

CENTRO PRO UNIONE

A publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

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Centro Pro Unione

A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement



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Centro Pro Unione Bulletin

A semi-annual publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, - www.atonementfriars.org - 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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Letter from the Director

The Fall issue is a rich harvest of some of the interesting research that has gone in the past years and the progress that is slowly but surely advancing in ecumenical and interreligious relations. Unfortunately we are unable to share two of the lectures that were offered this Fall for the reasons that I will explain. The first of these was given in November by Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle entitled: *Vatican II and Asia's Reception. A Cultural Reading from the Philippines*. The Cardinal did provide an interesting analysis of Asian theology as it received the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* especially chapter one. Tagle explained the same vision that Pope Francis has of the church as going out of itself to the margins of society. This is what Asians, in general, and Filipinos, in particular, have attempted to do since the Council. Tagle explained this is really what gave new energy to the Christians of Asia to become key players in Christianity.



The second lecture that does not appear in the *Bulletin* was given by Walter Cardinal Kasper. It was the 17th annual conference in honor of the Servant of God, Father Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White, co-founder of the Society of the Atonement. His conference was entitled: *The Theological Background of Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome – Disciple of the Second Vatican Council* has since been published in Italian, German and English as *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love. Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*. Kasper did a reading of Pope Francis' Vatican II formation and the Argentinian liberation theology. As in the case of the reception of the Council in Asia, so too with Pope Francis the starting point is the council's document *Lumen Gentium* that invites the Church to move out of herself to the periphery where the poor and marginalized live to bring the Gospel of tenderness and radical love.

What we are able to share are the conferences given by the former Pastor of the Methodist Church in Rome and current moderator of the British Methodist church Kenneth Howcroft. He shared with us the reception of the Catholic Spirit as found in the Anglican, Methodist and Catholic dialogues – a sort of "Protestant Harvesting the Fruits".

This conference was followed by that of the Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht, Joris Vercammen who spoke about the challenges of the International dialogue between the Roman and Old Catholic churches. These two churches share much of the same history. What is interesting concerns the question of the reception of a council. The archbishop opens for the reader some challenging thoughts in regards to this issue especially since Catholics are in the process of the reception of Vatican II. He shares some fascinating insights into this process and the unity of the church.

The third conference was jointly sponsored by the Centro and the John Paul II Centre for Interreligious Dialogue at the Angelicum. Dr. Josef Stern presents a reading taken from Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* concerning the binding of Isaac which he describes as one of the most terrifying stories found in the Torah. He presents his own unique understanding of what Maimonides is trying to do in his exegesis. I hope you will find his article both enlightening and challenging.

Next year's activities of the Centro will include: Prof. Geoffrey Wainwright's conference during the Week of Prayer celebration on the reception of Vatican II as found in the 50 years of dialogues between Methodists and Catholics, the annual course on Catholic Rome and Lutheran Wittenburg of St. Olaf College (USA), the visit of the students and professors of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey Switzerland, from the Università degli studi (Torino), Prof. Andrea Poma will speak on "La Chiesa e la sfida del post-moderno", visiting professor at the Angelicum, Rabbi Jack Bemporad will speak on "Violence: A Jewish Perspective" and finally the Centro will join in the 50th anniversary celebration of the work of the Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity with a series of presentations on the 23rd of June.

In this *Bulletin* you will find news of a new initiative called *120 seconds of ecumenism* on the new webTV (<http://webtv.prounione.it>) of the Centro as well as the Italian initiative of our Associate Director Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi entitled "Costellazioni Conciliari" which continues the Centro's three year celebration of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. This year's Summer course: Introduction to the Ecumenical and Interreligious Movements will run from June 29 to July 17.

Remember to continue to look at our new website (<http://www.prounione.it>) for news and activities of the Centro Pro Unione.

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James F. Puglisi, SA
Director Centro Pro Unione

N. 86 - Fall 2014

Catholic Spirit: Harvesting the Fruits of Methodist, Anglican and Roman Catholic Dialogues

Kenneth G. Howcroft - Pastor, Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church and Co-convenor of the Joint Implementation Commission for the Covenant between the Methodist Church in Great Britain and the Church of England

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 22 May 2014



Forgive me if I re-enforce your stereotypes of Methodists and begin with a quotation from the scriptures, the Gospel of Mark 4:26-29.

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

I know that passage is about the grain harvest whereas the second part of my title this evening (adapted from Cardinal Kasper's book published in 2009) is about harvesting fruits, but the point being made holds. When we are dealing with the creative and re-creative love of God transforming things until all are one in God (envisioned here as the 'kingdom') we are asked to co-operate with God. It looks and feels as if we are scattering seeds in hope. We can hardly see them when they are scattered. We cannot make them grow by ourselves. Even Jesus in his earthly life went to the cross having sowed the seeds of the kingdom but not seeing much harvest and not able to do much other than hand himself over into the hands of the Father. But God raised him to life. When we sow the seeds, we are not the only ones working in the situation. God enables them to sprout and grow. But when the time for harvest comes, we have to discern it and co-operate actively again.

For decades we have been sowing ecumenical seeds. Some of our churches would trace this back in the modern era to the Edinburgh Mission Conference of 1910. For the three dialogues we are concerned with in this paper [Anglican-Roman Catholic; Roman Catholic-Methodist; Anglican-Methodist] the starting point was the Second Vatican Council from 1962-5.

Over 40 years later, Cardinal Kasper and others discerned that it was time to gather any harvest that had appeared. The book that appeared in 2009 attempted to do so in so far as the international Roman Catholic dialogues with the Lutherans, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Anglican Communion, and World Methodist Council were concerned. In the immediately preceding years there had been what I will politely call pauses, firstly in the work of



Pastor Kenneth G. Howcroft

the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) whose second phase had ended by 2005, and whose third phase (despite a preparatory meeting in 2007) did not begin until 2011; and secondly in the work of the International Anglican –Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) which had begun work in 2001. Whereas ARCIC is a meeting of theologians to address theological principles, IARCCUM is a meeting of bishops charged, firstly, with promoting the reception of the ARCIC reports and the implementation of those principles; and, secondly, with monitoring and connecting regional developments in various parts of the world with the international work. To this end, in 2007 IARCCUM produced an overview (or even 'harvesting') of the ARCIC and allied processes to that point entitled *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*.

In the same period, the international Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogue had been assessing its own progress. In 2006 it produced a report *The Grace given you in Christ: Catholics and Methodists reflect further on the Church*. That report describes itself as seeking to harvest the blessings of 40 years of dialogue on that topic. This then led to the 2011 report *Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments* which explored some areas of significant divergence identified in the 2006 report by revisiting selected topics in the 1982 World Council of Churches' text *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* (often called the "Lima" text). But it also led to a more broad ranging "harvesting" of the dialogues in the 2010 text *Synthesis:*

Together to Holiness – 40 years of Methodist and Roman Catholic Dialogue.

So far as the Anglican – Methodist dialogue is concerned, the Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission (AMICUM) produced a major report in 1996 entitled *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*. There was then, as in the other dialogues, a pause. A second round of conversations began in 2009 and its report *Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches* is to be published in late summer 2014. This report again 'harvests the fruits' of the previous dialogue in the context of other bi-lateral and multi-lateral dialogues, and in particular of the World Council of Churches convergence texts *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* (Lima, 1982) and *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Busan, 2013). At the same time, it surveys practical progress in all the "regional" Anglican-Methodist relationships in various parts of the world (including the Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain, for which I have served as the Methodist Co-Convenor of its Joint Implementation Commission).

So, why the pauses? Why the need to produce overviews? Some would say that it was because we had on all sides reached a dead end. The metaphor "ecumenical winter" had begun to be used. Some would even say that there were no fruits to be harvested. Others would say that what fruits there were, were withering and going rotten on the vine or the tree. Certainly complaints and concerns are voiced in both the Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogues and Anglican-Methodist dialogues about the lack of response to and reception of the work of those dialogues in the various parts of those churches around the world. We shall return to this later.

It is true to say, however, that there has been a greater amount of formal response to the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, even if those responses revealed that some areas needed further work. Moreover, the ways that those responses were made neatly revealed that the discernment and decision making processes and the ecclesiologies in the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion are still anything but convergent.

The terms that I have just used ("Church" and "Communion") exemplify the point. To put it simply, and at the danger of over-simplifying it, ARCIC I was published in 1981. It dealt with the Church as Communion; Authority in the Church; Ministry and Ordination; and Eucharistic doctrine. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith made a number of critical observations about it. Although a few responses from Episcopal Conferences were published, this practice soon ceased. Concerns were expressed about damage being caused to the process by women and openly homosexual men being ordained to ministry, including episcopal ministry, in parts of the Anglican Communion, even

though these matters were not part of the ARCIC report.

Eventually the formal response from the Holy See emerged in 1991. It commended the emergence of a developing consensus on some matters, particularly on the Eucharist as both sacrifice and presence, and pointed to further work that needed to be done (for example on the understanding of transubstantiation). But it also pointed to a number of issues (for example, the ordination of women, papal primacy and infallibility) which needed to be addressed before further progress could be made. The implicit methodology was that the magisterial teaching of the church is a seamless robe. Much progress or convergence could not therefore be made on one point until it was made on all. This was different to the method of growing into deeper communion by stages set out in the Malta Report of 1968 which had eventually led to the work of ARCIC. It also differed from ARCIC's method of returning to read scripture and the tradition together in order to restate together for today the faith of the Church.

In the meantime, the autonomous churches in the Anglican Communion considered ARCIC I. In the light of their responses (and in the absence of a formal response from the Holy See) the 1988 Lambeth Conference (a consultative and collaborative body of bishops from the autonomous regional and national churches that make up the Anglican Communion, and not therefore a governance body) expressed the 'mind of the Communion' as welcoming and supporting the convergence in the ARCIC report, and noting some areas for further work. But 'expressing a mind' does not result in the constituent parts of the Communion being committed to anything or feeling bound by it. That means that it can be hard for anything to be turned into action. At this point Methodists, who place a strong emphasis on the idea of all members of the Church participating in appropriate ways in its oversight but do so within an even stronger commitment to mutual discipline and accountability, stand side by side with the Roman Catholics in tearing their hair out: until, that is, they reflect on the difficulty they themselves have in gaining a binding consensus about anything across the Methodist world!

To return to our question: are there any fruits? Implicit in what we have been saying is the recognition that there are. The fact that we can start to identify and face the next order of questions suggests that progress has been made with the first set of questions. The more that I hear or read (particularly on the internet) people from all our traditions saying that the whole ecumenical process is a failure and a waste of time, and should be stopped, the more I think that the dialogues must have achieved something important. Otherwise why are these people so afraid, so furious and vitriolic; watching over one another in hate rather than in love (to re-coin a favourite phrase of John Wesley).

The first great fruit, as Cardinal Kasper recognises, is that despite all our histories and arguments, we do indeed share the same apostolic faith. ARCIC almost takes this for granted as it deals with other matters which keep their two traditions apart. An example is paragraph 45 of the 1990 ARCIC II statement *The Church as Communion*.

It is now possible to describe what constitutes ecclesial communion. It is rooted in the confession of the one apostolic faith, revealed in the Scriptures, and set forth in the Creeds. It is founded upon one baptism. The one celebration of the Eucharist is its pre-eminent expression and focus. It necessarily finds expression in shared commitment to the mission entrusted by Christ to his Church. It is a life of shared concern for one another in mutual forbearance, submission, gentleness and love; in the placing of the interests of others above the interests of self; in making room for each other in the body of Christ; in solidarity with the poor and the powerless; and in the sharing of gifts both material and spiritual (cf. Acts 2:44). Also constitutive of life in communion is acceptance of the same basic moral values....

The Anglican-Methodist dialogue in 1996 set out a list of agreed core doctrines in paragraph 15ff of *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*. In paragraph 97 it then recommended that the Lambeth Conference and World Methodist Council

.... affirm and recognize that:

- Both Anglicans and Methodists belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Jesus Christ and participate in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.
- In the churches of our two Communion the Word of God is authentically preached and the Sacraments instituted by Christ are duly administered.
- Our churches share in the common confession and heritage of the apostolic faith.

These affirmations have since been made in agreements between various particular national or regional Anglican and Methodist churches in various parts of the world, such as in the Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain.

The Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue also makes the point explicitly. Paragraph 45 in the Synthesis document states that

Both Methodists and Catholics accept the Scriptures, the creeds and the doctrinal decrees of the early ecumenical councils, and hold that all doctrines must remain under the Word of God....

The report then sets out what from John Wesley onwards Methodists have considered to be 'the essential doctrines of the gospel'. It recognises that "The Roman Catholic Church is at one with Methodists about these essential doctrines...". It also notes that Wesley distinguished between, on the one hand, these essential doctrines; and, on the other, views about some matters of worship, ecclesiastical polity and even the ways in which people articulated their experience of being transformed

by the truths encountered in the essential doctrines. All these latter things he termed 'opinions'. There is obvious resonance here with the Roman Catholic recognition of a 'hierarchy of truths' of Catholic doctrine. "For Methodists and Catholics, therefore, there is an order among the doctrines of the faith based upon their relationship to the core of that faith: the love of God revealed in the redemption" (para 48). Yet the report also notes that the Roman Catholic Church "... emphasises that the whole teaching of the Church constitutes an organic unity; its members are therefore called upon to believe the full teaching of the Church". We are back here to the issue of the magisterial teaching of the Roman Catholic Church being a seamless robe, and the effect of that on the dialogues. As the Synthesis document puts it (para 45) "*Though Catholics and Methodists share to*



▶ Dialogue and conversation among lecturer and conference attendees.

a great extent a common faith, they are not yet fully agreed on what doctrinal accord is necessary for the full communion of faith which would unite our traditions.”

The *Harvesting* book outlines some other achievements which make a rich harvest. We do not have time to go into them all in detail, but the headings are

- A fresh and renewed understanding of the relation between Scripture and Tradition
- Basic agreement on the doctrine of justification
- Deepened understanding of the nature of the Church
- New approaches to the sacraments of baptism and eucharist.

The Anglican-Methodist dialogues reflect the same achievements. Let me give just two examples. First, debates about the interaction of scripture and tradition tend to be across both families of churches rather than between them. The 1996 report *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion* stated that

18. The churches of our two Communions hold in common a number of official doctrinal texts and standards. We all affirm the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and life and their sufficiency as containing all things necessary to salvation. We all affirm the beliefs contained in the Apostles' and Nicene-Constantinopolitan creeds which we employ in our services of worship. We all affirm the fundamental principles of the English Reformation, to which the formularies of the 16th century, Homilies, Prayer Book and Articles, bear historic testimony. Both Anglicans and Methodists have used the rites of the Book of Common Prayer as received and adapted by the various churches in the two communions. Our contemporary revisions of the liturgy all draw on commonly shared research in the context of the modern liturgical movement.

The 2014 report *Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches* states in paragraph 55 that “Our two churches understand that apostolic faith is multi-faceted. The scriptures have a normative place in interpreting the faith and discerning its truthful expression in every age.¹ The historic creeds [and, I would add, later doctrinal texts and standards], while not expressing every aspect of the apostolic faith, are faithful witnesses to (and ecumenical declarations of) it through

1 Re scriptures, see also World Council of Churches Faith & Order document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (CTCV) (2012), #11

time and space. As one member church puts it, they are ‘authoritative statements of the Catholic faith, framed in the language of their day and used by Christians in many ways, to declare and to guard the right understanding of that faith’.²”

Second, with regard to deepening understanding of the nature of the Church, particularly as being in communion with the Triune God, *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion* says that

Recognising our common Baptism, we now hear the Holy Spirit calling us to fuller communion. We yearn to respond to this divine call which prompts us to reclaim one another. We recognise that we are called to fuller communion not only by practical considerations, but also by the very nature of our Gospel Faith, which calls us into communion with the Triune God and with one another (*koinonia*). The Scriptures portray the unity of the Church as a joyful communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, as well as communion among its members (1 Jn 1:1-10; cf. 2 Cor 13:14). Jesus prays that the disciples may be one as the Father is in him and he is in the Father, so that the world may believe (Jn 17: 21). Our quest is to share more fully life in the Triune God. (Para 7)

So, why the pauses in the first decade of this century? Why the need to stop and gather the harvests? I would argue that it was indeed because they were not being harvested as they ripened and were in danger of rotting on the vine or the tree. To put it another way, the truths, the grace, the movements of the Spirit being revealed through the dialogues were not being embodied or incarnated in the Churches. They were not being received in a way that affected the day to day lives of those Churches. That is partly because implementing them and acting upon them takes us from more abstract, theoretical theology (both doctrinal and spiritual) of the nature of the Church to more concrete matters about the practice of our actual Churches as the body of Christ that is engaged in worship and mission.

When we reach this point we are, of course, dealing with issues of power, and status and vested interests because however holy the church is, it is made up, individually and corporately, of sinners who are in the process of allowing themselves to be transformed into saints and into being a more perfect embodiment of the body of Christ.

I have long believed that we have not paid sufficient attention to the interconnection between and

2 Uniting Church in Australia, *Basis of Union*, 1971, #9

interdependency of worship and mission. I have also long believed that we have not paid sufficient attention to the connection between our 'theoretical' dialogues and the 'practical' life of our churches. I have struggled with this for the last five years as the Co-Convenor for the Joint Implementation Commission for the Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain. There is too often dissonance and disjunction.

I suspect that it has been a sense of that disjunction which has caused there to be an increasing emphasis on "Unity in Mission". One of the fruits of the dialogues for me has been the recognition that apostolic faith is not just about the transmission of the content of what is to be believed, but is the presentation and re-presentation - through word, sacrament and holy lives - of Christ as a living person to be believed in. Moreover, apostolic faith is also about a commitment to being sent to share in the mission of the kingdom. So it is not surprising that we have seen the development of, say, IARCCUM alongside that of ARCIC.

But I believe that there is something more to be learned here. When I reflect on the experience in my own country, something interesting emerges. Until the late 1980's ecumenical work was done through Councils of Churches under the aegis of the British Council of Churches. The sense was that as with the ecumenical councils of the church in previous ages, these councils were bodies playing a part in the oversight of Christ's church. They were in a sense embryonic or anticipatory oversight and governance bodies for the united church that was emerging into existence. The model was of a visible unity that was organic, institutional and uniform rather than pluriform. It was impossible for the Roman Catholic churches in Britain to be full members. Whatever the actual nuance of the phrase, the statement from the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium* that the Church of Christ 'subsistit in' the Roman Catholic Church prevented it.

At the same time, the statement in *Lumen Gentium* that there are elements of truth and sanctification in other Christian churches and communities raised the question of how the Roman Catholic Churches would relate to them. The breakthrough was the Swanwick Declaration in 1987. That led to the abandonment of the conciliar model and its replacement by a "Churches Together" model of working. In 1990 the British Council of Churches was disbanded and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (with sub-groups such as Churches Together in England) was created. These were definitely not oversight or governance bodies. They were conferring and co-ordinating bodies supporting the churches as they worked together.

The model was therefore one of "Unity in Mission". Visible unity no longer meant – at least in the foreseeable future – organic, institutional uniformity, but churches

that retained high degrees of autonomy yet worked with and alongside each other in mission. The language began to shift from talk of 'visible unity' to talk of 'communion'. The goal started to become 'autonomy in communion'. But that phrase is not without its difficulties. It has been used to propose a model for the Anglican Communion that might see it through some troubled times. But as a lawyer once said in a meeting that I was at, "Of course, in theory there is no difference between theory and practice...!".

This model has released energy and enabled many good things to happen. But that very fact creates a potential tension with the models previously inherent in the formal dialogues. Ironically, that is particularly true for the Roman Catholic Church which inspired much of the move towards "Churches Together", because of the tension between the new model and the implications of the phrase 'subsistit in'.

So it is not surprising that the harvesting of the fruits has led to the identification of this as a new question to be addressed. Most strikingly, a major part of the mandate for ARCIC III is *To re-examine how the "commitment to the common goal of the restoration of complete communion in faith and sacramental life" is to be understood and pursued today*, and *"to consider the Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in communion the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching"* – where the emphasis on ethical teaching will really sharpen and test the efficacy of any models proposed.

This is potentially exciting in that it should require the work in the formal dialogues on 'the Church as Communion' to interact with the practical issues and problems of engaging in "Unity in Mission". One issue to be addressed is that if you ask people from different traditions what the phrase "local church" designates, you will get markedly different answers. So, in particular, deeper thinking about how the local and universal cohere will be extremely helpful.

It is important to note that how the local and universal cohere is not just a question between churches but also within them. It is not just the Anglican Communion which has a problem here. It is a great shame to me that Methodism is so dysfunctional at international level. There is no single system of oversight or governance for the world Methodist family of churches. There is no Conference (in the sense of a supreme oversight and governing body) at its head. The work of the World Methodist Council is not binding on member churches. We are churches each of which likes to be very tightly knit itself, but which can therefore only be loosely knit to each other.

That is because of our history. For example, the mother movement of Methodism is the British tradition. But the mother church of Methodism was what has now become the United Methodist Church in the United

States. As the British movement gradually separated from the Church of England and became a church in its own right, it began to send missionaries around the world. The American church also sent missionaries. The history of both those missions mirrors the political and social history of the two nations. The British founded an empire of churches, and then in the mid-20th century decolonised and encouraged its daughter churches to become sister churches in something like a Methodist commonwealth of churches. The Americans ended up with a federal system, rather like their political constitution. Their overseas work was federated with the work that was being undertaken in the various states of the Union. Both 'overseas' and 'home' work were under the jurisdiction of a single General Conference. They never thought of what they did as an empire, and so in a sense never de-colonised. But recently European and African Methodists in the United Methodist tradition have shown signs of wanting to be European and African Methodists rather than European and African versions of American Methodists.

Moreover, it is not just the Anglican Communion and world Methodism that have problems about how the local coheres with the universal. If we dare say it, there have been times when particular regional Catholic Conferences of Bishops have had tensions with the Curia. Then, to widen our brief for a moment, there are the tensions over Eastern Rite churches existing in the same countries as Orthodox Churches which see themselves as the sole legitimate Churches of those countries. Although there are signs in Britain that Orthodox churches are recognising that they cannot just remain as ex-patriate communities when their members are increasingly British, the Orthodox have a strong sense of relationship to nations or countries. That is matched by various European Protestant Churches. The Porvoo Communion of Anglican Churches in Great Britain and Ireland and Lutheran Churches in Nordic and Baltic countries is marked by that fact.

Things are different when churches have overlapping territorial jurisdictions. One of the surprising things we have uncovered in the Covenant between the Methodist Church in Great Britain and the Church of England is the nature of the relationships between the Anglican churches in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Methodist Church in Great Britain is a single entity that exists in England, Scotland and Wales. It is in a covenant relationship or a partnership with the Anglican churches in those countries – the Church of England, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church

in Wales. The question has never been answered, or even properly asked, whether the goal of visible unity means three separate united churches in England, Scotland and Wales. If so, the price of such unity for Methodists is likely to be that of dividing itself into three, with the result that the Methodist charisms cannot be nurtured in each of the three united churches.

So another way forward would be to develop something like a Porvoo agreement between the three Anglican churches and the Methodist Church in Great Britain. However, we have received strong indications that the Anglican churches do not wish to go down that route. They do not wish to get too close to each other. They like to be in communion with each other, but to remain autonomous and separate as far as possible. It seems to me that this is much more like reconciled diversity than visible unity, and that their sense of being in communion is very attenuated. The Methodist in me says that communion must mean more than that. If being part of the body of Christ means being transformed and swept up with the other parts into the communion (koinonia) of the Triune God, it must involve developing the mind of Christ and, at a practical level, coordinating action. That in turn must involve discerning the grace and will of God together, making decisions together and deploying our resources together (and it is interesting to note that the Acts of the Apostles sees the working out of the implications of koinonia as involving the use of financial resources).

So what do we Methodists bring to this issue? I would argue that it is a strong sense of being in communion as I have just outlined it, but one that is allied to another sense of being what we call "in full connexion". The *Synthesis* document seems to suggest



► Convivial post-conference encounter.

that communion and connexion are synonymous terms, but I would argue that the latter denotes a much tighter and stronger relationship than the former. To the factors that I have outlined as constituting what it means to be 'in communion', being 'in connexion' adds the sense of exercising mutual accountability within a common framework of discipline.

Methodism began as a movement in the Church of England. It took the form of a religious society or even what we might call now a religious order. From its earliest days it was distinctive in being both a holiness movement and a missionary movement (in the broadest sense of that term) within the Church of England; and its members were still meant to participate in that Church so far as worship and the sacraments were concerned. The leader of the Methodist movement was John Wesley supported by his brother Charles (the hymn writer) and others. The phrase "in full connexion" was used to describe those who allied themselves with John Wesley and, through him, with each other in the movement. The movement was structured, organised and disciplined. Its leaders met regularly in Conference to discern together what God was doing amongst them and requiring of them, and to decide what to do. In an almost papal way Wesley wrote up the outcomes of the Conferences and published them as the Minutes. He was acting as the extraordinary overseer or episkopos of a movement within the Church which was not at that stage itself a Church. But he was also acting as an overseer who worked collaboratively in Conference with others. This latter emphasis gradually gained in importance. After Wesley's death at the age of 87 there was a strong feeling that there should be "no more king in Israel". In a sense Wesley had anticipated this himself when in his early 80's he had made legal provision to define the Conference as a fixed number of named people working collectively and collaboratively – the Legal Hundred.

So as Methodism gradually started to become a Church in Britain, the supreme source of episcopate (oversight) in human terms became the corporate person of the Conference rather than the individual persons who were episkopoi (overseers, superintendents, bishops, call them what you will). Most Methodists in the world have bishops – the exception for historical reasons are those churches originating in my British tradition – but they are not bishops in the historic episcopate. All Methodists recognise that there is a need for the oversight of the corporate person, the Conference, to be secondarily focussed in and represented by individual persons throughout the Church. The question, and often the tension, is how those individuals relate to the Conference. You can see the same question and tension the other way round in those traditions which make the oversight of the individual person primary, and then have to work out how individual and corporate bodies may relate to and participate in it.

In the British Methodist Covenant with the Church of England we have tried to find ways forward. In chapter 11 of the report we published in September 2013 we have said:

In the life of the Church there therefore need to be signs [*sc. of apostolic continuity in faith, worship and mission*] that 'represent' all the constituent parts of the body of Christ in the world today and throughout history, and which also 're-present' them to each other in the sense of making them real to each other, connecting them to each other, and making them impinge upon the consciousness, understanding, prayer and action of those who gather in a particular place. In a profound sense such signs are sacramental. They make visible those profound realities that are otherwise invisible; and by making them visible they effect what they signify: they do not just speak of or point to bonds of communion or connections, they actually connect people. Moreover, since what is being realised is a matter of personal relationships (both individual and corporate; both spiritual and practical), and because the Christian faith is incarnational, the signs which point to, nurture and effect them are most appropriately embodied in persons (individually and collectively).

There is a need to explore the relative roles in ensuring the apostolic continuity of Councils of the Church on the one hand, and Popes and/or Bishops on the other (to put it one way); or (to put it in the terms of my tradition) of Conferences on the one hand, and Presidents or Superintendents or Bishops on the other. Then we British Methodists might be able to persuade ourselves at last that taking the historic episcopate into our system really is for the *bene esse* of our Church and will increase our effectiveness in worship and mission in communion with our fellow Christians. We have said we are prepared to do it for nearly 50 years, but we have never seen enough evidence from elsewhere of any benefit being realised by it to make us actually do it. Perhaps we lack faith or hope. But our close colleagues in the Methodist Church in Ireland have just made a big potential breakthrough in their relationship with the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. Both Churches have agreed that the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland can be properly identified as an Episcopal Minister (neatly and helpfully avoiding the word Bishop which is problematic for many Methodists). In future, Church of Ireland Bishops will be involved in the installation of Irish Methodist Presidents and their consecration as Episcopal Ministers, and vice versa. Such moves will ensure that all future Methodist ordinations are within the historic episcopate. But because the identification of the Presidents as Episcopal Ministers

applies not only to present and future but also to past Presidents, full interchangeability of existing ministers will be deemed to exist without further ordination.

Enough of Bishops! Let me briefly point to an interesting change of direction in the International Roman Catholic- Methodist dialogue. For its current quinquennium it is going to concentrate on the topic of holiness and holy living (both as individuals and as churches). I believe that we have not considered deeply enough the implications of our common understanding and acceptance of each other's baptism. I also believe that one of the great achievements of the ecumenical movement to date has been the 1999 Roman Catholic-Lutheran *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, which I hope will be part of the celebrations in 2017 of the 500th Anniversary of Luther's theses. In 2006 the World Methodist Council became the third signatory to it, not least because they found in it a dynamic that they could recognise in which holiness entails both conversion and transformation, of being 'changed from glory into glory'. In this Catholics and Methodists are at one. As the *Synthesis* document puts it "Bearing in mind the controversy at the Reformation regarding cooperation with grace, it is of immense significance that Catholics and Methodists stand

together on this matter. Methodists and Catholics believe that we truly cooperate with God's grace and participate in God's life."

Much of the earlier ecumenical dialogues was concerned with orthodoxy (although I am always intrigued that *doxa* in Greek refers both to glory and therefore worship, and to the understanding of truth). The unity in mission agenda and concerns about moral behaviour in the 21st century are raising the topic of orthopraxy, and we can see that ARCIC III might be moving towards that. What the move to discuss holiness and holy living does is pay attention to what we might call ortho-pathy, the formation of individual and collective minds, hearts and spirits into the image of Christ. It is about tempers and dispositions. It is what lies at the heart of what some call "spiritual ecumenism". It is about love.

So, I end by returning to my title. Catholic Spirit. John Wesley wrote a famous sermon under that title. Its teaching is simple. Doing it is difficult. It included the famous sentences "Although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?"

A Challenging Relationship

The Contribution to Ecumenism of the Roman Catholic/Old Catholic Dialogue

+Joris Vercammen - Old Catholic Archbishop of Utrecht

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Monday, 27 October 2014

**Introduction**

Ecclesiology is more than ever a key-question in the perspective of the growing unity among the churches. Churches can only be united, in one or another way, if there is a consensus about what it means to be church. A lot of ecumenical dialogues have contributed to this question. The particular opinions of the large traditions have opened up themselves to ideas that until recently times were quite alien to their own context. It is the question how the Old-Catholic communion can contribute to those dialogues and to the unity of the churches in developing its ecclesiology. Its ambition is to realize a catholicity as it existed in the church of the first millennium and thereby contribute to the unity of the churches. This intention appears in several places of the Utrecht Bishops' Declaration of 1889.

This lecture will first present the churches of the Communion of the Union of Utrecht and tell you something about their ecclesiological approach. Following this presentation, I will introduce the Roman Catholic – Old Catholic dialogue by focusing on the document published in 2009 as a result of the newest phase of that dialogue, and finally seek to identify the challenging questions that we face.

The Union of Utrecht of Old-Catholic churches

Although the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands is much older, the name *old catholic* or '*altkatholisch*' appeared only during the 19th century within the movement of those catholic Christians in German

speaking countries who protested against what they considered being unauthorized novelties introduced into catholic ecclesiology. Those novelties, they believed, were initiated by the Roman Catholic Church herself and concern the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (1854) and the infallibility and the worldwide jurisdiction of the pope (first Vatican council – 1871).

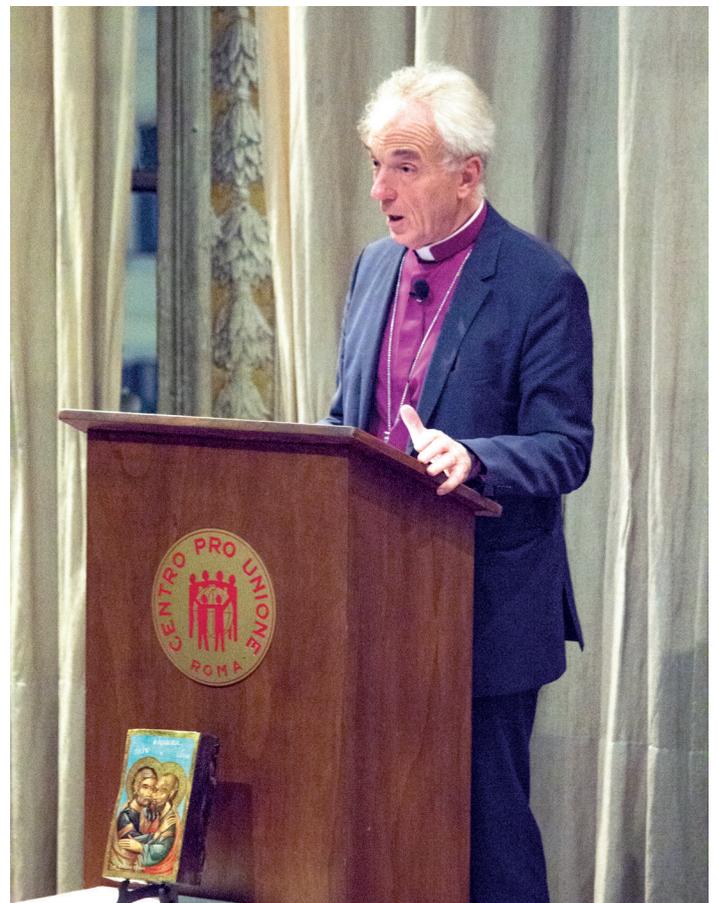
In 1889, the bishops who founded the Union of Utrecht met with that aim in Utrecht. They agreed on a declaration in which they laid down what they held in common and formulated the criteria for dealing with one another. They also drew up a constitution for the Union of Utrecht, which in principle is thought to be an assembly of bishops to inform one another.

The Utrecht Bishops' Declaration

Let me mention the core-points of the bishops' declaration of 1889. The document takes the undivided Church of the first centuries

as the foundation of the Old Catholic churches.

The Old Catholic churches are a post-tridentine phenomenon, and thus really to be distinguished from the



▶ Arch. Joris Vercammen

churches of the Reformation. They join the orthodox family in their theological views and ecclesiological insights, as they are based on the faith and practices of the church of the first centuries.

On this basis, the dogma of the papal infallibility and his universal jurisdiction were rejected. The pope is however recognized as the '*primus*

inter pares'. The importance of the Holy Eucharist for the church is stressed, concentrating on what is held in common and not on the differences. All contacts with dissidents and theologians of other confessions had to be truthfully dealt with. The unity of the church must be found again through exchange of ideas, and through a real interest and participation in one another's context and genuine way of being a Christian. A strong priority is put on the ecumenical challenge that asks for a clear commitment.

The declaration ends with a christologically colored paragraph about "the increasing contemporary indifference to faith". Speaking in a European context, this can be understood as an appeal to become involved in the moral and spiritual discussions of the day. In fact the declaration witnesses to the church's openness to society and culture, to both moral and religious issues and to her commitment to the evangelization of society.

The Declaration of Utrecht became the foundation of an increasingly 'growing together' based on shared principles, while each church retained its own relative autonomy. The Union not only promoted the reciprocal integration and the forming of a shared identity of the Old Catholic churches. Afterwards it also proved to be of importance for the Old Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement. It also became clear that only those Bishops and the Churches they represent are admitted to the Union and may rightly call themselves Old Catholic.

The Members of the Union of Utrecht

From the inception of the Union, three types of churches can be found within the Union of Utrecht.

The **first type** only has one representative within the communion. It is the Dutch church, arising from a conflict between the chapter of Utrecht and Rome about the appointment of a new archbishop of Utrecht at the beginning of the 18th century. As a matter of fact the church of Utrecht sees itself as the continuation of the mediaeval church that was founded by Saint Willibrord at the end of the 7th century. The Roman Catholic Church above the river Rhine also developed from that mediaeval church being the successor of that part that didn't share the point of view of the Utrecht chapter.

In a **second group** are the churches formed by the protest-movement against the papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction of the pope. Especially in German speaking areas, a strong theological movement opposed the decisions made at the First Vatican Council, because those new dogmas were seen as being in contradiction with the tradition. This movement was not strong enough to influence the decision-making process at the council, although many scholars and clergy were involved. After the decisions were made this movement was expelled from the Roman Catholic Church and had no other choice

than founding "emergency-dioceses". Actually such was the case in Germany and Switzerland. Later on also churches in Austria, the Czech Republic and Croatia were founded.

The **third type** is represented by those churches that arose from an emancipation movement. That was the case among the Polish Migrants in the United States of America at the end of the 19th century. They felt they were not respected enough by the Roman Catholic Church and founded their own independent catholic church. The Polish Catholic Church in Poland was founded by that American church and is a member of the Union of Utrecht.

The ecumenical involvement

The ecumenical involvement had concrete results for the communion of the Union of Utrecht as well. In 1931 an agreement of full communion was signed with the Anglican Churches with which we have enjoyed a very strong relationship until now. The permanent joint working party in which our two communions work together is the place where common projects are worked out. Since 1965 we also have intercommunion with the Spanish Reformed Church, the Lusitanian Church (Portugal) and the Iglesia Filippine Independiente (IFI).

With the Orthodox churches, we have a very long tradition of dialogue, which even predates the signing of the Utrecht Declaration. In 1987, as the result of that tradition, a consensus on all important theological matters was achieved. Unfortunately, it didn't lead to full communion. The main reason for that was the orthodox rejection of the ordination of women. As you may know, in 1996 the majority of the Old Catholic churches decided to open up the threefold apostolic ministry to women. Nevertheless, with most orthodox churches, and especially with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, we continue to be involved in active processes of dialogue, discovering how our similar views on the most important aspects of the Christian faith can lead to more practical cooperation.

In the late nineteen sixties, we started the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, which in more recent time has been resumed. I can add that an in-depth dialogue with the Church of Sweden resulted in a theological document that we are studying right now. Last but not least I have to mention a theological dialogue with the Mar Thoma Church of Malabar, South India.

Ecclesiological approach

Ecumenism is at the heart of the Union of Utrecht. We inherited this from the Old Catholic movement, which was an ecumenical movement even before the word was invented. Within the Old Catholic movement you find one of the very first attempts to think about going beyond confessional borders in order to restore the unity of the church. This drive for restoring the unity among Christians

was related to the need for Christians to open themselves to modernity. Openness to modern developments wasn't seen as a threat to the Christian faith. On the contrary, it was seen as a challenge to discover God's creativity, without being so naïve as to become blind to the risks of modernity.

But the nineteenth-century legacy of the Old Catholic movement is not the only contribution. There is also the spiritual heritage of the Dutch church. Our church can't be understood without taking into account the context of the Counter-Reformation. Those leading church-people of the eighteenth century had the deep desire to give shape to a church that would be a real Dutch catholic church, rooted in the Dutch spiritual tradition of devotion and prayer as it was expressed in so-called Jansenism.

From both sources we herited the reference to the *'ecclesia primitiva'*, that witnesses to a catholicity understood as the commitment of a local church to live in solidarity with the Universal Church and global Christianity. The example of the Early Church tells us that this is possible without neglecting one's own particular context in which the gospel is lived in the first place. This the tangible location where the reconciliation, proclaimed by the gospel, must become real and communion must be realised. Catholicity is about communion among Christians as they participate in the communion of the Trinity. Catholicity tells us that the church is both a human and a divine reality, an incarnational reality. It finds its expression in our faith in the sacraments as the real presence of the Lord in the context of a community of faithful. It is our conviction that ministry is given as a symbol of unity. In the centre of the church is the Eucharist in which communion among faithful and with the Trinity comes into being and is celebrated in thankfulness and praise. This Catholicity

is at the heart of the church and therefore it will play a dominant role in its future. This is the catholicity we are called to serve because of our commitment to proclaim the gospel and to promote unity among Christians

The Roman Catholic – Old Catholic dialogue

The history of the Roman Catholic – Old Catholic dialogue

The invitation to appoint an observer to the Second Vatican Council was accepted by the bishops of the Union of Utrecht as a sign that Rome was looking for the reconciliation with dissident Catholics of the Churches of the Union of Utrecht. As a result of the acceptance and the positive experience of the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church decided on withdrawing all existing preliminary conditions for dialogue. Those conditions were about the condemnation of Jansenius and Jansenism, questions that played a crucial role in the conflict between the Vatican and the Chapter of Utrecht in the early 18th century. In consequence joint working groups were organized in the Netherlands as well as in Switzerland. Because of the need on the Old Catholic side to coordinate things, the Old Catholic members of both national dialogue groups met in Zürich in 1968. A couple of weeks after this meeting also the Roman Catholic members of both groups came to Zürich for a similar meeting. Both meetings made obvious the churches of the Union of Utrecht could have the same status as the Orthodox churches and that means that a *communio in sacris* would be possible. A concept of a document on a *communio in sacris* was composed and is known as the *Zürcher Nota*. This paper was approved in 1970 both by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the International Bishops Conference of the Union of Utrecht



► Fr. James Puglisi, SA (center) - Director, and Teresa Francesca Rossi (left) - Associate Director, welcoming lecturer Arch. Joris Vercammen (right).

(=IBC). The paper was also approved by the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith in 1972. That meant the negotiations in order to realize the *communio in sacris* in the concrete life of the churches in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands could start.

It was at that level that several difficulties appeared. Roman Catholic bishops had some objections about the Old Catholic Churches sharing the status of the Orthodox, the administration of the sacraments and the acceptance of former Roman Catholic priests into the Old Catholic churches. Cardinal Willibrands, the President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity from 1969 until 1989, made huge efforts to solve the problems, but even he did not succeed to full extent.

In the 1990s, some other problems appeared. For the Roman Catholic side these were the main problems: the joint declaration of the Evangelical Church and the Old Catholic Church in Germany about Eucharistic hospitality, the amount of former Roman Catholic priests joining Old Catholic churches was still growing in all the churches of the Union of Utrecht and the discussion about women's ordination had started. Cardinal Cassidy, the successor of Cardinal Willibrands, took the lead in conceiving some guidelines for the transfer of former Roman Catholic priests. The concept of this paper was ready in 1996 and was accepted by the Pontifical Council and the IBC, but was not approved by the local Roman Catholic bishops' conferences, not because they were against the guidelines as such, but because they wanted in some cases to insert the obligation to consult the Congregation for the Clergy before a priest would be accepted. As soon as it seemed possible to solve that problem, within the majority of the Old Catholic Churches women's ordination was accepted. That meant an even more complicated problem. Despite this, Cardinal Kasper and Archbishop Glazemaker took the initiative in the early days of the year 2000, while celebrating the opening of the Holy Year, to start a new phase in the ongoing process of the dialogue. After some preparation work had been done, the group started in 2003 and produced the very interesting document *Church and Ecclesial Communion*, which has been published in 2009 and can be consulted on the website of the Pontifical Council.

On the way to full ecclesial communion?

Before describing some of the results of that new phase in the dialogue, I want to emphasize the following points.

To Rome, there has been no doubt about the Old Catholic churches being churches and not ecclesial communities. It has been obvious that the sacraments and the ministry are understood in a true catholic way. It has been expressed in that way ultimately by the Congregation of the Doctrine in 1987, but was already affirmed by the

Roman Catholic delegates in national Old Catholic–Roman Catholic dialogue commissions in 1967 in Zurich. As also the new document states: the conflict between RC and OC is to be seen as an inner-catholic question and as a conflict within the catholic family. But that doesn't make matters necessarily easier...There had a lot to be done in order to heal the memories and to install a hermeneutic of trust. One cannot simply neglect one or even two centuries of division in which both parties have hurt each other.

The Second Vatican Council is crucial in creating the opportunities for the dialogue. It affirmed the communion-ecclesiology and it agreed to accept the reference to the ecclesiological principles as criterion as is the case for the Church of the East, which enabled the dialogue to be fruitful. Even the perspective of a possible ecclesial communion appeared on the horizon.

The concept of the recent dialogue was shaped with the more recent principles of 'ecumenical hermeneutics'. "These principles are founded on the recognition that the sought-for unity in the faith does not mean uniformity, but rather a diversity in which any remaining differences beyond the fundamental consensus are not accorded church-dividing force. Accordingly the goal of dialogue is not doctrinal consensus in the form of congruence, but a differentiated consensus (...)" (*Church and Ecclesial Communion* number 34). This implies two components that are interrelated: consensus in fundamental and essential content of a previously controversial doctrine; and a declaration that remaining doctrinal differences, clearly named, can be considered admissible.

What are the fundamental points of agreement?

In general we can conclude that there is a basic common opinion on the following points.

The fundamental understanding of the church and the understanding that there are ministries and offices that bear the responsibility for the realization of the basic activities of the church via *marturia, leiturgia and diakonia* with the Eucharist at its heart.

Consensus exists also on the importance of the local church, led by one bishop and on the shaping of the episcopé – responsibility in a personal, collegial and communal way. In addition the report has concluded that if the pope is not isolated and set apart from the communion-structure of the church, the conflict of 1870 does not have that weight anymore. (numbers 36-39)

It is important to point out that these conclusions have an important ecumenical meaning. Let me mention some of them a little bit more in detail. The common emphasis on the sacramental identity of the church as the body of Christ in the world constituted by the Holy Spirit, is the point of orientation we have to bring into the ecumenical reflection about the church. The same is the case with the conclusions about ministry and about the

personal, collegial and communal aspects of it. Synodality and conciliarity are key-words for shaping both the local and the universal church. Apostolicity as the process of connecting the church with the time of the apostles and their proclamation of the Gospel, needs to be a continuing and conscious process of being ready to reflect on our own reality through their eyes and to remain in their truth. Also this last point is a responsibility that cannot be entrusted to the magisterium only because the whole church must be involved in it. Even about the functioning of the petrine office there are some crucial points Roman Catholic and Old Catholic ecclesiology have in common, because both are convinced of the need of a global primacy.

The open questions:

The ecclesiological questions:

The consequences of the ecclesiological position of the pope on the universal church as the communion of local churches. In this respect also the notions of juridical doctrinal primacy need more clarification as well as *primus inter pares*. Old Catholics have some difficulties with seeing the pope in a 'petrine office' or in a 'petrine ministry' with the concept that it could be directly derived from the New Testament.

Another question is that of the autonomy of the local churches in realising their mission and in the election of their bishops. How this autonomy would be related to the pope who possesses, following the Roman view, the full, highest and universal power in the church. A question, related to this, is how to conceive the synodality of the bishops. (numbers 41-47)

The questions on the Marian dogmas of 1854 and 1950

Another point of difference in dogma consists in the Old Catholic rejection of the papally-defined dogmas of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (1854) and the Bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven (1950). Because the content of these dogmas do not have a clear biblical basis and because neither can be based on apostolic witness, it is impossible for the pope to declare them to be essential for the Christian faith and, in consequence, for the redemption of people. Despite this, the Old Catholic tradition has a positive view on the place of Mary within the faith. (Numbers 48-55)

The question of the ordination of women to the priestly ministry

It was only after a long period of reflection that in 1996 the IBC opened the way to the ordination of women to the threefold ministry. It was declared a matter of discipline and left to the churches to take the decision whether or not to accept women priests. In consequence most of the churches, but not all, did introduce the

ordination of women to the diaconate and the priesthood. The question was defined as a cultural issue and the fact that the ancient church did not know this practice was seen as a matter of dependence on the ancient cultural context in which it was unthinkable women would fulfil the role of being president of the Eucharistic assembly. The Union of Utrecht is aware of the fact this decision is "an innovation in their otherwise ancient church orientation in church discipline" (56). The churches of the Union of Utrecht wanted to make clear they did not change the understanding of the three-fold ministry as the sacramental *ordo* of the church as they share it with the Roman Catholic Church. (numbers 56-73)

Open questions involving canon law from a Roman Catholic perspective

Those questions are about the fact the Old Catholic churches know the practice of priests and bishops being married and about the transfer of formerly Roman Catholic clergy and Roman Catholic lay-people into one of the Old Catholic churches. Canon lawyers are not pessimistic about finding constructive solutions for those points, that are surely no reason to impede ecclesial communion. Another question is again the functioning of ordained women in the case of an ecclesial communion which would give access to Roman Catholic faithful to the sacraments ministered by Old Catholic clergy. Would it be appropriate to exclude women priests from dispensing the sacraments in that case? (numbers 74-82)

Some critical notes about ecumenism

Having given a short overview of what Old Catholic churches are about and of the process and the contents of the RC-OC dialogue, I would like to offer some critical remarks about the direction that our ecumenical efforts have to take.

The crisis in ecumenism is essentially a crisis of the church. The essence of the crisis is the fact that the bearers of the traditions identify themselves with the tradition itself. Openness to one another has clearly grown but the sociological law and order remain that institutes make themselves into absolutes. Beyond that fact the churches think that the way in which they have interpreted the tradition is absolute. And they are taking the shape of the tradition that was the product of their efforts, as the tradition itself. They have become less aware of the fact that 'tradition' is in fact a living and dynamic event, a process that 'happens' within a context of a community. God's message of salvation has to be related to and confronted with today's life of the people who live in a determined context and historical period. Christians do not have a kind of Truth that would be unchangeable and that would only have to be handed over without any contribution of its own.

All we have are Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit as a compass that shows us the way to those places where the presence of the risen Lord is to be experienced. It is the same compass to which the churches could point to show exit from the ecumenical deadlock since it shows the way to 'catholicity'! In other words: the way out of the deadlock is to become more catholic!

Ignatius of Antioch defined 'catholicity' in a twofold way: it is about orthodoxy and about orthopraxis. I want to translate those terms into two questions about 'catholicity': (1) How does the church see its relationship to the world as a place where all people can find a home (the *oikos*)? (2) How is the church committed to its assignment to proclaim the gospel in deed and word?

The first question refers directly to the universality of the Christian message. It starts with the belief that it is possible to integrate the Christian message in every human culture, and the deep conviction that the gospel is relevant to every human being and to every human culture. In addition we may know that the relationship of Christians with cultures is a dialogical one. Christianity does not only bring a message, it is ready to receive as well. The starting point is the acceptance of the otherness of the other.

Concerning the second question, about how the church will proclaim the gospel, it is important to be aware that the center of the Biblical and Christian message is not a conviction, but the historical events that have really happened. It is about the historical event of the exodus, of the deportation of the People of God to Babylon, of the death on the cross of Jesus of Nazareth. Those stories may direct our view to our own lives and of our world. The consequence will be that the meaning of the events we are involved in will become clear to us. To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus Christ; it is to learn to see through the eyes of Jesus himself. Who is ready to take that attitude, will discover what the meaning of events could be. We will be far removed from a church that comments on events from a safe distance and a pedantic height. You will only find out about the meaning of things if you are really involved in the struggle for human dignity.

I am convinced that churches and confessions have to be less concerned about themselves and should cultivate a more open mind for the gospel and show more concern about what is happening in the world in general and cultures in particular. To me, those three conditions seem to enable fresh and vital missionary dynamics. It is an Old Catholic conviction that the way forward is the way back to

the model of the early church, in which it was possible for churches to differ from one another because of cultural reasons while remaining in the same fellowship of faith.

This kind of fellowship is the spiritual network we want to work on. In the centre of the fellowship is the twofold question about the catholicity of the church and the missionary dynamic they express. All those churches and groupings that find themselves challenged by those questions and that missionary dynamic should be brought together in a fellowship, global and local. This is what ecumenism has to be about!

Conclusion

I repeat: it is important work that has been done. Also against this background of a critical view on the ecumenical commission of the churches, one can conclude that Roman Catholics and Old Catholics together have said some very fundamental things about the church and its mission.

Now it would be appropriate to work on the realization of these reflections starting from the questions that were mentioned in the section above and to work out the solidarity between the Roman Catholic Church and the Old Catholic churches in a more concrete way.

In other words: what does the document *Church and Ecclesial Communion* offer in the context of the two questions in respect to 'catholicity'? Does it help us to be involved in the dialogue with the world and its cultures? Does it help us to enthusiastically proclaim the gospel in word and deed in that same world? What we have in common has to be seen in the light of that challenge to 'catholicity'. That means that our reflections about the church, the sacraments and ministry must become



▶ A group of attendees during a post-conference convivial gathering with Arch. Vercammen.

'operational' in that light. But also the questions to which we did not find a common answer until now, must be seen in that missionary light. I am convinced that they will be posed in another way.

Therefore it is also the question if Roman Catholics and Old Catholics accept one another as partners in defending the catholic quality of the church as it is meant above. If we are both convinced that this catholicity can really open up a future of a new ecumenical zeal ('élan'), then the question arises how RC and OC will witness to their solidarity at this point? If the RC would be able to accept that the Old Catholic churches have a special calling in this, the Old Catholic churches would have the opportunity to make an even better contribution to it. It would imply the RCC accepts developments within the Old Catholic churches, as i.e. the ordination of women, not as the way they would have to follow themselves but as the conscious decision it has been and for the reasons this decision was taken.

Those two questions on the catholicity of the church are key-questions for catholic ecclesiology. It is necessary to take them with us as we are in the next phase of our dialogue. It shall surely make some more room for diversity within the catholic thinking about the church. Because there is no way a 'back to Rome' approach could function in a constructive way, it is our sincere hope that the RCC would recognize the diversity within Christianity and value it as the expression of the creativity of the Holy Spirit, if there is reason to do so. This kind of open-mindedness would open up the way to a renewed and concrete shaping of the universal church as the organized expression of global Christianity.

Diversity is of all times. Perhaps you know that the Declaration of Utrecht takes the quote of Saint Vincent of Lérin as its point of orientation in order to defend its own existence and calling. "We hold that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all; that is truly and properly catholic." (*Id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.*) It is important to remember that Vincent's counsel encourages us to continue to build bridges and to seek communion. The monk of Lérin was seeking a way out for the widely diversified Christianity of his day, which was threatening to fall into total chaos. In our time, too, there is great diversity within Christianity. This is certainly an opportunity, but also a threat. It is essential to be clearly connected to each other in our diversity, so that discord and strife do not get the upper hand. This same challenge has to be faced by the world. The situation of Christianity hardly differs on this point from the position of the world in which it exists. For this reason, God calls Christians, ever more clearly, to point the way to the reconciliation, unity and communion the world so badly needs.

It is our sincere hope to receive the grace to contribute to this witness of the Church.

DOCUMENTS

The Declaration of Utrecht - <http://www.utrechterunion.com>
Church and Ecclesial Communion - <http://www.vatican.va>

The Unbinding of Isaac: Maimonides on the Aqedah ¹

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One of Maimonides' great legacies to Jewish thought was philosophical scriptural exegesis. He was not the first to engage in this enterprise; already Philo Judeas (b. 20 BCE) belonged to a rich Alexandrian tradition of allegorical exegesis of the Torah and, in the Islamic world, Saadia and Abraham ibn Ezra each engaged in philosophical biblical interpretation. Nonetheless it was characteristically Maimonides who inspired and initiated a live tradition of philosophical interpretation of the Torah during the Middle Ages. We can trace a line of philosophical exegetes from Maimonides on, commentators who see themselves as carrying out a project he envisioned: Samuel and Moses ibn Tibbon, Joseph ibn Kaspi, Nissim of Marseilles, Immanuel of Rome, and a rich tradition of Yemenite philosophical exegetes.

Maimonides himself did not write a running commentary on the Torah. However, in the Introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, he tells us that it has two purposes: (1) to explain the multiple meanings of ambiguous terms in Scripture and (2) to identify and interpret "very obscure parables" in prophetic books. In light of these statements, many Maimonides scholars today approach the *Guide* as a work of philosophical biblical exegesis rather than as a traditional philosophical treatise or as theological kalam. But different scholars have different



▶ Josef Stern

understandings of Maimonides' exegetical project. Some show how Maimonides decodes or translates scriptural terms and claims into Aristotelian categories, terminology, and doctrines by establishing semantical equivalences between words or concepts: thus 'ishah/woman' is matter, 'tzelem/image' is Aristotelian form, and so on. On this approach, the aim of the exegesis is to "harmonize" scripture and philosophy. Others try to extrapolate from the scattered scriptural proof texts cited in the *Guide* Maimonides' unstated philosophical interpretation

of the larger biblical narratives from which those verses are drawn. A third approach, my own, does not try to show how the Bible can be harmonized with Philosophy by reading it as—translating it into—Aristotle; instead it aims to work out how Maimonides might have read the Torah as a work with its own distinctive philosophy. The Bible is not Aristotle but it emerged from a rich philosophical world that Maimonides believed existed in ancient Israel, with competing schools roughly parallel to all those known in the Arabic philosophical tradition. The philosophical arguments for and against Aristotelian views found in the *Guide* are not borrowed to philosophically legitimate the Law, nor are they a key to decipher Scripture. Rather they provide a context for original philosophical positions that Maimonides finds expressed, especially in parable form, in the Bible, the text he takes to be the exemplary philosophical work of all time.

In this talk I want to walk you through one example of Maimonidean philosophical biblical exegesis of this last sort. The text for my lesson is Gen. 22, the story of the binding of Isaac, the Aqedah, one of the most familiar yet terrifying stories in the Torah. I assume you know the plot. Its best known interpretation and, since Kierkegaard, the philosophically most influential one, is that its lesson

¹ This talk is based on a larger work-in-progress of the same name. All footnotes have been suppressed. All parenthetical references to Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* are to the Shlomo Pines translation (University of Chicago Press, 1963), by part, chapter, and page, e.g., III: 8: 430-436. Translations of the Mishneh Torah are my own. The complete passage in *Guide* III: 24 on the Aqedah follows in an appendix.

lies in Abraham's absolute though absurd faith in God's promise to make him into a nation as numerous as the stars in heaven. A second widely held explanation focuses on Abraham's unconditional obedience to God. In rabbinic thought, the Aqedah is called a *nisayon*, derived from the word *nissah* that figures in the opening verse like a title for the story: "And it was after these events and God *nissah* Abraham." For some, this means that God put Abraham to the test—made him undergo an ordeal; for others, *nissah* (based on the Hebrew term *nassos*) means that Abraham was made to serve as an exemplar, held aloft like a banner, for others to imitate and emulate. As an extreme example of this kind, in medieval Crusader Ashkenaz, the Aqedah was used, as a model, to justify acts of self- and child-martyrdom when faced with the demand to convert to Christianity or violate the Torah. These martyrs, inspired by Abraham's love and fear of God, actually saw themselves as executing an act that Abraham failed to carry out.

All these interpretations share one assumption: Had the angel not intervened in vv. 11-12, Abraham would have carried out the sacrificial act; and for that—his willingness to sacrifice Isaac—he is to be praised and rewarded. Thus the lesson of the Aqedah, Abraham's exemplary act, lies entirely in its first ten verses, from the initial divine command to the moment when Abraham stretches out his hand to raise the knife to sacrifice Isaac. Subsequent events—the angel's intervention, the sacrifice of the ram, the angel's blessing—is all post-climactic denouement.

This reading of the Aqedah, focusing on Abraham's unhesitating, unquestioning obedience or faith manifest in the first 10 verses, raises all sorts of problems. These are wonderfully illustrated in a passage recited every morning in the daily rabbinic prayers in which worshipers ask God to "remember His covenant with Israel, His loving-kindness, (*hesed*) and the oath He swore to Abraham the Patriarch on Mount Moriah." The liturgy continues:

#1 And let there appear before You, O Lord, Abraham's binding of Isaac his son, on the altar. Just as Abraham conquered his mercy to do Your will wholeheartedly, so may Your mercy conquer Your anger at us.

Now, we usually do not praise parents for "conquering"—i.e., suppressing—their mercy for their own children whose lives are threatened, especially by the parents themselves. Although religions do praise people for wholeheartedly carrying out God's will, Abraham's obedience demands that he act hardheartedly. Could that really be what obedience to God requires? Nor is the analogy between God and Abraham that underlies the prayer clear. Why should God's mercy conquer His anger, if Abraham's mercy for Isaac does not conquer but is conquered by his obedience? And is it really Abraham's mercy for Isaac

that has to be conquered by his obedience to God? Given the analogy, we would think that it would be Abraham's anger at God that must be conquered by his obedience—just as God's mercy conquers His own anger. Perhaps the author of the liturgy could not bring himself to explicitly acknowledge Abraham's—understandable—anger at God, hence, he settled instead on his mercy for Isaac.

Maimonides turns the received interpretation of the Aqedah, the interpretation underlying this prayer, on its head. He begins by rejecting two standard medieval theodicies exemplified by the Aqedah that privilege its first ten verses. On the first of these, the point of the Aqedah was to prove the degree of Abraham's faith or obedience. But since the only being present at the event to whom this could have been proven was God, Maimonides objects that this interpretation presupposes that God was previously ignorant of Abraham's faith or obedience and, hence, that God changes—two divine imperfections. The second rejected theodicy, again focused on vv. 1-10, responds to the apparent divine injustice in putting a righteous individual like Abraham through this ordeal. Its justification is that by undergoing the Aqedah Abraham merited or earned greater compensation or happiness in the future. To this theodicy Maimonides again objects: even so, Abraham's suffering was undeserved and therefore unjust at the time of the Aqedah. Therefore this second justification, like the first, is untenable.

But the problems for which the rejected theodicies are proposed as solutions are problems only so long as one takes the crux of the Aqedah to consist in its first ten verses. Having rejected the two theodicies, Maimonides next undermines their underlying exegetical motivation. First he shifts the significance of the Aqedah from the event described by the story to the scriptural text itself. After all, if the Aqedah is a model for us to emulate, what we know about the Aqedah is what we learn from the biblical text, not from having observed the actual event. Then he shifts the weight of the significance of the text from vv. 1-10 to vv. 11-19: to include the angel's commandment not to sacrifice Isaac and its aftermath, the sacrifice of the ram. The end, or point, of the story lies in its ending.

What is that point? Maimonides writes that the Aqedah contains two "great notions that are fundamental principles of the Law" (III: 24). The first is "the limit of love for God... and fear of Him—that is, up to what limit they must reach" (*ibid.*). Almost all of his commentators, medieval and modern, take Maimonides to mean by "the limit" of the love and fear of God that the Aqedah teaches us the limitlessness of the love and fear of God: that there are no limits. One must do everything one possibly can, and then some, to demonstrate one's love and fear of God.

I want to propose that what Maimonides means by 'limit' is limit. What the Aqedah teaches is that there

is a limit to the love and fear of God. And if there is a limit, there can also be excessive love and fear of God. The Aqedah teaches that one must respect a limit even in loving and fearing God. Abraham initially recognized and respected no such limit; his love and fear of God could bring him even to sacrifice Isaac. However, the full Aqedah narrative is more than the first ten verses. The end, or point, as well as the ending of the story is that Abraham does not sacrifice Isaac and instead sacrifices the ram, thus marking a limit to love and fear of God. The *nisayon*—the proof or demonstration to others—lies in the conclusion of the story of the Aqedah, not in its aborted beginning.

In order to work out Maimonides' conception of the limit on love and fear of God, let me take a minute here to fill in two pieces of background: first, from Maimonides' theory of parables and, second, from his theory of prophecy. (I included summaries of this on the handout for you to consult.)

Maimonides tells us that one of the two purposes of the Guide is to explain "obscure parables occurring in" prophetic books that are "not explicitly identified there as such" (I: Introduction: 6). I take him to mean that not only is there no title "Parable" above these passages but also that there are no superficial literary features that mark the prophetic parables, as there are, for example, for rabbinic king-parables. Instead Maimonides goes on to characterize a parable as any text with three levels of interpretation. I call these: (1) the vulgar external meaning, (2) the parabolic external meaning, and (3) the parabolic inner meaning.

The vulgar external meaning of a parable is the meaning of its words, their lexical or literal meaning, or how the vulgar understand the passage, say, a narrative as a story about actual individuals. Maimonides says this meaning is "worth nothing" (*ibid.* 11) because it contains no philosophical wisdom: at best it is innocuous, like the meaning of a "historical work or a piece of poetry" (I: 2: 24); at worst, it is deeply false like corporeal descriptions of God. So, on its vulgar external meaning, Gen. 22 would be a historical narrative about a particular man commanded by a fickle god to sacrifice his son, who silently obeyed, journeyed to a far-off place, and, once he got there, was ordered by the same fickle deity not to carry out His command. According to Maimonides, whether or not any such event occurred, the significance of Gen. 22, the reason why this story is included in the Torah, cannot lie in this vulgar interpretation, either as a chapter in the history of ancient Israel or as ancient mythology. But note: this is not to say, even though the text is instead interpreted as a philosophical parable, that the event it describes never occurred. A text can both be a parable and correspond to something factually true. Being a parable simply means that the reason why the story is included in the Torah is to express philosophical wisdom, not to record some historical fact. The parabolic status of the

text is neutral with respect to its extra-textual veracity.

Instead of its vulgar interpretation, the value of Gen. 22 lies in reading it as a text of wisdom or wisdoms according to its parabolic external and inner meanings. These kinds of wisdom are both meanings of the text; they differ, however, in their contents. Parabolic external meaning expresses "wisdom that is useful in many respects, among which is the welfare of human societies" (I: Introduction: 12), that is, wisdom concerning communal welfare—but not only, it should be emphasized, at material, economic, moral, and political well-being but also at inculcating in the citizens correct beliefs and values, i.e., their intellectual welfare. Parabolic inner meaning expresses "wisdom that is useful for beliefs concerned with the truth as it is" (*ibid.*). This somewhat obscure formulation calls out for explanation, but what Maimonides has in mind is wisdom concerned with individual perfection (as opposed to communal welfare) which is a function of the actualization, to the degree possible, of one's intellectual potential through knowledge of the truths of physics and metaphysics. For reasons of time, this talk will address only the parabolic external meaning, the wisdom that concerns communal welfare; the inner meaning of the parable of the Aqedah will have to await another occasion.

Now a word about prophecy (and again there is a summary on handout): On the familiar view of prophecy, God, or an angel, speaks to or tells a prophet to do or to say something, for example, to command a law: the prophet serves as a mouthpiece or channel for God. Maimonides, drawing on his Arabic Aristotelian predecessors, turns this picture around. Let me just mention two of his central claims. First, contrary to the familiar understanding, on Maimonides' view, the prophet is not told something by someone else, God or an angel. The prophet, like a philosopher or a scientist, comes to know through his intellect, by reasoning or direct intellectual intuition, some truth, say, an abstract proposition of science or philosophy, no different from the way that any philosopher or scientist intellectually grasps or knows a truth. However, after apprehending or grasping this truth, the prophet, who also has a well developed imagination, translates that abstract truth into an image or sensible representation or into a law or action that can be understood even by those in the community who cannot grasp abstract truths as such. For example, Jacob's dream of a ladder of angels ascending and descending is an imaginative representation of his prophetic knowledge of the structure of the physical world, its discovery by man, and of God as the so-called prime mover of the spheres. This knowledge of abstract truths of science and philosophy is common to philosophers and prophets who equally grasp them through their intellects. What distinguishes the prophet from the (non-prophetic) knower, philosopher, or scientist is simply the second stage in which the prophet uses his imagination to

communicate the abstract truth to the wider community. So, to return now to the Aqedah, the first important implication is that, on this theory of prophecy, when Scripture states that Abraham has a prophetic experience in which he is “commanded” to offer up Isaac, what is actually transpiring is that Abraham, through his own autonomous intellect and reasoning, comes to know a philosophical truth or dictate that is imaginatively expressed by the command to sacrifice Isaac.

The second claim about prophecy relevant to the Aqedah concerns angels. Some scriptural descriptions of prophecy refer explicitly to God as their source like v.1, others to an angel like v. 11. Now, like the Hebrew term ‘mal’akh’

cause of everything but He always works through the intermediate causes or instruments that are called ‘angels.’ And this holds true for prophetic experiences as well. Therefore, whether a verse explicitly mentions an angel or not, in reality God always ‘addresses’ prophets ‘through’ angels. But ‘addresses’ also cannot mean addresses. Since angels are not bodily beings, they don’t have mouths with which to speak or, for that matter, arms with which to wrestle. So all descriptions found in the Torah of angels speaking or wrestling (or of God speaking, which must be through the intermediation of an angel) could only be imagined, or have transpired within a vision or dream (II: 41: 385-6). In other words, if a prophet is said to “see”

have all experienced in our own vivid dreams. Maimonides’ moral for the Aqedah should now be obvious. When Abraham is said to be commanded by the angel to do such-and-such, as if the angel were a real independent being speaking to him, what is really occurring is that Abraham himself is intellectually apprehending some truth or imperative and imaginatively projecting it into the mouth of a visionary angel. Do not, then, think of the prophetic commands in vv. 1-2 or 15-18 as if a real external divine being is telling Abraham what to do; rather the verses refer to Abraham’s own intellectual judgment based on a conclusion he has arrived at through the reasoning of his own intellect, no different from any other truth he knows, a truth or command that he then projects imaginatively onto the vivid mental image of an angel “commanding” him.

Thus the two angelic “commands,” first to sacrifice Isaac and then not to, are really the contents of Abraham’s own intellectual judgments based on his own reasoning. But if that is the case, we must ask: What arguments or reasoning could have led Abraham to these two—opposed—conclusions? As I have already proposed, the Aqedah is a parable; hence, it has two levels of parabolic meaning, one external, one inner, each of which contains its own story about the reasoning that led Abraham to his conclusions. Again, for reasons of time, I will explore just the first line of reasoning, the external meaning of the parable.

According to that interpretation, the meaning of the parable communicates wisdom concerning communal welfare. Abraham is a prototype for the founder of a divine community: he is model for his community to emulate. Why should such a founder’s love and fear of God require the sacrifice of a human being, let alone his own son and heir? Maimonides’ answer is spelled out in (2A) but I won’t



▶ A varied assembly of participants during the talk and discussion.

which literally means messenger (III: 6: 262), an “angel” for Maimonides is nothing but a natural instrument or intermediary through which God causes natural phenomena like human intellectual apprehension. Angels are not sensible, corporeal beings, human-like figures with wings and halos; they are powers or faculties like the intellect or imagination or physical forces like gravity or the causes of the motions of the spheres. Furthermore, God may be the ultimate

an angel with a certain bodily shape, what is really happening is that the prophet’s imagination is translating his knowledge of the functioning of an abstract force or power (like his intellect grasping a truth) into the concrete image of a angel whom the prophet “sees” addressing him either in a vision or in a dream. And when the imagination is functioning at its best, it projects its images onto the external world as if the imagined angel were really “out there,” as we

read this whole passage; let me briefly summarize it :

For in this story he was ordered to do something that bears no comparison either with sacrifice of property or with sacrifice of life. In truth it is the most extraordinary thing that could happen in the world, such a thing that one would not imagine that human nature was capable of it. Here is a sterile man having an exceeding desire for a son, possessed of great property and commanding respect, and having the wish that his progeny should become a religious community. When a son comes to him after his having lost hope, how great will be his attachment to him and love for him! However, because of his fear of Him... and because of his love to carry out His command, he holds this beloved son as little, gives up all his hopes regarding him, and hastens to slaughter him after a journey of days. For if he had chosen to do this immediately, as soon as the order came to him, it would have been an act of stupefaction and disturbance in the absence of exhaustive reflection. But his doing it days after the command had come to him shows that the act sprang from thought, correct understanding, consideration of the truth of His command, ...love of Him, and fear of Him. No other circumstance should be put forward, nor should one opt for the notion that he was in a state of passion. For Abraham our Father did not hasten to slaughter Isaac because he was afraid that God would kill him or make him poor, but solely because of what is incumbent upon the Adamites—namely, to love Him and fear Him...—and not, as we have explained in several passages for any hope of a reward or for fear of punishment. (III: 24: 500-501)

Maimonides emphasizes how unimaginably great was the sacrifice demanded of Abraham. Yet he did not act out of passion, shock, or “fear of punishment but only after “exhaustive reflection... thought, correct understanding, consideration of the truth of His command.” Proof is the three days journey to Mt. Moriah that figuratively signifies three days of deliberation. But what was Abraham deliberating for those three anxious days and why does Maimonides place so much emphasis on deliberation?

Let’s begin with the content of his three days of deliberation. We are told that Abraham loves Isaac, his son, the seed of the religious community that will grow from him, more than any property, more even than his own life, more than anything else in this world. Abraham could offer, or make, no greater sacrifice than Isaac. Nonetheless, the sacrifice of Isaac is not as great a sacrifice as it would have been not to obey God’s command. It may be that the sacrifice of Isaac was, as Maimonides says, so “extraordinary... that one would not imagine that human nature was capable of it,” but not fulfilling God’s

command must have been still more unimaginable than the unimaginable for the one who truly fears and loves God. Abraham, then, faces two mutually exclusive options: either sacrifice the most valuable thing for him in the world or sacrifice, i.e., surrender, a command of God. To choose the latter would be tantamount to loving something else more than God. So, by choosing, after thought and deliberation, to fulfill, and not to sacrifice, God’s command by sacrificing Isaac, Abraham demonstrates his ultimate, incomparable and exclusive love and fear of God.

As we mentioned earlier, in medieval Ashkenaz, Northern France or Germany, this script was played out in frightening reality: the Aqedah became a topos for acts of martyrdom, not only of one’s self but also of one’s children. Faced with Crusader demands to convert, to violate the Torah and sacrifice God’s commandments, rabbis sacrificed not only their own lives but also those of their children, and with their own hands—invoking the example of Abraham at the Aqedah. Acts of this kind were not limited to Ashkenaz. Maimonides also would have known of the forced conversion and mass martyrdom of Jews in the Maghrib and the tragic story of the martyrdom of the Jews of Sigilmasa under the Almohads. For many, to die for God rather than transgress, or sacrifice, even the least of His commandments became the highest expression of devotion to God, the truest “sanctification of the Name of God,” the litmus test for the one who truly loves and fears God.

That one should die, or surrender oneself to be killed, rather than violate specific commandments, *yehareg ve’al ya’avur*, “be killed rather than transgress,” has a long, legitimate history in rabbinic halakhah. The rabbis obligate one to martyr oneself when a coercer demands, on pain of death for disobedience, that one worship idolatry, commit murder, or perform forbidden sexual acts like adultery or incest. In later rabbinic thought, these three cases are expanded to any public transgression that would desecrate the Name of God or threaten the very survival of the people or religion, Jews or Judaism. However, Maimonides’ concern is not with these instances of mandatory or obligatory martyrdom but with voluntary martyrdom, the state of mind in which one believes that the ultimate love and fear of God demands that one ought to die for God, martyr one’s self and child—that this is the highest form of devotion to God. One rabbinic precedent for this stance is R. Aqiba, who actively sought out martyrdom by teaching Torah in public in open contempt of a Roman prohibition in order to fulfill the commandment of Deut. 6, 5, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might,” a verse he interpreted and proclaimed on the occasion of the martyrdom he waited his whole life for the opportunity to undergo, even enjoy. A second source is Bahya ibn Paqudah’s *Duties of the Heart* which describes love of God in neo-platonic terms

as the desire and yearning of a soul, bound to a material body it despises, to withdraw from this world and empty itself of everything material and worldly. The soul stands in awe and fear before the great power of God that dwarfs its own puny insignificance and worthlessness, thereby bringing it to dedicate itself exclusively and totally to the deity. Bahya's paradigm of such a god-lover is Abraham who demonstrated his total love of God through, among other things, his "willingness to surrender his own soul [i.e., life] for love of God by his promptness and zealousness (*haritzut*) in the matter of Isaac," i.e., in the *Aqedah*. In these words, Bahya, remarkably, takes Abraham's offering of Isaac to be nothing less than sacrificing his, Abraham's, own life, as if they were identical. (And while he does not explicitly state this, because he views the child as an extension of the parent's own self, that is presumably why he also does not view this as murder.) Elsewhere Bahya repeats that the God-fearing individual is the one who "is sincerely willing to give up his soul and body, possessions and children, to do God's will," again conceptually linking love, fear, and the death of oneself and one's children for God. Thus, dying, or martyrdom, is the full expression of the ultimate love of God that involves emptying all of one's thought of anything other than God.

But if this is the argument that might move one to die for God, Maimonides also argues that the full story of the *Aqedah* proves that such love and fear of God is "excessive." What he means by 'excessive' emerges in a comment he makes on child-sacrifice in the course of his explanation of the commandments of the Temple in the last part of the *Guide*. He explains that the primary intention of the Mosaic Law was to eliminate all idolatry from Israel and, in particular, what he calls 'Sabianism,' a star-worshipping, magical, astrological, superstitious culture in which ancient Israel was nurtured. Maimonides repeatedly states that what is wrong with Sabianism is the "burden and excess" it imposed on its followers, by which he means that the Sabian practices were not only unnecessarily demanding but also that they expressed "untrue opinions" and required "useless practices which brought about a waste of lives in vain and futile things [Isa. 49, 4]" (III: 49: 612). In contrast, the Mosaic commandments are "equibalanced... manners of worship in which there is no burden and excess" (II: 39: 380-1). As an example, Maimonides tells his reader:

#3 ... to compare a rite in which for reasons of divine worship a man burns his child with one in which he burns a young pigeon. ... This was the worship they rendered to their gods. What corresponds to this in our worship is the burning of a young pigeon or even of a handful of flour. (III: 47: 593-4).

What is wrong—"excessive"—about child-sacrifice is also that it is useless, vain, and false. Maimonides points

to three deeply mistaken motivations for martyrdom either of one's self or of one's child. Some think that they demonstrate their love and fear of God by blind obedience to His commands especially when that involves dying, when they let themselves be killed simply out of the belief that it is God's will for no other reason. This is mistaken because it assumes that God issues His commandments for no reason, when in fact all His commandments have reasons, indeed reasons that aim at the human good—which is never a privation like death. Others think that dying or sacrificing their young out of love for God is, in turn, reciprocal, loved by God, but in fact all such cultic actions "are hateful and odious to God" (III: 29: 517, III: 45: 578). Finally, some believe that dying itself is the purest, highest worship of the one God. This for Maimonides is a false, indeed idolatrous belief, idolatry being first and foremost the deeply wrong belief that God is corporeal or a divisible body, hence, not absolutely One. To believe that bodily death constitutes worship of God is to worship God through the body, corporeally; such a bodily mode of worship even of the one incorporeal immaterial God is idolatry.

With this background, we can now say how Maimonides read the *Aqedah* as a parable expressing wisdom concerning communal welfare. Abraham's initial decision to sacrifice Isaac out of love and fear of God, however noble these motives, was nonetheless cut in the same mold as the Sabian "rite in which a man burns his child" for God. For all his opposition to the content of Sabian idolatry, Abraham was in the grip of the Sabian picture, or psychology, of the highest mode of divine worship: that one expresses one's ultimate love of God by dying for God, that the test of one's love of God is one's willingness to die for Him. Therefore, like the Sabian practice, Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac was an expression of excessive—false, vain, and useless, in one word, idolatrous—love and fear of the one God.

Worship that is not excessive, fear of God within the proper limits, is exemplified by Abraham's sacrifice of the ram. When the angel tells Abraham: "For now I know that thou fearest God: meaning that through the act because of which the term fearing God is applied to you, all the Adamites will know what the limits of the fear of the Lord are," the act to which the angel is referring is not Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac but rather his judgment to abstain from that act, his decision not to sacrifice Isaac, and, in its place, the sacrifice of the ram which exemplifies not only the sacrificial cult but the performance of all commandments. As Maimonides continues in his explication, or definition, of the phrase "fearing God":

#4 Know that this notion is corroborated and explained in the Torah, in which it is mentioned that the final end of the whole of the Torah, including its commandments, prohibitions, promises, and

narratives, is one thing only—namely, fear of Him....

Here I take Maimonides to be defining fear of God as the aim of the Mosaic law as a whole: to achieve that state, what is called for is living the life of the commandments. The angel expresses Abraham's recognition that proper fear of God—i.e., fear of God that respects limits—is manifest not by dying for God but by the life of the Mosaic law.

The Mosaic commandments demarcate “the limits of the fear of God” because they are “equibalanced” and not excessive. That does not mean that they are absolutely ideal but that they are the best possible accommodation of the ideal to the necessities of human nature. Recall Maimonides' statement that God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his sole child and heir was something “unimaginable” given human nature. This does not mean that martyrdom is always ruled out. As we said earlier, there are defined circumstances in which certain exceptional individuals are obligated to martyr themselves and ought to be willing to die for their beliefs and even sacrifice their family and children. But, given human nature which is constituted by more than intellect, by all the emotional, sensible, psychic, and non-rational faculties that feed into our imaginations, a law that makes martyrdom an ideal for everyone is indeed unimaginable, i.e., not a normative option for the general member of the community. Such an ideal, directed at martyrdom, focuses on extreme moments, crises, to identify the true worshiper of God; it is uncompromising, tolerating no accommodation to human nature or different natures. A law, however, precisely because it is directed to the good of the community at large, must delimit its ideals to the contours of human nature. This Maimonidean fear of God, achieved through the commandments, is not *Bahya's*; rather it is reverence of the kind that Maimonides describes as the state intended to be inspired in those who enter the Temple precinct—a part of the Law, again, prefigured by Abraham's sacrifice of the ram (III: 47: 593). For reasons of time, I won't read out the laws I have included on the handout under #5 from Maimonides' great legal code, the *Mishneh Torah*, but the fear of God they describe is a matter of respect for boundaries and limits, restraint and self-control, self-discipline, attending to and not forgetting where and when one is, knowing one's place. This is not fear that moves one to die for God; it demarcates the god-fearing life, a sensibility inculcated by the commandments that serve now, in

Pierre Hadot's words, as spiritual exercises or training.

#5, 1. It is a positive commandment to be in awe



▶ Post-Conference opportunity of dialogue and conversation among attending Professors, Students and Lecturer.

of the Temple. As it said, “And my Temple you shall fear.” But it not the Temple that you fear but He who commanded us concerning its fear.

2. And what does fear of Him consist in? One should not enter the Temple Mount with his staff or with shoes on his feet or with his belt or with dust on his feet or with money bound in his tunic. And it is not necessary to mention that it is forbidden to spit anywhere on the Temple mount. But if it happens to someone that he has spit, he should absorb it in his garment. And one should not use the Temple mount as a shortcut to enter from an opening on one side and exit from a facing opening on the other side—but one should go around the Temple from outside and not enter it except for sacred purposes.

3. A person should not act frivolously facing the eastern gate of the Court, namely, the Gate of Nikanor, because it faces the Holy of Holies. And anyone who enters the Court should walk slowly and unhurriedly where he is permitted to enter and see himself standing in the presence of God, as it said “And My eyes and My heart shall be there all time.” And he should walk with awe, fear, and trembling, as it is said, “We shall walk in the House of God with feeling [beragesh]. (Laws Concerning the Temple vii)

I want to conclude with one textual reason why, despite our argument, one might give priority to vv. 1-10 and take the lesson of the Aqedah to be Abraham's initial judgment to sacrifice Isaac. In vv. 12 and 16, after commanding

Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac, the angel nonetheless commends him for not having “withheld” Isaac, for having been willing to sacrifice him. These angelic pronouncements apparently locate the focus of the story in the first ten verses but Maimonides nowhere explicitly mentions these two verses. However, they introduce an odd ambiguity or ambivalence into the story: that at the very moment when the angel commands Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac he also praises him for having been willing to do so, implying that he had good reason to sacrifice him. I want to propose that Maimonides addresses this ambiguity by incorporating it into his own account in the *Mishneh Torah*, albeit obliquely. Despite his critique in the *Guide of the religious psychology of dying for God*, the psychology manifest in a communal ideal of voluntary martyrdom, the Maimonides of the *Mishneh Torah* rules, in accordance with classic rabbinic law as I mentioned earlier, that there are specific circumstances in which it is mandatory to martyr oneself. Like the ambiguous biblical text of the *Aqedah*, Maimonides’ presentation acknowledges both sides of the story. On the one hand, he commends and praises the acts of exceptional would-be martyrs like Daniel, R. Aqiba, and their peers. At the same time, he offers an alternative non-martyrological paradigm of the one “who sanctifies the name of God,” the traditional euphemism for the martyr, which he reinterprets in terms of actually living a certain kind of life rather than dying for it: the sage who “is extremely exacting of his own behavior and who acts within the line of the law,” whose inter-personal relations are always good-natured and friend-like, who respects even those who do not respect him, who is honest in business, pious and learned, loved, praised, and imitated by all. The one who lives this kind of life, even if not always perfectly, not the one who dies rather than compromise it, is Maimonides’ preferred model of the one who reenacts the *Aqedah*.

But Maimonides’ most telling statement of his preference for living over dying for God emerges at the very beginning of his codification of the laws of martyrdom: Let’s read #6:

#6 1. All [members of] the House of Israel are commanded to sanctify the great name [of God] (*al qiddush ha-shem ha-gadol ha-zeh*). As it is said: “And I shall be sanctified among the children of Israel” (Lev. 22, 32). And they are warned not to profane it, as it is said, “And you shall not profane My holy name” (*ibid.*).

The phrase that is used here, ‘*qiddush hashem*,’ ‘sanctification of the name of God’ is, as we have said, the classic rabbinic euphemism for martyrdom. Maimonides continues:

How [do we fulfill these commandments]? When an idolater arises and [violently] coerces an Israelite to transgress any one of the commandments mentioned in the Torah under the threat of death,

Now, given the traditional meaning of the phrase ‘*qiddush hashem*,’ what we would expect to find is an answer like this:

He should allow himself to be killed rather than transgress the commandment. Instead Maimonides writes just the opposite: he should transgress [the commandment] and not [allow himself to] be killed. For it said concerning the commandments, “which, if a man do them, he shall live by them” (*ibid.* 18, 5). [This implies that] he “shall live by them,” and not die by them. And if he suffers death and does not commit the transgression, he is to blame for his own death [*mithayev benafsho*].

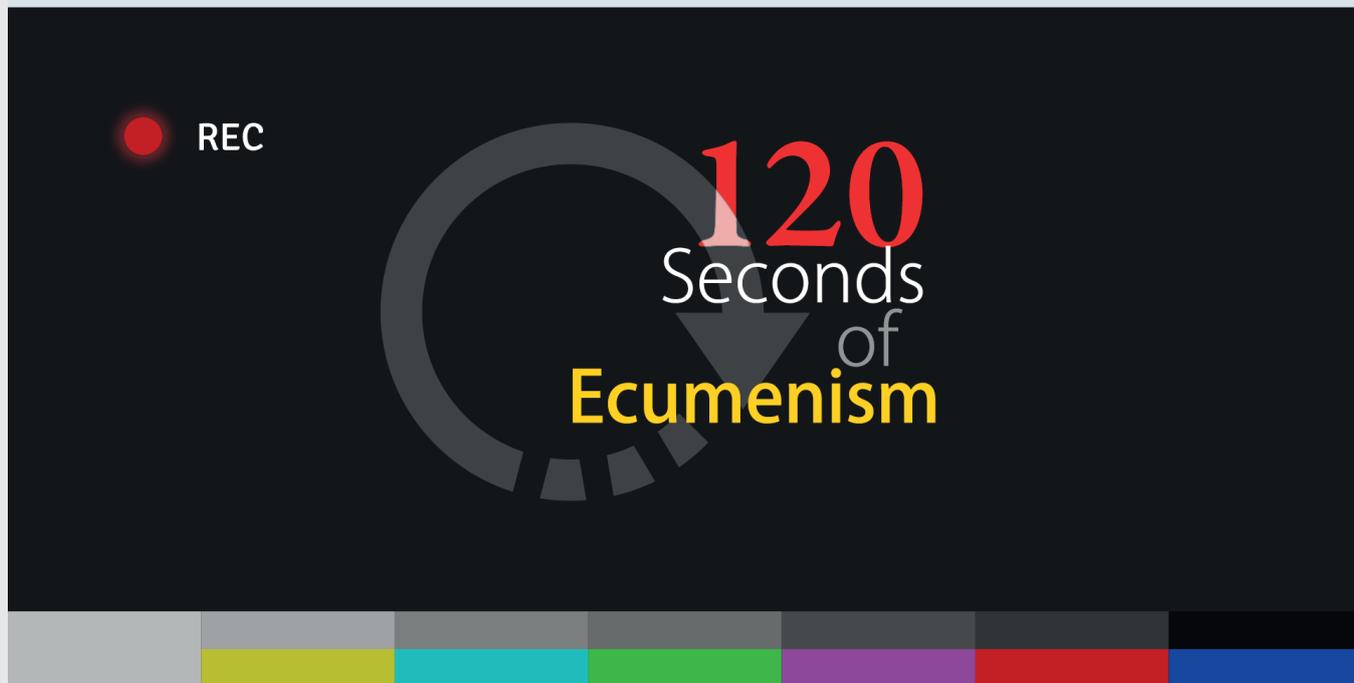
It is nothing but remarkable that Maimonides opens these laws of “the sanctification of the name of God,” *qiddush hashem*, with a case that requires one not to martyr oneself but instead to commit a transgression rather than be killed. His proof text Lev. 18, 5, tells it all: the primary way to sanctify the name of God is by living according to the commandments, not by sacrificing oneself, or dying, in order not to sacrifice, or violate, the performance of a law. Indeed the self-righteous individual who would have himself be killed when the strict law enjoins that he transgress a commandment bears guilt for his own death—a charge Maimonides repeats three times in the chapter. Martyrdom does not lend itself to superogatory fulfillment.

Maimonides’ aim in the *Mishneh Torah* is not narrowly halakhic, or legalistic. The purpose of the Law is to cultivate a specific kind of religious personality in the community, to inculcate correct beliefs and values, to create a certain model of citizen. The Maimonidean version of this personality-type is not one who takes the highest worship of God to consist in dying for God, but rather in living a certain kind of life, even if that life sometimes requires transgression. By presenting the laws of martyrdom in the order he does, he demotes dying and promotes living by the commandments as the primary mode to sanctify the name of God. This conception of Judaism or religion in general was, as we know, far from shared in the twelfth century—or today. Maimonides nowhere mentions the historical incidents of martyrdom either in Crusader Ashkenaz or in the Islamicate world. It is difficult to believe that he had not heard of them. However, the *Mishneh Torah* clearly shows us what he thought about this other model of the most sublime religious life.

WebTV

120 Seconds of Ecumenism

 #120sEcu



"120 seconds of Ecumenism" 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.

In "120 seconds of Ecumenism" the Centro Pro Unione joins its specific ministry of formation to the authentic ecumenical spirit, with its willingness to provide a formative tool which uses digital media technology, in order to reach, all over the world, those who – due to their studies, ministries, pastoral care, teaching or personal interest – are sensitive to the Ecumenical Movement and willing to deepen their knowledge on the journey towards the unity of Christians "that they may be one [...] so that the world may believe" (Jn 17, 21).

WebTV & Media

- ▶ **What is it?**
It is a new space, for gathering content and audiovisual resources in a section of the website of the Centro Pro Unione visible at <https://webtv.prounione.it>
- ▶ **Why?**
The new technologies provide the means to design, develop and implement a new type of electronic digital communication for multimedia (video, audio, images) and the Centro Pro Unione intends to be in step with the times by using these new forms of communication and interaction.
- ▶ **How?**
We want to offer such media resources that will be displayed in this section and that are the result of the collaboration of a team involved in the ministry of education and training that promote ecumenical formation, in harmony with the authentic spirit and charisma of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement and its founder, the Servant of God Father Paul Wattson.
- ▶ **How is it called?**
We thought about this title: 'WebTV' which indicates a collection of audiovisual materials (Acronym TV) that can be enjoyed via the network (Web)
- ▶ **What audiovisual projects?**
In conjunction with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2015 we will launch the first project. A virtual space that is called '120 Seconds of Ecumenism'. It is a project of ecumenical formation in the form of brief interviews with scholars, teachers and experts, who, through their presentations, express a variety of views and perspectives, characteristic of those who seek the unity of the Church.
- ▶ **Subsequent projects?**
Among successive audiovisual projects there will be a documentary on ecumenical formation that the Centro Pro Unione annually offers – a Summer Course on the Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective – with participants from different countries and continents who meet in Rome to learn and live an historical and theological experience in the heart of Christianity. A series of audio podcasts from Conferences held in the Centro during important meetings.

120 Secondi di Ecumenismo



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#120sEcu



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



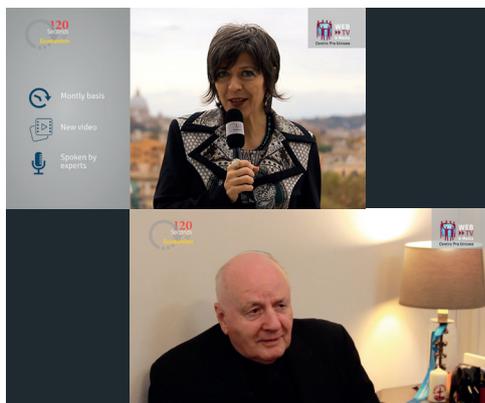
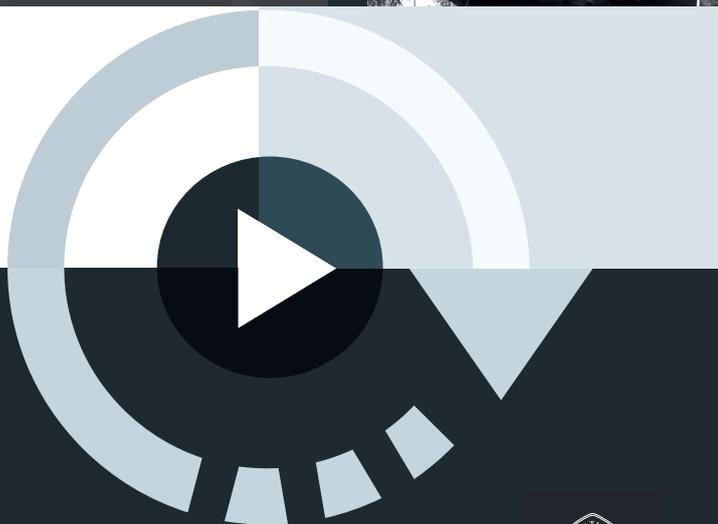
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vedi su:

In lingua Italiana e in lingua Inglese



Centro Pro Unione
Ut Omnes Unum Sint



A Ministry of the
Franciscan Friars
of the Atonement



School Application 2015

Please return this form with non-refundable tuition before **March 31st, 2015** to: **CENTRO PRO UNIONE / Via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30 - 00186 Rome, Italy**

Application Form
Summer Course in Ecumenism

Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective

Centro Pro Unione

Last Name First Name

Nationality Religious Affiliation

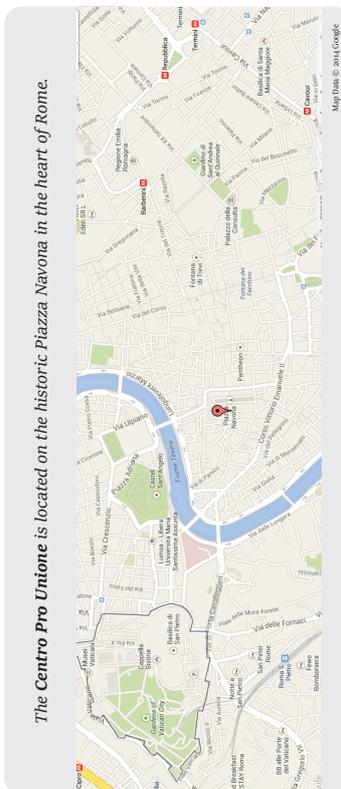
Present Address

Tel. () Fax () E-mail

Profession, Occupation or Ministry

Highest Theological Degree

Date Signature



Annual Summer Course

Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective

29 June - 17 July 2015

Centro Pro Unione



A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30
I-00186 ROME (Italy)

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Website www.prounione.it
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Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective

29 June - 17 July 2015

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 religious life, who are in the mission field, who are ecumenical officers or members of ecumenical commissions, or who are looking for a sabbatical experience led by qualified professors and ecumenists.

Faculty

The faculty includes, but is not limited to, staff members of the Centro Pro Unione (Rome) and the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute (New York).

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 I

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 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.

Week II

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.

Week III

Christians & World Faith Traditions

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.



Practical Information

The cost of the course is US\$300 (non-refundable) which is payable at the time of application. Deadline for application is March 31st.

Upon acceptance of application, a list of possible lodgings in Rome will be mailed or faxed. Booking of lodgings is the responsibility of applicant. Housing cannot be guaranteed after application deadline. Transportation (from North America), lodgings and meals will be approximately US\$3,500.

The Centro Pro Unione is located on the historic Piazza Navona in the heart of Rome.

Application can also be filled out on-line:
www.prounione.it

Program Schedule 2015

Faculty

- › Cornelius Ant. van Duin
Professional Tour Guide
- › James Loughran, sa
Director – Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute, NY
- › Timothy MacDonald, sa
Associate Director – Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute, NY
- › Loredana Nepi
Librarian – Centro Pro Unione, Rome
- › James Puglisi, sa
Director – Centro Pro Unione, Rome
- › Gabriel Quicke
Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Vatican
- › Teresa Francesca Rossi
Associate Director – Centro Pro Unione Professor of Ecumenism – Angelicum, Rome
- › Lucio Sembrano
Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Vatican

Schedule

from Monday through Friday

- › 8:45-9:00 Morning Prayer
- › 9:00-10:00 Class I
- › 10:15-11:15 Class II
- › 11:30-12:30 Class III

Afternoon Program Schedule

"Centro Pro Unione Ecumenical Gatherings"

- › **Monday, 29 June** | *Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul*
Mass of the Pallium - St. Peter's Basilica in the presence of the Delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate 9:30 am
- › **Wednesday, 1 July** | *St. Peter's Basilica*
Meeting point: at the obelisk of St. Peter's Square at 2:30 pm
- › **Monday, 6 July** | *St. John Lateran, Baptistry and Basilica of St. Clement*
Meeting point: at the obelisk of St. John's at 3:30 pm
- › **Tuesday, 7 July** | *Excavations under St. Peter's Basilica*
Meeting point: at the obelisk of St. Peter's Square at 3:45 pm
- › **Wednesday, 8 July** | *St Pauls-outside-the-walls*
Meeting point: S.Paolo fuori le Mura, main entrance (riverside) at 3:30 pm
- › **Monday, 13 July** | *Tour of the "Roman Ghetto", the Synagogue and Museum*
Meeting point: L.go Argentina, Theater entrance at 3.30 pm
- › **Wednesday, 15 July** | *Islamic Center & Mosque*
Meeting point: main entrance to the Center, Viale della Moschea, 1 at 9:45 am

Program Schedule Summer Course

Ecumenical & Interreligious Movements from a Catholic Perspective

29 June - 17 July 2015

Centro Pro Unione



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[www.twitter.com/EcumenUnity](https://twitter.com/EcumenUnity)

Week One 29 June to 3 July

Monday 29 June *Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul*

Mass of the Pallium - St. Peter's Basilica in the presence of the delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate

Tuesday 30 June

- I. Biblical foundations (Puglisi)
- II. Historical overview of factions / divisions within the church (Rossi)
- III. Eastern Christianity (Puglisi)

Wednesday 1 July

- I. Reading of Ecumenical Texts (Rossi)
- II. Reformation (Loughran)
- III. Anglicanism (MacDonald)

Thursday 2 July

- I. Radical Reformation (Puglisi)
- II. Catholic Reformation (Loughran)
- III. Modern Ecumenical Movement (Rossi)

Friday 3 July

- I. World Council of Churches (Rossi)
- II. Concept of Reception in the Ecumenical Movement (MacDonald)
- III. RC Ecumenical Documents (Rossi)

Week Two 6 to 10 July

Monday 6 July

- I. Dialogues overview (Rossi)
- II. Dialogues with Orthodox (Puglisi)
- III. Dialogues with Lutherans (Loughran)

Tuesday 7 July - GROUP PICTURE

- I. Vatican II and Catholic Principles (Quicke)
- II. Vatican II and Catholic Principles (Quicke)
- III. Dialogues with Anglicans (MacDonald)

Wednesday 8 July

- I. Dialogues with Methodists (MacDonald)
- II. Dialogues with Reformed (Loughran)
- III. Dialogues with Pentecostals (Rossi)

Thursday 9 July

- I-II-III Morning spent at the Pontifical Councils for the Promotion of Christian Unity and for Interreligious Dialogue (Nepi)

Friday 10 July

- I. Models of Unity (MacDonald)
- II. Baptism - Eucharist - Ministry (Puglisi)
- III. Petrine Ministry and Christian Unity (Puglisi)

Week Three 13 to 17 July

Monday 13 July

- I. Religious Liberty at Vatican II: Its Impact on Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue (Puglisi)
- II. Jewish-Christian Relations (Loughran)
- III. Dialogue with the Jews (Loughran)

Tuesday 14 July

- I. Interreligious Dialogue: Current Theological Thought I (Sembrano)
- II. Islam - A Basic Overview (Sembrano)
- III. Polydoxy and Fundamentalisms (Puglisi)

Wednesday 15 July

- I-II-III Visit to the Mosque and Islamic Center (Dini)

Thursday 16 July

- I. Topics in Interreligious Dialogue: Hindu and Buddhist Case Studies (Sembrano)
- II. Interreligious Dialogue: Current Theological Thought II (Sembrano)
- III. Christian Responses to People of Other Faiths: Evangelism and Inculturation

Friday 17 July

- I. New Religious Movements (NRM) and Christian Identity (Sembrano)
- II. Informal Dialogue between Faculty and Students (Staff)
- III. Closing worship



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