultats sont soumis au pape pour qu'il élabore une exhortation post-synodale. Selon le regretté jésuite, récemment disparu,

"tout est fait pour que le sens de la parole s'inverse: elle ne va plus des évêques au siège de Rome, mais de celui-ci aux évêques et à leurs responsabilités. Le contenu des questions étudiées illustre largement ce propos. Par exemple, le Synode sur les évêques de 2001 n'a jamais évoqué la question des rapports de l'épiscopat et du primat romain

et donc de la collégialité. On peut se demander si les synodes des évêques ne deviennent pas surtout une session de formation permanente des évêques".<sup>59</sup>

*Episcopalis communio* de François n'a essentiellement pas modifié le fonctionnement de l'institution. Le synode a toujours un caractère consultatif, sauf si le pontife romain concède à l'Assemblée un pouvoir délibératif, et les documents finals sont remis au pape qui décide de leur publication (EC 18). Certes, il est vrai que la doctrine de collégialité ne légitime pas un pouvoir délibératif du synode des évêques. Le synode des évêques n'est pas le collège épiscopal et n'est pas un Concile œcuménique et ainsi il ne peut pas avoir le pouvoir des décisions universelles. Ici se révèle toute la problématique de la notion de collégialité.

Pour résumer, le problème fondamental pour nous est le fait qu'au fond, le synode des évêques fonctionne comme un synode diocésain, comme si le pape était un évêque universel. Évidemment personne ne prétend cela formellement. Mais si on réfléchit sur la manière de son organisation, il ressemble plus à une assemblée diocésaine qu'à un Concile épiscopal. Conçu comme un "Conseil épiscopal du primat romain",<sup>60</sup> pour l'aider et consulter pour sa mission, le synode laisse le pape décider seul selon le vieux principe: "il papa decide da solo!"<sup>61</sup>

D'un point de vue orthodoxe, il ne peut pas y avoir un synode des évêques où le vote serait consultatif. Suivant une ecclésiologie

56 J. GROOTAERS, *Heurs et malheurs de la "collégialité"...*, xvi: Voir aussi sur la création du synode: GILLES ROUTHIER, *Vatican II, Herméneutique et réception...*, (Montréal: Fides, 2006) 202-211.

57 J. GROOTAERS, *Heurs et malheurs de la "collégialité"...*, xvii: "Selon le récit des témoins, la lecture du motu proprio suscita d'abord un accueil enthousiaste *in aula*, mais quelques jours plus tard, le texte ayant été lu de près, celui-ci occasionna des déceptions car on réalisa qu'il s'agissait d'un synode non délibératif. L'ambiguïté n'est donc pas absente de la promulgation du texte de Paul VI et de ses commentaires. Parmi les attendus de la décision pontificale, **on ne trouvait aucune allusion au principe de la collégialité épiscopale**, qui cependant s'était trouvée au centre du chapitre III de *Lumen gentium*, Constitution promulguée quelques mois auparavant." (C'est nous qui soulignons).

58 BERNARD SESBOÛÉ, *De quelques aspects de l'Église*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2011)151. De même, J. GROOTAERS *Heurs et malheurs de la "collégialité"...*, 16.

59 BERNARD SESBOÛÉ, "La réception de Vatican II est-elle achevée?" dans JACQUES-NOËL PERES, *La réception de Vatican II. En cinquante ans, quels effets pour les Églises?*, Théologie à l'Université (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2013)145.

60 JEAN-MARIE TILLARD, *L'Église locale, ecclésiologie de communion et catholicité, Cogitatio Fidei* 191 (Paris: Cerf, 1995) 480.

61 Nous puisons ceci chez H. LEGRAND, "Le dogme de la juridiction universelle de l'évêque de Rome", 107. Voir F. JANKOWIAK, "Consistoire après le concile de Trente" et M. ROSA, "Sixte V ou Sixte Quint" dans PHILIPPE LEVILLAIN (sous la dir.), *Dictionnaire de la papauté*, (Paris: Fayard, 1994) 471 et 1593-1595 (respectivement).

eucharistique cohérente, le pouvoir ministériel dans l'Église n'est que sacramentel (la *sacra potestas* dont parle aussi *Lumen gentium* 27).<sup>62</sup> Ainsi, c'est seulement *dans* et *pour* son Église locale qu'un évêque peut décider tout seul. C'est pourquoi un synode diocésain a toujours un caractère consultatif, malgré l'importance ecclésiologique de cette consultation au nom de la conciliarité ecclésiale.<sup>63</sup> En revanche, en dehors de son diocèse l'évêque, en tant que "personnalité corporative" de son Église diocésaine,<sup>64</sup> a toujours un vote, parce qu'il représente une vraie Église. Cela n'annule pas l'autorité d'un primate car celui-ci ne décide jamais seul, mais toujours en synode. En conséquence, si le pape peut décider seul au sein de l'Église dite universelle, cela signifie qu'il est un évêque universel. Il est assez incompréhensible pour un orthodoxe qu'un évêque catholique a droit de vote seulement lorsqu'il est membre d'un Concile œcuménique, mais il perd ce droit en tant que membre d'une Conférence épiscopale ou du Synode des évêques.

En bref: l'ecclésiologie universaliste, comme elle est exprimée par l'idée de la collégialité et appliquée dans le Synode des évêques, ne permet pas un fonctionnement juste de la synodalité épiscopale.

## Obstacle à une réelle synodalité de base

Il faut ajouter que l'universalisme ne porte pas seulement atteinte à la synodalité épiscopale mais il constitue également un obstacle à une

réelle synodalité de base, à savoir à la conciliarité ecclésiale qui se réalise fondamentalement dans l'Église locale. Certains signes universalistes demeurent. Permettez-moi d'en mentionner trois.

On insiste pour appeler le diocèse "Église particulière" et non pas "Église locale". L'enjeu ecclésiologique de cette terminologie a été relevé depuis des années.<sup>65</sup> Nous constatons que la territorialité, principe traditionnel de l'organisation ecclésiale, est de plus en plus mise en question, à propos soit des Églises uniates soit d'une fausse conception d'unité entre des diverses communautés chrétiennes.<sup>66</sup> Le P. Legrand, dans ses écrits, nous a expliqué à maintes reprises pourquoi la territorialité est indispensable pour la catholicité d'une Église locale.<sup>67</sup>

Deuxièmement, dans le document sur la synodalité, la Commission théologique internationale mentionne que la "formule [de Vatican I] selon laquelle les définitions *ex cathedra* du pape sont irréformables" par elles-mêmes et non pas en vertu du consentement de l'Église'

65 Voir GILLES ROUTHIER, "Église locale ou Église particulière: querelle sémantique ou option théologique", *Studia canonica*, 25 (1991) 277-344; JOSEPH KOMONCHAK, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic: The Contemporary Theological Problematic", *The Jurist* 52 (1992) 416-447; LAURENT VILLEMEN, "Le diocèse est-il une Église locale ou une Église particulière? Quel est l'enjeu de ce vocabulaire" dans HERVÉ LEGRAND et CHRISTOPH THEOBALD (sous la dir.), *Le ministère des évêques au concile Vatican II...*, 75-86 et AMPHILOCHIOS MILTOS, "Le Chiese locali e la Chiesa universale", *Il Regno. Documenti*, 58 (2013) 568-576.

66 Voir A. MILTOS, *Collégialité et synodalité...*, 588-598 et 669-670. Aussi, notre article à paraître: "Églises sœurs ou Una Ecclesia? Imaginer l'Église locale après Balamand". Conférence au Colloque organisé par The Louvain Center for Eastern and Oriental Christianity of KU Leuven (LOCEOC) (Leuven 26-28/11/2017) sous le thème "The reception of the Balamand declaration (1993-2018) and current relationships between the Orthodox and Oriental churches and their Catholic Sister Churches".

67 HERVÉ LEGRAND, "La réalisation de l'Église en un lieu" dans BERNARD LAURET et FRANÇOIS REFOULE (sous la dir.), *Initiation à la pratique de la théologie*, t. III: *Dogmatique* 2, (Paris: Cerf, 1983) 143-345; "Inverser Babel, mission de l'Église", *Spiritus* 11 (1970) 323-346; "Un seul évêque par ville", *Irenikon*, 77 (2004) 5-43.

62 Sur cette problématique voir l'étude fondamentale de LAURENT VILLEMEN, *Pouvoir d'ordre et pouvoir de juridiction. Histoire théologique de leur distinction, Cogitatio Fidei* (Paris: Cerf, 2003) 228. Aussi une thèse récente: MARTIN PINET, *La notion de munus au Concile Vatican II et après. Pour une fondation théologique du pouvoir dans l'Église*, (Rome: Lateran University Press, 2021).

63 Voir la remarquable analyse de Borrás, à la fois sur l'investiture sacramentelle du ministère "apostolique" (évêques et prêtres) et sur l'"au-delà du purement consultatif": ALPHONSE BORRÁS, "Évolutions souhaitables en matière de synodalité sur le plan des 'instances intermédiaires'" dans L. BALDISSERI (ed.), *A cinquant'anni dell'Apostolica sollicitudo*, 276-279.

64 Pour cette qualification voir A. MILTOS, *Collégialité et synodalité...*, chap. VII et notamment 484-491 et 521-532.



‘ne rend pas le *consensus Ecclesiae* superflu’<sup>68</sup>. Nous comprenons, comme l’explique un autre document de la Commission intitulé *Le sensus fidei dans la vie de l’Église*, que cette formule visait le gallicanisme. Toutefois, nous nous demandons comment il est possible d’articuler cette position avec le processus ecclésial de *réception* ou avec l’énoncé, déjà mentionné, du *Episcopalis communio* selon lequel le point de départ et d’arrivée de la synodalité est le peuple de Dieu. La question mérite d’être éclairée, et non pas seulement à cause d’une sensibilité orthodoxe.

Enfin, concernant la question de la consultation et de l’écoute des fidèles dans une démarche synodale, elle nous semble également piégée dans une perspective universaliste. Il est sans doute nécessaire et extrêmement important de promouvoir l’écoute et la participation. Nous nous interrogeons pourtant sur la finalité<sup>69</sup> d’une enquête très générale, comme p. ex. celle de la consultation actuelle en vue de du synode de 2023: “comment ce ‘marcher ensemble’ se réalise-t-il aujourd’hui dans votre Église particulière? Quels pas l’Esprit nous invite-t-il à accomplir pour grandir dans notre ‘marcher ensemble’?”.<sup>70</sup> Nous ne sous-estimons pas la question, mais il nous semble problématique de préparer un agenda et ensuite des directives depuis Rome pour tout l’univers sur un tel sujet. Le nouveau processus de consultation, mis en œuvre en vue du synode en 2023, honore les niveaux intermédiaires (conférences épiscopales,

conclusions continentales), mais on reste dans la logique où tout est orienté par et vers le “centre romain”.

Ici apparaît la question fondamentale du rapport entre le local et l’universel, si débattue. Ce serait une erreur d’opposer les deux dimensions, comme aussi de considérer l’une ou l’autre comme secondaire. Il ne faut pas oublier que l’Église une se réalise nécessairement en un lieu et qu’elle existe dans et à partir des Églises locales (LG 23). Comme le remarque Borrás, “Le point de départ est en tout cas l’Église ‘en ce lieu’ – *communio localis* –, c’est à partir de là que l’Église prends corps, mais jamais de manière isolée, car elle s’inscrit dans la communion de toutes les Églises – *communio ecclesiarum* – où la catholicité (s’) enrichit (de) la catholicité des autres”.<sup>71</sup> Dans un tel processus “ecclésiogénétique”, l’ecclésiologie doit inclure les sujets concrets de “cette dynamique qui engendre l’*ecclesia*”.<sup>72</sup> Permettez-moi de citer Joseph Komonchak,

“Thus the formal principle of the Church’s genesis includes not only the gifts of God but also the freedom of men and women with which they receive them. When the human subjects of the Church’s realization are introduced into ecclesiology, the focus shifts to include also the local communities in which alone the Church is realized, since human freedom is never realized except in particular individuals and communities and as a moment in their historical self-projects”.<sup>73</sup>

Dans cette perspective, l’ecclésiologie est appelée à explorer “not simply what it means to be the Church in general, but what it means to be the *one Church locally*, here and now, in response to specific challenges and opportunities”.<sup>74</sup>

68 COMMISSION THEOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE, *La synodalité dans la vie...*, 53-54.

69 Nous nous partageons les remarques D’A. BORRAS, “La synodalité ecclésiale...”, 297-298.

70 Document préparatoire, n. 26, texte sur *synod. va*, consulté le 4 octobre 2021. Il nous semble que cette question a du sens en vue d’un Synode diocésain qui vise à promouvoir l’esprit synodal et ecclésial. La manière pratique que cet esprit (qui doit exister partout, à savoir dans l’Église de chaque lieu) est exprimée diffère légitimement dans un diocèse en Europe, en Afrique ou en Asie. Nous nous demandons alors quel profit pourrait tirer d’une telle consultation le synode “universel” des évêques valable à l’échelle universelle, sinon ce qui est déjà évident, c’est-à-dire que l’Église est par nature synodale.

71 A. BORRAS, “La synodalité ecclésiale...”, 295.

72 *Ibid.*

73 JOSEPH KOMONCHAK, “The Local Church and the Church Catholic...”, 447.

74 *Ibid.*

## Les attentes: d'une synodalité anodine à une synodalité qui coûte

Au terme de notre exposé et en guise de conclusion, il convient d'exprimer nos attentes pour la suite du développement de la synodalité au sein de l'Église catholique. En récapitulant nos points principaux, nous formulons nos espoirs pour l'avenir d'abord sur le versant ecclésiologique et ensuite sur le versant pratique, en suivant la tripartition des niveaux de l'organisation ecclésiale (local, régional, universel), déjà devenue classique.

Nous avons salué les promesses que la "nouvelle ecclésiologie" du pape François a exprimé par des prises de positions et des gestes. De fait, il ne s'agit d'une "nouvelle ecclésiologie", mais d'une version de l'ecclésiologie prédominante en contexte œcuménique, l'ecclésiologie de communion. Nous considérons que ce qui est à la fois le principal apport et la principale promesse de cette orientation donnée par l'évêque de Rome est l'inscription du sujet de la synodalité dans l'agenda de la recherche théologique et notamment du dialogue ecclésial. Ce processus qui vient de commencer donnera certainement de fruit à court ou à long terme.

Nous attendons au niveau théologique ce que grand nombre des ecclésiologues catholiques souhaitent, à savoir "le dépassement d'une ecclésiologie universaliste" qui ruine aussi bien la synodalité épiscopale que la conciliarité ecclésiale. Dépasser l'ecclésiologie universaliste ne signifie pas nier la dimension universelle de l'Église. Nous sommes tous d'accord, me semble-t-il, que par "universalisme" nous entendons l'attribution, d'une manière ou d'une autre, de la priorité à l'Église dite universelle, opposée à l'Église dite particulière, ce qui conduit inévitablement à considérer la seconde comme partie d'un tout et donc de nier la véritable catholicité d'une Église en un lieu, qu'il vaut mieux alors appeler "locale". L'Église universelle ne constitue pas "un être de raison",<sup>75</sup> selon les mots de Lubac. Il s'agit de

l'Église tout entière, de l'Église une et unique, la *Catholica*. Comme le souligne Komonchak, "l'Église universelle ne transcende pas la communion des Églises locales: elle est cette communion. (...) Les énoncés sur l'Église universelle ne sont vraies que dans la mesure où elles sont vérifiées dans les Églises locales".<sup>76</sup> Il faut approfondir la simultanété et l'intériorité mutuelle entre l'Église une et les Églises locales. Dès lors, parler de l'Église locale signifie automatiquement parler de l'Église une, même si évidemment et certainement une Église locale n'est pas toute l'Église. Unité et pluralité sont réciproquement constitutives, simultanées et interdépendantes.<sup>77</sup>

C'est ainsi que l'ecclésiologie de communion définit le rapport entre l'Église entière et les Églises locales. En revanche, l'ecclésiologie universaliste se trouve aux antipodes: elle présuppose ou sous-entend une opposition et appelle à une priorité. C'est pourquoi nous ne pouvons pas compléter l'ecclésiologie universaliste avec l'ecclésiologie de communion. Elles sont foncièrement incompatibles.<sup>78</sup>

Nous avons identifié des symptômes de l'ecclésiologie universaliste qui persistent dans la théologie catholique. Certes, nous reconnaissons le changement des accents vers une ecclésiologie de communion. Par exemple, la Commission Théologique Internationale, dans son document, affirme en renvoyant à *Lumen gentium* (23), que "l'importance des conférences épiscopales pour promouvoir le chemin synodal du Peuple de Dieu réside dans le fait que 'chaque évêque représente son Église'".<sup>79</sup> Une telle vision cependant achoppe au concept de collégialité. Pour cette raison, il faut réviser, voire *abandonner*, le concept de collégialité, d'abord parce que, comme le remarque Chiron,

76 J. KOMONCHAK, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic ...", 433.

77 Voir les articles de J. ZIZIOLAS, "Le mystère de l'Église" et "Christologie, pneumatologie" dans *L'Église et ses institutions...*, 20-21 et 101-102 respectivement.

78 Pour plus d'arguments sur cette thèse voir A. MILTOS, *Collégialité et synodalité...*, 663-668.

79 COMMISSION THÉOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE, *La synodalité dans la vie ...*, n. 90, p. 103.

75 HENRI DE LUBAC, *Les églises particulières dans l'Église universelle*, Intelligence de la foi 4 (Paris: Aubier Montagne, 1971) 54.

“une perspective qui part du ‘collège’ est d’emblée universaliste”.<sup>80</sup> Mais il ne s’agit pas seulement de la question du point de départ, comme disait Ratzinger dans son commentaire sur la collégialité,<sup>81</sup> au lendemain de Vatican II. Toute la théorie d’un collège épiscopal qui succède au collège apostolique, doctrine rejetée par les orthodoxes à l’époque du Concile comme non traditionnelle, est par définition universaliste. On ne peut pas marier collégialité et synodalité épiscopale, comme on ne peut pas tenir ensemble ecclésiologie universaliste et ecclésiologie de communion. Pratiquement, l’ecclésiologie de communion signifie une corrélation ou interdépendance entre Église entière et diocèses, entre primat et membres du synode, entre pape, primat et les autres évêques. Le P. John Meyendorff, pendant le Concile, écrivait: “Si la définition finale de Vatican II proclamait, sous quelque forme que se soit, ce principe d’interdépendance, un pas réel et important sera franchi sur la voie de l’union chrétienne. Mais ni le discours du pape, ni les textes actuellement en discussion, ne suggèrent qu’une telle définition est aujourd’hui possible”.<sup>82</sup> Ce qui, à l’époque, était “hors contexte”<sup>83</sup>, nous semble possible aujourd’hui, grâce à la synodalité et à l’ecclésiologie de communion.

Si donc, d’après la déclaration prophétique de François, la synodalité est le chemin pour 3<sup>e</sup> millénaire, cela signifie une conversion pratique, à l’échelle locale, régionale et universelle, qui récuse l’ecclésiologie universaliste.

Le niveau local, à savoir celui du diocèse (ou même sous conditions de paroisse), est, à nos yeux, le plus réussi par rapport à la mise en pratique de la synodalité. La théologie du peuple de Dieu, ou

une théologie du laïc, de Vatican II est plus ou moins bien reçue au sein de l’Église catholique et a contribué non seulement au développement d’une théologie de synodalité locale, mais aussi à une pratique. Ainsi, l’institution du synode diocésain est une application admirable de la synodalité, que l’Église orthodoxe devrait adopter. Bien sûr, il faudra encore généraliser ou améliorer les pratiques (p. ex. une minorité des diocèses ont célébré un synode diocésain, le fonctionnement du Conseil presbytéral ou du Conseil pastoral reste à améliorer etc), mais l’idée, la doctrine et même la pratique synodale locale sont déjà des acquis.

En revanche, le niveau le plus problématique reste le niveau régional. Si on tient vraiment à ce qu’une décentralisation romaine salutaire se réalise, il faut sortir des bipartitions comme Église universelle-Église particulière ou pape-évêques. L’histoire a connu ce qu’on appelle aujourd’hui une Église *polycentrique* ou *polyédrique* avec “des instances intermédiaires”!<sup>84</sup> L’organisation régionale n’est pas inexistante aujourd’hui dans l’Église catholique. Il faut juste lui reconnaître sa vraie valeur. La doctrine de la collégialité nous a enfermés dans des débats sans issue sur l’*affectus collegialis* et la collégialité effective ou au sens strict; sur la question de savoir si les Conférences des évêques sont des regroupements d’Églises ou des assemblées d’évêques; sur le rapport entre les Conciles particuliers et les Conférences<sup>85</sup>. Si on croit au fait que, comme nous a rappelé la Commission Théologique à la suite de *Lumen gentium*, “l’évêque représente son Église” (selon nos termes, il est la “personnalité corporative” de sa communauté eucharistique), alors un évêque garde toujours cette qualité à toutes les assemblées

80 J.-FR. CHIRON, “Synodalité et ecclésiologie de l’Église universelle...”, 399.

81 JOSEPH RATZINGER, “La collégialité épiscopale. Développement théologique” dans GUILHERME BARAUNA (sous la dir.), *L’Église de Vatican II*, t. III, *Unam Sanctam* 51c (Paris: Cerf, 1966) 775-778.

82 JEAN MEYENDORFF, “Papauté et Collégialité”, *Le Messenger Orthodoxe*, no 24-25 (1964) 6.

83 JEAN MEYENDORFF, “Vatican II” dans *Orthodoxie et Catholicité*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965) 151.

84 A. BORRAS, “Évolutions souhaitables...”, 294 et *id.* “La synodalité ecclésiale...”, 299. Il renvoie à l’ouvrage collectif sous la dir. de M. LAMBERIGTS, *Cinquante ans après le Concile Vatican II. Des théologiens du monde délibèrent*, (Paris/Rome, Libreria vaticana, 2015), et en l’occurrence 91-98 (“Une Église polycentrique, témoin et signe d’unité dans la diversité”).

85 Malgré les efforts positifs de clarifier les débats (voir A. BORRAS, “Évolutions souhaitables...”, 284-293), l’impasse reste.

en dehors de son diocèse. Sinon, comme le disait le P. Sesboüé: "il apparaît paradoxal que des évêques, qui ont à titre personnel une autorité magistérielle, la perdent dès qu'ils se rencontrent pour se concerter au nom de la collégialité, ce qui contredirait toute la pratique ancienne des synodes régionaux".<sup>86</sup>

Notre attente pour le niveau régional est l'évolution des Conférences épiscopales en synodes régionaux autour d'un primat, avec une certaine autonomie, exerçant, comme le veut le Code de 1983 (c. 753) "un magistère authentique". De même, pourrait-on aussi imaginer des assemblées continentales d'évêques fonctionnant à l'instar des anciennes Églises patriarcales? Il n'est pas question d'imposer le modèle oriental à l'Église catholique. Cette dernière a sa propre tradition qui peut inspirer des formes d'institutions synodales. Or, afin que la synodalité régionale fonctionne, on a aussi besoin d'une primauté régionale, comme jadis les archevêques-métropolitains. La primauté ne peut pas être individuelle, mais elle doit appartenir à une Église. Dès lors, le président de la Conférence épiscopale ne serait pas élu, mais serait alors l'évêque de l'Église primatiale.

Je m'interroge sur la peur diffuse que l'on a des Conférences épiscopales. Peut-être que la mémoire des vieux problèmes du conciliarisme et du gallicanisme marque encore les esprits. De plus, les relations entre les Églises territoriales/autocéphales au sein de l'Église orthodoxe ne donnent pas un modèle exemplaire. La peur des nationalismes n'est pas inexistante. Quoi qu'il en soit, bien qu'une centralisation facilite le gouvernement, notre ecclésiologie commune appelle au chemin difficile, à savoir celui de la synodalité. Le remède aux risques mentionnés est une primauté bien comprise.

Nous arrivons ainsi au niveau universel et à la primauté romaine. L'attente orthodoxe ici est de voir une primauté universelle conditionnée par une synodalité universelle. Cela ne signifie pas d'institutionnaliser le Concile œcuménique.

Il y a des formes institutionnelles qui peuvent assurer que le pape est entouré des autres primats régionaux pour exercer son ministère spécifique.<sup>87</sup> L'institution du Synode des évêques est une de ces formes, mais à deux conditions: 1) que sa composition respectera l'organisation régionale (en effet un évêque se réfère d'abord à son synode régional et, à travers lui, il aura accès au primat universel<sup>88</sup>) et 2) les évêques auront un vote délibératif. On répète constamment que les évêques sont *cum* et *sub Petro*, mais nous nous demandons si la communion avec le primat universel devait être considérée comme une certaine *soumission*. Pourquoi le *cum* n'est pas suffisant? Pourrait-on rêver de voir un jour une primauté papale, qui ne permet pas l'image d'un monarque absolu mais qui, en revanche, serait dépendant de la synodalité?

Pour terminer, la redécouverte de la synodalité est vraiment un *kairos*, un don de Dieu, tant pour chacune de nos Églises que pour notre rapprochement. Le cadre de mon sujet ne m'a pas offert la possibilité de faire notre autocritique, car souvent l'Église orthodoxe ne pratique pas l'ecclésiologie qu'Elle professe. Si synodalité signifie marcher ensemble, la synodalité est à la fois la voie et le but de notre dialogue. Nous devons travailler ensemble pour avancer vers une véritable synodalité à tous les niveaux de la vie ecclésiale. Parler de la synodalité dans l'Église locale est une chose, permettez-moi de le dire, anodine. Mettre en œuvre une synodalité à l'échelle régionale et universelle a un prix! Si l'ecclésiologie de communion nous guide, le Seigneur fera route avec nous!

87 L'Église orthodoxe, depuis le début du ministère patriarcal de Bartholomée (1991), connaît une nouvelle institution, celle de *Synaxe*, Assemblée, des primats des Églises autocéphales, convoquée par le primat universel, le patriarche œcuménique.

88 Cela ne signifie pas d'établir la Conférence comme une interposition entre les évêques et le saint Siège, selon un axe vertical, mais de respecter les principes fondamentaux de l'institution synodale où un évêque rends compte à son synode dont il est membre.

86 B. SESBOÛÉ, *De quelques aspects de l'Église...*, 149.



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Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 14 October 2021

Professor of Canon Law at the Faculty of Catholic Theology,  
University of Erfurt, Germany, member of the Faith & Order Commission,  
member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, and Consultor to the Synod of Bishops

## “The Church of God is Convoled in Synod” Theological and Canonical Challenges Concerning the 2021-2023 Synod

“The Church of God is convoled in Synod.”<sup>1</sup> These are the opening words of the Preparatory Document of the 2021-2023 Synod on synodality,<sup>2</sup> which is formally entitled: “For a Synodal Church. Communion – Participation – Mission.”<sup>3</sup> On October 10, 2021 pope Francis solemnly inaugurated the synod for the entire church and a week later the synodal process began in the local churches when bishops in their own dioceses around the world celebrated its opening. For two years the church will engage in a process of consultations in dioceses, episcopal conferences and continental structures. Subsequently, a “fundamental *stage* will be the celebration of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023, which will be followed by the implementation phase that will again involve the particular churches (cf. EC, arts. 9-21)” (PD *Synod 2021-2023*, nr. 1).

While commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the synod of bishops in 2015, pope Francis had already underscored that synodality would be an important topic for the church: “What the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present

1 The current study finds its origin in a lecture presented at a symposium on Synodality organized by and held at the Centro pro Unione in Rome on October 14, 2021. The lecture was entitled “Walking Together in Discerning the Holy Spirit: Theological and Canonical Possibilities, Opportunities and Challenges.”

2 SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD, *Synod 2021-2023. For a Synodal Church. Communion – Participation – Mission*, (Rome: Synod of Bishops, 2021). <https://bit.ly/35fRCrC> URL Retrieved: 15 February 2022. Hereafter PD *Synod 2021-2023*.

3 On March 7, 2020 the subject of the synod was formally announced. Press Release of the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 07.03.2020. <https://bit.ly/3s67hmd> URL Retrieved: 21 October 2021

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in the very word ‘Synod.’ Journeying together – laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome – is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice.”<sup>4</sup> After some initial comments, the current study offers some reflections on theological and canonical challenges that the synod on synodality poses.

### 1 - General Observations

“The Church of God is convoled in Synod”. The introduction to this study reveals already three unique points that warrant a further theological reflection: **First**, the documents speak about a synod in which the whole church is engaged: it is not just a synod of bishops. **Secondly**, the process reveals a unique implementation of the doctrine that the church exists in and from the local churches (*in quibus et ex quibus* - LG 23). It is not a one way direction. **Thirdly**, the process envisions an implementation phase of the synod. These three points deserve attention, but before doing so, a few more general comments are in place.

4 POPE FRANCIS, Address “Ceremony Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops” delivered on October 17, 2015. <https://bit.ly/3LOe7V5> URL Retrieved 21 October 2021

### 1.1 A Conversion towards being Synodal

What lies ahead is rather unique: the task of the current synod is at the same time the resource: the object is at the same time the method. All are invited to experience – and not just to understand – synodality so that a conversion from a hierarchical to a synodal church can occur. The conversion that is asked for implies a new internal disposition of how different protagonists in the church discern and decide. It is a conversion that will lead to a change in the way the people of God, which includes bishops, priests and laity, interact with each other. Hence, the church convoked in synod may reap some of the fruits of a synodal conversion as all engage in experiencing it, reflecting upon it and sharing what they have learned. The intention is that this will enlighten all in grasping what it means to be a more synodal church. The hope is that the synod will assist each and every baptized person – which again includes the bishops and the other clergy – to discover more deeply the meaning of baptism. As pope Francis put it during a day of reflection before the opening of the synod: “In the Church, everything starts with baptism. Baptism, the source of our life, gives rise to the equal dignity of the children of God, albeit in the diversity of ministries and charisms. Consequently, all the baptized are called to take part in the Church’s life and mission. [...] Enabling everyone to participate is an essential ecclesial duty! All the baptized, for baptism is our identity card.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed baptism calls each person to experience and live communion, participate more fully in the life of the church and engage more deeply in the missionary task that each baptized as an individual enjoys and that the community as such has.

To be a more synodal church is a prerequisite for discerning the working of the Holy Spirit for and in our time. As pope Francis puts it: “It is precisely this path of synodality

which God expects of the Church in the third millennium”. (PD *Synod 2021-2023*, nr. 2)

As the church walks that journey it takes another step in the reception of the Second Vatican Council. This step gives a particular shape to the doctrines that find expression in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* chapter II entitled “The People of God” and in the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, *Dei Verbum*. Key words in this area are baptism, People of God, *sensus fidelium*, Holy Spirit. This study will attend to some of these aspects.

The synod for the entire church, which begins in the local churches – whether they belong to the Latin church or to one of the 23 Eastern churches *sui iuris* – provides an occasion to discern together and offer valuable elements with regard to the strengths and achievements as well as the limitations and challenges of being a synodal church.

Hence, the first step consists of the local churches as communities of faithful, journeying together under the guidance of their diocesan bishops, by listening to and sharing their experiences of what it means to be a synodal church.

Theologically one can say that there is a hope that the – at times too exclusive – christological foundation of exercising leadership in the church will be complemented by an increased pneumatological one.

The main question for the first stage of the synod in this process is: How do we encounter the Holy Spirit guiding the Church as it journeys to fulfill its unique mission to proclaim the Good News as we live here and now? Indeed the purpose of the synodal process is ultimately not a mere inward looking, but the consultation occurs in view of being more deeply the church of Christ so as to live communion, achieve participation in order to proclaim with integrity and effectively the Gospel, that is, be a missionary church. Such a task cannot be envisioned without an ecumenical dimension: the commitment of the Second Vatican Council to the restoration of Christian unity, which saint John Paul II qualified

<sup>5</sup> FRANCIS, Address for the Opening of the Synod on October 9, 2021. See <https://bit.ly/3sXVdCC> URL Retrieved: 21 October 2021

as “irrevocable”,<sup>6</sup> implies that all reflections, processes and actions must occur while keeping in mind the implications for bringing about the unity of the church of Christ. Ecumenism does not come as an add-on, but needs to be an integral part of what we think, say and do.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Synod and Synodality

Synod and Synodality: the two terms might cause some confusion. Whereas synod presupposes synodality, synodality itself is not limited to holding synods. Synods are one form or expression among many others to practise synodality. Being a synodal church finds also expression through consultation and participation

6 Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, AAS 87 (1993) 921-982, nr. 3. For canon law there is a double task: On the one hand there are the specific issues that relate to e.g. ecumenical gatherings and sacramental sharing. The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity in 1993 issued *Ecumenical Directory* [AAS 85 (1993) 1039-1119] and in 2020, issued an Ecumenical Vademecum *The Bishop and Christian Unity* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice, 2020) attend to many of these topics. On a different level lie the ecclesiological issues such as the responsibilities that flow from the petrine ministry, the canonical “translation” of the theological understanding of the relationship between the bishop of Rome and the college of bishops, or between the bishop of Rome and the diocesan bishops, the interaction of the bishops and the role of laity, that is, the composition and decision making instances in e.g. synodal structures in specific canonical norms. Norms in these areas can be conducive to the restoration of unity, but could also impede them. Hence, a need for canon lawyers to evaluate them regularly in particular in light of progress made in the ecumenical dialogues. For further reflections see MYRIAM WIJLENS, “‘That All May be One...’ (John 17:21). The Lord’s Prayer in the Work of Canon Lawyers: A Mere Option?” *The Jurist* 65 (2005) 181-204.

7 See also Francis: “If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us. To give but one example, in the dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, we Catholics have the opportunity to learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and their experience of synodality. Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us ever more fully into truth and goodness.” FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation, “*Evangelium Gaudium*,” Nr. 246. <https://bit.ly/3BA89ma> URL Retrieved: 21 October 2021

in discerning processes as they occur, for example, in presbyteral councils as well as in diocesan and parish councils, in diocesan synods as well as in plenary and particular councils, in chapters of religious institutes. However, being and acting synodal goes beyond formal structures: it involves encountering, listening, discerning, deciding. Indeed, it is engaging together in encountering the working of the Holy Spirit and the other by listening to the Word of God and sharing the experience that comes with it. This is followed by discerning together when all reflect and grasp the experience in light of reading the signs of the times: It means discerning what the Holy Spirit asks from the community here and now. Finally, the ecclesologically competent authority takes a decision. Synodality in its deepest sense is, therefore, not about structures, but refers to an internal disposition of how Christians together interact with each other while arriving at a decision. Structures and institutions facilitate the necessary processes to achieve the goal. If they are to facilitate, it means that a regular evaluation of them would be appropriate. For example, are they providing optimal results in light of new theological insights on the one hand and available resources in this place at this time in history on the other hand? Adaptations might be necessary.<sup>8</sup> There are thus different articulations of synodality:

1. The *style*: this is the *modus vivendi* and *operandi* with which the people of God live and work. It touches on an internal disposition.
2. The *structures and processes* governed by theology and canon law which are to facilitate listening and discerning. As a canon lawyer, it is necessary to articulate a caution: No matter how well these institutions are governed by law,

8 There is probably no institution in the church that, over the course of history, has not seen developments and adaptations in its canonical provisions due to new theological insights as well as an awareness that sociological and cultural aspects in as much as financial and personnel resources called for revisions and at times saw new institutions established (e.g. episcopal conferences after 1830). Since Vatican II the Synod of Bishops itself as well as e.g. the Roman Curia saw revisions.



even if they are obligatory, if there is no internal disposition to bring synodality to life through them, it will not work. In extreme situations one might even be deceived, when, for example, the name of the institution suggests a synodal entity, but in reality there is little synodal interaction. Such would be the case when a bishop e.g. merely informs the presbyteral council what he has already decided on instead of truly engaging in listening to and discerning with the council beforehand.

3. The specific *synodal events* convoked by the competent authority involving all to discern the way forward.<sup>9</sup>

The Preparatory Document for the 2021-2023 Synod recalls that the “journeying together” can be understood from two perspectives that are interconnected:

1. The first concerns the internal life of the churches: it is between all faithful: laity-clergy- religious and the pastors. It also has an ecumenical dimension, because we share in the gift of baptism.
2. The second considers journeying together with the whole human family. It focuses on relations with people of other religions, with people who are distant from the faith and with people of specific social environments and groups (the world of culture, economics, finance) as well as the poor and the excluded.<sup>10</sup>

Before attending to some of the theological and canonical issues it is possible to present a bit of the flavor and atmosphere of the process that lies ahead. In order to facilitate the listening and consultative process, the Preparatory Document presents ten thematic nuclei that articulate different aspects of synodality. They present topics that the people of God in the local

churches can address. However, the document explicitly mentions that there is a need to adapt the topics to the local circumstances. Expressing such a consideration is a direct implementation of Vatican II’s attention for the necessity to attend to the local context and inculturation allowing for the church to be truly catholic (cf. *LG 13* and *AG 22*).<sup>11</sup> The questions have headings with proposed sub questions:

1. *Journeying Companions*: Who are we as a church? Who is the “we” and who is not included in this? How do we listen and with what kind of attitude and prejudices? For example with regard to youth, women, minorities?
2. *Listening*: to whom do we listen? How do we identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder a true listening?
3. *Speaking out*: All are invited to speak: but what kind of style of communication do we have? Do we allow all to speak up freely and with courage?
4. *Celebrating*: Journeying together is only possible when it is based on communal listening to the Word and celebrating the Eucharist. How do prayer and liturgical celebrations inspire and direct the journey and decisions making?
5. *Co-responsible in the mission*: All are responsible for the mission of the church: how is each baptized person called to be a protagonist in this? How are people supported by the community when they e.g. engage in science, politics, care for creation?
6. *Dialogue in Church and Society*: What modes of dialogue do we have? How do we handle divisions and divergences? How do we dialogue e.g. with neighboring dioceses,

9 Cf. the 2018 document of the INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, nr. 70. <https://bit.ly/3LLBCyd> URL Retrieved: 21 October 2021

10 PD Synod on Synodality, nr.28-29.

11 With adaptations to local circumstances the topic of balancing and securing unity and diversity arises. The “Peter and Paul Seminar”, an international research group composed of theologians and canon lawyers, addressed the topic in an academic conference entitled “Diversity and Unity: Rethinking the Teaching Office of the Episcopal Conference in a Worldwide Church”. The thirteen contributions are published in *Studia canonica* 53 (2019) 7-331.

ecclesial movements and religious institutes? With other religions and non-believers?

7. *With the other Christian Denominations:* Who are the other Christians with whom we live in the same territory and what relation do we have with them? What fruits and difficulties came to the fore in “journeying together”?

8. *Authority and Participation:* A synodal church is participatory and co-responsible. How does the community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to achieve them and the steps to be taken? How is authority being exercised? How do team work and co-responsibility unfold? How are lay ministries and the assumption of the responsibility of the faithful promoted? How do synodal bodies at the local level function?

9. *Discerning and Deciding:* What procedures and methods are used to make decisions while listening to the Holy Spirit? How is participation in decisions making within hierarchically structured communities promoted? How is the consultative phase with the deliberative one articulated? (decision making and taking). How and with what tools are transparency and accountability promoted?

10. *Formation in synodality.* Formation is almost a prerequisite for the above: What formation is available so that people can live the practice of journeying together, of listening, of discerning? In other words: what formation for discernment and exercising authority is offered?<sup>12</sup>

The first phase of the Synod is a consultation in the local churches in which experience, listening and discerning of all faithful under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are central in view of the mission of the Church. To assist the churches in this process the Secretariat of the Synod published a Handbook (*Vademecum*).<sup>13</sup>

12 PD *Synod 2021-2023*, nr. 30.

13 SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality* (Vatican: Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, 2021) <https://bit.ly/3I9zYEf> URL Retrieved: 14 November 2021. Hereafter *Vademecum*.

## 2. - Theological and Canonical Challenges

The synodal process does warrant some serious theological reflections that have canonical implications and present some challenges. Some of them would need and benefit from a fruitful exchange and cooperation of theologians and canon lawyers, because the one discipline will not be able to solve the issues without the other. For all topics listed below separate research groups should really be organized. In the context of this study, it will only be possible to hint at the questions that such seminars might address.

### 2.1. Synod of the entire church and the synod of bishops

“The Church of God is convoked in Synod”. These are the first words of the Preparatory Document (PD *Synod 2021-2023*, nr 1). Pope Francis opened the Synod on October 10, 2021. The question arises: is this the Synod of bishops convoked for 2023? No. “The synodal process is no longer only an assembly of bishops, but a journey for all faithful, in which every local church has an integral part to play. The Second Vatican Council reinvigorated the sense that all the baptized, but the hierarchy and the laity, are called to be active participants in the saving mission of the Church (LG 32-33)” (*Vademecum* 1.3). The new understanding of the synod manifests itself in its logo which shows men, women, children, and physically challenged people journeying together with in the midst of them a bishop. It has as subtitle: “Synod 2021-2023”. The synod gives expression to some fundamental changes brought about by Vatican II. In order to understand and appreciate these changes, it is necessary to return to Vatican II. In particular two major aspects need attention: the ecclesiological reconfiguration in the dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen gentium* (LG) and the new understanding of revelation as expressed in particular in the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, *Dei Verbum* (DV).

#### 2.1.1 An Ecclesiological Reconfiguration of People of God and Hierarchy

The ecclesiological changes in Vatican II cannot be fully appreciated without attending

to Vatican I first. The latter council had attended to the papacy in particular. Due to the war in Europe the council had to be closed before it had been possible to attend to the relationship between the pope and the bishops as well as between the pope and the college of bishops. The subject concerned both so-called papal dogmas: primacy of jurisdiction and infallibility. Vatican II attended to these questions and did so in what ultimately was going to be Chapter III of *Lumen gentium* entitled "The Hierarchy". This chapter clarifies that bishops become members of the college of bishops by ordination and being in hierarchical communion. (The relationship between a bishop and the local church was not developed, which causes problems later on). The chapter also clarified that the pope alone as well as the college of bishops with the pope, but not without him, holds supreme authority in the church. It can teach infallibly. Furthermore, the council teaches that the diocesan bishop is vicar of Christ for the diocese entrusted to his care (LG 26); he is not the vicar of the pope. The council was able to develop these thoughts because it took recourse to what is called the theology of the doctrine of collegiality of bishops and puts this in relationship to the doctrine on the papacy, or more recently – in ecumenical circles – also referred to as the doctrine on the petrine ministry.<sup>14</sup>

Besides these doctrinal clarifications the bishops – including the pope – gathered in council at Vatican II experienced how beneficial it was for the pope himself, for the other bishops as well as for the church at large to meet in person, listen to each other, and obtain firsthand information. It enabled them to become aware of the richness and challenges, the diversity and unity of the church in all corners of the world. Not only did they ask

that the Roman Curia be internationalized, they also felt that regular meetings of the bishops from around the world would be beneficial. It would allow for the exchange of firsthand information on specific issues and find solutions in common deliberation. Yet, the bishops were also aware that it would be impossible for all to gather regularly. The doctrine of collegiality of bishops as well as the experience together led to the idea that a representation of the college of bishops could meet regularly with the pope. Yet, not all were so sure as to what powers this body should be given: deliberative or merely consultative. Some were indeed afraid that such a body might diminish the powers of the pope. Possibly, in order to prevent further discussions, pope Paul VI decided to create a new institution which he called Synod of Bishops. He did so on September 15, 1965 just one day after opening the fourth and final session of the council.

The composition of this body is such that indeed membership in the college of bishops seem to be the (only) requirement.<sup>15</sup> The episcopal conferences elect some bishops from their territory and the number depends on the size of the episcopal conference. The conference is thus used as a vehicle to secure a certain form of representation – in the sense of geographical dispersion – of the college of bishops. Those elected do not have to be diocesan bishops, but

14 Attention to the language used is of great relevance to find ecumenically a way forward. Pope John Paul II invited leaders and theologians of other churches to assist him finding a way forward so that the ministry of primacy that he holds as the "bishop of Rome" can be accepted. See JOHN PAUL II, *Ut unum sint*, nr. 95-96. See in this regard also e.g. GROUP OF FARFA SABINA, *Communion of Churches and Petrine Ministry: Lutheran Catholic Convergences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014) 127pp.

15 The first norms of 1965 state: "Synodus Episcoporum, qua Episcopi selecti e diversis orbis regionibus supremo Ecclesiae Pastori validiorem praestantia diu tricem operam, ita constituitur, ut sit: a) institutum ecclesiasticum centrale; b) partes agens totius catholici Episcopatus ..." PAUL VI, *Motu proprio Apostolica sollicitudo*, AAS 57(1965) 775-780, here 776. In English translation: "The Synod of Bishops, whereby bishops chosen from various parts of the world are to offer more effective assistance to the supreme Shepherd, is to be constituted in such a way that it is a) a central ecclesiastical institution; b) representing the whole Catholic episcopate...". English translation: "A New World Synod of Bishops", *The Pope Speaks* 10 (1965) 340.

can be titular bishops or retired bishops.<sup>16</sup> Indeed from its onset the bishops gathered in synod do not participate as diocesan bishops. In conclusion, one can see that the synod of bishops thus came about to give expression to the doctrine on the relationship between the pope and the bishops (as members of the college of bishops). It was not conceived as an institution that would give expression to the doctrine of the relationship between the local churches and the entire church nor to the doctrine on the people of God.

However, Vatican II also made another decision. The council fathers very consciously decided that in the draft of *Lumen gentium* in which there were different chapters on the hierarchy, the laity and the religious, a new chapter should be inserted that would find expression what all have in common. The chapter was going to be chapter II of *Lumen gentium* entitled “People of God” and was inserted before the chapters on the hierarchy (III), on the laity (IV) and on consecrated life (V). Chapter II includes indeed what all baptized hold in common and expresses that all faithful together make up the People of God due to being baptized in Christ. All share in the threefold ministry of Christ. Hence, this chapter also presents a reflection about the relation to the other Christians and the non-baptized (LG 14-15). The chapter expresses the doctrine on the infallibility of the church (LG 12) and not just of the pope or the pope with the bishops. It affirms that the church as such and as a whole has a missionary task. Through the doctrine expressed it is clear that the hierarchy stands in service to this.

Why is it necessary to mention all of this? The problem with *Lumen gentium* is that although the council inserted the chapter on the “People of God”, it did not draw consequences flowing from it with regard to chapter III on “The Hierarchy”. In a way chapter II and III stand side by side

without a new synthesis being developed: they are juxtaposed. The post conciliar church thus saw itself confronted with handling this as well as several other juxtapositions.<sup>17</sup> Considering the conscious decision of the council to insert the chapter on the “People of God” before the one on “The hierarchy”, the juxtaposition could only be resolved by an appropriate hermeneutics of Vatican II. It means interpreting chapter III on “The Hierarchy” through the lenses of the doctrine expressed in chapter II on the “People of God”. A crucial point in this was the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1983. A careful analysis reveals that the legislator often times provided more for one aspect of the doctrine to be endorsed by way of providing canonical institutions of legislation while the other aspect is given less weight or even completely neglected. Examples might illustrate what is meant: if a bishop would wish to govern his diocese without the involvement of any lay person he could do so till today. The legislation does provide for canonical entities in which lay persons can participate, such as the diocesan pastoral council, the diocesan synod, the finance office, a lay judge, etc., but it is left to the discretion of the bishop to implement this or not. Another example concerns the role of the magisterium in exercising the teaching office invoking the certain levels of obligations for the faithful to obey or submit without at the same time making any provision for an obligation on

16 In 1991 a so-called Authentic Interpretation – which by that fact has the force of law – responded to the following question in the affirmative: “Whether bishops emeriti, as mentioned in canon 402, § 1 [= retired bishops, both diocesan and titular], can be elected by the conference of bishops as members of the synod of bishops according to the prescription of canon 346 § 1”, AAS 83 (1991) 1093.

17 The council used juxtapositions as a method to renew. The old and new were put side by side. See HENK WITTE, “Reform with the Help of Juxtapositions: A Challenge to the Interpretation of the Documents of Vatican II”, *The Jurist* 71 (2011) 20-34.

the side of the bishops to ascertain the *sensus fidei fidelium*.<sup>18</sup>

Before further reflecting on the consequences and challenges all of this poses, it is helpful to recall the deeper theological reasoning for emphasizing the relevance of what all share in common and how the people of God as such are a protagonist in the church. The deeper cause lies with Vatican II's understanding of revelation and the role of the teaching authority in the church.

### 2.1.2 A New Understanding of Revelation: *sensus fidei fidelium*

As the council fathers gathered in Rome for the Second Vatican Council they brought with them an understanding of revelation that was considered to occur in an hierarchically ordered way. Revelation would be transmitted from Christ to Peter (and the other apostles), down to the pope and from there to the bishops, the priests and finally to the laity who would receive the teaching in obedience. It was a merely top down model

18 While promulgating the 1983 Code of Canon Law, Pope John Paul II seems to have been aware of the juxtapositions that seem to suggest how to handle this also in the application of the law when he noted: "What constitutes the substantial *newness* of the Second Vatican Council, in line with the legislative tradition of the Church, especially in regard to ecclesiology, constitutes likewise the newness of the new Code. Among the elements that characterize the true and genuine image of the Church we should emphasize especially the following: the doctrine in which the Church is presented as the people of God (Cf. dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* chapter 2) and hierarchical authority as service (cf. *ibid.*, chapter 3); [...] the doctrine according to which all the members of the people of God, in the way suited to each of them, participate in the threefold priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, to which doctrine is also linked that which concerns the duties and rights of the faithful and particularly of the laity [...]. If, therefore, the Second Vatican Council has drawn both new and old from the treasury of tradition, and the new consists precisely in the elements which I have enumerated, then it is clear that the Code should also reflect the same note of fidelity in newness and of newness in fidelity, and conform itself to this in this own subject matter and in its own particular manner of expression." JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution "Sacrae disciplinae leges", AAS 75 (1983) vii-xiv. English translation: *Code of Canon Law: Latin English Edition, New English Translation* (Washington DC: CLSA; 1998) xxx-xxxii.

and very much christomonistic in its foundation. Furthermore, revelation was very much considered to be a set of doctrines formulated in propositions that the faithful had to learn by heart. To assist them in this, catechisms were produced. The second chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* as well as the Dogmatic Constitution on *Divine Revelation* display a new understanding: Revelation is not so much a set of doctrines, but rather an encounter of persons with God: men and women encounter personally God. God speaks to them as friends and enters into fellowship with them (*DV* 2).<sup>19</sup> The Word of God is listened to and heard by all including the ordained. It all begins with listening not to each other but listening to the Word of God, which is directed to each and everyone. Yet the Word of God can only be understood under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through a complex interaction of all the faithful, each and every one, according his or her position and function. In the listening process the Holy Spirit leads into relationship and understanding revelation (*DV* 5). The church of God is thus a listening church before it is a teaching church.

This understanding touches on the notion of tradition: tradition occurs through all the faithful: *LG* 12 uses for this the term *sensus fidei fidelium*: the sense of the faith of all faithful. That then has an impact on the understanding of the doctrine on infallibility: the church as such is infallible (*LG* 12). The latter understanding has always been the case, but it had somewhat been forgotten even up to the point that more or less

19 Biblical scholar and co-drafter of *Dei Verbum*, Cardinal Augustin Bea, explains that the word "friends" implies an encounter at eye level. Scripture refers to Abraham as God's friend (Jes. 41:8 and James 2:23). The Book of Wisdom describes people as God's friend and prophets (Wisdom 7:27) Jesus also refers to the apostles as friends (Lk 12:4 and John 15:14-15), but the terminology implies that all disciples are meant: "What Jesus said to his first apostles he said, through them, to all his disciples throughout time. [...] So the idea of friendship between God and man expresses more clearly the generosity of God, who stoops to treat man as an equal. This is the new and characteristic element of the text in which God presents himself as the friend of man". AUGUSTIN BEA, *The Word of God and Mankind* (London: Chapman, 1967) 43.

on the eve of Vatican II the infallibility of the church had been reduced to a passive infallibility whereas the infallibility of particularly the pope was considered to be an active infallibility. Hence on the eve of Vatican II there was almost a danger that the infallibility of church had become dependent on the infallibility of – what was called – the magisterium. Due to studies in particular on the church Fathers,<sup>20</sup> Vatican II recovered the understanding that revelation occurs within the people of God in a complex network of relations between all faithful from laypersons to bishops. Such an understanding can only be appreciated in light of the doctrines that through baptism all faithful participate in the threefold ministry of Christ and receive charisms (LG 12) as well as the doctrine that the Holy Spirit is active in each and everyone (LG 12).

However, the Holy Spirit does not work in isolation. Different people are dependent on each other: the individual cannot believe without the community. At same time: the common faith lives within the *lived* faith of the faithful: there it finds its most comprehensive and most diverse expression. Hence, the living faith is an important witness and source of faith and thus a *locus theologicus*. This implies a need for a common listening, as well as a need for mutual obedience and respect of laity and hierarchy. All of this finds expression in LG 12: The entire body of faithful cannot err in matters of faith. The believing church, the church *in credendo* is infallible and discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of Truth. It is exercised not just under the guidance of the teaching authority, but there is a circularity between the *sensus fidelium* and the teaching

authority.<sup>21</sup> Whereas LG 12 still sees the people of God “under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience, DV 10 articulates a circularity between the people of God and pastors: “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherd remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers, so that holding to, practising and professing the heritage of faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single common effort.” (DV 10).

As a result, the infallibility of the so-called magisterium<sup>22</sup> is embedded within the infallibility of the church. The infallibility *in docendo* falls within the infallibility *in credendo*.

### 2.1.3 Consequences for synodality

As outlined above, the Synod of bishops which pope Paul VI erected in 1965 on the one hand resulted from the experience that it is beneficial for the pope and for the bishops to discern together regularly relevant subjects and on the other hand had its theological foundation in the newly understood doctrine between the papacy and episcopal collegiality. The Synod of Bishops thus gave expression to the doctrine articulated in particular in chapter three of *Lumen gentium* on the hierarchy, but not in chapter two on the “People of God.”

21 See the extremely insightful article by DARIO VITALI, who traces the whole tradition on *sensus fidei* in relation to and mutual interaction with the magisterium in “The Circularity between *sensus fidei* and Magisterium as a Criterion for the Exercise of Synodality in the Church”, in ANTONIO SPADARO, CARLOS GALLI (eds.), *For a Missionary Reform of the Church: The Civiltà Cattolica Seminar* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2017) 196-217.

22 The term “magisterium” for teaching authority is not without its own problems: it arose most probably among theologians and canon lawyers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was widely accepted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century especially in the context of the discussions of Vatican I. See YVES CONGAR, *Droit ancien et structures ecclesiales* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982) VII: 85-98.

20 The Belgian theologian Gustave Thils presented an extremely important study on the infallibility of the people of God just before the Vatican II began: GUSTAVE THILS, *L’infalibilité de peuple chrétien “in credendo”*: *Notes de théologie posttridentine*, BETL 21 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963).

Pope Francis, however, while seeking for a form to give expression to the insights as expressed in Chapter II on the people of God and all it entails, concludes that there is a need for a “journeying together”. From the beginning of his pontificate pope Francis has stressed the need to place the people of God at the centre and envisioned the hierarchy as standing in service to the people of God to fulfill its mission.

Whereas in the past synods on the family, the youth and the Amazon the listening occurred in the preparatory phase of the synod, by opening the synod on synodality in 2021 he has now integrated the preparatory phase into the synod as such. With such a reconfiguration the synod has, therefore, become an expression not just of the doctrine on collegiality of bishops, but of the church as people of God. The Church convoked in the 2021-2023 Synod will celebrate the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023. Hence, the doctrine on the collegiality of bishops which finds expression in chapter three of *Lumen gentium* is integrated in the doctrine that finds expression in chapter two on the “People of God”. There has thus been a reconfiguration of the different doctrines that Vatican II teaches. Pope Francis has not added anything new, but has reconfigured the doctrines in fidelity to the intention of the council fathers when they asked that the council first express what all share in common before differentiations are being made.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.2. The Interaction of the Local Church and Entire Church

“The Church of God is convoked in Synod”. A week after pope Francis opened the synod for

the entire church, the bishops in the dioceses around the world also opened the synodal process within their dioceses. From the beginning, there is, therefore, a lively interaction between the entire church and the local churches. Theologically a few aspects deserve attention: First, Vatican II affirmed that the local churches are not just parts of the entire church, but that they are fully church (LG 26). Each diocese is a *portio populo Dei*: it is a portion – not a part – of the entire church (Cf. CD 11 and c. 369 CIC/1983) which is entrusted to the bishop to shepherd. Hence, it becomes clear from the liturgy by which a diocesan bishop is ordained: it is not the bishop who has a diocese, but a diocese has a bishop who is ordained to serve it.<sup>24</sup>

Related to this is a second aspect: Vatican II confirmed that the church exists in and from the local churches (“*in quibus et ex quibus*”, LG 23). The local church and the entire church thus cannot exist one without the other. It is like a cake: The one portion of the cake cannot exist without the whole cake and yet the one portion makes up and contains all that the cake is. Although the pope has initiated and opened the synod, the process of discernment of the synodal topic really begins with the people of God in their local churches. At this stage it is enriching to recall that the achievements of Vatican II were so rich, because after pope John XXIII had convoked the council, the local churches were able to offer and share their precious gifts and insights for the good of the church universal gathered in a council. For example, the Germans brought new insights about the liturgy. French speaking theologians enriched Vatican II with their studies on the church Fathers. The American church offered its

23 In an earlier study, I reflected in particular on the Address that employed the terms “hitting the reset button” and reconfiguration to express what pope Francis did. It is of extreme relevance to understand that he did not add anything that was not already in Vatican II, but he simply reconfigured the different doctrines in relation to each other and by doing so surpassed and lifted the juxtaposition. MYRIAM WIJLENS, “Reforming the Church by Hitting the Reset Button: Reconfiguring Collegiality within Synodality because of *sensus fidei fidelium*”, *The Canonist* 8 (2017) 235-261.

24 In 2008, the Peter and Paul Seminar devoted a study to “The Local Church and its Bishop: Receiving the Vision of Vatican II.” The acts are published in *The Jurist* 68 (2008) 321-498 and 69 (2009) 1-170. Of particular relevance for the current topic are LAURENT VILLEMEN, “Theology of the Relation of The Bishop to his Diocese in the Ceremonial of Bishops”, *The Jurist* 68 (2008) 408-417 and MYRIAM WIJLENS, “The Doctrine of the People of God and Hierarchical Authority as Service in Latin Church Legislation on the Local Church”, *The Jurist* 68 (2008) 328-349.

contribution with regard to freedom of religion. Numerous other contributions can be mentioned. In a discernment process the council pondered about the fruits offered and decided what could be received in so far as it would contribute to the edification of the entire church. What was offered by some local churches to the entire church was subsequently received and shared for the wellbeing of the entire church. The process of reception thus became of great relevance. Indeed, it was not the church universal that presented its insights to the local churches understood as a top down model, but there was a deep interaction indicating a circularity between the different entities that turned out to be beneficial for all.<sup>25</sup> The *in quibus et ex quibus* is thus a constantly flowing movement.

The current synod is framed on a similar idea: The fruits of the sharing of the people in the local churches on how to be a more synodal church will be offered to the church universal for discernment so as to determine what the Holy Spirit is telling us on how to interact with each other, not just for the sake of the interaction, but in order to strengthen the fundamental task of each and everyone, as well as of the church as such, namely to proclaim the good news. Hence, under the leadership of the bishop, the people of God discern in prayer what the Spirit has to say of how to be God's church in this time and in this place. This will require a careful and prayerful listening. On behalf of their dioceses the bishops will share the results with the neighboring bishops who shepherd the other local churches in the episcopal conference. Remarkably, the *Vademecum* mentions that the report that the bishop presents is to reflect

the diversity of views and opinions expressed. It "should be faithful to the people's voices and to whatever emerged from their discernment and dialogue, rather than a series of generalized or doctrinally correct statements" (*Vademecum*, Appendix D). The report should therefore not just contain what the bishop thinks the entire church or the pope wants to hear. It is also not the report of the diocesan bishop as a person, but of the local church. In other words, it is to be the report of the *communio fidelium* in the local church. The bishop, therefore, gives witness to the faith of the church entrusted to his pastoral care: its hope and joys, its pain and sorrows.

The *in quibus et ex quibus* is not only a matter of an interaction of the local and entire church, but indeed two consultations on a supra diocesan level will occur. The first one is when the bishops within an episcopal conference are invited to discern together the results coming from their local churches asking themselves what the reports mean for the territory of their conference (*Vademecum*, Nr. 3.2). On the basis of the reports submitted by the episcopal conferences, the Secretariat of the Synod will draft a first edition of the *Instrumentum laboris*. That edition will be the "working document" for the seven continental meetings the church knows, such as for Europe the CCEE, for Latin America the CELAM and for Asia the FABC. These seven groups are invited to discern what the *instrumentum laboris* can mean within their continent. This will result in seven final documents that will be submitted to the Secretariat for the Synod.

From an ecclesiological perspective it is remarkable that these supra episcopal conference institutions will be involved as it is a recognition of the *sollicitudo* for neighbouring dioceses and conferences within one socio-economic culture and at the same time is a recognition of the complexity and diversity of the world. It will also express "that each Bishop possesses simultaneously and inseparably responsibility

25 In a 2012 conference held at the University of Erfurt (Germany), theologians and canon lawyers reflected on the process of mutual reception of the local and universal Church. The Australian theologian and expert on *sensus fidei fidelium*, ORMUND RUSH, reflected on the meaning of *sensus fidelium* in the interaction between the local and universal Church: "Sensus fidelium und Katholizität: Ortskirche und Universalkirche in Gespräch mit Gott", in MYRIAM WIJLENS (ed.), *Die wechselseitige Rezeption zwischen Ortskirche und Universalkirche: Das Zweite Vatikanum und die Kirche im Osten Deutschlands*, Erfurter Theologische Studien 46 (Würzburg: Echter, 2014) 151-160.



for the particular Church assigned to his pastoral care and solicitude for the universal Church.”<sup>26</sup>

The Final Documents of the seven international meetings will serve as the basis for the second *Instrumentum laboris* that will be used at the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023. This will be followed by the implementation phase that will again involve the local churches (PD 1; *Vademecum* 3.5). “Here it must be remembered that ‘cultures are in fact quite diverse, and every general principle... needs to be inculturated, if it is to be respected and applied+. In this way, it can be seen that the synodal process not only has its point of departure but also its point of arrival in the People of God, upon whom the gifts of grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit through the gathering of Bishops in Assembly must be poured out.”<sup>27</sup>

Hence, the *in quibus et ex quibus* will imply a constant flow between the local and the entire church, as well as between the faithful and churches in neighbouring dioceses. The envisioned process strengthens the relations between the local and the entire church. It will give expression to the catholicity of the church. As LG 13 states: “Between all the parts of the Church there remains a bond of close communion whereby they share spiritual riches, apostolic workers and temporal resources. For the members of the people of God are called to share these goods in common, and of each of the Churches the words of the Apostle hold good: ‘According to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.’”

A further and fourth key point in the interactive process is the ecclesiological relevance of the diocesan bishop, because more than ever before will he be *a witness to the faith* of the local church entrusted to his care. Thus, the process envisioned unfolds the relationship between the *communio fidelium*, the *communio ecclesiarum* and the *communio episcoporum*.

Yet, framing the process in this way also reveals the theologically delicate point of the

ecclesiological position of retired and titular bishops. Titular bishops do not have the pastoral care for a specific local church. There are different titular bishops: some are auxiliary bishops who assist the diocesan bishop in the pastoral care of the diocese, whereas others hold e.g. offices in the Roman Curia or as Apostolic Nuncio. Due to their ordination all these bishops are member of the college of bishops. Hence, as long as the synod of bishops was a gathering of bishops belonging to the college of bishops the connection to the local churches was not of primary relevance. In recent times, the awareness of the theological relevance of the relationship between a bishop and the local church is growing.<sup>28</sup> Already pope John Paul II declared: “The Bishops assembled in Synod represent in the first place their own Churches, but they are also attentive to the contributions of the Episcopal Conferences which selected them and whose views about questions under discussion they then communicate.”<sup>29</sup> Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Synod of Bishops, pope Francis showed that he stands in line with pope John Paul II, because he recalled that on the eve of the 2015 Synod on the Family he had prayed: “For the Synod Fathers we ask the Holy Spirit first of all for the gift of listening: to listen to God, so that with him we may hear the cry of his people; to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us.” Francis explained that the synodal process “culminates in listening to the Bishop of Rome, who is called to speak as ‘pastor and teacher of all Christians’<sup>30</sup> not on the basis of his personal convictions but as the

28 It should be recalled that when the Synod of Bishops was established in 1965, the church had no experience yet with bishops who retired. This was only introduced during Vatican II. Within the college of bishops the balance between titular and retired bishops on the one hand and diocesan bishops on the other hand would have been quite different from today.

29 JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis*, Nr. 58. <https://bit.ly/33F2aA6>  
URL Retrieved: 28 November 2021

30 The pope refers here in a footnote to Vatican I, the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor aeternus*, 18 July 1870, ch. IV, Denz. 3074. Cf. c. 749 § 1.

26 AC *Episcopalis communio*, Nr. 2. A reference is made here to LG 23 and CD 3.

27 AC *Episcopalis communio*, Nr. 7.

supreme witness to the *fides totius Ecclesiae*, ‘the guarantor of the obedience and the conformity of the Church to the will of God, to the Gospel of Christ, and to the Tradition of the Church.’<sup>31</sup> These references reveal the connection between the bishop and the people of God as well as that the bishop – also the bishop of Rome – testifies to the faith of the community entrusted to his care, not his personal convictions. Such considerations do, however, indicate that in light of the doctrine expressed with the trias *communio fidelium*, *communio ecclesiarum* and *communio episcoporum*, the role of the titular bishops in synods of bishops is in need of a careful theological reflection.<sup>32</sup>

### 2.3 Neither a democracy nor a parliament: arriving at consensus

In the context of synods one can hear time and again that the church is not governed by the dynamics of democracy and that it is not a parliament. The Preparatory Document writes:

“The consultation of the people of God does not imply the assumption within the church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority, because there is, at the basis of participation in every synodal process a shared compassion for the common mission of evangelization and not the representation of conflicting interests.” (PD Synod 2021-2023 14).

On Saturday Oct. 9, 2021, that is, the day before opening the 2021-2023 Synod Pope Francis emphasized: “I want to say that the synod is not a parliament or an opinion poll. The synod is an

ecclesial event and its protagonist is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is not present there will be no synod.”<sup>33</sup>

What can these warnings mean? Some might quickly respond that in the Church there is no voting. The truth is that many ecclesial bodies proceed by voting also on matters of faith: in Vatican II there was even a very advanced system of “electronic” voting. In plenary and particular councils, as well as in episcopal conferences members vote not only on business matters such as statutes or elections, but also on doctrinal questions. And yet, the purpose seems to be to obtain not just the required majority, but consensus. Vatican II says it well: “The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole peoples’ supernatural discernment in matters of faith when ‘from the bishops down to the last of the lay faithful’ they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth.” (LG 12) It means that in matters of belief the community seeks consensus – which is not the same as unanimity. Whereas unanimity as well as majority originates from the world of law,<sup>34</sup> arriving at consensus can be understood as referring to a discernment process under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in which the truth is

31 The text referred to here is POPE FRANCIS, Address to the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 18 October 2014. In this address, Pope Francis explains the notion of synodality, as well as the task of the bishops and the pope. <https://bit.ly/3H7myr1> URL Retrieved: 28 November 2021

32 The position of titular bishops in an episcopal conference poses similar challenges. Cf. MYRIAM WIJLENS, “Representation and Witnessing in Synodal Structures. Rethinking the *munus docendi* of Episcopal Conferences in Light of *communio fidelium*, *communio ecclesiarum* and *communio episcoporum*”, *Studia canonica* 53 (2019) 75-106.

33 POPE FRANCIS, Address for the Opening of the Synod on October 9, 2021, see <https://bit.ly/3sXVdCC> URL Retrieved: 21 October 2021

34 See HANS HATTENHAUER, “Zur Geschichte von Konsens- und Mehrheitsprinzip”, in HANS HATTENHAUER and WERNER KALTEFLEITER (eds.), *Mehrheitsprinzip, Konsens und Verfassung* (Heidelberg: C.F. Müller Juristischer Verlag, 1986) 1-22. CARSTEN K.W. DE DREU, NANNE K. DE VRIES (eds.), *Group Consensus and Minority Influence: Implications for Innovation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001).

searched for.<sup>35</sup> Such a process usually involves a time-consuming and painstaking process characterized by mutual listening. It implies that there is need and space for an extensive discussion about the subject concerned with ample space for a true *disputatio*, in which different arguments accompanied by prayer are brought forward and considered carefully. Consensus is a manifestation of God's participation in the discernment process. The council of Jerusalem witnesses to this. It means that all participate, but it does not mean that all speak with the same authority. In this context one can be reminded of the principle *quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet*.<sup>36</sup> Thus, arriving at consensus – which could be a moral consensus – is quite different from merely counting votes or determining a majority. In this regard the 2018 Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio* on the Synod of Bishops is of interest, because it emphasizes that in the church there is the need for a consensus in the sense of a morally unanimous vote. The document does not speak about a juridic unanimity: “In the church the purpose of any collegial body... is always the search for truth or the good of the Church. When it is therefore a question involving the faith itself, the *consensus ecclesiae* is not determined by the tallying of votes, but is the outcome of the

working of the Spirit, the soul of the one church of Christ. Therefore the vote of the Synod Fathers if morally unanimous, has a qualitative ecclesial weight which surpasses the merely formal aspect of the consultative vote”.<sup>37</sup>

The topic of majority and consensus is not only of concern to the Roman Catholic Church. In 1994 the the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) changed its meeting procedures from an adversarial to a consensus style. In 2002, a Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches (WCC) proposed a change of meeting procedures to consensus decision-making. This was borne out of a growing unease that minority voices were not being heard meaningfully in WCC meetings. Since 2005 the World Council of Churches has adopted consensus for decision making in so far as the topic relates to faith. It does not use a parliamentary model. The reasoning is quite remarkable:

“The World Council of Churches is called to bear witness to unity in a world which is marked by tensions, antagonisms, conflicts, war and rumours of wars (cf. Matt. 24:6). In this situation the Council can bear witness not only by its programmes and resolutions, but also by the way it does business. It can shape its rules and procedures in such a way as to express faith ‘made effective in love’ (Gal. 5:6). This means that member churches, as well as representatives of those churches, will treat each other with respect and will seek to build one another up in love (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-6, 14:12)”.

“Some churches around the world, and some parts of the Council itself, have found that making decisions by consensus is a better way of reflecting the nature of the Church as described in the New Testament than is the parliamentary approach. In 1 Cor 12:12-27, St. Paul speaks of parts of the body needing each

35 For an introduction to discernment in a synodal church: Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council, *Document for Community Discernment at the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean Mexico 2021*: <https://bit.ly/3LRGWjx> URL Retrieved: 28 November 2021. See as well LADISLAS ÖRSY, *Discernment: Theology and Practice, Communal and Personal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2020).

36 The phrase *quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet* originally added *et approbari debet*. Vatican I addressed the question of the need for the reception of doctrine. Cf. YVES CONGAR, “Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet”, *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, IV. Série 36 (1958) 210-259; ORAZIA CONDORELLI, *Quod omnes tangit, debet ab omnibus approbari*. Note sull’origine e sull’utilizzazione del principio tra medioevo e prima età moderna”, *Ius Canonicum* 53 (2013) 101-127; JASMIN HAUCK, “Quod omnes tangit debet ab omnibus approbari: Eine Rechtsregel im Dialog der beiden Rechte”, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung*, 99 (2013) 398-417.

37 POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis communio* On the Synod of Bishops, 15 September 2018, English translation: <https://bit.ly/3p2WxmS> URL Retrieved: 15 February 2021, no. 7.

other. A fully functioning body integrates the gifts of all its members. Similarly, any ecumenical body will function best when it makes optimum use of the abilities, history, experience, commitment, and spiritual tradition of all the members”.

“Consensus procedures allow more room for consultation, exploration, questioning, and prayerful reflection, with less rigidity than formal voting procedures. By promoting collaboration rather than adversarial debate, consensus procedures help the assembly (or a commission or committee) to seek the mind of Christ together. Rather than striving to succeed in debate, participants are encouraged to submit to one another to seek to ‘understand what the will of the Lord is’ (Eph 5:17)”.

“The consensus model for decision making also encourages prayerful listening to one another and growth in understanding between ecclesial traditions. At the same time, it requires discipline on the part of participants and moderators. There must also be rules. But the aim is to arrive at a common mind rather than simply the will of the majority. When consensus is declared, all who have participated can confidently affirm: ‘It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ...’ (Acts 15:28)”.<sup>38</sup>

Although the Roman Catholic Church has the status of observer at the World Council of Churches, she is a full member of its Faith and Order Commission. Hence, through the Catholic delegates on the Faith and Order Commission, she has been able to gain experience with the method of deciding by consensus instead of

voting.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, if being a synodal church implies also listening to and learning from the other churches and ecclesial communities, the Roman Catholic church should study the topic of finding consensus in a synod of bishops as well as in other bodies while reflecting the matter in light of its own ecclesiology. This is even more urgent considering the remark Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, made in the context of the opening of the 2021-2023 Synod:

“Although I am aware that even in a council the consent of the Fathers is measured by the vote, I wonder and I ask you if we should not reflect on this point, to find other solutions to verify the consent. Is it so impossible to imagine, for example, resorting to the vote on the Final Document of the Synod of Bishops and its individual numbers only when the consensus is not certain? Isn’t it enough to provide reasoned objections to the text, perhaps signed by an adequate number of members of the Assembly, resolved with a supplement for further discussion, and to resort to voting as a final and unwanted instance? I limit myself to these few questions, not to give a solution,

38 WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, *Achieving Consensus: A Guide for Conducting Meetings* (Geneva: WCC, 2014) 1-2. At the request of the World Council of Churches TILL TABART reported on how the United Australian Church arrived at its decision in her book, *Coming to Consensus: A Case Study for the Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 2003).

39 The FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION approved by consensus, e.g. its convergence document *The Church Towards a Common Vision* (Geneva: WCC, 2013) and the Study Document *Churches and Moral Discernment: Facilitating Dialogue to build koinonia* (Geneva: WCC, 2021).

but to point out a problem on which we must carefully reflect.”<sup>40</sup>

Such a study should attend to another aspect that would need attention and that might well be implied when reference is made that the church is not a parliament. One can think of so-called lobby groups. This phenomenon too is not foreign to the church as it finds already mention in Scripture. There is, however, a need to secure that all voices can be heard and not only those who have sufficient money to use the media and other forms of modern technology.

## 2.4 Representation, Reflection and Giving Witness

Already above both the topics of diocesan bishops witnessing to the faith of the people entrusted to their pastoral care and of democracy arose. Being a synodal church will imply meeting in synodal structures such as synods of Bishops, diocesan and parish pastoral councils as well as presbyteral councils. Yet a question arises: who speaks or decides on behalf of whom with what kind of authority in these bodies? This topic

touches on the role, function and task not only of bishops in a synod or an episcopal conference, but also of all who are members of consultative bodies in the diocese and parish. The question is related to the composition of the members in these bodies. Should these bodies have a faithful or good *representation* of e.g. the diocese or parish or should they rather *reflect* the diocese or parish. Interesting is in this regard the language used in the norms on the presbyteral and the diocesan pastoral council. The presbyteral council is to “represent” (*repraesentare* - c. 495 §1 and 499) the *presbyterium* of the diocese, taking into account especially the different ministries and various regions of the diocese. The diocesan pastoral council on the other hand is to “truly reflect” (*revera configure*) the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese, “with consideration given to the different areas of the diocese, social conditions and professions, and the role which they have in the apostolate whether individually or joined with others.” (c. 512 §2).

The question really is: who are the persons in these bodies, in the sense of whom they represent? What is their legitimation? What does it mean for them to participate in the decision making and taking? Do they reflect, discern and speak about their own faith? Do they or are they expected to speak on behalf of others or express the faith of others? Do bishops in an episcopal conference, for example, witness to the faith of their church or do they express their own views in light of their personal belief? The topic of

40 Cardinal MARIO GRECH expressed his thoughts in English during his address to the Annual Convention of the Canadian Canon Law Society on October 24, 2021. On September 9, 2021 Cardinal Grech said: “In questa dinamica ecclesiale si innesta facilmente la tentazione di risolvere l’ascolto attraverso le dinamiche democratiche; soprattutto di conferire al voto un valore che rischia di trasformare l’Assemblea sinodale in un parlamento, introducendo nella Chiesa le logiche della maggioranza e della minoranza. Per quanto sia consapevole che anche in concilio il consenso dell’aula è misurato dal voto, mi chiedo e vi chiedo se non dobbiamo riflettere su questo punto, per trovare altre soluzioni per verificare il consenso. Molto spesso incontrando le assemblee ecclesiali ed altri gruppi siamo interpellati sulla questione del voto! È così impossibile immaginare, ad esempio, di ricorrere al voto sul Documento finale e sui suoi numeri singoli solo quando il consenso non sia certo? Non basta prevedere obiezioni motivate al testo, magari firmate da un numero congruo di membri dell’Assemblea, risolte con un supplemento di confronto, e ricorrere al voto come istanza ultima e non desiderata? Mi limito a queste poche domande, non per dare una soluzione, ma per segnalare un problema su cui dobbiamo attentamente riflettere.”

See <https://bit.ly/3h04pRF> URL Retrieved: 15 February 2021

representation is of theological great relevance in a synodal church.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.4 Participation: *sacra potestas* and the *tria munera*

A major topic that indubitably will arise in the context of a more synodal church is the question of the participation of lay persons in the decision making and thus in the power of governance within the church. The issue touches on the relationship between the power of orders and jurisdiction as well as the participation in the threefold ministry of Christ, the *tria munera*. It is a rather complex topic that already during the Second Vatican Council could not be solved completely and even caused some remarks in the famous Explanatory Note (*Nota Explicativa Praevia*) which was added to *Lumen gentium*.

Ever since Vatican II canon lawyers have had heavy discussions about the possibility of what they often refer to as a participation of “non-ordained” in the power of governance. Whereas in particular on the basis of history some conclude that ordination is not or not always a prerequisite for exercising the power of governance or jurisdiction, others take recourse to the so-called theory of *sacra potestas* as articulated by Vatican II and argue that the power of governance cannot be exercised by non-ordained persons or by non-clerics. The 1917 Code of Canon Law had determined that only clerics could exercise the power of jurisdiction (c. 118). Yet till 1972 clerics

included those men who had received tonsure and not yet the diaconate, thus a group that today would be considered to be lay men.

The discussion about laity and jurisdiction was heavy after Vatican II as the 1983 Code of Canon Law – in particular canon 129 – was being drafted. As of 1971 laymen could be appointed a judges first in marriage cases and as of 1974 also in other cases. As of 1983 laypersons in general – thus women included – could be appointed as judges, but only in a college of judges with two other clerics. Controversial discussions continued after 1983 as some canonical provisions did not seem to be completely reconcilable among themselves, such as that lay persons can be appointed as judges in ecclesiastical courts (c. 1421 § 2), but that only clerics can obtain offices for whose exercise the power of orders or of ecclesiastical governance is required (c. 274).<sup>42</sup> And yet, after the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law the church is indeed seeing further developments as lay persons both in the parishes, dioceses and within the Holy See are being granted offices to which some – form of – power of governance is attached. Not only *de facto* developments – which may well be qualified as legitimate development *praeter ius*, and not necessarily as *contra ius* –, but also remarkable recent new legal provisions issued by both pope Benedict XVI and pope Francis warrant a fresh theological- canonical reflection. Pope Benedict XVI changed canons 1008 and 1009 CIC determining that those who have received episcopal or priestly ordination receive the mission and faculty to act *in persona Christi capitis*, whereas deacons “are empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and

41 Brian Thierney refers to three forms of representation. The first is *symbolic representation* or *personification*, when a whole community is taken to be figuratively present in the person of its head. When a constitutional monarch makes a State visit, he is held to represent his people. The second meaning is referred to as *Mimesis*: an assembly represents a whole society because it faithfully mirrors in its composition all the varied elements that make up the society. The third meaning is delegation or authorization: a community confers to an individual the right to act in its name by a specific act of election. BRIAN THIERNEY, “The Idea of Representation in the Medieval Councils of the West”, *Concilium*, no. 187 (1983), 25. See also some relevant studies in MASSIMO FAGGILO, ALBERTO MELLONI (eds.), “Repraesentatio:” *Mapping a Keyword for Churches and Governance*, Christianity and History, vol. 3, (Münster: Lit, 2006).

42 Excellent overviews of the discussion are presented by JOHN BEAL, “The Exercise of the Power of Governance by Lay People: State of the Question”, *The Jurist* 55 (1995) 1-92 and KONRAD MARIA ACKERMANN, *Die sacra potestas im Werk von Alfons Maria Stickler and Klaus Mörsdorf. Rechtssystematische Überlegungen zur Möglichkeit einer Mitwirkung von Laien an der kirchlichen Regierungsgewalt*, Kirchen- und Religionsrecht, 32 (Münster Aschaffenburg, 2020).

charity.”<sup>43</sup> This has implications for the notion of being a cleric and requires a reflection about the theological foundation for deacons exercising the power of governance. Pope Francis changed the law (c. 1421) in that he determined that for marriage cases the college of three judges does not need to have a majority of clergy anymore, but could have a majority of lay persons, which implies both men or women. It would appear that no differentiate is made between a deacon who is a cleric or a priest / bishop, nor are married deacons excluded.<sup>44</sup> In penal cases it is possible for lay persons to be appointed as judges (a dispensation can be obtained). Furthermore, Francis recently determined that allegations against cardinals, papal legates and bishops can be heard by the courts of Vatican City State in which lay persons can be judges.<sup>45</sup>

Canonical doctrine does hold that judges in ecclesiastical courts exercise power of governance. Also, a bishop – or as is common the judicial vicar – assigns the case to a judge, but once appointed, he cannot instruct the judge how to decide in a specific case. Once appointed as a judge in a specific case, he or she acts and decides independently. It should be noticed that for example in marriage nullity cases, judges determine the canonical

status of a person within the community: they might determine that the person is no longer to be considered as a married person, but rather as a single person. The change in status implies a change of rights and obligations.

These canonical provisions are, therefore, in need of a thorough theological reflection so that consequences for the participation of laity in other areas of the exercise of the power of governance can be envisioned. For that it is indispensable to begin with a careful consideration of determining the *status quaestiones*. Usually the question is raised whether a “non-ordained” person can exercise the power of jurisdiction or participate in the *potestas regiminis*. Possibly it might be more fruitful to attend to the question not from the perspective of “non-ordained”, but rather building on the participation in the threefold ministry of Christ due to baptism in combination with delegation of the power the diocesan bishop holds for his diocese.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.5 Accountability in a Synodal Church

As the Church of God is convoked in Synod to reflect about being a synodal church, the word “listening” has become a key word in the many addresses and documents. Indubitably, listening is a decisive moment in the discernment process. Decision making is followed by decision taking. However, the scandals of spiritual, financial and sexual abuse in the Church reveal that there is a further step to be taken: there is a need to reflect on accountability, that is, being held responsible and answerable for an obligation. It would include judgement, skill, ability and capacity.<sup>47</sup> Currently, (parish) priests are held accountable to their bishop and bishops are held accountable for their decisions to the pope. This accountability is somewhat provided for by way of visitations

43 POPE BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic letter *Omnium in mentem*, October 26, 2009. See: [🔗 https://bit.ly/36uYimf](https://bit.ly/36uYimf) 🕒 URL Retrieved: 28 November 2021

44 POPE FRANCIS, Motu proprio *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesu* of August 15, 2015, AAS 107 (2015) 958-970.

45 Pope Francis terminated the privilege that cardinals and bishops had, namely that their case be only heard by the Roman Pontiff himself, which meant in practice that only cardinals and bishops would hear these cases and determined that the Courts of Vatican City State on which lay persons sit as judges can hear these cases. One condition is attached: “The tribunal shall judge with the prior consent of the Supreme Pontiff”. The motivation given for the change is “to ensure the equality of all members of the Church in their equal dignity and position, without privileges that date back to earlier times and are no longer in keeping with the responsibilities that each person has in building up the Church. This requires solidity of faith and consistency of behaviour and actions”. FRANCIS, Motu proprio *Amending the Jurisdiction of the Judicial Bodies of Vatican City State*, April 30, 2021: [🔗 https://bit.ly/3h4lkSR](https://bit.ly/3h4lkSR) 🕒 URL Retrieved: 28 November 2021

46 For some initial reflections on a change in the way the question on laity and jurisdiction is phrased see MYRIAM WIJLENS, “Ecclesial Lay Ministry, Clergy and Complementarity”, *Proceedings of the Canon Law Society of America* (Washington, DC: CLSA) 64 (2002) 27-47.

47 ROBERT J. KASLYN, “Accountability of Diocesan Bishops: A Significant Aspect of Ecclesial Communion”, *The Jurist* 67 (2007) 109-152, here 111.

and the “ad limina” visit. If there are indications that there are severe problems an extraordinary visitation or – in the case of bishops – an apostolic visitation can be ordered. In financial matters church leaders are in many states accountable to civil authorities.

In recent years pope Francis has provided new regulations enforcing stronger implications – including removal from office – for those in leadership who “through negligence, posited or omitted acts that have provoked a grave harm to others, whether it concerns physical persons, or concerns a community in its totality. The harm can be physical, moral, spiritual or patrimonial.”<sup>48</sup> Over the past years bishops have lost their office (officium) or even be dismissed from the clerical state.

The accountability of leadership within the local church is very much “vertically” understood. Yet, if the church is moving from a hierarchical to a more synodal understanding the question needs to be raised as to what this may imply for being held accountable.<sup>49</sup>

Already in 2007, the canon lawyer Robert J. Kaslyn published a study in which he reflects on accountability within a “communio” ecclesiology. He writes:

“The *communio* that is the Church derives from the salvific activity and will of Jesus Christ; the Church continues to fulfill its divine mission through time, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit until the consummation of the world. This *communio* exists not as a static but as a dynamic reality: the Church is

in progress towards its final destiny. In the interim, all the faithful have an obligation to remain in communion with one another and with God and this obligation necessarily implies accountability to one another and to God. We can view such accountability from the perspective both of the community of the faithful (the *communio fidelium*) and of the constitutive role of the hierarchy within the Church (*communio hierarchica*). An analysis of these two perspectives will assist in understanding the accountability inherent in the office of bishop. Nonetheless, the fundamental unity of *communio* must not be lost: ‘The communion of the churches and the collegiality of the bishops is based on the more fundamental communion which is the church, the people of God itself.’”<sup>50</sup>

Kaslyn continues his reflections on the *communio fidelium* while citing Walter Kasper: “With this aspect of *communio* ecclesiology, the idea about the church as an ‘unequal society’ has in principle been surmounted. It means that the common existence of the people of God precedes all differences of functions, charismata and ministries.” [Walter Kasper] *Communio* consists of all the people of God, each one of whom makes a definitive contribution to the life of the Church, as willed by God and guided by the Spirit. This focus does not lessen the importance of hierarchical communion—the bishops are authentic teachers of the faith—but rather situates that specification of communion within the entire Church as established by Jesus Christ that is, the *communio fidelium*. Further, all the members of the People of God, including all bishops and the bishop of Rome must maintain communion with one another and with God; as one consequence, they are necessarily accountable to one another and to God. Understanding accountability as occurring within, motivated by, and both theologically and theologically directed towards *communio* firmly

48 POPE FRANCIS, Motu proprio, “Come una madre amorevole” (English: “As a loving mother”), 04 June 2016, art. 1. See: <https://bit.ly/35d77k7> URL Retrieved: 30 November 2021

49 Cardinal Oswald Gracias, one of the six cardinals advising pope Francis, addressed a conference for presidents of episcopal conferences in light of the sex abuse crises on February 22, 2019. He forcefully called for bishops addressing their accountability in a truly synodal church, where they do not take recourse to “their” commissions, “their meetings” etc. OSWALD GRACIAS, “Accountability in a Collegial and Synodal Church”, <https://bit.ly/3BBWtiM> URL Retrieved: 30 November 2021

50 KASLYN, 116. Kaslyn refers in his study e.g. to Yves Congar and Walter Kasper.



establishes that responsibility within traditional ecclesiological concepts and perceptions.”<sup>51</sup>

Kaslyn concludes that there is therefore a two-fold movement within a *communio* ecclesiology: spatially it is both horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, all the faithful, including the bishops, are members of the *communio* from which flows the obligation to preserve this with one another and with God. Vertically, all faithful live in *communio* with God, who communicates with each and everyone through Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hence, for Kaslyn, there is a *communio fidelium* and a *communio hierarchicum*. After reflecting on the latter, Kaslyn concludes that the latter presumes the former and that each bishop “in addition to maintaining hierarchical communion with the other bishops, including the bishop of Rome within the college of bishops, must also maintain communion with all the faithful.”<sup>52</sup>

The topic of accountability within a synodal church needs further theological reflection and based on its outcome possible adapted canonical structures that see to a sound implementation. While engaging in such a research again the ecumenical dimension may not be forgotten. The question can be raised as to how other churches and ecclesial communities theologially reflect accountability and how they practically provide for an implementation. In 2021 the “Peter and Paul Seminar” started its research project “Accountability in a Synodal Church” to attend to the theological, canonical and ecumenical dimension.

### 3. Concluding reflections

#### 3.1 The role of canon law and canon lawyers

The project on moving from a hierarchical to a more synodal church requires a conversion of all. The topics mentioned in the previous section most certainly will need theological reflection followed by an evaluation of existing canonical norms, possibly leading to a reform of some of them. Such a reform, however, will not be possible

without the canon lawyers reflecting and acting with what pope Paul VI already called a *novus habitus mentis*.<sup>53</sup> A new attitude of mind, which means a disposition that is open to new insights arriving from listening to what the Spirit has to say to us, pondering it in light of the tradition of the church, and consulting also with the surrounding world about possibly new models and structures to provide for a successful implementation of the new insights, so that the community can live in agreement with its beliefs and is best equipped to be a true missionary church. New lenses are required to hear the message, read the situation and find fresh and adequate solutions. Oftentimes, people think that canonical revisions are necessary before anything can change, but this might display a static understanding of law. All who apply the law need to be aware that development does not only occur by way of providing new legislation, but also and in particular by receiving new (theological) insights- including results of ecumenical dialogues that govern the bodies. The Code of Canon Law of 1983 cannot be interpreted with a theological understanding that was present at the time of its promulgation; the continuous development in theology (and other disciplines, such as medicine, etc. psychology) must be received in the interpretation and application of the law. In the aftermath of Vatican II this occurred as well: the 1917 Code was still in force, but the doctrine taught by Vatican II had an impact on the interpretation. Canon lawyers attributed a historical relevance to the *mens legislatoris* so that the law would not impede the community to live

51 KASLYN, 117-118.

52 KASLYN, 121.

53 PAUL VI, Allocution to the Pontifical University Gregoriana on December 14, 1973, AAS 66 (1974) 10, English translation “Canon Law and the Church’s Pastoral Mission”, *Canon Law Digest (CLD)* 8: 100-101 and *idem*, Allocution to the Roman Rota on February 4, 1977, AAS 69 (1977) 153, English translation “The New Code and the Better Protection of Justice”, *CLD* 8: 111.

what was being taught.<sup>54</sup> In our times something similar is to occur. As the Holy Spirit moves the faith community, the law should not stifle the community to live accordingly.

### 3.2 A Story of Conversion

This study ends with a story about a bishop, who himself a canon lawyer, underwent such a conversion.

In 2008 I met a diocesan bishop who had just taken possession of his diocese. He told me that he had not reinstated the diocesan pastoral council as he considered it a waste of time, and as he added, "it is not obliged by canon law to have such a council, isn't it?" I responded by asking if he celebrated the sacrament of confirmation in his diocese. "Oh yes", he responded, "it is actually quite nice to do so". I said: so what is the sacrament all about? "Oh," he responded, "it is about the Holy Spirit." I then asked: "And do you believe that the Holy Spirit is subsequently working in these people to whom you gave the sacrament?" He looked puzzled. I continued: "In case you do believe it, how do you as their bishop become aware of that working? What instruments do you use to discover how the Holy Spirit works through the people entrusted to your care?" He looked with great question marks in his eyes. I continued: "The diocesan pastoral council is actually one way of doing this. It enables the faithful to communicate with you as a bishop and reveal to you their needs, the possible solutions that might help them, the feasibility of what is being proposed. The community as such could benefit and grown from such an interaction." We departed with a friendly handshake. I was not sure what he thought.

About seven years later I met the bishop again. He told me that the encounter with me had been a bit of a challenge for him. He had thought it over and had then set up a diocesan pastoral council. They were now regularly meeting to discuss what was of importance for the diocese. Recently they had talked about the future of the schools in the diocese. They discovered that there was no teacher, principal or student on the council. He said: "We felt that we needed to invite these people to first listen to them, so we moved the topic to the next meeting. We really listened to them and made an informed decision that was accepted by all." The pastoral council had helped him writing pastoral letters by suggesting topics, content, style etc. and thus they had been well received in his diocese. He had used the diocesan pastoral council to help him write the *ad limina* report. Instead of writing a dull report it had become an occasion for the diocese to take stock and see where they were heading. He mentioned that ever since his new awareness, his visitations of parishes had obtained a new dimension. It was not so much about inspecting financial and other records, but it was about meeting people and finding out where they are at and what solutions they can see. He also admitted that he had to get over his initial fear of what he might encounter. The gear change from immediately speaking and from the feeling that he must proclaim to first listening had been a personal challenge. Indeed, he concluded, he had been pleasantly surprised by the many talents that were present in the community and by the energy the people had been willing to put into the life of the diocese. An energy that helped and sustained him in his ministry. The example narrates well, what I have tried to explain in this study.

54 Cf. e.g. HUGO SCHWENDENWEIN, "Der Geist der Gesetzgebung als dynamischer Interpretationsfaktor", *Revue de Droit Canonique* 22 (1972) 313-332; RICHARD POTZ, *Die Geltung kirchenrechtlicher Normen: Prolegomena zu einer kritisch-hermeneutischen Theorie des Kirchenrechts*, Kirche und Recht 15 (Wien: Herder, 1978); HELMUTH PREE, *Die evolutive Interpretation der Rechtsnorm im kanonischen Recht*, Linzer Universitätschriften, Monographien, 6 (Wien: Springer, 1980); WINFRIED SCHULZ, "Der Geist des Konzils als Interpretationsmaxime der kanonischen Rechtsordnung? Zur Auslegung der kodikarischen Interpretationsregeln", *Appollinaris* 55 (1982) 449-460.



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Associate Director, Centro Pro Unione



### Prof. Dr. Myriam Wijlens

Professor of Canon Law at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the Univ. of Erfurt, Germany · Consultant to the Synod of Bishops and Member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors

**Walking Together in Discerning the Holy Spirit:  
Canonical Possibilities, Opportunities and Challenges**



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**Matinée** animée par **Mgr Ian Ernest**  
Directeur – Centre Anglican de Rome

**Afternoon** moderated by **Teresa Francesca Rossi**  
Associate Director – Centro Pro Unione

🕒 09:00 – 10:15

Les liens étroits entre le renouveau de la synodalité et le renouveau du ministère épiscopal. Ecclésiologie et droit canonique

👤 Dr. Hervé Legrand, op · Professeur émérite Institut catholique de Paris

🕒 10:15 – 10:30

Pause

🕒 10:30 – 11:45

Le développement actuel de la synodalité au sein de l'Église catholique: promesses, difficultés, attentes. Un point de vue orthodoxe

👤 Archimandrite Dr. Amphilochios Miltos · Membre de la Commission mixte internationale pour le dialogue théologique entre les Églises catholique et orthodoxe

🕒 15:00 – 16:15

Walking Together in Discerning the Holy Spirit: Canonical Possibilities, Opportunities and Challenges

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Pause

🕒 16:15 – 16:30

🕒 16:30 – 17:45

Anglican Aspects of Synodality: Walking Together on the Way

👤 Right Reverend Christopher Hill · Retired Bishop of Guildford · President of the Ecclesiastical Law Society and member of ARCIC III

🕒 17:45 – 18:00

Conclusion

👤 James F. Puglisi, sa · Director – Centro Pro Unione

**Full Program**  
Symposium on Synodality



The Symposium will take place **IN PRESENCE** and **ONLINE**  
**IN PRESENCE SEATS** ▶ 35 attendees morning · 35 attendees afternoon  
**ONLINE WEBCAST TICKETS** ▶ 100 viewers morning · 100 viewers afternoon



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In the seventh century Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus (of Canterbury) established the diocesan boundaries of the Church of England and presided over the Synod of Hertford (672 or 673). He promulgated 10 Canons as part of his re-organisation of the Church. This included the behaviour of bishops, monastics, a common Easter and, importantly, provision for synods twice a year or at least once, no doubt reflecting the teaching of both Nicaea and Chalcedon. Theodore coming from Tarsus would be particularly conscious of the Byzantine conciliar tradition. The Synod of Hatfield (679), also under Theodore, condemned Monothelism, affirmed the first five Ecumenical Councils and the double procession of the Holy Spirit. Nine synods at Clovesho (location unknown) are reported through the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries in accordance with the earlier Synod of Hertford. These appear to have been attended by bishops from south of the river Humber (approximating to southern England). It is clear from the above that the decisions of ecumenical councils in relation to synodality were both known and implemented locally in England in the so-called Dark Ages.

*Ecclesia Anglicana* was by the 8<sup>th</sup> century divided into the two ecclesiastical provinces of Canterbury and York. Though precedence was finally awarded to Canterbury only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (by Pope Innocent VI), York exercised its separate provincial synodality from 735 after Archbishop Theodore's reorganisation of the English Church. From then on there were two provincial synods called the Convocations of Canterbury and York.

We have already noted that the Synod of Hatfield affirmed the first five Ecumenical Councils. Relating to synods this included Nicaea (325) canon 5 (two synods a year in each province); Chalcedon (451) Canon 19 repeated this indicating perhaps some non-observance; Nicaea II (787) perhaps following the Eastern Synod of Trullo (692) permitted in canon 6 one synod a year. Moving on to later Western General Councils, the reforming Innocent III convoked Lateran IV (1215) and reminded the Western church of the above canons and repeated the

obligation to hold provincial councils each year, called for synods in each diocese and that dioceses were to appoint suitable persons in investigate necessary reform and correction. In convoking Lateran IV, Innocent invited the bishops through the Legates to prepare topics for discussion and he extended invitations to priors and chapters of Cathedral churches and religious orders as well as civil authorities. Constance (1414-18) legislated for regular General Councils, every ten years. It also introduced the canonical principle of a two-thirds majority (in Papal elections). Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome (1431-45) repeated that General Councils should be regular and be published in provincial and diocesan synods, as well as the general chapters of religious orders. In addition it provided for the election of representatives for forthcoming General Councils. The decrees of Lateran V (1512-1517) were only published in 1521. Henry VIII had been King of England from 1509 and by the mid 1520ies he was already pondering on an annulment of his marriage to Katherine of Aragon. In any case in the last General Council which the pre-Reformation Church of England would have theoretically accepted there was no special discussion of synods. Nevertheless, up to and including Lateran V the Church of England received and was bound to implement the synodal teaching of the Councils and there is plenty of evidence that it did.<sup>1</sup> By the 10<sup>th</sup> century there is evidence of a pattern of *diocesan* synods, either in the cathedral or another prominent church, as provided by the laws of the Saxon King Edgar (960). Archbishop Dunstan of Canterbury (960-988) held a number of reforming councils. In the eleventh century, after the Norman Conquest (1066), the English Church was brought much closer to continental patterns, especially that of Normandy. A synod at Winchester (1070) deposed recalcitrant Saxon bishops or those who were married (Leofwine, Bishop of Lichfield-my own diocese!) The Italian Lanfranc, Abbot of Bec in Normandy became William 'the Conqueror's' Archbishop of Canterbury (1070 -1089) and held

1 See the Excursus on the question of whether *Ecclesia Anglicana* was directly subject to Roman jurisdiction.

councils at Winchester in 1072 and 1076 and London in 1075. In the thirteenth century English bishops attended Lateran IV, Archbishop Stephen Langton promulgated provincial constitutions at the Council of Oxford and diocesan Synods were held, including those of Worcester, Salisbury and Lincoln whose statutes are extant. So in England there was a regular synodical pattern, though this I want to stress that this was not unique and can be instanced throughout the Western Church at this time.

Now to the structure of the Convocations of Canterbury and York. Until 1225 the Convocations consisted only of prelates. But in that year Archbishop Stephen Langton additionally summoned proctors from cathedral and monastic chapters, perhaps following Lateran IV. In 1258 archdeacons were also convoked with (importantly) letters of proxy from their clergy. They represented them. With Archbishop Peckham in 1283 Convocation consisted of bishops, abbots, deans of cathedrals and archdeacons together with two representatives from the clergy of each diocese and one from each chapter in addition to the Dean. At first the bishops and lower clergy sat together but since the 15<sup>th</sup> century they have sat as an Upper and Lower House. (The bishops and mitred abbots were also Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords of the English Parliament). From an early date the Convocations were the means whereby the clergy taxed themselves; this later proved to be problematic. Though contentious as far as the English Crown was concerned this right of self-taxation was not surrendered until 1664, just under a century after the break with Rome. The normal method of legislation of the Convocations in the Middle Ages was by canons. During the reigns of Henry VIII, Mary I and Elizabeth I the Convocations were fully active. Synodal life at the time of the break with Rome was alive and well and had inherited many of the insights of the Conciliar Movement, summed up in the adage: 'in matters which touch all, all should have a voice'. It has also incidentally been argued by the Anglican social and political historian Ernest Baker (1874-1960) that there was a strong link between the development of representative

government in both Church and State and the representative government which emerged in the Dominican order in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly, St Dominic was a close friend of Archbishop Stephen Langton and Simon de Montfort who was responsible for organising the first representative English Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

## What Happened to Anglican Synodality at and after the break with Rome?

Henry VIII was both a Renaissance Prince and a tyrant. The first part of the English Reformation was however juridical rather than theological. In effect the King 'persuaded' both Parliament and the synods of the Church (effectively the Convocation of Canterbury) to 'agree' to the transfer of all Papal jurisdiction in England to himself. In Parliament the House of Commons included plenty of anti-clerical members who eventually benefitted from the despoiling of the monastic houses. It also included some of radical reformed convictions.<sup>3</sup> In the House of Lords there were conservative bishops as well as the more reform minded. But Henry became his own Pope and coerced both Parliament and Convocation, effectively using Thomas Cromwell as his ecclesiastical Vicegerent. In 1529 the Convocation began a conservative attempt at reform by drafting a number of canons. 26 Canons were eventually passed but the King ordered the acceptance of three articles in 1532 which forbade the convocations to enact canons *without Royal licence* and he further established a commission to draft a more extensive reform of canon law. Parliamentary force was later given to this project though its results were never enacted. What came to be called the Submission

2 Ernest Barker, *The Dominican Order and Convocation. A Study of the Growth of Representation in the Church during the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913) and ERNEST BARKER, *Church, State and Study: Essays* (London: Greenwood Press, 1930).

3 The latter kept a low profile while Henry lived, indeed one of his last Acts of Parliament (1539) was to publish Six Articles which *affirmed* transubstantiation, communion in one kind, clerical celibacy, private masses and sacramental confession.

of the Clergy was incorporated into an Act of Parliament which also cut off appeals to Rome. Between 1532 and 1543 seven Acts of Parliament cut the threads which bound England to Rome, though not in other ways changing doctrine. Crucially, the Act for the Submission of the Clergy (1534) put into Parliamentary statute the earlier coerced acceptance by the Convocation of the Royal Supremacy. This in effect made the Royal Supremacy that of the King *in Parliament* rather than personal. Amongst other things the Royal Supremacy thus enacted now by both Convocation and Parliament restricted the ability of the Convocations to promulge canons without royal licence and because the Convocations remained the instrument of the self-taxation of the clergy provision was made that from this time on the Sovereign would convoke the convocations rather than the two Archbishops. Thereafter, Parliament and Convocation (both as instruments of taxation) were convoked and prorogued (dismissed) simultaneously. This remained the case until 1966! At the close of Henry's reign the ancient synodical structures of the Church of England remained intact but considerably restrained by the Crown in Parliament. Henry died in 1547.

Under Edward VI doctrinal and liturgical changes were rapidly advanced, led by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.<sup>4</sup> In 1549 the English Prayer Book was authorised by Parliament, introduced into the House of Lords where the Lords Spiritual, who were divided, took the lead. An English Ordinal followed in 1550. Some conservatives such as bishops Gardiner of Winchester and Bonner of London were prepared to use the First Prayer Book. A second Prayer Book followed, also by Act of Parliament. New bishops of a more reformed stance were replacing the old guard and criticism of the first Prayer Book from Continental Reformers was taken seriously. Again the new Prayer Book was authorised by Parliament (1552) but was probably never used in many parts of

England as the boy King died in July 1553 and the succession passed to the Catholic Princess Mary. Though the Convocations had discussed the Prayer Books their authorisation had been by the King in Parliament, albeit with episcopal participation through the bishops in the House of Lords.

Queen Mary restored some exiled bishops of the old school and though the title 'Supreme Head' disappeared she nevertheless governed like her father through Parliament. In 1554 the Queen published a set of Royal Injunctions requiring the bishops to depose married clergy and amongst other things stone altars were restored. On condition that property previously belonging to the Church was not touched, Parliament repealed all the Reformation statutes since 1528 other than those concerned with the dissolution of the monasteries. In 1554 Cardinal Pole, himself a Catholic reformer and a favourite of the Queen, returned to England as Legate. Cranmer and others were tried for heresy and burnt. Under Mary, Pole governed the Church using his Legatine powers and communion with Rome was restored. Nevertheless, he continued a process of reform in part based on Counter-Reformation synods in Cologne (two), Mainz and Trier. His Legatine Constitutions were accepted synodically in 1556 and two years later Convocation attempted to give them further effect but this was curtailed by the death of both Cardinal Pole and his Queen.

Elizabeth I's first Parliament passed a new Act of Supremacy and an Act of Uniformity. The first revived her father's legislation against Rome, though carefully substituting the title 'Supreme Governor' for her father's 'Supreme Head'. The second reintroduced the 1552 version of the Book of Common Prayer, though with certain important modifications in a catholic, or at least Lutheran, direction with reference to eucharistic doctrine. Puritans said it 'smelled of Popery'. Royal Injunctions followed which enjoined kneeling for communion, clerical dress and bowing at the name of Jesus. Priests were forbidden to marry unless their future spouse was approved by the bishop (and two Justices). Some catholic minded bishops went into exile. Matthew Parker was

4 There was already discussion in Convocation about the Mass in 1547. Reform of the Breviary was also discussed there. A committee of bishops of both traditional and reformed persuasion was established. They were not unanimous.

nominated to Canterbury and issued injunctions or Advertisements (1566) in his own name (rather than the Queen who declined to sign them but must have approved them). They insisted on the maintenance of some vestments and kneeling for communion; the Vestrarian controversy ensued. The Convocations meanwhile (from 1563) had been reviewing articles of belief which resulted eventually in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. The Preface to the Articles established that they had been approved both synodically and by the Crown (1562 and 1571). At the same time the project of revising the canon law was also revived supported by almost all the bishops, but the Queen refused to approve the draft canons. The Convocation of Canterbury approved a small number of canons in 1597 which were approved by the Queen. The project of a completely revised canon law did at last come to fruition with the accession of James I to the throne of England in 1603 (he had been King of Scotland since 1567). A set of 141 canons was approved by the bishops and clergy of the Canterbury Convocation 'at their Synod beginning in AD 1603' and equally approved by King James. (The York Convocation approved them in 1606!) They were *not* submitted to Parliament for approval. Canons 139-141 are entitled *Authority of Synods*. Canon 139 was entitled *A National Synod the Church Representative* and it spoke of the true Church of England *by representation* (emphasis mine). Canon 140 affirmed that absence from a synod did not invalidate it. Canon 141 censured those who devalued synods. All three canons concluded with a penalty of excommunication for those who rejected them. These three canons together represent a clear affirmation of representative synodality at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, despite an equally clear affirmation of the Royal Supremacy. A further set of canons of a more discursive theological nature, against among other things anti-nomianism, though accepted in 1606, were not given Royal Assent so did not become law.

In the reign of Charles I the Canons were re-published with a royal Declaration and Irish canons were passed by the convocations of the *four*

Irish ecclesiastical provinces in 1634-5. These were modifications of the English Canons. Their royal preface speaks of the attendance of 'our bishops, deans of our cathedral churches, archdeacons, chapters and colleges and the rest of the clergy within our Kingdom of Ireland'. The 'clergy' were presumably represented by proxies rather than all being present. A more radical adaptation of the English Canons was drafted by Archbishop William Laud of Canterbury for Scotland, which King Charles attempted to impose, but these were rejected by the (Reformed) General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1638. Laud's Scottish liturgy of 1637 had suffered a similar fate.

In 1640 Charles I and Laud attempted further canons through the convocation designed to remedy abuses in the ecclesiastical courts; they were sensible reforms. Parliament contested the Convocation's right to pass canons without their approval and this opposition became known as the 'Grand Remonstrance', which included the charge that the Convocations had 'turned into a provincial synod'. It described the canons as 'pretended'. Note the Parliamentary opposition to a synod. The English Civil War followed in 1642. By 1645 the Church of England had been abolished along with episcopacy together with the whole body of canon law, the ecclesiastical law and the Convocations themselves. Charles was executed in 1649; Laud had been beheaded in 1645.

## Synodality after the Commonwealth Republic

With the Restoration of the Monarchy under Charles II in 1660 there followed two years later the complete restoration (in England and Wales) of the Church of England with both episcopacy, canon law, ecclesiastical courts, Anglican liturgy and the synodical structure of the Convocations. But sharp debate with the Presbyterians, Puritans and Independents continued. Some were more moderate and favoured earlier (1641) proposals by Archbishop James Usher (of Armagh) entitled *A Reduction of Episcopacy unto the Form of Synodical Government*. This is the first instance, I am aware of, of the use of the now common Anglican term Synodical Government. Though the pre-Interregnum exclusive structures of the



Church had been restored, England had in fact by now become religiously pluriform. After initially restrictive Acts of Parliament there was eventual toleration for Protestants; Roman Catholic toleration had to wait until at least the end of the 18th century.

With James II, a catholic and unpopular for this reason, panic and wild stories of the persecution of heretics fanned revolutionary flames. James fled the country after William of Orange had invaded England and become de facto King (1688). Not all the Anglican bishops and clergy felt they could be disloyal to their oath of obedience to James, despite his Catholicism; these were removed from office and became the Non-Jurors. Under William and his Queen, Mary, the Convocations attempted to resume their synodical work. This had lapsed because the clergy were no longer taxing themselves and for this reason had not been convoked by the Crown. But the lower house (clergy) and the upper house (bishops) were in constant opposition, both for doctrinal and political reasons. This came to a head in 1717 after much previous controversy. The clergy were largely 'Tory' or orthodox, royalist, conservative high churchmen. The bishops appointed by the Crown at the time of the Whig political ascendancy tended to theological liberalism, toleration and particularly Erastianism. Benjamin Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, preached before King George I against the notion of the visible church. The Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury condemned the sermon and to save Hoadly's synodical condemnation the King, persuaded by his ministers for King George I spoke nor English prorogued (dismissed) Convocation. It was not to meet formally after that until 1852. Thus ended for one hundred and thirty-five years an active synodality in the Church of England. The only relevant thing to note in this period is that when the Church of Ireland was merged with the Church of England (as the united Church of England and Ireland) at the time when the Irish Parliament was also united to Westminster, the Irish (Anglican) Church asked that the Convocations of the four ecclesiastical provinces should be united to the English Convocations in a single Synod. This was

rejected. The English Convocations though not abolished were effectively silenced and became dormant.

With the Oxford Movement developing in England from 1833 under Keble and Newman there arose agitation for the revival of working Convocations, together with much legal and ecclesiastical interest in early English synodality. Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (of Oxford), son of the anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce, was the leading episcopal campaigner for the revival. The Canterbury Convocation met from 1854 and York from 1861. They proceeded to draft canons but Canterbury and York could not always agree and only one was promulgated. In 1921 two canons were passed concerning the 'Representation of the Clergy' in the lower houses of Canterbury and York, revised in 1936 and 1961 (and on clergy discipline in 1948). The whole of the old Code was replaced by a new Code of Canons (1964, 1969) and is regularly updated. In this new code Section H with three detailed canons concern representation to the various synods of the Church.

### **Clergy and Laity in Synodality**

Until the end of the 19th century lay people in England had a voice in Church affairs through Parliament; indeed up until the mid-19th century only members of the Church of England could be elected to Parliament. The House of Commons had included zealous reformers at the Reformation; the House of Lords included all the diocesan bishops, including conservatives and reformers in the 16th century and Tory and Whig (High Churchmen and Erastians) in the 17th to 19th centuries. Even before the Reformation ecclesiastical matters had sometimes been dealt with by Parliamentary Acts rather than in the church synods proper. An outstanding later example of the lay voice as the voice of Christian conscience, even of the *sensus fidelium*, was William Wilberforce's parliamentary campaign for the abolition of the slave trade and the condemnation of slavery itself. But by the late 19th century less and less parliamentary time could be afforded for strictly ecclesiastical matters by an increasingly secular Parliament. So where was a lay voice to be heard?

In 1885 the Canterbury Convocation accepted a house of laity as a consultative adjunct. But not on matters of faith and doctrine. York followed in 1892. Archbishop Benson of Canterbury tried unsuccessfully to amalgamate the two Convocations and the two lay houses to create a representative synodical structure for the whole Church of England. But from 1896 all the houses could 'unofficially' meet together. A Representative Council did come into existence in 1904. It did not replace the existing Convocations; they became part of it. In 1919 an Enabling Act (of Parliament) renamed the Representative Council as the General Assembly of the Church of England and gave it most importantly direct powers of presenting Measures for Royal Assent provided an Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament did not object. Parliament could not amend these Church Measures only approve or disapprove. The Parliamentary 'shackling' of synodality was slowly being undone. Even so, spectacularly, the long-awaited revision of the Prayer Book was rejected by Parliament in 1927/28, largely through the votes of Northern Ireland Presbyterians who suspected it of 'Popery' because of its eucharistic liturgy. Scottish Presbyterian members of Parliament correctly abstained.

The Church Assembly consisted of the four houses of the Convocations (two episcopal and two clerical) and a single House of Laity. Meanwhile Diocesan Conferences and Ruridecanal Conferences of clergy and laity had begun to meet at diocesan and more local levels. The lay members of the diocesan conference elected representatives to the national body. It is worth noting that the involvement of the laity in governance was in part spurred on by the need to by-pass Parliament. This required parliamentary agreement first! So procedures were devised similar to Parliament including an elected lay-body. ARCIC III touches on a better ecclesiological rationale when it speaks of shared understanding of the three gifts of Christ to his Church: the office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, corresponding to Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. These gifts are given to the

whole church not simply the ordained. Though prominent in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which moved away from understanding governance as exclusively clerical, the three-fold understanding of Christ is also deeply embedded in both Anglican teaching and piety.

In 1969 a General Synod of the Church of England was created to achieve more effective and coherent Synodality. Some powers of Convocations were taken over by the Synod but the Convocations continue to exist as part of the Synod. Diocesan and Deanery Synods were also created, the latter being the electoral base for the national House of Laity. In 1974 the Worship and Doctrine Measure gave the General Synod full power to regulate by Canon all matters of worship, liturgy and doctrine, though Measures still have to be scrutinized by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. All matters concerning worship, doctrine and liturgy must have a two-thirds majority in the Synod and in addition be in a form previously accepted by the House of Bishops. The provision of a two-thirds majority for worship, doctrine and liturgy was consciously adopted from the 'good practice advice' of the canonists of the conciliar movement in contradistinction to the Westminster Parliament practice of a bare majority. The House of Bishops however is not made up of all bishops, only the diocesans (ordinaries) plus some suffragans (auxiliary bishops) elected by themselves to the House of Bishops. This has recently been questioned.

The Church of England has therefore a continuous history of synodical structure from well before the Reformation, though not without interruption. Nevertheless, it has continually developed. At the Reformation royal power effectively controlled but never abolished it. It was abolished during the Commonwealth then restored at the Restoration. It was effectively suppressed but not abolished for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and half the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was then renewed and developed by the addition of representative laity in addition to representative clergy with the bishops.

### Wider Anglican Synodality

I have concentrated in some detail on the story of synodality in England. This is because this is what I know a little about. The detailed history of synodality in the Anglican Communion would require many lectures! As, however, the Anglican Communion grew, in part on the coat-tails of the British Empire the new churches developed their synodality by both continuing the tradition of the synodality of the Church of England but nevertheless rejecting its constraints. In the USA after Independence the synodical structures of the Episcopal Church at least in part reflected the federal constitution of the USA. Despite its name the episcopate in the Episcopal Church was more constrained by democratic checks and balances than in the Church of England, indeed it was not certain at the beginning after the American War of Independence that there would be bishops at all. In the continuing British Colonies the synodal tradition became stronger with the recognition in the 19th century that the Church in the colonies was not established by law as in England. Bishops like Augustus Selwyn of New Zealand and especially Bishop Broughton of Australia saw that unfettered synodality required casting off the chains of the English Royal Supremacy. The necessary growth of the Church required the recognition that the creation of new dioceses did not depend on the Crown but, to quote bishop Broughton, 'the Provincial Synod (which) possesses (an) inherent power of sub-dividing dioceses'. The story of Archbishop Robert Gray of Cape Town is instructive. In 1861 the Bishop of Natal, John Colenso, was accused of heresy by his Metropolitan, Archbishop Gray, who subsequently deposed him. Colenso however appealed to the Crown through the Privy Council, which in 1865 found in his favour, repeating an earlier precedent. Despite this, or indeed because of it, Gray went on to establish the voluntary authority of the Provincial Synod and what became the Church of the Province of Southern Africa became an autonomous Church of the Anglican Communion not an overseas branch of the Church of England. 'Colonial' churches were not established by law as the Church of England

and necessarily developed synodical structures of authority. They took from the Church of England an ecclesiology and synodality which was shorn of the restrictions of the English Royal Supremacy. The Colenso affair was a major factor in the reason for calls from all over the then colonial Churches and from the USA for a 'Pan Anglican Synod'. This became the first Lambeth Conference of 1867. Resolution IV set out a hierarchy of synods and a committee report spelt out in detail the guiding principles for diocesan and provincial synods, including participation of laity, voting by 'houses', the presidency of bishops and representative clergy in large dioceses. Today the Anglican Communion Office continues to lay down synodical requirements when new provincial churches are created. Without the drama of the 'Colenso Affair' this pattern of synodical government has been multiplied throughout the Anglican Communion but detailed description is beyond the scope of this paper.

In fact this is not necessary because a group of Anglican Communion canonists from around the world have produced a compilation called *The Principles of Canon Law Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion*. (It is currently being updated). It is not itself a universal code of Anglican canon law; with juridically autonomous churches that would be an ecclesiological impossibility. Nevertheless, in a modest way it tries to do what in the 12<sup>th</sup> century Gratian's *Decretum* intended: a 'concordia discordantium canonum' (a harmonious collection of discordant canons). Principle 15 on Ecclesiastical Polity states for all Anglican Churches that: a church is an autonomous unit of jurisdiction; that bishops, clergy and laity share authority in synodical government; that episcopal leadership is fundamental as is also episcopal collegiality. Principle 18 is entitled *Representative Government* and begins with the conciliar principle that in matters that touch all, all should have a voice. It states that: synods consist of representative bishops, clergy and laity; that houses, orders or other cameral systems represent episcopal, clerical and lay character; that diocesan bishops are members by

virtue of their office, clergy and laity by virtue of election, appointment or admission. Principle 22 is entitled Lay Participation. Lay people are entitled to participate in the government of a Church; communicant status is required for such participation; and it is governed by appropriate law or regulation. All this represents the intentions of the first Lambeth Conference as worked into the actual canon laws and constitutions of the diverse churches of the Communion. They are understood to be common to the whole Communion. They can be seen in principle in the complex history of the development of synodality I have outlined in above bit before and after the break of communion with Rome in the 16th century.

Open questions for the future of the Anglican Communion, not least in its present unhappy state of division, are the relationship between the exclusively episcopal Lambeth Conference and the equally non-binding Anglican Consultative Council (with membership of bishops, clergy and laity) and the relation of the episcopal Primates Meeting to both. None of these are strictly speaking Synods of the Church. None of these have binding, canonical authority; the ACC includes the word consultative in its own title. The Lambeth Conference is also not determinative. And yet although it is usually said that it was never intended that it should be, this is not the case. Recent scholarship has shown that Archbishop Longley prior to calling the First Lambeth Conference in 1867 did speak of it as a synod. It was only after consideration of the promulgation of canons was seen to potentially clash with the Royal Prerogative that it was called a conference, with resolutions rather than canons. Further, the first LC Resolutions IV and VIII (the latter explicitly) speak of a 'Synod of the Anglican Communion'. It also set up working committees, one of which set out the structure for a Communion-wide appellate doctrinal tribunal. It spoke of the matter as of great difficulty but recognised that it might well be required. It was never proceeded with although the committee did not think the difficulties were 'insuperable'. What is clear however is that the sense of synodality was of the greatest importance to the

first LC. Synodality surely still has many things to say in relation to the contemporary Anglican Communion and, as contemporary RC debate as well as Anglican history shows, despite many vicissitudes synodality refuses to be extinguished.

## Excursus

Was the Church in England subject to direct Papal jurisdiction before the Reformation? There has been an Anglican myth that the 'British' or 'Celtic' Church and later the *Ecclesia Anglicana* was a kind of autonomous western Patriarchate. Henrician Reformation parliamentary statutes claim this in terms of 'this Realm of England is an Empire', that is an independent, sovereign state. This was aided and abetted by the Tudor 'common law' lawyers against the canon lawyers, or 'civilians'. Under Queen Elizabeth, Archbishop Matthew Parker of Canterbury began assiduously to collect ancient manuscripts from the dissolved monasteries and from Cathedral Chapters in order to bolster this myth academically.

The myth of an autonomous *Ecclesia Anglicana* did not die out in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there was much agitation about the reform of the Ecclesiastical Courts in England which still exercised jurisdiction over marriage, probate, defamation and (interestingly) nautical law by reason of the necessity of working with Roman civil law practice internationally. Bishop Stubbs of Oxford (1825-1901) previously Regius Professor of History at Oxford and author of a definitive constitutional history of England, contributed to the historical introduction of a report to reform the Church of England's ecclesiastical courts. In this he maintained that in the Middle Ages Roman Canon law was not binding on the English clergy unless it had been re-enacted by English Synods. F. W. Maitland (1850-1906) a Cambridge legal historian of equal distinction proved otherwise, with bishop Stubbs' own later agreement. More recent historiography, notably by Richard Helmholz has subsequently qualified and nuanced the Stubbs-Maitland debate but not overturned Maitland's verdict. The point of this excursus is to note that Roman Canon Law, including that contained in the General Councils

of the Western Church which took place after the Great Schism with the East was both known and acted upon in England prior to the Reformation, including provision for synods. In this England was in no way unique and provincial and local

synods can be documented from all over Europe, including territories where there were more than one ecclesiastical province such as Ireland and France.



*Rev. Christopher Hill lecturing at the Symposium*

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CENTRO PRO UNIONE

## Symposium on Synodality

Afternoon moderated by Teresa Francesca Rossi  
Associate Director, Centro Pro Unione

**Right Reverend Christopher Hill**  
Retired Bishop of Guildford · President of the Ecclesiastical Law Society and Member of ARCIC III

**Anglican Aspects of Synodality: Walking Together on the Way**

Organized by

**JAMES F. PUGLISI, SA**

Director, Centro Pro Unione



Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione

Thursday · 14 October 2021

## Aspects of Synodality: To Make a Beginning

### Concluding Remarks

The English poet, Thomas Stern Eliot in his famous work, the *Four Quartets* makes an very pertinent observation by making a case for the generative potential of an ending:

*“What we call the beginning is often the end.  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from”*.<sup>1</sup>

“To make an ending is to make a beginning”. As we come to the close of this symposium, we might say that we have come to the end of our deliberations. What I would like to propose is that we are just beginning. Hence as the poet says “Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning...” So what will we take away from this gathering of various traditions and what will inspire us to take action and generate new energies and write new histories of our “journey on the way”?

In this place where we gathered, there is a long standing tradition for events that have happened here to have a far reaching impact. During the Second Vatican Council the invited observers and the *periti* would meet almost weekly, – here in this very historic room of the *Collegio innocenziano*, to discuss and share ideas about what was happening on the other side of the Tiber in St. Peter’s basilica at the Council. So many great discussions and insights were generated here and some of these found their way back across the Tiber to find a place in the documents of the Council. What took place in this hall was sometimes referred to as the “council on the other side of the Tiber”. I would not suggest that what took place here in this symposium will find its way into the synod’s final document.

<sup>1</sup> T.S. ELIOT, “Little Gidding” in *Four Quartets*, fifth movement.

### MEDIA

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However, what we did hear today certainly should not be lost as the church sets out on the synodical path.

The idea of holding this symposium, precisely as the synodical experience begins here in Rome, was aimed at exploring aspects of the whole process so that we may begin to have a clear vision and understanding of the task that Pope Francis has given to the Church. This symposium was an attempt to understand the theological, ecclesiological, canonical and ecumenical dimensions of what the synodical experience has been in the past and needs to be in the present. Moreover, it also raised awareness to what has not worked in the past or is obsolete for the present. The impact of the Second Vatican Council has made an enormous difference in what needs to be re-thought about how synods are celebrated in a post Vatican II church.

What I would like to do here in this conclusion is to raise up some points that I heard that might urge us to further reflection. The first important fact that Bishop Christopher pointed out in his presentation was that for the medieval literature it should be noted that there many references reminding bishops of the necessity to hold synods. Even though it may be said that the normal way of deciding important matters was in councils or synods, it appears that the practice of holding regular diocesan synods had fallen by the wayside and was not part of the ethos of how the local churches lived. In much of ecclesiastical literature it should be noted that if there is constant need to repeat the same obligation to



hold synods, this probably meant that synods were not being celebrated. Therefore my question is: will we repeat history again?

The observation that Profs. Legrand and Wijlens made about the fact that we may be conceptualizing and talking about what a synod is and what a synod should do, and so forth, risks a possible lack of translating into the actual practice of becoming a synodical church. It is a big jump from the theory to the practice of a synodical life especially if some other important factors are not put into play.

This should bring us back to the fundamentals, namely the primary one is that we need to start with the realization of the church as the baptized people of God. The recognition of the baptismal reality of the church that is realized in the Trinitarian communion in the edification of the Body of Christ in concrete spaces, times and cultures. This means that there is a co-responsibility that needs to be taken at all levels. First, by those who are responsible for the building up of the Body due to their ordination. Then by all the baptized who are responsible for bearing witness to the Gospel because of their baptism. Hence there is no place for competition or conflict of roles but rather a holy collaboration and coordination that is required, thanks to the common baptism that both, ministers and faithful, share.

On one level, those who have the responsibility for the building up of the Body of Christ have a formational role to play, namely the preparation and oversight of forming, with the help of other ministers and laity, Christian men and women who know what their responsibility is for the witnessing to the Gospel and the mission that Christ gives them to be a prophetic, priestly and holy people.

A synodical church therefore is a local church where no part of the people of God is excluded but that all learn how to bear their proper responsibility. Therefore, the role of Christian formation is foundational. This must happen at all levels. It happens at the primary level of the parish; it happens at the diocesan level with

the bishop who takes a long, loving look on the future of the portion of the people of God which has been entrusted to him. This illustrates how fundamental it is that the church will be built up locally in communion from within. Hence the synodical form of what we do and who we are is born out of a profound awareness of baptism.

Prof. Wijlens noted that “the hope is that the synod will assist each and every baptized person – which again includes the bishops and the other clergy – to discover more deeply the meaning of baptism. As pope Francis put it during a day of reflection before the opening of the synod: ‘In the Church, everything starts with baptism. Baptism, the source of our life, gives rise to the equal dignity of the children of God, albeit in the diversity of ministries and charisms. Consequently, all the baptized are called to take part in the Church’s life and mission. [...] Enabling everyone to participate is an essential ecclesial duty! All the baptized, for baptism is our identity card.’”<sup>2</sup>

From the Catholic perspective, we talk about the reception of the Second Vatican Council. We need, moreover, to affirm honestly that which was not successful, so that we may correct our course accordingly. Does this mean calling for another Council? I think not. It does however mean seeking what needs to be done by asking the “what” is not being received and the “why” it is not received. We do this above all, at the **local** level. That is what Pope Francis, as a pastor, is trying to do. This reality, namely, the reception of the Council, remains a challenge to each everyone of us to assume. First by all those who have been baptized and then by the ordained who have the responsibility for the formation of those entrusted to him.

Next we need to consider what it is that we do in a synodical structure, –in living a synodical life, –in journeying together as pilgrims. We forget the fact that we, the church, are moving to the heavenly Jerusalem which is

<sup>2</sup> FRANCIS, Address for the Opening of the Synod on October 9, 2021. See <https://bit.ly/3sXVdCC> URL Retrieved: 21 October 2021

an eschatological reality. This is what synodality must be grounded in. Therefore, our structures should not be considered to be permanent and unchanging. These structures are at the service of a much greater mission,— they are for the sake of the Gospel. I think that we often forget this last point, *for the sake of the Gospel*. The structures are not for ourselves and for our glory, but for the sake of the Gospel. This is what I think Pope Francis meant when he said that synodality is a calling the church together – to be a missionary people. This then is another challenge that is not only presented to Catholics or Methodists or Orthodox or Anglicans, but it is laid at the feet of all of the baptized. This challenge helps us to realize our solidarity with all the baptized and our communion, even though not yet perfect, is a communion in the Trinitarian life of our God who calls us into being.

Another point that struck me was the discussion on methods of taking decision. Being a member of a religious community, for instances concerning fraternal and communitarian matters, we never decide by taking votes but by discernment, except for those matters that canon law requires a formal vote. Discernment is not a matter of choosing my brother's or sister's will over my will but rather what is God's will for us in a particular matter, at this time and in this space. Discernment is not an easy matter but we need to recognize that it is the action of the Spirit.

I am reminded of Acts 15 when there was the first serious crisis between Christians of Jewish origin and those of non-Jewish origin. Peter writes that he recognized that the uncircumcised received the same Spirit as he did; they received the same salvation as he did. The task is therefore to recognize where the Spirit is present and acting.

We know that the reality of discernment is rooted in the principle that the Spirit recognizes the Spirit. There where the Spirit is present there is life since the Spirit is the Spirit of life-giving, creator God. God as Creator sends the Spirit to bring life out of chaos, out of darkness and, even, out of death itself. Hence in this synodical journey, as we move towards that future to which we are being called by God, to that unity of believers, we

need to be prepared to see and discern where the Spirit of life is and to be ready to *carpe diem*, seize the opportunity to recognize that same Spirit wherever it is active.

Then in this context, we may realize that prayer has an important part of the synodical process. Dr. Wijlens reminded us that the Synod began with hearing the Word of God, by penetrating the mystery of God in silence, and then in prayer. So it is prayer that opens the vision that God is giving to us. God is shaping the Church that will be one; God is gifting us because unity is a part of God's reality. We then must be faithful, loving servants of the will of God.

Finally, we talked about the Eucharist being the central moment of the synodical reality. Our friend the metropolitan of Pergamon, John Zizioulas has shown that ecclesiology in the New Testament is not a theoretical discipline but rather a concrete reality. Every time we find the word *ekklesia* in the New Testament, we find that the faithful are gathered for a specific purpose: to praise and glorify the author of life, to hear the Word of God proclaimed and to break the bread and share the cup of benediction given to us, once and for all by Jesus. Therefore this understanding of the eucharistic action as *sacrificium laudis* leads us into the understanding of Jesus' sacrifice, namely a life of total obedience to the will of the Father, that eventually led to his death on the cross. We are, in turn, challenged to ask if our sacrifice is one of obedience to the same will? Tertullian, when speaking about the eucharistic sacrifice is actually speaking about the prayers that are being offered,<sup>3</sup> namely the eucharistic *anaphora*. This explains why prayer and especially eucharistic prayer is fundamental for becoming a synodical church.

The theological importance for reflection for what this means and is applied to our structures which are being changed since the Spirit is bringing new life to these same structures. Fr. Congar has taught that the renewal of the structures of the church is accomplished by the Spirit since it is the Spirit who gifts them to

3 Cf., TERTULLIAN, *De oratione* Cap. 28-29; CCL 1, 273-274.



the church.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of these structures is for the articulation of the Gospel project which explains why in the course of history the church has instituted changes so that the Gospel may be witnessed to in the best way.

If we hope to have the faithful people responsibly involved in the life of the local church, then those who are responsible for their formation will have an important role. However, in a church fully responsible for its mission all of the People of God must be involved. The *communio fidelium* is not seen in opposition to the *communio hierarchica* because this communion consists of all the people of God, each according to each one's role and gifts. Mutual accountability is necessary for the synodical structure to function correctly since all members of the People of God, including all the bishops and the bishop of Rome are obliged to maintain communion with one another and with God.

Finally, the solicitude for the common mission of the church therefore is to be exhibited not only by a part of the baptized faithful but by all the baptized be they Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Reformed and so forth. It is that baptismal reality whereby the Spirit seeks new places to plant the seed of God's love and desire for all of God's creation to be at one with its Creator. In the end, the synodical church has the primary objective of the unity of the communion shared by all the baptized.

More than 60 years ago, in this very lecture hall of the Collegio innocenziano, observers from various ecclesial traditions took part in a "synodical fashion" in the Second Vatican Council.<sup>5</sup> This was done not only by their presence but by sharing their witness to the lived Gospel of Jesus Christ, as members of the People of God. The fruitful telling of their faith journey commingled with that of the *periti* and eventually with the Council Fathers themselves in their discernment of the Spirit that enabled the Catholic church to embrace the ecumenical movement.

4 See YVES M.-J. CONGAR, *Je crois en l'Esprit saint. T. III: Le Fleuve de Vie (Ap 22, 1) coule en Orient et en Occident*, (Paris: Cerf, 1980) 343-351.

5 On the role of the observers, see YVES CONGAR, *Le Concile de Vatican II. Son Église. Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, Théologie historique, 71 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984) 91-98.



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**Fr. James Puglisi, sa**  
Director · Centro Pro Unione

Conclusion Symposium  
Praying together · Prier ensemble

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### Presentazione del Nuovo Testamento Greco-Italiano

► **Giacomo PUGLISI**, sa  
*saluto e introduzione*

**S**iamo molto lieti di dare ospitalità a questo evento così importante. Questa sala, nella sua storia, ha visto tantissimi eventi di rilievo, soprattutto sotto il profilo ecumenico e anche biblico. Durante il Concilio Vaticano II, in questa sala, una volta o due alla settimana, i periti del Concilio e gli osservatori invitati da papa Giovanni XXIII s'incontravano, parlavano, discutevano e formulavano idee, alcune delle quali sono state riportate nelle discussioni dei Padri conciliari. Un esempio spesso citato è la formulazione del principio della "Gerarchia della verità".

Autorevoli esponenti dalle varie tradizioni ecclesiali hanno parlato in questa sala: uno per tutti, molto interessante per quanto riguarda il tema di questa sera, fu il prof. Oscar Cullmann, grandissimo studioso della Bibbia. Poi non possiamo dimenticare padre Yves Congar che è stato architetto di molti dei documenti del Vaticano II, soprattutto per quanto riguarda la tradizione biblica, l'ecumenismo e l'unità dei cristiani.

Quindi il Centro Pro Unione è molto lieto di continuare questa tradizione con eventi come questo, con persone come voi, interessate prima di tutto allo studio critico della Parola di Dio e alla sua diffusione. La missione dell'evangelizzazione che è stata affidata a noi da Gesù è responsabilità di tutti i battezzati, siamo quindi felici di avere l'opportunità di presentare la nuova traduzione greco-italiana del Nuovo Testamento.

Lascio la parola ora al nostro direttore associato, la dottoressa Teresa Francesca Rossi, che introdurrà la scaletta di questa sera.

Grazie, di nuovo, per la vostra presenza.

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► **Teresa Francesca ROSSI**  
*presentazione scaletta*

Vi ricordo il programma della serata: ci onorano della loro presenza e apriranno l'incontro Sua Eminenza il Cardinale Gualtiero Bassetti, presidente della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, e la Diacona Alessandra Trotta, moderatrice della Tavola Valdese. Seguiranno due brevi interventi del presidente della Società Biblica Italiana, il professor don Luca Mazzinghi, docente presso la Pontificia Università Gregoriana e il professor pastore Eric Noffke, docente presso la Facoltà Valdese di Teologia. Al termine avremo anche il piacere di ascoltare qualche parola dal dottor Mario Cignoni, curatore del volume che viene presentato questa sera, docente presso la Facoltà Valdese di Teologia e segretario generale della Società Biblica in Italia.

Buon ascolto!

📻 **Audio Podcast**  
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► **S.Em. Cardinale Gualtiero BASSETTI**  
*presidente della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana*

Ringrazio prima di tutto la Società biblica in Italia per questo invito; ringrazio in particolare l'attuale presidente, il prof. d. Luca Mazzinghi, e il precedente presidente, il prof. pastore Eric Noffke e, assieme a loro, Mario Cignoni, curatore di questa edizione. Un saluto con amicizia in modo davvero speciale alla diacona Alessandra Trotta, moderatrice della Tavola valdese, che

presenta insieme a me questo libro. Vorrei notare, come si vede anche dal risvolto della copertina di questo libro, che la chiesa valdese, assieme alla Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, ha reso possibile la pubblicazione di quest'opera. Un saluto anche ai membri delle diverse chiese e confessioni cristiane che partecipano come soci o come amici alla vita della Società biblica e che oggi sono qui presenti, sia di persona che a distanza. Un saluto anche a S.E. Chris Trott, ambasciatore del Regno Unito presso la Santa Sede

Il testo che stasera viene presentato non contiene di per sé novità, dal punto di vista dei tre testi che vi sono offerti, quello greco e le due traduzioni italiane; lascio qui da parte il testo greco del Nuovo Testamento - ne parleranno gli specialisti! - e mi soffermo sulle due traduzioni italiane che questo libro mette in parallelo sulla stessa pagina. Questa è a mio parere la novità più significativa. Si tratta come già sapete della traduzione ufficiale e liturgica della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, ovvero della Bibbia CEI 2008, e della nuova Bibbia italiana della Riforma. In questo modo, cattolici e membri delle diverse chiese protestanti e riformate in Italia possono leggere le rispettive traduzioni nello stesso libro e - per chi ne ha la possibilità - metterle a confronto con l'originale greco.

Si tratta di una proposta dal grande valore ecumenico. Mi permetto di ricordare a questo riguardo quanto Benedetto XVI scriveva nella esortazione apostolica *Verbum Domini* a proposito del valore ecumenico della lettura e dello studio in comune della Bibbia: "ascoltare insieme la Parola di Dio, praticare la lectio divina della Bibbia, lasciarsi sorprendere dalla novità, che mai invecchia e mai si esaurisce, della Parola di Dio, superare la nostra sordità per quelle parole che non si accordano con le nostre opinioni o pregiudizi, ascoltare e studiare nella comunione dei credenti di tutti i tempi: tutto ciò costituisce un cammino da percorrere per raggiungere l'unità della fede, come risposta all'ascolto della Parola" (VD 46). Sì, se prendiamo sul serio queste parole, si tratta davvero di lasciarsi sorprendere dalla novità della Parola di Dio e dalla capacità di non essere sordi di fronte a ciò che mette in crisi i nostri pregiudizi e che non si accorda con le nostre opinioni.

Questa pubblicazione, fatta assieme dalle diverse chiese e confessioni cristiane che partecipano

alla vita della Società biblica in Italia, ci ricorda come siamo ormai lontani da tempi davvero tristi, quando in un passato non troppo distante le diverse Società bibliche nel mondo venivano aspramente osteggiate dalla Chiesa cattolica perché diffondevano traduzioni non autorizzate e soprattutto perché mettevano in mano la Bibbia a tutti: di riflesso, la Chiesa cattolica veniva considerata come nemica della Parola di Dio e combattuta per questo. Il Concilio Vaticano II - parlo qui dal punto di vista della Chiesa cattolica - ha rappresentato una svolta decisiva. Lo Spirito ha fatto sì che queste inimicizie, senz'altro contro il Vangelo, siano ormai superate.

Collaborare assieme tra le diverse chiese cristiane per diffondere la Parola di Dio è un passo senz'altro fondamentale per il cammino ecumenico. Come scrive l'autore della lettera agli Ebrei, "la Parola di Dio è viva, efficace e più tagliente di ogni spada a doppio taglio" (Eb 4,12). L'efficacia della Parola va nel senso che essa ci provoca e ci spinge a convertirci e a crescere così nella fedeltà alla Parola stessa. Del resto è questo il principio che sta alla base della vita di Lutero, quando dinanzi all'imperatore Carlo V, il 17 aprile del 1521, dichiarò che la sua coscienza era "prigioniera della Parola di Dio". Scopriamo allora alla luce della Bibbia tutto ciò che ci unisce, come cristiani, cominciando proprio dal testo stesso del Nuovo Testamento.

Quanto a ciò che ci divide, non dimentichiamo che l'apostolo Paolo, nel celebre capitolo 12 della prima lettera ai Corinzi, accostando la comunità dei credenti al corpo di Cristo, riconosce da un lato l'unità di quel corpo attorno al Cristo, dall'altro la diversità delle varie membra, dei vari carismi che lo Spirito è in grado di suscitare. Il cammino ecumenico va così nella direzione della ricerca dell'unità, ma anche del riconoscimento del valore delle differenze all'interno di un unico corpo. Così come nel Nuovo Testamento Paolo e Giovanni sono molto diversi tra loro, come anche Paolo e Giacomo, per ricordare solo qualche esempio.

Scrivono papa Francesco nella *Evangelii Gaudium*: "E se realmente crediamo nella libera e generosa azione dello Spirito, quante cose possiamo imparare gli uni dagli altri! Non si tratta solamente di ricevere informazioni sugli altri per conoscerli meglio, ma di raccogliere quello che lo Spirito ha seminato in loro come un dono anche per noi" (EG 246).



del metodo, l'approccio, la fedeltà alle fonti, l'attenzione e la sensibilità con cui si trattano.

Ma non si tratta solo di questo. Vi è anche la convinzione del valore culturale della Bibbia in sé. Ci crediamo profondamente e lo abbiamo dimostrato finanziando altri progetti come quelli portati avanti dall'associazione Bibbia per incoraggiare la conoscenza dei testi biblici all'interno delle scuole, non in un'ora confessionale, ma proprio attraverso l'approccio al testo biblico considerato come un codice fondamentale. Gli italiani non ne hanno molta percezione, stranamente. Pur essendo l'Italia uno dei Paesi in cui più si rivendicano le "radici cristiane" e in cui la stragrande maggioranza della popolazione ancora oggi si dichiara cristiana, il popolo italiano è forse fra quelli che hanno meno la consapevolezza di quanto la Bibbia contenga codici che sono essenziali per poter comprendere arte, musica, letteratura, storia, il passato, il presente... e che, davvero, una formazione culturale che prescindere da una conoscenza dei testi biblici è veramente carente! Quindi tutto quello che può contribuire, come un volume di questo tipo, ad accrescere la possibilità di approfondita conoscenza della Bibbia e a rendere accessibili questi codici fondamentali perché si possa strutturare una consapevolezza di dove si è e del significato delle cose che si hanno intorno - anche a prescindere dall'esistenza di una prospettiva di fede, di una ricerca di fede - è per noi una straordinaria impresa culturale che giustifica pienamente che in questa impresa si investano fondi del nostro Otto per mille. Ci tenevo anche a sottolineare questo aspetto.

Con la curiosità di ascoltare i dettagli dell'opera e qualche elemento in più che ci conduce all'interno di questo testo, desidero esprimere ulteriormente l'apprezzamento, la stima, il sostegno da parte delle nostre chiese al lavoro straordinario e instancabile della Società Biblica, con l'augurio, naturalmente, che questo lavoro possa proseguire sempre più supportato in modo congiunto da tutte le chiese, che nel testo biblico scoprono e riscoprono continuamente il fondamento e il centro della propria fede.

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► **Luca MAZZINGHI**

*presidente Società Biblica in Italia*

Buona sera e benvenuti a tutte e tutti anche da parte mia, come nuovo presidente della Società Biblica in Italia. Grazie anche a tutti coloro che in questo momento ci seguono online. L'edizione del Nuovo Testamento che oggi presentiamo nasce subito con un nome difficile, la "Diglotta", un termine che rischia di mettere in crisi molti potenziali lettori, al di fuori dei soliti addetti ai lavori: che cosa sarà mai? I miei parrocchiani erano un po' perplessi... Si tratta evidentemente di una edizione in due lingue, in questo caso l'originale greco affiancato dalla traduzione italiana, con la particolarità che le traduzioni italiane sono in realtà due, l'una accanto all'altra: la traduzione ufficiale della Chiesa cattolica italiana per l'uso liturgico, la CEI riveduta nel 2008, e la nuova Bibbia italiana della Riforma.

La vera novità è appunto nel poter avere insieme, sotto uno stesso sguardo e nella stessa pagina, queste due traduzioni. L'aggiunta del testo greco originale - il migliore che oggi abbiamo, la 28° edizione del Nestle - Aland, può sembrare un vezzo culturale, ma è in realtà un invito a ricordarci che in ogni caso noi leggiamo sempre Bibbie tradotte nelle nostre lingue, nel caso del Nuovo Testamento da testi originariamente in greco. E del resto neppure il greco rispecchia i detti di un Gesù che ai suoi interlocutori parlava in realtà in aramaico.

Ripropongo così a tutti voi una breve riflessione sul fatto di leggere la Bibbia in traduzione, qualcosa che ho già scritto nella prefazione a questo volume, curata assieme a Eric Noffke. Ogni traduttore è, o dovrebbe essere consapevole che l'atto del tradurre ha sempre dei limiti e che nessuna traduzione potrà mai rendere pienamente la forza della lingua originale. Lo sapeva bene già il nipote di Ben Sira, l'autore del libro omonimo, appartenente ai cosiddetti "deuterocanonici". Nel prologo che precede la traduzione greca del libro del nonno, scritto in ebraico, l'anonimo nipote che traduce il testo in greco intorno al 132 a.C. ad Alessandria d'Egitto si scusa se non è stato capace di rendere la forza di determinate espressioni e osserva che "Legge, profeti e altri scritti", l'intera Bibbia ebraica nel suo caso, conserva un vantaggio non piccolo nella lingua originale.

Girolamo, traducendo la Bibbia in latino in quella che diventerà per secoli la Bibbia ufficiale nella chiesa latina, la *Vulgata*, scriveva: “se traduco parola per parola, suona assurdo. Ma se per necessità cambio qualcosa nell’ordine o nello stile darò l’impressione di mancare al mio compito di traduttore” (*Praef. Euseb. Chron.* 1). Ne erano pienamente consapevoli anche i rabbini, più o meno contemporanei di Girolamo, come si legge in un passo talmudico: “rabbi Giuda disse: colui che traduce letteralmente è un bugiardo, colui che aggiunge qualcosa al testo è un bestemmiatore e un diffamatore” (*Talmud Qiddushin* 49a). E molto più tardi Lutero, altro celebre traduttore della Bibbia, ebbe a osservare, non senza una certa ironia: “io sudo sangue e acqua per dare i profeti in lingua volgare. Buon Dio, che lavoro! Che enorme difficoltà hanno questi scrittori ebrei a parlare tedesco!” (*Lettera a Link*, 1528).

Non solo: ogni traduzione, anche se condotta come avviene oggi sui migliori testi critici disponibili e con rigorosi criteri scientifici, porta inevitabilmente con sé la sensibilità e anche la fede di chi l’ha prodotta, specialmente quando si tratta di una traduzione che proviene da una precisa comunità religiosa ed è destinata ad usi ufficiali o liturgici. A volte ne porta anche i condizionamenti e, come accade nelle vicende umane, talora anche possibili errori; io ho personalmente lavorato all’interno della commissione per la Bibbia CEI 2008 e ne sono ben consapevole. Ecco perché confrontare una traduzione con un’altra e se possibile confrontare queste con il testo originale, è un’attività davvero importante.

Lo scopo di questa edizione, tuttavia, non è primariamente di carattere culturale, nonostante la presenza del testo greco, ma ecumenico. Avere in mano questa edizione del Nuovo Testamento potrà essere – lo speriamo – un utile esercizio di ecumenismo concreto, condotto sul suo più vero fondamento: la parola di Dio, come già fu sperimentato in Italia nella traduzione interconfessionale (la cosiddetta Bibbia in lingua corrente). Il testo biblico offre infatti una ricchezza di senso che va ben al di là delle possibili differenze di interpretazione e soprattutto va

oltre ogni possibile controversia teologica e dogmatica. La parola di Dio, e di conseguenza la sua interpretazione, non appartiene come tale ad alcuna chiesa o confessione; già il confronto tra due modi diversi di tradurre può condurre i lettori a un atteggiamento di dialogo a partire dalla Parola stessa, un dialogo che non potrà che essere fruttuoso. Si tratta da un lato di trovare punti in comune, di rispettare e prendere sul serio la fede dell’altro, ma anche (e spero soprattutto) di lasciarsi provocare dal testo biblico che ci spinge sempre, come singoli e come chiese, a un cammino di conversione.

In Italia le vicende della Società Biblica si sono intrecciate nel passato a fattori sociali, teologici e persino politici. Parlando qui da cattolico, siamo grazie a Dio ormai ben lontani dai tempi di Pio IX che non lontano da qui, nel 1846, nella sua *Qui pluribus* condannava le Società Bibliche con parole davvero molto forti, non immaginando neppure che nel 2021 un cardinale avrebbe presentato un testo della Società Biblica proprio a Roma. Un confronto aspro che si è trascinato per troppo tempo, scavando solchi profondi tra il mondo protestante e riformato e la chiesa cattolica, per non parlare del non facile rapporto con le chiese ortodosse, che da troppo tempo non partecipano alle attività della Società Biblica. Problemi che non ignoriamo e che rendono ancora più urgente un cammino comune a partire dalla Parola.

Questa pubblicazione è un modestissimo segno di un cammino nuovo; l’augurio – in realtà una preghiera – è che si realizzi ciò che Paolo diceva agli anziani della chiesa di Efeso, nel momento in cui li saluta partendo per Gerusalemme, sapendo che non li vedrà più. “Ed ora vi affido a Dio e alla parola della sua grazia”, dice Paolo in *At* 20,32. Un passo che mi colpisce sempre, perché non è la Parola che viene affidata alla chiesa, ma la chiesa alla Parola. Il Concilio Vaticano II, riprendendo tematiche care alla Riforma, usa proprio questo testo degli *Atti* al n.21 della *Dei Verbum* per sottolineare l’efficacia della Parola. È il punto di partenza di ogni nostra attività, come Società Biblica.









**Relatori**  
della presentazione



**CENTRO PRO UNIONE**  
"Ut Omnes Unum Sint"

il direttore P. James Puglisi, SA  
è lieto di ospitare la presentazione del



**SOCIETÀ BIBLICA IN ITALIA**  
- Alleanza Biblica Universale -

**NUOVO TESTAMENTO  
GRECO - ITALIANO**  
a cura di Mario Cignoni

Società Biblica in Italia (SBI)  
Claudiana  
Roma - Torino 2021



**Intervengono**

**S.Em. Cardinale Gualtiero Bassetti**  
Presidente della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana

**Diac. Alessandra Trotta**  
Moderatore della Tavola Valdese

**Presentano il volume**

**Prof. Don Luca Mazzinghi**  
Presidente SBI / Pont. Univ. Gregoriana

**Prof. Past. Eric Noffke**  
Facoltà valdese di teologia

Sarà presente il curatore

**Lunedì  
6 dicembre 2021  
ore 18.00**

Per partecipare in presenza  
ci si dovrà registrare  
sul sito del Centro Pro Unione.  
Causa Covid la capienza è limitata.  
Previo registrazione sul sito  
l'evento potrà essere seguito  
anche via webcast online.  
Per entrare al Centro Pro Unione  
occorre seguire il protocollo Covid,  
stabilito dalla Direzione sulla base  
della legge italiana.

All'ingresso, con mascherina,  
si dovrà presentare uno dei seguenti documenti:  
1. Green Pass  
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di Canada, Giappone, Israele, Regno Unito  
di Gran Bretagna e Irlanda del Nord,  
Stati Uniti d'America  
3. Prova di recupero da Covid-19 negli ultimi 6 mesi  
4. Test Covid negativo nelle ultime 48 ore

Registrazione | [www.prounione.it/it/events/6-dec-2021](http://www.prounione.it/it/events/6-dec-2021)



*Intervento di S. Em. Cardinale  
Gualtiero Bassetti*

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CENTRO PRO UNIONE  
**PRESENTAZIONE  
NUOVO TESTAMENTO  
GRECO – ITALIANO**  
a cura di Mario Cignoni  
Società Biblica in Italia (SBI)

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Moderatora della Tavola Valdese

**Presentano il volume** **Prof. Don Luca Mazzinghi**  
Presidente SBI / Pontificia Università Gregoriana  
**Prof. Past. Eric Noffke**  
Facoltà Valdese di Teologia

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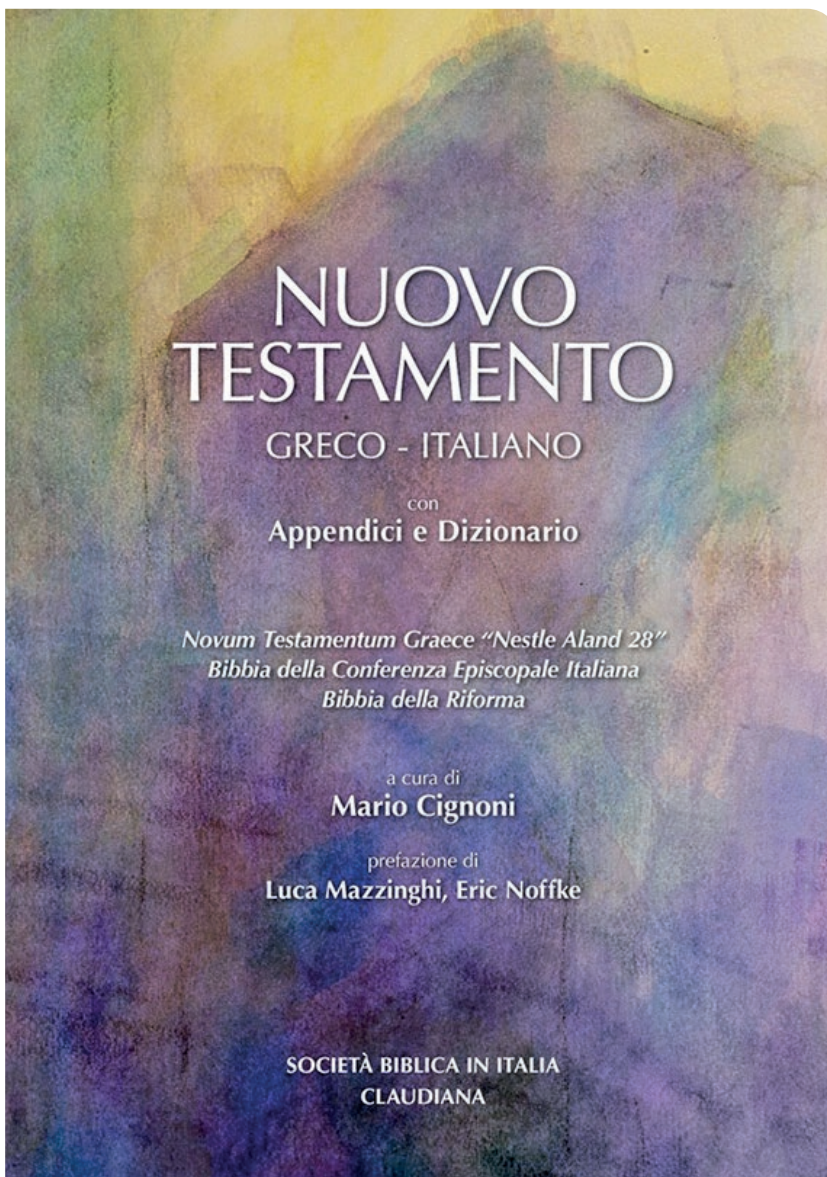


Illustrazione audiovisivo  
nella sezione Media

**Guarda online**

**Media Video**

[www.prounione.it/webtv/  
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**NUOVO  
TESTAMENTO**  
GRECO - ITALIANO  
con  
Appendici e Dizionario

*Novum Testamentum Graece "Nestle Aland 28"*  
*Bibbia della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana*  
*Bibbia della Riforma*

a cura di  
**Mario Cignoni**

prefazione di  
**Luca Mazzinghi, Eric Noffke**

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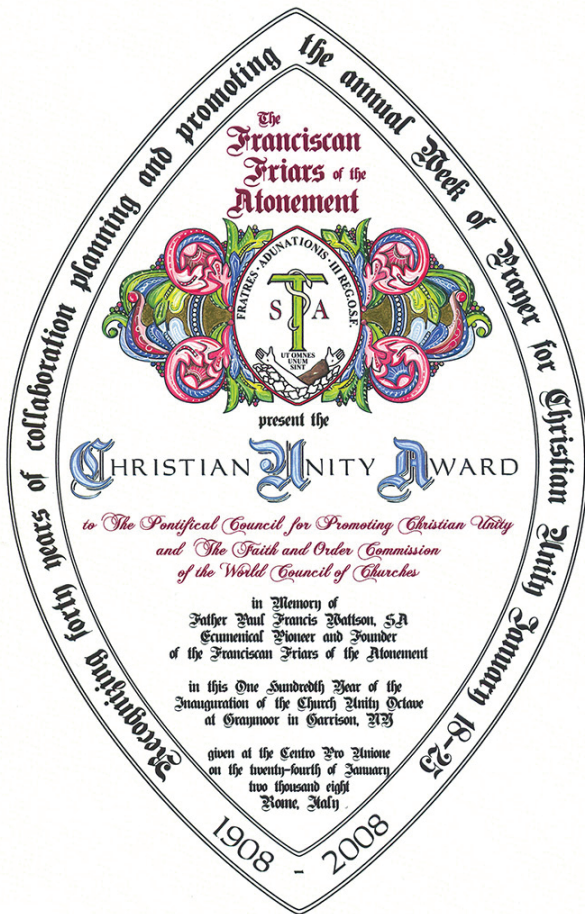
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A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



# Christian Unity Award



› Rev. Dr. Thomas Best, Rev. Canon Dr. John Gibaut and Rev. Dr. Günther Gassmann receiving the Christian Unity Award presented to Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches · WCC



› Fr. James F. Puglisi, sa, Minister General of the Atonement Friars presents the Christian Unity Award to H. Em. Card. Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

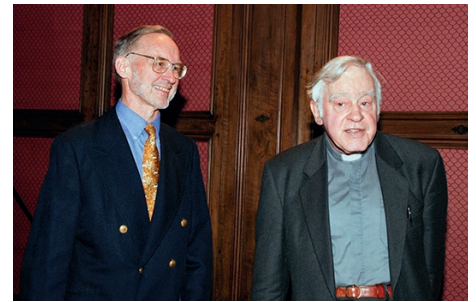


› The Award was presented in memory of our founder the Servant of God Father Paul Wattson to those who devotedly worked for the pursuit of the Unity and Reconciliation of Christians. Held at the Centro in occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity





› His Em. Cardinal Walter Kasper at the Award ceremony



› Rev. Dr. Thomas Best and Rev. Dr. Günther Gassmann



› A view of the Conference hall



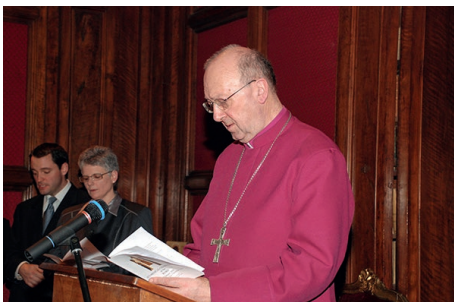
› The ceremony marked the centenary of the eight days' Prayer for Unity



› Ecumenical Celebration of the Word afterwards the award's presentation



› Front row anniversary celebration at the Centro



› The Right Revd. John Flack, Director Anglican Centre in Rome, president of the Worship



› The Rev. Canon Dr. John Gibaut, director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches at the award ceremony



› Another view of the Conference hall

*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*

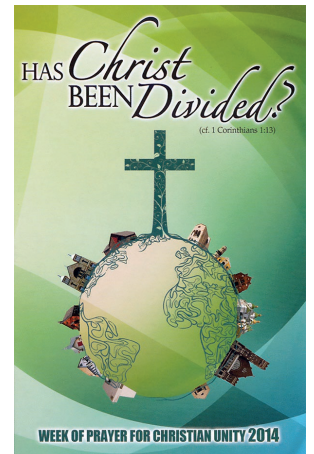
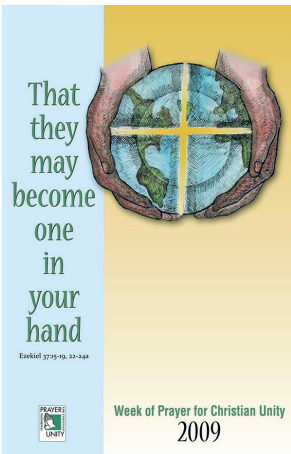


## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



› Most Rev. Sir David Moxon Knzm (Preacher), Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome and the V. Rev. Brian Terry (President), Minister General of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

› Ecumenical Celebration of the Word



› Dr. Donna Orsuto, Director of The Lay Centre, co-sponsor of the traditional ecumenical service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



› Members of Christian traditions gathering on the annual prayer for Unity held at the Centro

*The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas*  
Co-Organization of the Ecumenical Celebration of the Word



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## *Atonement Society in service for Christian Unity*



› Minister General of the Atonement Friars V. Rev. Brian Terry, SA gives a prayer card to His Holiness Pope Francis for the canonization of Father Paul of Graymoor, the Order's founder



› Members of the Sisters and Friars of the Atonement in Italy welcoming H. Em. Card. Walter Kasper to the Centro Pro Unione



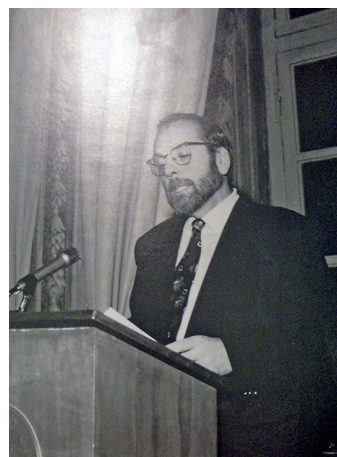
› Members of the Friars of the Atonement, attending Ecumenical Worship during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Rome



› His Holiness Pope John XXIII with the Friars of the Atonement



› Fr. Emil Tomaskovic, SA former Min. General of the Atonement Friars



› Fr. David Fitzgerald, SA former Rector Church of St. Onofrio in Rome



› Friars of the Atonement present the Christian Unity Award to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches · WCC





› Sr. Alessandra, SA speaking at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Week for Unity



› Fr. Kevin McMorrow, SA former Director Centro Pro Unione



› Sr. Denise Robillard, SA attending the Vespers at St. Paul's Outside the Walls



› Fr. James Puglisi, SA encountering His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI



› Sr. Sue, SA and Sr. Gabriella, SA attending the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary



› His Holiness Pope John Paul II receiving Fr. Daniel O'Shea, SA first librarian at the Centro Pro Unione and former Rector of the Church of St. Onofrio in Rome



› Fr. James Puglisi, SA and Fr. Conan Hall, SA met with H. Em. Card. Sérgio da Rocha, Primate of Brazil, at the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil - CNBB



› Fr. Edward Boes, SA, Fr. Brian Terry, SA and Bro. Gregory Lucrezia, SA in conversation with H. Em. Card. Kurt Koch



› H. Em. Card. Jan Willebrands and Princess Doria Pamphilj along with Fr. Thaddeus Horgan, SA



› H. Em. Card. Jan Willebrands in conversation with Fr. Celestine Leahy, SA at the Centro



› H. Em. Cardinal Walter Kasper along with Bro. Gregory Lucrezia, SA in a conference at the Centro



› Monsignor Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop of Assisi-Nocera Umbra-Gualdo Tadino during an encounter with V. Rev. Brian Terry, SA and Fr. James Puglisi, SA



› H. Em. Card. Edward Cassidy introducing Fr. James Puglisi, SA to His Holiness Pope John Paul II

A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



# Ecumenical Formation Summer School



› Summer School students visiting the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue as part of the formative program



› Rev. James Loughran, SA Director GEII - Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute - NY, presenting as faculty member along with staff of the School Summer in Rome



› Fr. Tim MacDonald, SA a faculty member in the Course



› Classroom of the Summer School



› Students participating in a class given by a faculty member



› Attendees of the course at the Islamic Center



› A visit to the Great Mosque of Rome is included in the itinerary of the Ecumenical Gatherings



› Professors and students together for a class group picture



› Students from 41 countries and five continents learning at the Centro's Ecumenical study programs and visiting historic worship places for the Christian, the Jewish and the Islamic traditions in Rome



› Morning worship



› Student materials and badges



*"How many important things unite us!  
If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit,  
we can learn so much from one another!  
It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping  
what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us."*

*Franciscus*

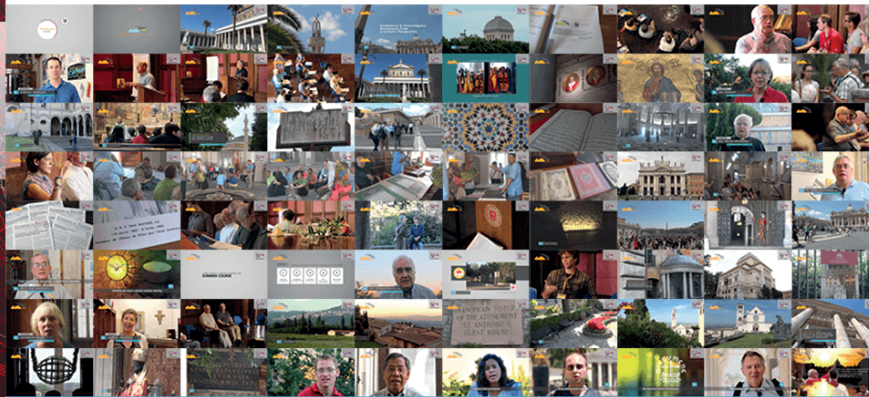
Pope Francis, the joy of the gospel, 246



› Certificate of completion



24' Documentary – Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective



› Afternoon ecumenical gatherings



› A 24' documentary is available with testimony of our students at [www.prounione.it/webtv/doc-ministryedu](http://www.prounione.it/webtv/doc-ministryedu)

*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## *Thank You! to Our Lecturers, Visitors and Speakers*



› H. Em. Cardinal Walter Kasper, President emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity



› Rev. Dr. Olav Fyske Tveit, former General Secretary World Council of Churches, WCC Geneva (2010-2020)



› The Most Reverend Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury (1990-1991)



› H. Em. Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity



› Don Jonathan Pogson Doria Pamphilj



› H.E. Callista Gingrich, former Ambassador of the US to the Holy See (2017-2021)



› H. Em. Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, President of the Italian Episcopal Conference



› H. Em. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples



› H.E. Sally Axworth, fmr Ambassador of Great Britain to the Holy See (2016-2021)



› H.E. Oren David, fmr Ambassador of Israel to the Holy See (2016-2021)



› Princess Orietta Doria Pamphilj at the Centro



› H.E. Manuel Roberto López, Ambassador of El Salvador to the Holy See



› Rev. Anthony Currer, PCPCU



› Monsignor Juan Usma Gómez, PCPCU



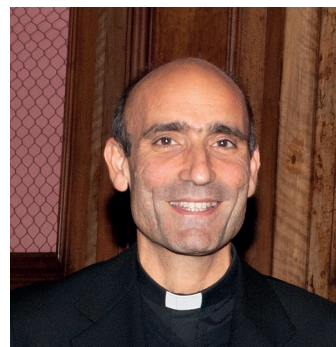
› The Rt. Rev. Bishop Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity



› Rev. Ken Howcroft, fmr Minister Ponte Sant' Angelo Methodist Church Rome, belonging to the Italian Methodist-Waldensian Church



› Rev. Matthew A. Laferty, Director Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome



› Monsignor Andrea Palmieri, PCPCU



› Archbishop Ian Ernest, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome

*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## *Thank You! to Our Lecturers, Visitors and Speakers*



› H.E. Tamara Grdzeldze, *fmr* Ambassador of Georgia to the Holy See (2014-2018)



› V. Revd. David Richardson, *former* Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome (2008-2013)



› Fr. James Puglisi, SA - Director Centro Pro Unione  
 › The Rt Revd. Bishop Brian Farrell, Sec. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity  
 › Dr. Daniel Seidemann, Founder and Director of Terrestrial Jerusalem  
 › H.E. Zion Evrony, *former* Ambassador of Israel to the Holy See (2012-2016)  
 › Prof. Marshal Breger, Professor of Law at the Columbia School of Law The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.  
 › Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Director Center for Interreligious Understanding



› The Rt Revd. Bishop Brian Farrell, Fr. James Puglisi, SA, H. Em. Cardinal Walter Kasper and H. Em. Cardinal Kurt Koch at a Conference in the Centro



› Revd. David Moxton, *fmr* Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome (2013-2017)



› H.E. Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen, Ambassador of Hungary to the Holy See



› Monsignor John Radano, PCPCU



› Organizers, lecturers and musicians at the Study Day GERUSALEMME - "Giornata di studi filosofico-teologica con interventi poetico-musicali"



› Revd. Andrzej Choromanski, PCPCU



› H. Em. Kallistos Ware, Metropolitan of Diokleia in Phrygia



› Rev. Tim MacQuiban, pastor of Rome's Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church and director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office



› 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Joint Working Group (JWG) between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) — 1965 / 2015. Linked with the first plenary of the tenth phase of dialogue of the JWG, this commemorative event intends to present its past accomplishments, evoke with gratitude those who contributed to achieve them and outline perspectives for future work. Founded in 1965 jointly by the Secretariat (now Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches the JWG has been a valuable instrument of shared commitment to the goal of the visible unity of the Church. Its establishment was one of the first fruits of the Second Vatican Council. For fifty years it has served as a catalyst for fruitful collaboration between the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church. It has been distinctive forum for sustained theological discussion and practical cooperation. The agenda of the JWG includes issues related to mission and evangelism, justice and peace, ecumenical formation, youth, and new emerging questions related to the life of modern societies.

1965 - 2015  
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP  
**COMMEMORATIVE  
EVENT**



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN UNITY



CENTRO PRO UNIONE



WORLD COUNCIL  
OF CHURCHES



› HE Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste, Romanian Orthodox Church Co-Chair of the RCC-WCC Joint Working Group with other Orthodox Guests



› Prof. Giovanni Maria Vian, former Director of L'Osservatore Romano



› Prof. Menachem Lorberbaum, Tel Aviv University



› Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Director Center for Interreligious Understanding



› Rev. Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman, Minister of Rome's Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church



› Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, Hickey Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue along with Fr. Michael D. Calabria, Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies - St. Bonaventure University



› Professor Giovanni Cereti, lecturing at the Centro



› Fr. James Puglisi, SA and equipe of the Centro welcoming H. Em. Card. Luis Tagle for a lecture on Vatican Council II

*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## *Thank You! to Our Lecturers, Visitors and Speakers*



› Professor Dr. Donna Orsuto, Director The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas



› Professor Dr. Myriam Wijlens, University of Erfurt, Germany



› Dr. Rev. Diane Kessler, United Church of Christ - Ret. Dir. Massachusetts C. Churches



› Dimitra Koukoura, Professor of Homiletics · Aristotle University of Thessaloniki



› Gillian Kingston, Vice President of the World Methodist Council



› The Right Rev. John Flack, fmr. Director Anglican Centre in Rome (2003-2008)



› Dr. Hervé Legrand, op, Professor Emeritus · Institut catholique de Paris



› Dr. Thomas F. Best, President North American Academy of Euamenists



› Rev. Avelino Gonzalez-Ferrér, PCPCU



› Rev. Dr. Canon John Gibaut fmr. head Commission on Faith and Order · WCC



› Dr. Rosino Gibellini, Theologian, former Literary Director Editrice Queriniana



› Dr. Heather Walker, The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas



› Dr. Henrica van Velzen, The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas



› Philippa Hitchen, journalist at Vatican Radio in Rome and Prof. Turid Karlsen Seim, The Norwegian Institute in Rome with some of our visitors



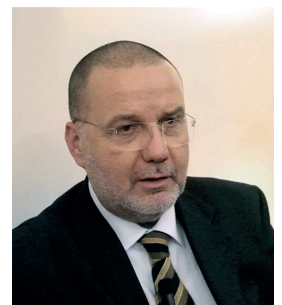
› Prof. Gail Ramshaw, Professor of Religion, along with Rev. Gordon Lathrop



› Professors Teodora and Margherita Rossi, Theologians · Faculty at the Angelicum University, Rome



› Sr. Prof. Gracy Vadakara (Angelicum), Cornelius Ant. van Duin, Summer School Tour Guide along with an Angelicum student



› Professor Alberto Melloni, Church historian and secretary Fondazione per le scienze religiose (FSCIRE)



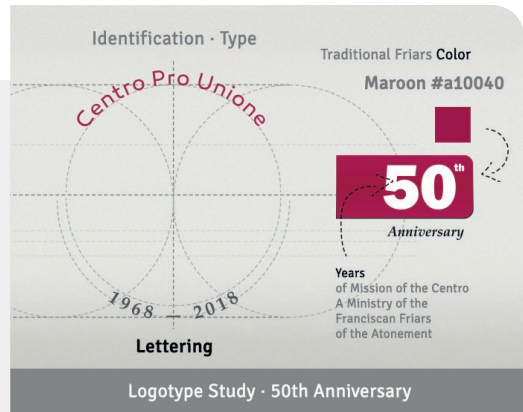
*Students · Scholars*  
*Attending the Activities of the Centro*



A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



## Centro's 50<sup>th</sup> Foundation Anniversary



› Study layout of the celebrative logo / lettering composing

Construction lines pattern



Logotype Study - 50th Anniversary

› Study layout of the celebrative logo / grid lines pattern



› Then and now - An "Ecumenical Tea" 50 years ago

Chromatic Scale

Figure · Pictogram



Multiplicity



Gathering / Unity

Logotype Study - 50th Anniversary

› Study layout of the celebrative logo / color palette scheme



› A new logo opening the anniversary celebration

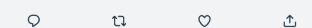


"50 Years for the Centro Pro Unione"  
Today we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of foundation and activities with joy and gratitude

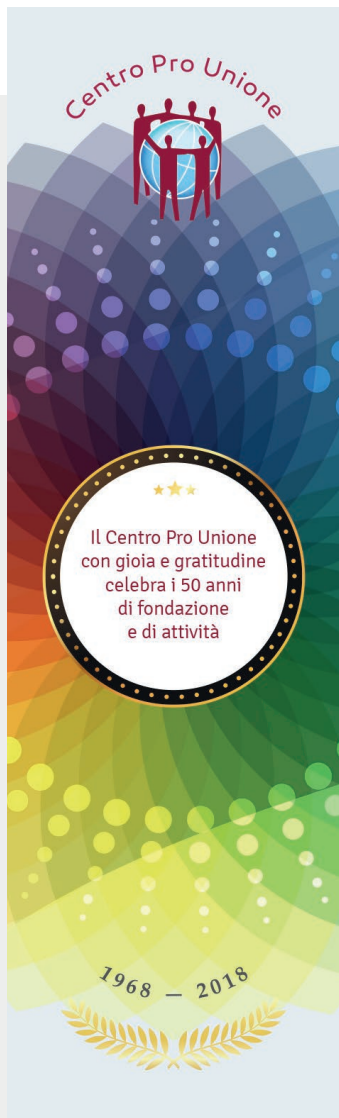
#UtOmnesUnumSint  
@Ecumenunity

3:22 PM · May 17, 2018 · Twitter Web Client

3 Retweets 4 Likes



› Media network channel post



› Bookmark created in remembrance of the celebrative day



Ut Omnes Unum Sint



› Don Jonathan Pogson Doria Pamphili, speech at the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Centro Pro Unione foundation



› Invited guests of the anniversary day



› Anniversary celebration reception hall

*Il Centro Pro Unione dei Frati Francescani dell'Attonement,  
per celebrare i 50 anni di fondazione,  
è lieto di invitarLa ad un "tè ecumenico"  
con S.E.R. Kurt Cardinal Koch,  
Presidente del Pontificio Consiglio per la Promozione  
dell'Unità dei Cristiani  
giovedì 17 maggio 2018 alle ore 17.00  
presso il Centro Pro Unione  
Via Santa Maria dell'Anima 30 - 1° piano*

› Original Invitation · RSVP



› Princess Gesine Doria Pamphili joined the celebrative encounter of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### **Ecumenismo in Erba**

#### *The Budding Ecumenism Initiative*

Is a formation project directed to children. Today's children will be tomorrow's faithful, and it is important that they can grow with a sense of the reconciling mission of the Church and what is the ecumenical movement. Erba means grass. The grass is also the place where children usually play and have fun. And this is probably the most important, maybe innovative, aspect of the initiative: the method that 'Ecumenismo in erba' follows - or, as we will call it: the 'budding method' - is a ludo-mathetic one ('learning through the games' from the etymological roots *matheo* - to learn and *ludus* - game), namely one where children are introduced to the principles and practice of ecumenism through an interactive, interdisciplinary, game-based methodology.

### **Edinburgh 2010**

**A Missing Mission?**  
The "Budding Ecumenism"  
Formation Project  
of the Centro Pro Unione



**CENTRO PRO UNIONE**  
Fratelli Francescani dell'ATONEMENT

**Il Centro Ecumenico Pro Unione**  
promuove incontri  
per avvicinare i bambini  
al dialogo ecumenico attraverso  
giochi, gare e momenti di preghiera,  
tenuti da specialisti

**in erba**  
Educate all'Ecumenismo i più piccoli

Referenti Scientifici:  
**Prof. Dott. p. James Puglisi - S.A.**  
Direttore del Centro Pro Unione  
**Prof. Dott. Teresa Francesca Rossi**  
Responsabile del Progetto

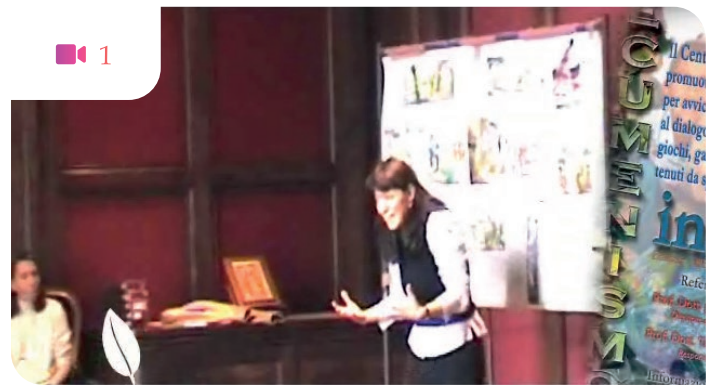
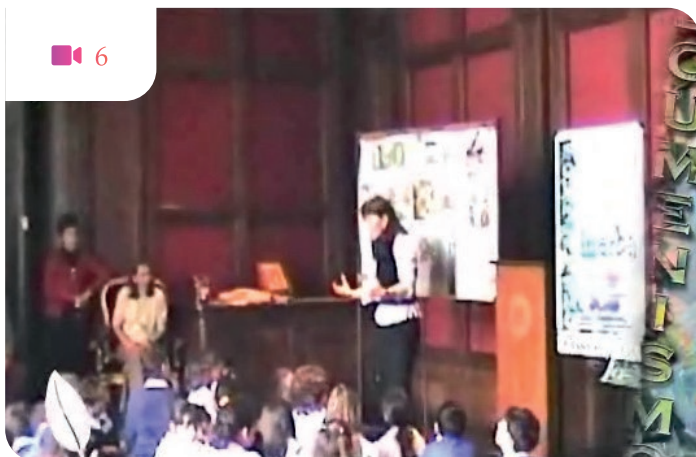
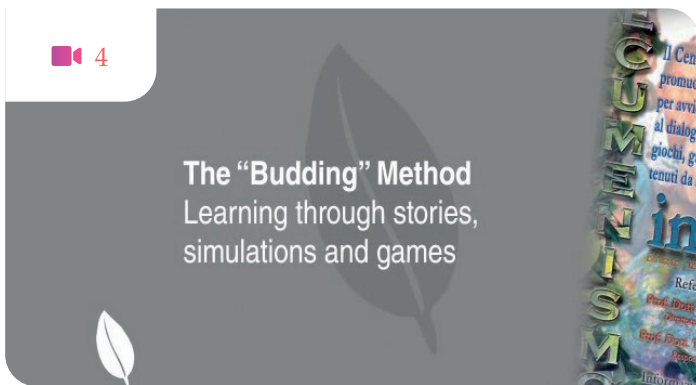
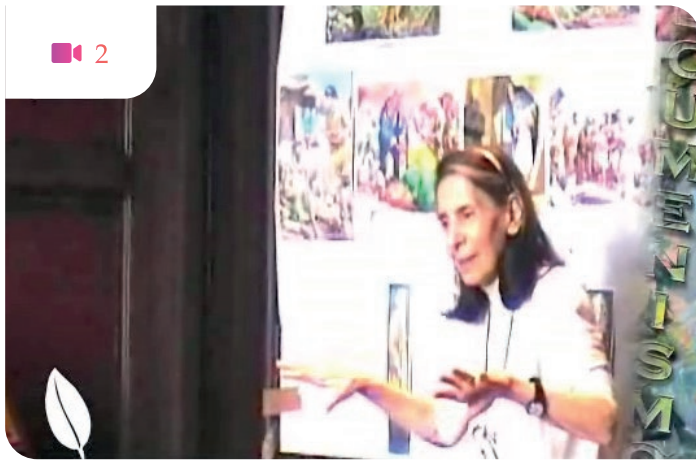
Informazioni e Prenotazioni  
Teresa Francesca Rossi - Centro Pro Unione, via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30  
Tell. 067856318 - 066879552 - e-mail: [teresafrancesca@pro.urbe.it](mailto:teresafrancesca@pro.urbe.it)

**Introductory text from**  
*Edinburgh 2010 - Mission Today and Tomorrow* edited by  
Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson

© First published 2011  
by Regnum Books International  
ISBN: 978-1-870345-91-0

*Highlights from the 'Budding in Ecumenism' Keynote at the Edinburgh 2010's Plenary*

The video presents some moments of the different sessions in a snapshot way, as well as in a scattered sequences displayed during the centenary of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

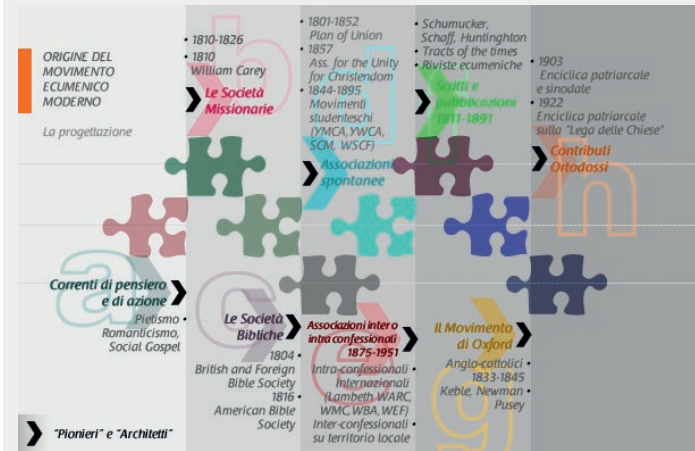
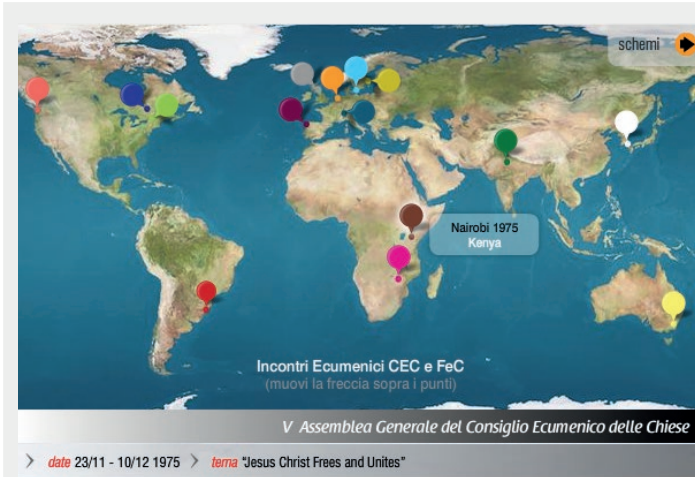


### *Manual of Ecumenism*

*Formation*

*In the conviction that what unites us is more than what divides, the nearly 500 pages of the manual - enriched by a multimedia interactive CD-ROM, as well as passages of Scripture and well-known and lesser-known documents on the Catholic Church - are organized into four parts. There are modules on Method, Spirituality, History and Systematics, plus reflections and material for ecumenical laboratories.*



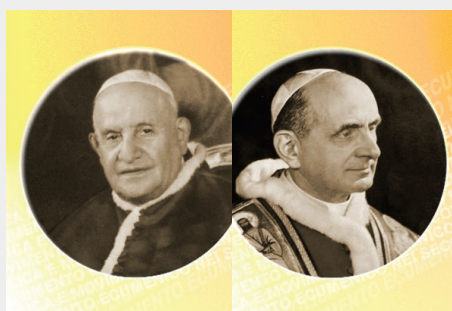


**Moduli Interattivi CD-ROM**

**Percorsi**

**INIZIAZIONE**

**METODO**   **SPIRITUALITÀ**   **SISTEMATICA**   **STORIA**



► SCHEMA COMPARATIVO

	Dialogo ecumenico	Dialogo interreligioso
Natura	• dialogo fra le confessioni cristiane, fondato sulla comune fede in Gesù Cristo, nel Mistero della Trinità, dell'Incarnazione e Redenzione	• dialogo tra le grandi religioni e le diverse fedi, fondato sul fatto di essere una famiglia umana, aperta al trascendente, creata da Dio
Finalità	• unità piena e visibile, cioè: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comune professione della fede</li> <li>• riconoscimento e condivisione di ministeri e sacramenti</li> <li>• testimonianza comune</li> </ul>	• reciproca conoscenza • crescita nel rispetto e nella comprensione reciproci • collaborazione per la difesa e la promozione dei diritti umani
Metodo	• dialogo • apertura e rispetto • preghiera comune • fonti comuni: Bibbia, fede e prassi delle prime comunità cristiane	• dialogo • apertura e rispetto • maggiore conoscenza delle altre tradizioni religiose

A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### Conosciamo i Fratelli

an Audiovisual Initiative of Ecumenical Formation

Speakers Christian Communion



› Professor Yann Redalié · Waldesian speaker



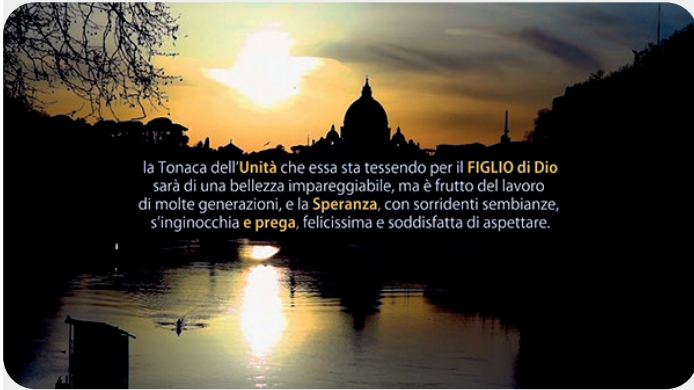
› Rev. Massimo Aquilante · Methodist speaker

Paese	Popolazione
Germania	12.675.439
Paesi Bassi	17.421.702
Svezia	9.542.087
Finlandia	5.526.104
Francia	6.822.271
Stati Uniti	3.282.000
Danimarca	5.475.308
Polonia	38.457.000
Ungheria	10.974.152
Repubblica Ceca	10.500.000
Cina	1.395.419
India	1.215.000
Giappone	1.285.000
Corea del Sud	51.000.000
Corea del Nord	25.000.000
Giamaica	2.800.000

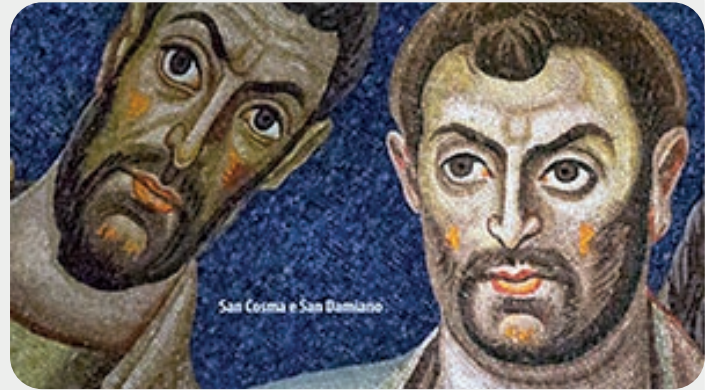


› Professor Martin Wallraff · Lutheran speaker





Speakers



Christian Communion



► Rev. Raffaele Volpe · Baptist speaker

### CONOSCIAMO I FRATELLI BATTISTI

Rev. Raffaele Volpe  
già Presidente dell'Unione Cristiana Evangelica Battista d'Italia (UCEBI)

One Lord · One Faith · One Baptism  
BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE



► Archdeacon Jonathan Boardman · Anglican speaker

### CONOSCIAMO I FRATELLI ANGLICANI

Archdeacon Jonathan Boardman  
Chaplain della All Saints Church in Rome  
già Vicario generale della Chiesa d'Inghilterra in Italia e Malta

THE ANGLICAN CENTRE IN ROME

Chiesa di Canterbury (1962) fondata da Papa Giovanni Paolo II e l'Arcivescovo di Canterbury Robert Ramsey

«C'è la divisione dei cristiani che da sé ha contribuito alla tragedia della divisione umana così come essa appare in tutto il mondo. Noi eleviamo le nostre preghiere per la pace e per la giustizia, specie per quei luoghi dove c'è la violenza. L'atteggiamento migliore per superare i conflitti tra comunità è l'UCU»

Nel contesto di umana discordia il difficile cammino dell'Unità cristiana deve essere costruito con determinazione e coraggio. Qualcosa viene dal mondo, qualcosa viene dal cielo.



► Rev.mo Archimandrita Simeon Catsinas · Orthodox speaker

### CONOSCIAMO I FRATELLI ORTODOSSI

Rev.mo Archimandrita Simeon Catsinas  
Rettore della Chiesa Greco-Ortodossa di San Teodoro Megalomartiri - Torino al Pasinato

«Il futuro unitario in atto»

Dichiarazione abolizione comunione di Papa Paolo III - «Abolizione di comunione»

San Teodoro

«Il pontefice ortodosso che riceve il papa è un atto di comunione»

A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### Conosciamo i Fratelli

an Audiovisual Initiative of Ecumenical Formation

Speakers   Christian Communion



› Professor Carmine Napolitano · Pentecostal speaker

Pentecostali	Totale membri (2010)
Pentecostali Classici	94.383.000
Carismatici	206.579.000
Neo-Carismatici	313.048.000
<b>Totale</b>	<b>614.010.000</b>



› Professor Leonardo De Chirico · Evangelical speaker

160.000.000  
Cristiani Evangelicali nel mondo  
(anno 1910 present)

radici evangelicalismo  
1° Grande Risveglio

Jonathan Edwards



› Fr. James Puglisi, SA · Catholic speaker

18-25 GENNAIO OTTAVARIO  
DI PREGHIERE  
PER L'UNIONE  
DEI CRISTIANI

At-One-Ment  
Romani cap. 5,11  
E non soltanto questo, ma anche ci gloriamo in Dio  
per mezzo del nostro Signor Gesù Cristo,  
per il quale abbiamo ora ottenuto la riconciliazione.



► *Projection video series "Conosciamo i Fratelli" · On this occasion, visiting members from the Baptist Evangelical Church in Trastevere joined us. The thematic clip 'Baptists', in the audiovisual series, was recorded during their worship, including testimonies from church Elders, Pastors and the faithful.*



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### Conosciamo i Fratelli

Book and DVD-Video

*Conosciamo i fratelli (Getting to know our separated brethren) Volume XIV of the series A Short course in ecumenism (published in Italian language) takes its inspiration from the invitation in the conciliar document on ecumenism: "Catholics who already have a proper grounding need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and cultural background" (Unitatis Redintegratio, 9).*

*It is addressed to teachers, ecumenical and pastoral officers and to all who are interested in gaining a greater knowledge of the Italian multi-confessional reality.*

*Publication includes a couple of DVD-Video Discs combining a total of more than 4 hours of original audiovisual content produced by the Centro. Waldesians, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, Anglicans, Orthodox, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and Catholics are the 9 chapters of the DVD that viewers might deepening about Christian faith traditions. The complete media video contents are available for browsing and watching online in a section of the Centro's website as E-Learning user interaction.*



DVD-Video

Conosciamo i Fratelli - una collana audiovisiva di formazione all'ecumenismo



**Conosciamo i Fratelli**

una collana audiovisiva di formazione all'ecumenismo



Contenuto DVD · Conosciamo i Fratelli

- VALDESI **Capitolo 1 - 32'50"**
- METODISTI **Capitolo 2 - 34'18"**
- LUTERANI **Capitolo 3 - 18'00"**
- BATTISTI **Capitolo 4 - 29'04"**
- ANGLICANI **Capitolo 5 - 24'51"**
- ORTODOSSI **Capitolo 6 - 15'46"**
- PENTECOSTALI **Capitolo 7 - 36'26"**
- EVANGELICALI **Capitolo 8 - 30'41"**
- CATTOLICI **Capitolo 9 - 33'31"**

Disco 1

Disco 2

Durata totale ⌚ 4ore 15min. 27 sec.

Questo audiovisivo è stato prodotto con contenuti video originali inediti. Le immagini fisse e in movimento addizionali, oltreché le musiche che corredano le puntate contenute nel DVD, sono reperite presso piattaforma che utilizzano la licenzia autorizzativa di tipo Creative Commons. Le fonti e gli autori dei contenuti inseriti sono citati nei crediti finali di ogni capitolo, in buona fede e nel rispetto della loro creatività intellettuale.

lingua: Italiano

stereo 2.0



codice regione - tutti i paesi  
**PAL**

formato originale

16:9 **HD**  
1080p Full-HD

Produzione collana

Testi e interviste a cura di  
**TERESA FRANCESCA ROSSI**  
Riprese video e montaggio  
**ESPEDITO NETO**  
Voce narrante  
**GIULIA BUCELLI**

Un'iniziativa formativa



Fondato e diretto dai



*Ecumenical Formation Audiovisuals*

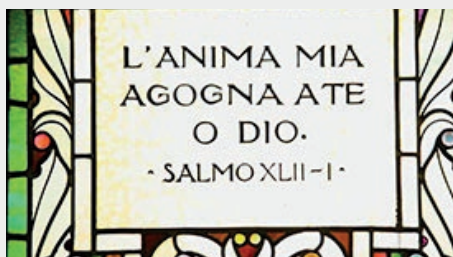


una collana audiovisiva di formazione all'ecumenismo



**Conosciamo i Fratelli**

Centro Pro Unione



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### **M.A.D. for Ecumenism**

#### *Mutual Accountability Desk*

The emerging Ecumenical category of Mutual accountability – aiming at deepening the mutual knowledge and reliability between denominations – is the inspiration of a Centro Pro Unione formation project. The project **MAD** for Ecumenism actually establishes a desk on Mutual Accountability and is directed to all Christian confessions willing to cooperate in such inter-denominational joint venture and formation initiative.

#### **Features:**

The project sets micro-goals revolving around study, charity actions, worship, which are carried out in the form (format) of Modules.

The first module will be focused on the theme of preaching.

Each module develops according to three modalities: dislocation, sharing, spreading.

**Dislocation** partners are free to work on the project by organizing their own timing, modalities and organizational details.

**Sharing** at some stage there will be 2/3 plenary meetings where results, reflections and perspectives are put in common;

**Spreading** means that at the end of the experience there will be an (official outcome) publication indicating the people involved in the group and the conclusions drawn, to constitute some growing archive.

The project is carried out both in Italian and English.

**MAD for Ecumenism**  
MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY DESK

Teresa Francesca Rossi (ed.)

**M.A.D. FOR ECUMENISM 1**  
*Mutual Accountability Desk*

Quaderno di M.A.D. for Ecumenism – Modulo 1  
Itinerario di uno storico scambio di ambone

Logbook of M.A.D. for Ecumenism – Module 1  
Itinerary of a Historical Exchange of Pulpit

Centro Pro Unione  
"Ut Omnes Unum Sint"  
ISBN: 978-88-945646-2-4

Read Online

**E-Book Digital Publication**  
[bit.ly/Logbook-MAD-for-Ecumenism-v1](http://bit.ly/Logbook-MAD-for-Ecumenism-v1)





*Highlights encounters M.A.D. for Ecumenism*  
*Immagini flash degli incontri del progetto*



A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives



«Centoveinti secondi di ecumenismo»: si chiama così lo spazio virtuale di formazione ecumenica che inaugura in questi giorni il canale web tv approntato dal Centro Pro Unione.  
L'Osservatore Romano, sabato 21 febbraio 2015

**Web TV & Media**  
a Multimedia Section

### English · 1<sup>st</sup> Season Series

- Prof. Tersa Francesca Rossi  
**PRESENTATION**
- Fr. James Puglisi, SA
- Msgr. Peter Hocken
- Msgr. John Radano
- Rav. Burton L. Visotzky
- Prof. Stanley Burgess
- Rev. James Loughran, SA
- Dorothy G. Ranaghan
- Rev. Kenneth Howcroft
- Most Revd. Michael Burbidge
- Msgr. John Radano
- Dr. Rev. Diane Kessler
- Rev. Dr. Cecil M. Robeck

### English · 2<sup>nd</sup> Season Series

- Fr. Brian Terry, SA  
**A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE**
- Prof. Fr. Adelbert DenauA  
**A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE**
- Rev. Prof. Geoffrey Wainwright  
**A METHODIST PERSPECTIVE**
- Prof. Ruth Burgess  
**A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE**
- Rev. Dr. William G. Rusch  
**A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE**

### Italian · 1<sup>st</sup> Season Series

- Prof. Tersa Francesca Rossi  
**PRESENTAZIONE**
- Fr. James Puglisi, SA
- Prof. Alberto Melloni
- Prof. Giovanni Cereti
- Prof. Joseph Ellul, OP
- Prof. Angelo Maffei
- Prof.ssa Sr. Margaret Carney
- Prof. Michael Fuss
- Prof. Rav. Jack Bemporad
- Prof. Francesco Compagnoni, OP
- Dr. Valdo Bertalot
- Elena Bosetti

### Italian · 2<sup>nd</sup> Season Series

- P. Brian Terry, SA  
**UNA PROSPETTIVA CATTOLICA**
- Prof. Michael Fuss  
**UNA PROSPETTIVA CATTOLICA**
- Prof. Rav. Jack Bemporad  
**UNA PROSPETTIVA EBRAICA**
- Prof. Francesco Compagnoni, OP  
**UNA PROSPETTIVA EBRAICA**
- Prof. Angelo Maffei  
**UNA PROSPETTIVA CATTOLICA**

## 120 Seconds of Ecumenism

#120sEcu

@EcumenUnity  
www.twitter.com/EcumenUnity

Centro Pro Unione

Based on short interviews

A format of ecumenical formation

In forma di interviste-flash

Una rubrica di formazione ecumenica

watch on:

In English and Italian Language



[www.prounione.it/webtv](http://www.prounione.it/webtv)

vedi su:

In lingua Italiana e in lingua Inglese

A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement



Nasce il canale web tv del Centro Pro Unione

# Ecumenismo in due minuti

ROMA, 20. «Centoventi secondi di ecumenismo»: si chiama così lo spazio virtuale di formazione ecumenica che inaugura in questi giorni il canale web tv approntato dal Centro Pro Unione. Una piccola grande sfida per rilanciare il tema della riconciliazione tra i battezzati oltre la ristretta cerchia degli addetti ai lavori. E per dimostrare come l'ecumenismo non sia importante solo per i cristiani: «Molta gente oggi crede che l'ecumenismo non sia di utilità, eppure nel mondo di oggi la costruzione della pace è basata sulla riconciliazione che rimette il debito dell'altro. Dunque l'ecumenismo è veramente utile per creare un mondo di pace», spiega nella prima clip il direttore del Centro Pro Unione, padre Giacomo Puglisi. L'iniziativa si propone, dunque, come un ulteriore momento dedicato alla riflessione sul movimento ecumenico e sul dialogo fra le confessioni cristiane impegnate dopo il Vaticano II a ristabilire la piena e visibile unità della Chiesa. In forma di interviste-flash, studiosi e rappresentanti di varie tradizioni cristiane saranno chiamati nei prossimi mesi a commentare temi, documenti e prospettive ecumeniche, offrendo approfondimenti e aggiornamenti.

Una iniziativa che tiene conto delle attuali dinamiche di diffusione dell'informazione e dunque, spiega Teresa Francesca Rossi, direttore associato del Centro Pro Unione, «breve» nella sua formulazione — «il tempo di sorseggiare un buon caffè, un caffè ecumenico» — ma di «alto valore nei contenuti», grazie soprattutto al contributo che verrà offerto da esponenti di rilievo del movimento ecumenico. «Il Centro Pro Unione — dice Rossi — ha infatti il dono di annoverare tra i propri amici studiosi, esperti, responsabili di Chiese pienamente impegnati nel dialogo e molto spesso direttamente coinvolti in importanti traguardi del cammino delle Chiese verso l'unità».

Il format della rubrica, disponibile in italiano e in inglese, consentirà di offrire, viene spiegato, una grande varietà di contributi e di punti di vista. Tra gli esperti di cui è stata annunciata la presenza, monsignor John A. Radano, per anni ufficiale del Pontificio Consiglio per la promozione dell'unità dei cristiani, monsignor Peter Hocken, storico del movimento pentecostale, Kenneth Howcroft, presidente della Conferenza metodista, i rabbini Burton Visotzky e Jack Bemporad.

Attraverso «120 secondi di ecumenismo», il Centro Pro Unione, importante realtà da quasi cinquant'anni presente a Roma, quale espressione dei frati francescani dell'Atonement, intende così — si legge nella presentazione del canale web — «coniugare il proprio specifico ministero formativo di educazione all'autentico spirito ecumenico, con il desiderio di realizzare un'offerta formativa che utilizzi la tecnologia multimediale e digitale, capace di superare la distanza spazio-temporale e raggiungere, simultaneamente, quanti, per ragioni di studio, di ministero, di pastorale, di didattica o per interesse personale siano attenti al movimento ecumenico e abbiano desiderio di conoscere meglio il cammino dei cristiani verso l'unità. «L'ecumenismo — spiega ancora padre Puglisi — è importante per due motivi principali, uno a livello umano e l'altro al livello della fede. Prima il livello umano, perché i cristiani hanno l'obbligo di restaurare nella creazione il senso gioioso della buona notizia data da Gesù Cristo. Al livello della fede perché dobbiamo testimoniare la generosità di Dio, la sua realtà di trinità e di unità».

Article reproduction courtesy Archive L'Osservatore Romano

Logo · 2015-2020



Logo · 2021-present



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



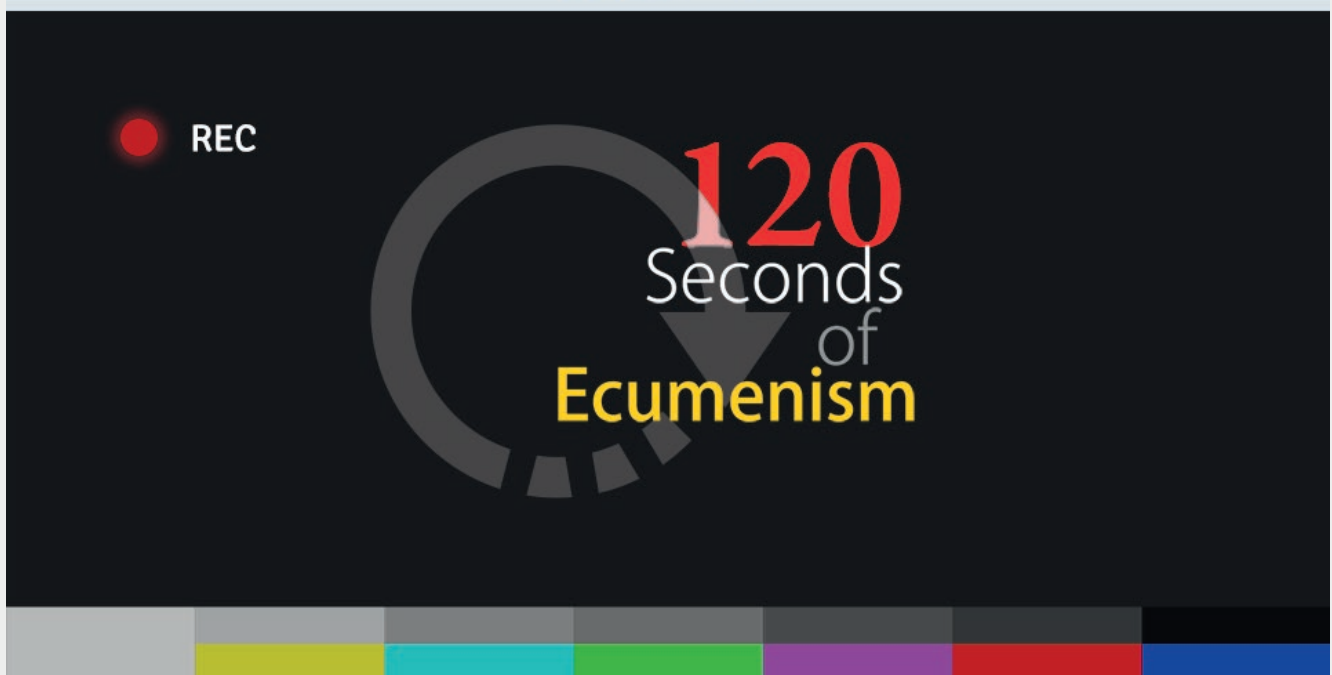
## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### 120 Seconds of Ecumenism

Flash-Interview format

An initiative dedicated to deepening and updating on some ecumenical events and documents, realized in a very short format, but with very qualified and this is thanks to the presence of great representatives of the ecumenical movement and ecumenical dialogue.

#120sEcu



*“120 seconds of Ecumenis” is a virtual space of ecumenical formation, a moment dedicated to reflect on the Ecumenical Movement and on the dialogue among Christian confessions committed to restore the full visible unity of the Church.*

*In the fashion of a short interview, scholars, experts, Church leaders from various Christian traditions will offer a deepening and an updating on the field of Ecumenism, by commenting on ecumenical issues and documents. The format of “120 seconds of Ecumenism” allows to collect a great variety of viewpoints and contributions, as well as to convey a message of mutual exchange, interaction, unity of purposes and a spirit of oneness, which characterize all those who seek the unity of the Church.*

120 Seconds of Ecumenism

- Monthly basis
- New video
- Spoken by experts

WEB TV  
Centro Pro Unione

120 Seconds of Ecumenism

**some SCHOLARS and EXPERTS of #120sEcumenism**

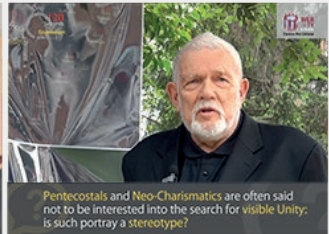
Prof. Alberto MELONI	Prof. Giovanni CERETI
Msgr. Peter HOCKEN	Rev. Burton L. VISOTZKY
Msgr. John RADANO	Dorothy G. RANAGHAN
Prof. Stanley BURGESS	Rev. Kenneth HOWCROFT
Rev. James LOUGHRAN, S.A.	Prof. Ruth BURGESS



120 Seconds of Ecumenism / 6 months today



Thank you! To our WebTV visitors from 27 localities



120 Secondi di Ecumenismo / i primi 6 mesi



Grazie! Ai visitatori della nostra WebTV da 27 località



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## Memorandum Projects and Initiatives

### **Costellazioni Conciliari**

#### *Pensiero-costellazioni Teologiche* ☼

Il Centro Pro Unione organizza una serie di incontri per tracciare, con il contributo dell'uditorio che risponderà agli stimoli offerti dai Relatori, il profilo del pensiero conciliare e delineare alcune "costellazioni" teologiche originali e feconde per la missione del popolo di Dio oggi.

Ogni incontro verterà su un ambito specifico della teologia (sistemica, biblica, ecclesiologia, morale) e conterà di una presentazione da parte del Relatore cui seguirà un laboratorio di approfondimento, durante il quale quanti lo desiderano possono portare il proprio contributo di specialista, formatore, pastore, operatore pastorale, fedele impegnato nella Chiesa, in risposta alle sollecitazioni offerte nella presentazione.

L'incontro conclusivo ricostruirà la "costellazione conciliare" emersa nel corso degli incontri.



#### **Intervengono nella serie**

**Prospettiva sistematica**  
Prof. Azzolino Chiappini

**Prospettiva biblica**  
Prof.ssa Ha Fong Maria Ko

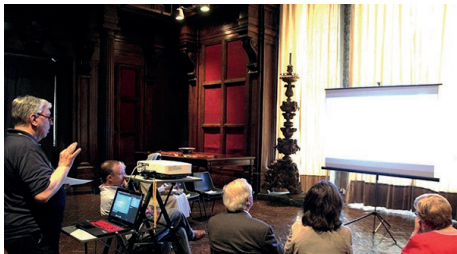
**Prospettiva ecclesiologica**  
Prof. Angelo Maffei

**Prospettiva morale**  
Prof. Francesco Compagnoni, OP

**Conclusioni**  
Prof. Giacomo Puglisi, SA



*Highlights encounters of the initiative Costellazioni Conciliari*  
*Immagini flash degli incontri dell'iniziativa*



*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



## The Library of the Centro Pro Unione

### Profile of the Library

*A specialized space for ecumenical studies and documentation*

*The library of the Centro Pro Unione is a specialized library established at the end of 1969.*

*The library has about 23,300 volumes and 400 periodicals.*

*It offers scholars a large collection in ecumenical theology, history of the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, history of Vatican II and substantial sections devoted to theology, liturgy, history and spirituality of Christian denominations, as well as an exhaustive documentation on interconfessional theological dialogues.*



### Some Historical Notes

#### The roots of half century in service for promoting Christian Unity

- *The Centro Pro Unione is born from the ecumenical charism of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, a branch of the Franciscan family.*
- *The Atonement Society was founded by The Servant of God Fr. Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White at the end of the XIX century.*
- *St. Pius X welcomed the Order into full communion with the Church of Rome in 1909.*
- *The roots of the Centro go back at least to 1948 when the friars began collaborating with the ecumenical magazine "Unitas", founded by the Jesuit P. Carlo Boyer and based in the convent of St. Brigida in piazza Farnese in Rome.*
- *Between 1950 and 1960 a collaboration was developed with the Ladies of Bethany and the Foyers Unitas for the welcoming of Orthodox and Protestant visitors to Rome.*
- *The Prayer Association "Pro Unione" (Lega di preghiera), conceived by Fr. Paul Wattson, was formed and directed by Fr. Celestine Leahy, SA. The League provided the Italian translation, the printing and the dissemination of the texts for the Week of "Prayer for Christian Unity".*
- *In 1962 Princess Orietta Doria Pamphilj and her husband Commander Frank Pogson invited Foyer Unitas, the International Association Unitas and the League of Prayer "Pro Unione" to move to Pamphilj Palace in Piazza Navona.*
- *In 1968 the Friars ceased the English edition of the magazine "Unitas" and founded the Centro Pro Unione, officially inaugurated by the Card. Johannes Willebrands. Its principle mission is to provide a place for research, meetings and encounters, formation in theological, social and spiritual ecumenism as well as promoting a sensitivity to the ecumenical movement.*
- *During the years of the Second Vatican Council the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in Piazza Navona, site of the Centro Pro Unione, was the scene of encounters with and among the "ecumenical observers" invited to the Council by the Secretariat for the Promotion of Unity among Christians, first at the request of Pope John XXIII and then by Paul VI.*



*First Librarian statement on the Centro's Library roots*

“ Fr. Thaddeus Horgan, SA inaugurated the Centro Pro Unione in 1968. [...] A year later the Community appointed me to come to Rome and catalogue a new Library. At the beginning the books were 8,000 and I had the aid of Ms. Antonietta. It took eight years to accomplish the cataloguing of the entire collection.  
 [...] We adopted a system according to Dewey Decimal System (DDC), a standard used at the World Council of Churches - WCC. At that time, a typewriter was used for the creation of the card catalog. Each book was associated to four cards including: title, author, subject and location of the volume. Today, cataloguing data is accomplished by means of electronic data systems.  
 [...] Ans J. Van der Bent, the librarian of the WCC, generously aided us in the amplify our Library collection, donating duplicates found in the WCC's library collection. The friars covered only the costs of transportation of the donated books. On one occasion we travelled to Geneva (at the WCC's Library) and packed our vehicle with a vast quantity of books received in donation and brought them to Rome. In this way we expanded our repertoire of books and periodicals.  
 [...] The aim of the Centro's library was to provide a specialized holding in ecumenism and to make this resource available for scholars and experts. At that time, this was a unique collection that could be consulted exclusively in-person within the spaces of the Centro Pro Unione library.  
 [...] A large number of students profitted from the library's collection during their academic years of research and preparation of their dissertations. Many of them afterwards gave us a copy of their published research for the library at the conclusion of their theological studies as a sign of gratitude. ”

*Fr. Daniel O'Shea, SA (in memoriam)*



1



1 Historical Office Secretary of League of Prayer  
 2 Former Office of English "Unitas"



2



**Library Overview**  
**Volumes**  
 23,300 (2022)  
**Periodicals**  
 400  
**Bibliography Records**  
 32,500  
 (daily updated)

**Online Catalog (OPAC)**  
[www.prounione.it/en/library/search](http://www.prounione.it/en/library/search)

**Library Association & Network**  
 · URBE Roman Ecclesial Library Union  
 · ACNP National Union Archive of Periodicals  
 · ATLA Bulletin indexed on the Religion Database  
 by the American Theological Foundation

**Established**  
 1969

**Services**  
 In-person Consultation · Two Reading Rooms  
 3 Workstations · Catalog & library multimedia  
 Formation · Document Delivery Service  
 Fotocopies

**Additional Supplements Compiled**  
 A Bibliography relating to Interchurch and  
 Interconfessional Theological Dialogues  
 (Thirty-six supplements published  
 up to now)

A photographic journey through 54 years of activities



## Media and News Review

### News Release

#### World Council of Churches

General secretary of the WCC Rev. Dr. Olav Fyske Tveit spoke at the Centro's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Read article

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-WCC-1-nov-2018](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-WCC-1-nov-2018)

### Radio Broadcast

#### Vatican Radio

Centro Pro Unione publishes the Manual of Ecumenism, a hands-on guide to Christian Unity

Listen podcast

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VR-21-jan-2013](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VR-21-jan-2013)

### Online Media

#### L'Osservatore Romano

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Centro Pro Unione



### News Release

#### Centro Pro Unione

- 1 Statement of gratitude to pope Benedict XVI for his pontificate
- 2 Centro's statement of great joy on pope Francis' election, 13 March 2013
- 3 Atonement Friars' statement on pope Francis 1<sup>st</sup> election anniversary



The **Centro Pro Unione** expresses its deep gratitude to Benedict XVI for his pontificate, for what he has witnessed with his person, as well as for what he has taught and done, particularly on the path towards full reconciliation among Christians, knowing that the ministry of the Bishop of Rome is to be faithful to the will of Christ for maintaining the unity of those who believe in Him.

Il **Centro Pro Unione** si unisce al coro di voci che ringraziano Benedetto XVI per il suo pontificato, per quanto egli ha testimoniato con la sua persona, e per quanto egli ha insegnato e operato, soprattutto nel cammino verso la piena riconciliazione fra i cristiani, certi che tale intenzione per l'unità della Chiesa – conforme alla volontà di Cristo – continuerà ad essere presente nella preghiera che il Papa eleverà a Dio nei suoi giorni di ritiro e contemplazione, e confidando in essa.

Rome, 28 February 2013



*Benedictus PP XVI*



"I wish to extend to your Holiness the greetings of the **Franciscan Friars of the Atonement** and the pledge of our prayerful support of your ministry as Bishop of Rome and as shepherd whose mission is to confirm the faith of your brothers and sisters in Christ and preside over the unity of the Church of Christ in love."

"The command given to our Seraphic Father, Francis of Assisi: "Go, rebuild my house" has now been entrusted into your hands and placed on your shoulders."

"May the Holy Spirit give you the strength and the courage to imitate the leaders of the first apostolic community in healing the first divisions among the believers of Christ by not imposing anything more than the Gospel requires for unity in Christ. Our prayer will accompany you."

With blessings of "Peace and all good"  
Atonement Friars - Minister General  
Fr. James F. Puglisi, SA



#### It's a great joy!

The **Centro Pro Unione** welcomes with deep joy the new elected Bishop of Rome, **Pope Francis**, in spirit of prayer and gratitude to the Lord who guides His Church throughout the ages, and offers its Franciscan charism and its ecumenical ministry at the service of Pope Francis.



13 March 2013  
Photo / Espedite zero



Online Media

Vatican News

Centro Marks 50 years of Ecumenical Welcome

 Read article

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-18-mag-2018](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-18-mag-2018)

 Listen podcast

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-Podcast-18-mag-2018](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-Podcast-18-mag-2018)



Online Media

Vatican News

Centro Pro Unione marks half century of ecumenical encounters

 Read article

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-23-mag-2018](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-23-mag-2018)

 Listen podcast

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-Podcast-23-mag-2018](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-Podcast-23-mag-2018)



Online Media

Vatican News

Ecumenical Services at the Centro Pro Unione during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

 Read article

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-24-jan-2022](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-24-jan-2022)

 Listen podcast

[bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-Podcast-24-jan-2022](http://bit.ly/CPU-NewsReview-VN-Podcast-24-jan-2022)



Online Media

Zenit

Summer School - Ecumenism in Rome from a Catholic Perspective at the Centro Pro Unione



PRIMO PIANO Sinodo 2018 Misericordia Amoris Laetitia

[Dona Adesso](#)

Ecumenismo a Roma da una prospettiva cattolica

Finisce il Corso estivo al Centro Pro Unione

LUGLIO 19, 2006 00:00 • REDAZIONE • ITALIA

CITTÀ DEL VATICANO, mercoledì, 19 luglio 2006 (ZENIT.org) - 16 studenti provenienti da Stati Uniti, Inghilterra e Spagna hanno seguito per tre settimane a Roma un Corso

Iscriviti alla newsletter quotidiana di ZENIT

Nella tua e-mail tutti i giorni le più importanti notizie dalla Chiesa e dal mondo

Nome

Cognome



REVIEW COLLECTION ARCHIVE

[www.prounione.it/en/news/press-reports](http://www.prounione.it/en/news/press-reports)

*A photographic journey through 54 years of activities*



Note about the  
*Photographic Journey Album - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the Bulletin*  
*Photo rights and usage*



**I**n composing the **photo gallery album** published in this special 100th anniversary edition of the Bulletin, we are aware of the importance of the rights and usage of the photos.

Our purpose in putting together this photo collection was to only faithfully document and witness to our mission and charism by picturing how the Centro occupies a specialized place for dialogue, encounter, lectures, and study days in ecumenism and Christian unity, and to be at the disposal of researchers, scholars, academics, educational institutions, the faithful, and to anyone who could profit through study, dialogue and research in the service of the Church on the path of seeking reconciliation among all Christians.

**About the photos of this anniversary album we confirm that:**

- All photos published were taken in the location of the Centro Pro Unione during its activities or were photos provided by the speakers and co-organizers for the promotion of the Centro's activities.

However, given our efforts to safeguard the rights of persons pictured in this digital publication, we are available, upon written request to observe personal reservation on any image used.

Any **request** regarding this topic, please contact us at ([pro@prounione.it](mailto:pro@prounione.it)) and include in the subject: "bulletin image usage". We will keep track of the requests posting updatings in the album over web edition of this Bulletin.

Thank you,



*The editorial staff  
Centro Pro Unione*



2021-present

## INTRODUCING A RENEWAL OF OUR WEB DESIGN

### Primary website logo



Includes Home Page and thematic sub-sites

- Interconfessional Dialogues
- Semi-Annual Bulletin
- E-Learning

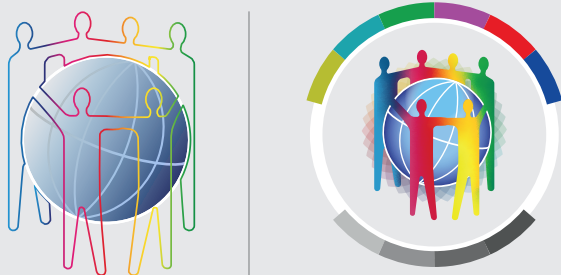
### WebTv&Media logo



Includes Streaming & audiovisual platform

- Online Conferences · Study Day · Symposium
- 120 Seconds of Ecumenism web series
- Audiovisual formats and projects

### Secondary media network logo



Includes our official channels

- Twitter, YouTube, SoundCloud and Facebook

### Renewal of web platforms and the new logo

Announced in 2021 – a major platform development and new software version 4.0 after twenty-two years of the Centro’s website, changes and improvements were made to the logo and printing fonts · lettering to present a more uniform image and obtain a more consistent branding across all of our media channels.

Considering some layout restyling such as:

Semi-Annual Bulletin publication cover, collection of Interconfessional Dialogues and internal website pages.

And finally the media streaming platform to increase the ability to share lectures, webinars and to provide audiovisual storage & video production capacity and to meet the growing demand for digital access and for greater online participation.

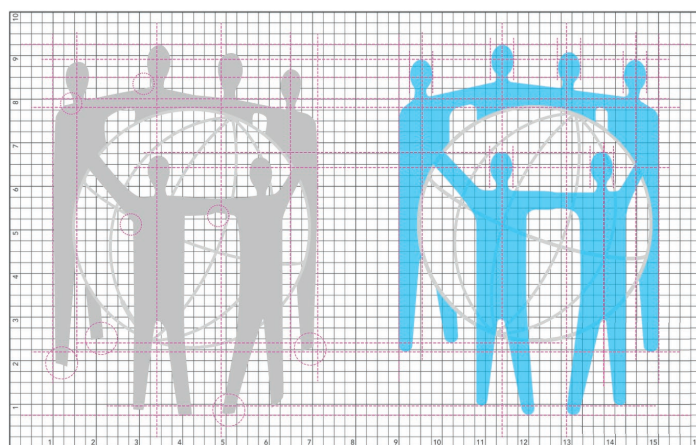
Throughout our network, we have adopted a common logo-image and colors and standardized lettering fonts on all of our print media, e.g., for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Material, the Semi-Annual Bulletin and published volumes, including the editorial Centro’s E-books and teaching materials for our courses.

*On this page we present the current logo of the Centro*

### Layout design improvements on a scale grid-based

Before

After



More information - working out of the Centro's logo see Bulletin N. 96 (2019) pages 32-33



Tema

**“In oriente abbiamo visto apparire  
la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo”**  
(Matteo 2, 2)

Illustrazione locandina

**“In oriente abbiamo visto apparire  
la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo”**

(Matteo 2,2)



## SETTIMANA DI PREGHIERA PER L'UNITÀ DEI CRISTIANI

Collegamenti ai sussidi e risorse utili · ITALIANO

Libretto Guida / Locandina / Pagellina

[www.prounione.it/it/ecumenismo/spuc/2022-settimana-preghiera-unita-cristiani](http://www.prounione.it/it/ecumenismo/spuc/2022-settimana-preghiera-unita-cristiani)

Edizioni per anno · Archivio

[www.prounione.it/it/ecumenismo/spuc](http://www.prounione.it/it/ecumenismo/spuc)



# WEEK OF PRAYER · CHRISTIAN UNITY

Prayer for Christian Unity · Eight Days



**THEME FOR THE YEAR 2022**

18-25 January 2022

55<sup>th</sup> edition / Octave for Unity introduced by our founder, Servant of God · Fr. Paul Wattson

**Theme**

We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him  
(Matthew 2:2)

Poster Artwork

**ENGLISH**



**Tema**


Hemos visto Su estrella en  
el oriente, y venimos a adorarlo  
(Mateo 2.2)

Ilustración del cartel

**ESPAÑOL**



## Links to materials and resources · ENGLISH

 **GEII / Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute · NY**  
[www.geii.org/week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_christian\\_unity](http://www.geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian_unity)

 **WCC / World Council of Churches**  
[www.oikoumene.org/resources/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity](http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity)

 **PCPCU / Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity**  
[www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita.html](http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita.html)

# WEEK OF PRAYER · CHRISTIAN UNITY

## ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Evening of reflection and prayer co-sponsored  
**The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas**  
and **Centro Pro Unione**

Learn more about the  
Ecumenical Worship

LAY centre | 35  
FOYER UNITAS  
Founded in 1986

[www.prounione.it/en/events/20-jan-2022](http://www.prounione.it/en/events/20-jan-2022)

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



CENTRO PRO UNIONE  
"Ut Omnes Unum Sint"

LAY centre | 35  
FOYER UNITAS  
Founded in 1986

In-person and  
webcast event

**Thursday**  
**20 January 2022**

**Lecturer**

**Gillian Kingston**

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

**Ecumenical  
Celebration of the Word**

**Presider · Preacher**

**Rev. Matthew A. Laferty**  
Director, Methodist Ecumenical  
Office Rome

on the occasion of the  
**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**  
you are cordially invited to an afternoon of prayer and reflection

**Thursday, 20 January 2022**  
**at 4:30 PM (Rome time)**

**"To serve the present age..."**



**Gillian KINGSTON**

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

*followed by*

**An Ecumenical Celebration of the Word**

Presider and Preacher: **Rev. Matthew A. Laferty**  
Director, Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome



Address

Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30  
1<sup>st</sup> floor (Piazza Navona) · Rome



A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

Organized by

**Centro Pro Unione and  
The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas**

Credits:  
design with artwork resources  
from Garry/Killian-Freepik

Websites  
[www.prounione.it](http://www.prounione.it)  
[www.laycentre.org](http://www.laycentre.org)

E-mail  
[pro@prounione.it](mailto:pro@prounione.it)  
[info@laycentre.org](mailto:info@laycentre.org)

Telephone  
(+39) 06 687 9552 (CPU)  
(+39) 06 772 6761 (LC)

FAX  
(+39) 06 6813 3668 (CPU)  
(+39) 06 772 676 235 (LC)

Social Media  
[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [YouTube](#) [LinkedIn](#)

**Sermon Podcast**

[bit.ly/Laferty-Sermon-Podcast-WPCU2022](https://bit.ly/Laferty-Sermon-Podcast-WPCU2022)

VIGIL PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2022

Streaming Media 

**Anglican Centre in Rome**  
Archbishop Ian Ernest  
Director

**Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome**  
Rev. Mathew A. Laferty  
Director

**Centro Pro Unione**  
Fr. James F. Puglisi, sa  
Director



**Media Video**

[www.prounione.it/webtv/live/17-jan-2022](http://www.prounione.it/webtv/live/17-jan-2022)

**Readers**

Joris Burmann  
Davide Bracale  
Wayne and Rose Wentz  
Kamla Ernest  
Hureem Salas

**Musicians**

Stefanie Gabuyo | Violin  
Antonio Montano | Piano · Tenor

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2022

We saw the *star* in the East and we came to *worship Him.* Mt 2:2

BEYOND SEPARATION TO GOD'S NEW PATHS


Join us for **A VIGIL OF PRAYER**


Hosted by the Centro Pro Unione, the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome, and the Anglican Centre in Rome


**Monday 17 January 2022 at 5.30 pm (ROME TIME)**

Via Facebook and YouTube

REVEREND MATTHEW LAFERTY, FATHER JAMES PUGLISI AND ARCHBISHOP IAN ERNEST WILL LEAD MEDITATIONS.

 THE ANGLICAN CENTRE IN ROME  
Piazza del Collegio Romano 2, 00185 Rome  
[www.anglicancentreinrome.org](http://www.anglicancentreinrome.org)

 METHODIST ECUMENICAL OFFICE ROME  
Via del Corso di Santa Spirito, 3, 00186 Rome  
[www.meorome.org/](http://www.meorome.org/)

 CENTRO PRO UNIONE  
Via di Santa Maria dell'Anima, 36, 00186 Rome RM  
[www.prounione.it](http://www.prounione.it)

**ARCH. IAN ERNEST**  
Director | Anglican Centre Rome

Matthew 2:7-12  
When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star

*Prayer of Praise and Confession*  
to redeem all the people, we ask you to have mercy on us, forgive us our sins










### *Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective*

**Proposed dates 27 June - 15 July 2022**

#### **Week One**

Reformation, both Protestant & Catholic:  
A Close Assessment of Their Reality

-  Biblical foundations
-  Factions and divisions within the Church
-  An overview of the Reformation and Catholic Reform movements, the modern ecumenical movement
-  Vatican II and the principles of Catholic principles of ecumenism; World Council of Churches
-  Worldwide ecumenical and interreligious organizations
-  Eastern Christianity
-  On June 29, Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, participation in the Papal Mass of the Pallium

#### **Faculty**

*will include*

**James Loughran, sa**

*Director · Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute, NY*

**Aaron Hollander**

*Associate Director · Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute, NY*

**James Puglisi, sa**

*Director · Centro Pro Unione, Rome*

**Teresa Francesca Rossi**

*Associate Director · Centro Pro Unione, Rome  
Professor of Ecumenism, Angelicum, Rome*

**Loredana Nepi**

*Librarian · Centro Pro Unione, Rome*

**Gabriël Quicke**

*Rector of the Church of St. Julian of the Flemings, Rome*

**Cornelius Ant. van Duin**

*Professional Tour Guide*

*and other experts*

The Course is "**Recognized and Endorsed**" by the Graduate Theological Foundation (USA) which can grant up to **6 graduate credits** for qualified graduate students.

#### *Schedule*






The schedule for the three weeks is the same Monday through Friday: morning prayer followed by three 60-minute lecture segments.

The afternoons are for on-site excursions and lectures (Roman catacombs, Basilica of St. Peter and excavations, St. Clement, "Roman ghetto", Synagogue and museum, Mosque and Islamic center, and others).

Weekends are free.

#### **Week Two**

From Division to Dialogue

-  Exploration of the various dialogues which exist between the churches, their context and results
-  Ecumenical documents
-  Reading of ecumenical texts
-  Concept of reception in the ecumenical movement
-  Visit to the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity and for Interreligious Dialogue







APPLICATION CAN BE FILLED OUT ONLINE 

**Week Three**  
Christians & World Faith Traditions









Submit your application through our **Summer School Web Page**

[www.prounione.it/en/formation/summer-school-rome](http://www.prounione.it/en/formation/summer-school-rome)



**Ecumenical Gatherings**  
Afternoon Program

-  Jewish-Christian relations
-  Christian responses to people of other faiths
-  Fundamentalism as a worldwide phenomenon
-  Catholicism and Islam in dialogue
-  New religious movements
-  Grassroots ecumenism

-  St. Peter's Basilica
-  St Pauls-outside-the-walls
-  Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul Mass of the Pallium in the presence of the Delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate
-  St. John Lateran, Baptistry and Basilica of St. Clement
-  St. Mary Major's Basilica
-  Tour of the "Roman Ghetto", the Synagogue and Museum
-  Excavations under St. Peter's
-  Islamic Center & Mosque

 **Aim**

This course is designed to introduce participants to the ecumenical and interreligious movements from a Catholic perspective. It will offer a historical and theological overview of the issues that divide Christians as well as the bonds that unite them.

The program will explore relations with other religious traditions. The course, which is in English, is for men and women who are in preparation for ministry or rel or a sabbatical experience led by qualified professors and ecumenists.

 **Practical Information**

Upon acceptance of application, a list of possible lodgings in Rome will be mailed or faxed.

The cost of the course is US\$300 (non-refundable) which is payable at the time of application.

The Centro Pro Unione is located on the historic Piazza Navona in the heart of Rome.

 **Testimonial Alumni Video**

A **24' minutes video** of the students' journey

 [www.prounione.it/webtv/doc-ministryedu](http://www.prounione.it/webtv/doc-ministryedu)

- Morning Prayer  8:45 — 9:00
- Class I  9:00 — 10:00
- Class II  10:15 — 11:15
- Class III  11:30 — 12:30



Graduate Theological Foundation (USA)

Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute (NY)



[www.gtfeducation.org](http://www.gtfeducation.org)

[www.geii.org](http://www.geii.org)

## BOOKS AND COURSE VOLUMES

The Centro offers a formative itinerary in Ecumenism and Christian Unity



### Volume I

#### A CHIESA CATTOLICA E IL MOVIMENTO ECUMENICO

(Book out of print)

€ 5,00 EURO



### Volume II

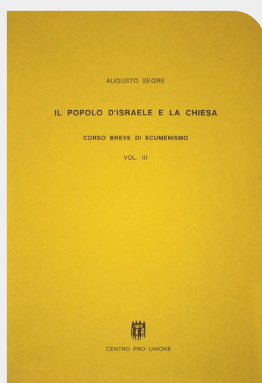
#### CONOSCIAMO I FRATELLI

— AA.VV. | La Chiesa Valdese, Metodista, Luterana, Battista, Anglicana e Ortodossa

€ 5,00 EURO

Reprinted in its entirety as the 1<sup>st</sup> part of

#### \* Volume XIV CONOSCIAMO I FRATELLI



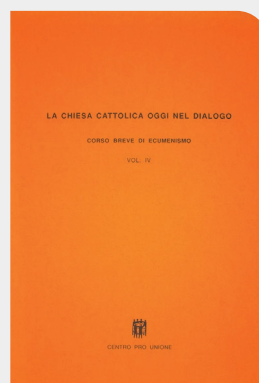
### Volume III

#### IL POPOLO D'ISRAELE E LA CHIESA

pp. 137, Ed. 1982  
Augusto Segre

— Nascita e sviluppo dell'idea ebraica. Gli ebrei in Italia, l'Antisemitismo, il Sionismo, lo Stato di Israele, il Concilio Vaticano II, gli Ebrei

€ 5,00 EURO



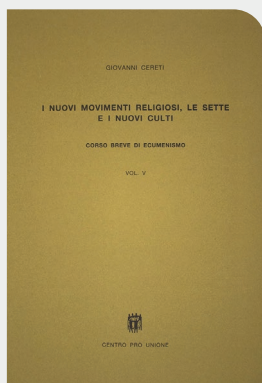
### Volume IV

#### LA CHIESA CATTOLICA OGGI NEL DIALOGO (I parte)

pp. 82, Ed. 1982

— Saggi sui dialoghi intercorsi dal 1978-1982 tra la Chiesa Cattolica e le altre Chiese Cristiane

€ 4,00 EURO



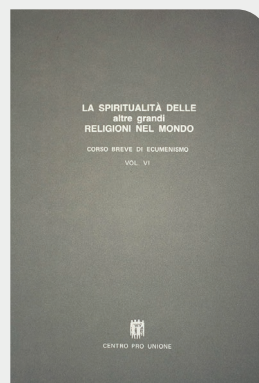
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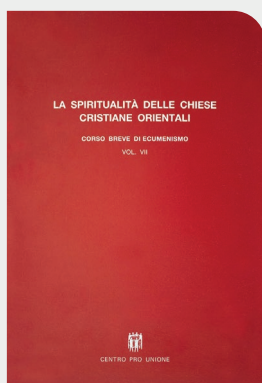
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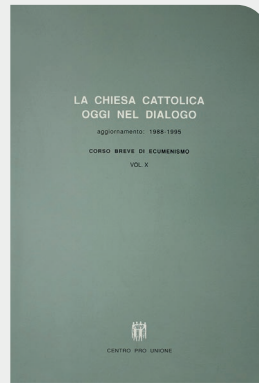
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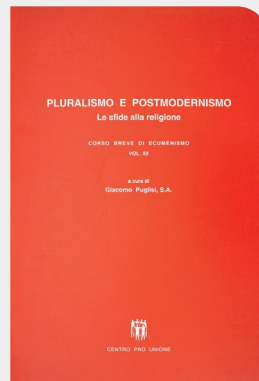
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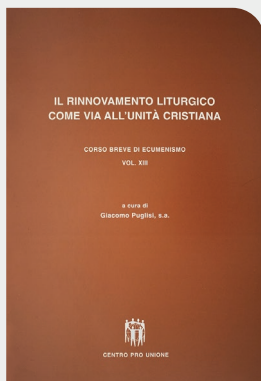
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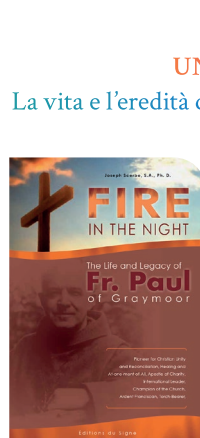


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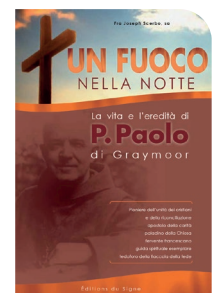


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Yesterday - Solemnity of the Annunciation - the Centro Pro unione @Ecumenunity joined #PopeFrancis in prayer for the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. "HolyMother... lead us now on the paths of Peace." Amen

#PrayTogether #Ukraine #Peace @Pontifex  
🐦 26 March 2022

Where to find the 🎧 podcast of lecture given by Prof. Menachem Lorberbum on theme "On the Task of Theology Theological Foundation of Interreligious Dialogue from a Jewish Perspective" plus Q&A session.

#Judaism #Interfaith #Theology @JohnPaul2Center  
🐦 22 March 2022

Ongoing Study day on Sorores in Spe: "Sisters in Hope of the Resurrection" - A fresh Response to the Condemnation of Anglican Orders (1896) - Sponsors: Mailines Conversation Group · @AnglicanCentre · @EcumenUnity

📄 — Registrations still available  
🐦 17 March 2022



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The Centro Pro Unione is most grateful to the moderators, speakers and attendees for their contribution to the accomplishment of a successful Study Day on Sorores in Spe.

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Anglican Centre Rome and 5 others



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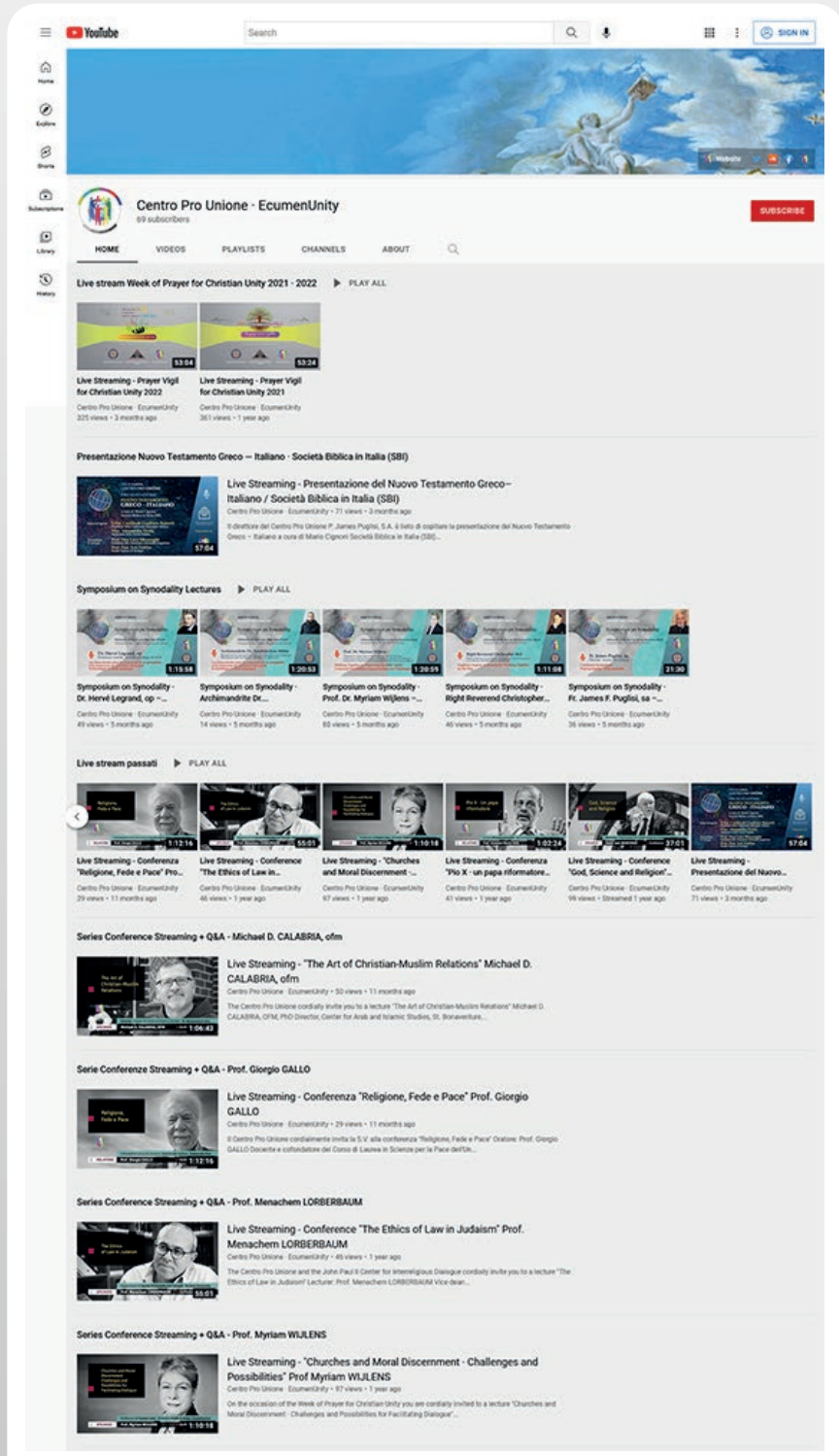
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S.Em. Cardinale Gualtiero Bassetti

#### Symposium on Synodality

Speakers

- Dr. Hervé Legrand, op
- Archimandrite Dr. Amphilochos Miltos
- Prof. Dr. Myriam Wijlens
- Right Reverend Christopher Hill
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HE Cardinal Luis Tagle

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**John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue**

When you approach God, you have to pray for the world. Dr Menachem Lorberbaum gave a talk on the task of #theology and #interreligious #dialogue at the Centro Pro Unione yesterday. #JP2Center #IRD #Interfaith #Judaism  
 25 February 2022 | @JP2Center

**The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas**

"Grateful for the opportunity to learn more about Synodality in Methodism and especially about the participation and role of the laity - a beautiful example of how laity, as part of the people of God, are empowered by their baptism to share their gifts for the upbuilding of the Church. Thank you Gillian Kingston. Also grateful that we could worship together, listen to the Word of God, and be inspired by the preaching of Rev. Matthew Laferty. Let us continue to work and pray for Christian Unity, not only during this Octave, but always."  
 #WeekofPrayerforChristianUnity2022 #Synodality #Ecumenism  
 21 January 2022 | @LayCentre

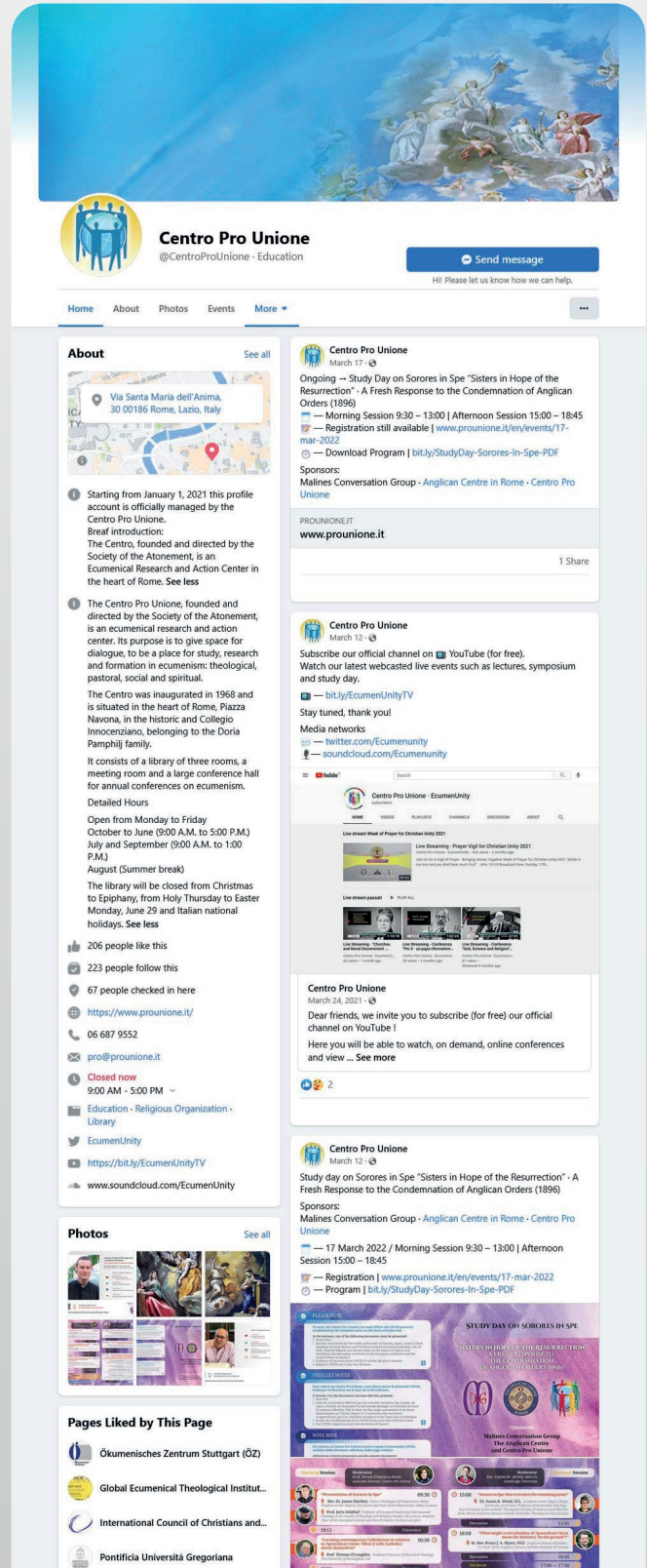
**Anglican Centre in Rome**

Live Streaming Prayer Vigil for Christian Unity week 2022 We saw the Star in the East and we came to Worship HIM #ChristianunityWeek202  
 17 January 2022 | @AnglicanCentre

**Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome**

MEOR director Matthew A. Laferty was in attendance at a special event tonight at Centro Pro Unione to launch a new Greek-Italian translation of the New Testament by the Bible Society in Italy. Methodist deacon and Waldensian Council moderator Alessandra Trotta (pictured) celebrated the project and its unique collaboration between Italian Protestants and Catholics.  
 6 December 2021 | @MethodistEOR

Join the conversation!



## WEEK OF PRAYER *on Media Network* Biblical Reflections and Prayers for the Eight Days

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### Day 1

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*Raise us up and draw us  
to your perfect light*

"WE OBSERVED HIS STAR  
IN THE EAST" (MT 2:2)

Readings

Zech 4:1-7 | I see a lampstand all of gold  
Ps 139:1-10 | Your right hand shall hold me fast  
2 Tim 1:7-10 | This grace... has now been revealed through  
the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus  
Jn 16:7-14 | When the Spirit of truth comes,  
he will guide you into all the truth



### Day 2

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*Humble leadership breaks down  
walls and builds up with love*

"WHERE IS THE CHILD WHO  
HAS BEEN BORN KING  
OF THE JEWS?" (MT 2:2)

Readings

Jer 23:1-6 | He shall reign as king and deal wisely  
Ps 46 | He makes wars cease to the end of the earth  
Phil 2:5-11 | Who... did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited  
Mt 20:20-28 | 'The Son of Man came not to be served,  
but to serve



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### Day 3

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*The presence of Christ,  
turning the world upside down*

"WHEN KING HEROD HEARD THIS  
HE WAS DISTURBED, AND ALL  
JERUSALEM WITH HIM" (MT 2:3)

Readings

Neh 4:18-21 | So we laboured ... from break of dawn until  
the stars came out  
Ps 2:1-10 | Why do the nations conspire...?  
Thess 2:13-3; 5 | But the Lord is faithful, he will strengthen you  
Mt 2:1-5 | He was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him



### Day 4

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*Though small and  
suffering, we lack nothing*

"AND YOU, BETHLEHEM...  
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST" (MT 2:6)

Readings

Mic 5:2-5a, 7-8 | From you shall come forth ... one who is to rule in Israel  
Ps 23 | The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want  
1 Pet 2: 21-25 | Now you have returned to the shepherd  
and guardian of your souls  
Lk 12:32-40 | Do not be afraid, little flock



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### Day 5

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*Guided by the one Lord*

"AHEAD OF THEM,  
WENT THE STAR THAT THEY  
HAD SEEN AT ITS RISING" (MT 2:9)

Readings

Ex 13:17-14:4 | The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud  
Ps 121 | I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where  
will my help come?  
Rev 22:5-9 | For the Lord God will be their light  
Mt 2:7-10 | Ahead of them, went the star  
that they had seen at its rising



### Day 6

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*Gathered in worship  
around the One Lord*

"THEY SAW THE CHILD WITH MARY  
HIS MOTHER, AND THEY KNELT DOWN  
AND PAID HIM HOMAGE" (MT 2:11)

Readings

Ex 3:1-6 | Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God  
Ps 84 | How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!  
Rev 4:8-11 | Worship the one who lives forever and ever  
Mt 28:16-20 | When they saw him, they worshipped him



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### Day 7

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*The gifts of communion*

"THEN, OPENING THEIR TREASURE CHESTS,  
THEY OFFERED HIM GIFTS OF GOLD,  
FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH" (MT 2:11)

Readings

Hos 6:1-6 | For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice  
Ps 100 | Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts  
with praise  
Acts 3:1-10 | I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you  
Mt 6:19-21 | For where your treasure is, there your heart  
will be also



### Day 8

"We saw the star in the East,  
and we came to worship him"  
(Mt 2:2)

*Beyond the familiar routes  
of separation to God's new paths*

"THEY LEFT FOR THEIR OWN  
COUNTRY BY ANOTHER ROAD"  
(MT 2:12)

Readings

Jer 31:31-34 | I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel  
Ps 16 | You show me the path of life  
Eph 4:20-23 | To be renewed in the spirit of your minds  
Mt 11:25-30 | Because you have hidden these things from the wise  
and the intelligent, and have revealed them to infants



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**Primo Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*Rialzaci e guidaci alla tua luce perfetta*

"ABBIAMO VISTO APPARIRE LA SUA STELLA" (MT 2,2)

Letture

Zc 4, 1-5 | Vedo un candelabro d'oro  
 Sal 139 (138), 1-10 | Là mi afferra la tua destra  
 2 Tim 1, 7-10 | La sua grazia si è chiaramente manifestata ora che è venuto Gesù Cristo, il nostro Salvatore  
 Gv 16, 7-14 | Quando verrà lo Spirito della verità, vi guiderà verso tutta la verità



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**Secondo Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*Un'autorità' umile abbatte i muri e costruisce con amore*

"DOVE SI TROVA QUEL BAMBINO, NATO DA POCO, IL RE DEI GIUDEI?" (MT 2,2)

Letture

Ger 23, 1-6 | Questo re governerà con saggezza  
 Sal 46 (45), 1-12 | In tutto il mondo pone fine alle guerre  
 Fil 2, 5-11 | Non conservò gelosamente il suo essere uguale a Dio  
 Mt 20, 20-28 | Il Figlio dell'uomo è venuto non per farsi servire, ma per servire



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**Terzo Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*La presenza di Cristo sovverte il mondo*

"QUESTE PAROLE MISERO IN AGITAZIONE TUTTI GLI ABITANTI DI GERUSALEMME, E SPECIALMENTE IL RE ERODE" (MT 2,3)

Letture

Ne 4, 12-15 | Continuammo a lavorare, dalle prime luci dell'alba fino a notte  
 Sal 2, 1-10 | Perché si rivoltano i popoli?  
 2 Ts 2, 13-3, 5 | Ma il Signore è fedele: egli vi darà forza  
 Mt 2, 1-5a | Queste parole misero in agitazione tutti gli abitanti di Gerusalemme, e specialmente il re Erode



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**Quarto Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*Saboteo piccoli e sofferenti: non ci manca niente*

"TU BETLEMME [...] NON SEI CERTO LA MENO IMPORTANTE" (MT 2,6)

Letture

Mic 5, 1-4a.6-7 | Da te uscirà colui che deve guidare il popolo d'Israele  
 Sal 23 (22), 1-6 | Il Signore è il mio pastore e nulla mi manca  
 1 Pt 2, 21-25 | Ma ora siete tornati al vostro pastore, al guardiano delle vostre anime  
 Lc 12, 32-40 | Non aver paura, piccolo gregge



**Quinto Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*Guardate dall'unico Signore*

"APPARVE ANCORA A QUEI SAPIENTI LA STELLA CHE AVEVANO VISTO IN ORIENTE" (MT 2,9)

Letture

Es 13, 17-14, 4 | Il Signore era davanti a loro come una grossa nube  
 Sal 121 (120) 1-8 | Alzo gli occhi verso i monti: chi mi potrà aiutare?  
 Ap 22, 5-9 | Il Signore Dio li illuminerà  
 Mt 2, 7-10 | Apparve ancora a quei sapienti la stella che avevano visto in oriente



**Sesto Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*Radunati in preghiera attorno all'unico Signore*

"VIDERO IL BAMBINO E SUA MADRE, MARIA. SI INGINOCCHiarONO E LO ADORARONO" (MT 2,11)

Letture

Es 3, 1-6 | Mosè si coprì la faccia perché aveva paura di guardare Dio  
 Sal 84 (83), 2-13 | Quanto mi è cara la tua casa, Dio dell'universo!  
 Ap 4, 8-11 | Adoravano il Dio che vive per sempre  
 Mt 28, 16-20 | Quando lo videro, lo adorarono



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**Settimo Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*7 Anni della comunione*

"GLI OFFRIRONO REGALI: ORO, INCENSO E MIRRA" (MT 2,11)

Letture

Os 6, 1-6 | Voglio amore costante, non sacrifici  
 Sal 100 (99), 1-5 | Entrate nel suo tempio con canti, nei suoi cortili con inni di lode  
 At 3, 1-10 | Soldi non ne ho, ma quello che ho te lo do volentieri  
 Mt 6, 19-21 | Perché, dove sono le tue ricchezze, là c'è anche il tuo cuore



**Ottavo Giorno**

"In oriente abbiamo visto apparire la sua stella e siamo venuti qui per onorarlo" (Matteo 2,2)

*Dalle consuetudini della separazione: alle nuove vie di Dio*

"ESSI PRESERO ALLORA UN'ALTRA STRADA E RITORNARONO AL LORO PAESE" (MT 2,12)

Letture

Ger 31, 31-34 | Concluderò una nuova alleanza con il popolo d'Israele  
 Sal 16 (15), 1-11 | Mi mostrerai la via che porta alla vita  
 Ef 4, 20-23 | Dovete lasciarvi rinnovare cuore e spirito  
 Mt 11, 25-30 | Perché hai nascosto queste cose ai grandi e ai sapienti e le hai fatte conoscere ai piccoli



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## Pioniere della Settimana di Preghiera per l'Unità dei Cristiani. Profeta di Unità

Lo scopo della vita di **Padre Paolo Wattson** consisteva nel lavorare e pregare per la realizzazione della preghiera pronunciata da Gesù durante l'Ultima Cena:

«Perché tutti siano una sola cosa: come tu, Padre, sei in me e io sono in te, siano anch'essi in noi...»  
(*Giovanni 17,21*).

Il cammino prosegue oggi grazie all'impegno continuo dei Frati e Suore Francescane dell'Atonement.

Nel mondo, la nostra missione ha raggiunto gli Stati Uniti, Canada, Giappone, Italia, Gran Bretagna, Brasile, Giamaica, Perù e le Filippine.

❖ Puoi sostenere il carisma e il ministero dei Frati dell'Atonement nel servizio a favore dell'unità dei Cristiani e della Riconciliazione, facendo una **donazione libera**. Benefattori che desiderano aiutare il nostro impegno e servizio, vedi le seguenti informazioni

**IBAN BIC**

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*Intestato a* Frati Francescani dell'Atonement  
Convento di S. Onofrio al Gianicolo  
Piazza S. Onofrio, 2  
00165 Roma

**Grazie di cuore!**  
*Pace e Bene*



Per conoscere di più sul ministero dei Frati, visita  
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e [www.fratiatonement.org](http://www.fratiatonement.org)





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