BOOK REVIEWS

Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality

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Introduction

In an essay originally published in 1948, Fr Georges Florovsky noted that, whereas the Orthodox conciliar tradition produced no formal definition or doctrine of the Church, this was not because of any confusion or obscurity regarding the question, but because the experiential reality of the Church was so overwhelmingly self-evident that it required no explanation.[1] Yet, what may have been self-evident in the patristic and Byzantine period no longer seems to be quite so obvious, and theologians now regularly question the nature of the Church, along with its purpose and relevance in the modern world. Despite the proliferation of various ecclesiological models and theories, many questions regarding the nature, identity, unity, structure, orders, and ministries of the Church remain largely open and under discussion, and these are not merely academic questions but to the contrary express a genuine and widespread crisis.

Church in the Making addresses these questions in ways that are exceptionally fresh and creative, and which should insure this book an important place in the large and complex body of ecclesiological literature produced over the last century and a half. The central problem, as Loudovikos sees it, is that hierarchy and institutional structure have come to dominate the vision of the Church, and as a result have become unwitting vectors in a vicious cycle: disproportionate emphasis on the Church as an institution invariably provokes a range of subjective, spiritualizing, charismatic and therapeutic reactions.

Far from being a merely general study of ecclesiology or episcopal primacy, *Church in the Making* is at once a meticulous and far-reaching exploration of these questions based on often brilliantly perceptive readings of patristic sources, in particular the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor. The author's reading of these sources brings new categories and concepts into prominence—or rather new understandings of traditional categories—such as 'imitation', 'consubstantiality', and 'participation' (all of which require careful parsing), which aim to move beyond the facile and false dichotomy of so-called 'therapeutic' ecclesi-

[1] Georges Florovsky, 'The Church: Her Nature and Task,' *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky,* vol. 1 (Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1989), 57; originally published in *The Universal Church in God's Design: An Ecumenical Study* (London: SCM Press, 1948), 43–58; the quotation appears on page 43.

ology and 'eucharistic' ecclesiology. In place of these, Loudovikos endeavors to articulate what he calls an 'ecclesiology of participation', which he argues is at the root of the patristic consciousness of the Church, making it a truly apostolic, catholic, and universal vision of the Church.

As Loudovikos emphasizes throughout the book, the Church is not something that simply 'is' or 'exists' in a static, self-contained form or structure, but is rather something that unfolds in a process of becoming, constituted as a continual dialogue or 'reciprocal exchange' (a Maximian phrase) between the created and the uncreated, bound together in the unity of created nature and recapitulated in the created human nature of Christ. From this point of view, and as will be discussed below, the Church is a participatory extension of divine consubstantiality into creaturely consubstantiality in and through the person of Christ. This has a range of theoretical and practical consequences for the Church, not least of which is the Church's unity, which is not something that is imposed upon it institutionally 'from above' but is realized in each and every order and charism of the Church, and which is simply expressed by—but not produced or grounded on—the charism of the episcopacy.

Church in the Making thus seeks to reclaim the lost territory between the extremes of an institutionally reductive and existentially ineffective episcopal bureaucracy, stereotypically associated with the sacerdotal-monarchical state institution of the Vatican, and its dialectical opposite in the anti-institutional, disembodied, charismatic and gnostic Christianity associated with some forms of Protestantism, many of them uniquely American.[2] In the author's words: 'Orthodox ecclesiology today seems to stumble between these two ecclesial models, the modern (secular, institutional, authoritarian, unregulated)' and the 'primitive (spiritual, communal, eschatological)', noting that the 'most important Orthodox theological trends of our age tend as a rule' to fall one-sidedly between only 'one of the two members of each of the following pairs', namely, 'between sacramental piety and ascetical piety, between an intellectual theology and one that is experiential, between the Eucharist and noetic prayer, between the bishop and the monastic elder, and between the parish and the monastery'. In short, a full-blown bifurcation between what modern scholars of sociology and religion have identified as a deep division between 'institution' and 'charisma'.

Church in the Making

Church in the Making is a revised and expanded version of a book originally published in 2002 in Greek, called *An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality,* which the author presents as the third volume in a trilogy. The book is comprised of eight studies, the first of which the author considers 'foundational' for the seven

[2] On which, see Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

that follow, which are 'subsidiary applications and extensions' of the first study. (After a brief survey of the book's contents, this review will focus on the first study.) The second study applies the principles established in the first study to the concept of 'communion' in Roman Catholic ecclesiology (with particular attention to the work of Karl Rahner and the ecclesiology of Vatican II). The third study focuses on the 'ontology of power', and considers how the lack of an ontologically grounded theory of the social has led to deep and destructive divisions between social life and social power. Here the author works with an eclectic mix of theorists including Hegel, Durkheim, Karl Popper, and Cornelius Castoriades. The fourth study, using the same principle of 'ontological consubstantiality', corrects the 'panentheistic archetype' operative in Russian philosophical ecclesiology and Sophiology, which the author describes in a long arc from Plotinus, through German Idealism, to Soloviev, Florensky, Khomiakov, Bulgakov, and Lossky. The fifth study continues the discussion of the previous study by applying Maximus' notion of 'analogy' to creation. Understood as a dialogue or an unfolding reciprocity, creation is constituted as an 'analogy' of consubstantiality between creatures and Creator, realized in union with the incarnate Logos through the Spirit. The sixth study presents an 'ecclesial ontology' of language, bringing Maximus the Confessor into dialogue with Ludwig Wittgenstein. The seventh study addresses the 'ecclesiological sin' of nationalism (described as 'one of the most dangerous temptations for the Church over the last centuries'), and engages a wide range of ancient and modern theorists, from Augustine to Hegel, and from Horkheimer to Benedict Anderson. The final, concluding study returns to the binary opposition of 'therapeutic' vs. 'eucharistic' ecclesiology, re-evaluating them both through the categories of 'image' and 'imitation', which were presented in detail in the first study.

Church in the Making: Study One

Rather intriguingly, the first study begins with an extended reference to Robert Silverberg's 2000 science-fiction novella, *Sailing to Byzantium*. Set three hundred years in the future, Silverberg's dystopia is an artificial world where human consciousness has been uploaded into virtual 'bodies' designed by computer programs. The technologically assisted separation of nature and 'person', along with the pseudo-ecstasy of the mind from the body, serves as an apt metaphor for the study's initial discussion of a gnostic, disincarnating, Platonic flight from the material world and the body. Loudovikos contends that such an ecstasy from 'nature toward a radical and absolute narcissistic imagined being' has become the 'only mysticism' available to the modern world. Orthodox theologians are not immune from this 'great sailing away from nature', and unwittingly promote the notion of the human

as 'purely a bare hypostasis, a person without nature'.[3] Not unlike the extremes of 'institution' and 'charisma', the modern construction of the 'monism of the subject' has called forth its opposite, namely, the 'mysticism of its deconstruction'. Here Loudovikos radicalizes the problem, and calls not only for the deconstruction of the secular subject but also for the deconstruction of 'the subject of the (introspective, psychological) religious quest', so that it might 'enter into objective structures far more primeval and profound'. As Loudovikos will go on to explain, these 'objective structures' are the sacramental structures of the Church, which are freely received into the life of the faithful, not in a psychological manner but ontologically in an 'ecclesialization of the inner human being'.

In order to establish his argument on solid historical and theological foundations, Loudovikos next turns to early patristic sources concerned with the nature of the Church. The sources in question are not numerous and have been the object of scholarly scrutiny from at least the early modern period. Loudovikos nonetheless manages to find fresh meaning in these classic texts by reading and rethinking them in new frameworks. For him, the *Didache,* the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, the *Apostolic Tradition,* and the writings of Cyprian of Carthage variously reflect a 'deep assimilation of the structural to the charismatic', or an ecclesial community in which episcopal office is 'validated by its conformity to the prophetic office', or in which ecclesial offices embody 'deep human relations', and are not 'structural replacements or substitutes for them'.

The author makes a strong case that these works are best seen as "existential-spiritual documents", and not constitutional charters for authoritarian administrative structures. Any episcopal 'primacy' they describe is qualified as an 'eschatological primacy', which does not refer to the 'end of the world', but signifies the concrete realization of the fundamental direction of being in Christ understood as 'self-sacrifice and self-emptying'. In all these sources, Loudovikos sees profound ontological connections between institution and charism, which in earlier periods were not conceived of as two fundamentally different realities. When properly understood, these early sources point the way to overcoming the bifurcation that has compromised and impaired the proper functioning of the Church as a unified body.

Loudovikos identifies the source of this bifurcation in the theology of Origen, who, under the influence of Platonism, divided the 'external' from the internal', so that the material culture of the 'external' liturgy was reduced to a temporary and insufficient manifestation of what is inward, genuine, immaterial, and enduring. Origen likewise subjected the Eucharist to this division, as well as the idea of the Church as a whole, since it is 'natural that this kind of approach should also be accompanied by analogous ecclesiological models'. Whereas Origen sees a 'spiritual

[3] In his 1926 poem, *Sailing to Byzantium,* Yeats describes consciousness as 'fastened to a dying animal' (i.e., the body), and which longs to be 'gathered into the artifice of eternity,' affirming that 'once out of nature, I shall never take my bodily form from any natural thing.'

goal' beyond the visible Church, Ignatius of Antioch sees both this goal and the visible Church as being the same. Origen is thus responsible for an 'ecclesiological dualism', and Loudovikos asserts that any modern dichotomy of institution and charisma 'will seek support in the Origenian dichotomy between the visible and the noetic Church', that is, the binary opposition of institutional structures and existential-spiritual charisms.

A sweeping judgment like this, however, can only be made on a relatively high level of abstraction, and thus would be difficult if not impossible to substantiate on the basis of Origen's writings. Yet Loudovikos's larger point is valid, though not because of the distinction between the 'inward' and the 'outward'. For this distinction, Origen consistently invoked the authority of the Apostle Paul's teaching regarding the 'inward' and 'outward' man (2 Cor 4:16), along with the Pauline hermeneutical notion that the (outward) 'letter kills' while the (inward) 'Spirit gives life' (2 Cor 3:4-6). Thus it is not simply the distinction between the visible and the invisible that is the problem, but rather the misconceived cosmology and dualistic metaphysics in which Origen framed it.[4]

Loudovikos rightly finds a more fully integrated ecclesial model in the writings attributed to Macarius of Egypt, which locate the visible Church, the inner Church of the heart, the heavenly Church, and the eschatological Church all on a single, unified continuum. He might have also noted that the Macarian tradition was prone to its own deficiencies and extremes, typically of a charismatic, anti-institutional character, which were condemned by various church councils.[5] Neither tradition, in its principle, was entirely balanced, and each required the counterweight of the other.[6] Through a long and complex process of reception and revision, the Origenist and Evagrian emphasis on the 'mind' was successfully integrated with the Macarian emphasis on the 'heart', primarily through the efforts of Dionysios the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor.[7] It is to these great thinkers and theologians that *Church in the Making* now turns.

[4] Origen's thought, which is complex and not always internally consistent, resists simple categorization; for a more positive estimation, see Daniel Boyarin, 'Origen as Theorist of Allegory: Alexandrian Contexts', in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory,* eds R. Copeland and P. Struck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 39–54.

[5] On which, see Columba Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart: The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[6] The notion of opposing schools of the 'mind' and 'heart' in Eastern Christian spirituality was established by Irénée Hausherr, 'Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 1 (1935): 121–28. Hausherr's thesis, which remains influential, was simplistic and exaggerated, but nonetheless corresponds very generally with different emphases found in some of the sources. Of course, the integration of the biblical concept of the 'heart' with the Greek vocabulary of the 'intellect' was a process that had already begun in the theology of Paul; on which, see Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use and Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

[7] For Maximus the Confessor's revision of Evagrius, see Maximos Constas, 'Nothing is Greater than Divine Love: Evagrios of Pontos, Maximos the Confessor, and the *Philokalia',* in *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Volume in Honour of Metropolitan Kallistos Ware,* ed. G. Speake (Oxford and Berlin: Peter Lang, 2016), 57–74.

Dionysios the Areopagite

The patristic writers of the first three centuries variously approximated but did not produce an adequate conceptual framework for ecclesiology. According to Loudovikos, the first writer to 'articulate ecclesiology in terms of ontology' was Dionysius the Areopagite. Loudovikos offers an insightful and important reading of the Areopagite's ecclesiology, which is a comparatively neglected area in the study of the *corpus Dionysiacum*. He takes a nuanced view of Dionysius' use of Greek philosophy, which resulted in the 'Christianizing of philosophy' and the 'Hellenization of ecclesiology'. Any and all philosophical elements found in the *corpus* have been 'assimilated to the perspective of the transformation of their existential content', inasmuch as Dionysius rejects the 'intermediate divisions of the hierarchy', which the philosophical tradition had identified as lower divinities.

Loudovikos argues that, for Dionysius, created existence is 'expressed not only as order, or as objective being, but also as an existential fact of becoming'. On the one hand, there is 'the objective fact of being, with its framework and its law (i.e., hierarchy), which is absolute and unshakeable'. On the other hand, 'there is also an "interior" dimension to the hierarchies, in which the external, objective and structural elements are interiorized' (which aligns Dionysius with the Macarian tradition) so that the emergent 'reality is simultaneously both dynamic and static, both social and spiritual, both structural and mystical'. This is an astute reading of the *corpus Dionysiacum* and an important corrective to the reductive, one-dimensional focus on hierarchy. Dionysian ontology is indeed committed to *both* 'being' *and* 'becoming', because while created beings have specific, unalterable natures (which signals the Areopagite's rejection of Origenism), these natures are dynamic and endowed by the Creator with the capacity to unfold and progress toward their eschatological goal, which, as Loudovikos notes, deeply informs their inner, rational structures. That this process unfolds within the Church, where it is ordered to the Eucharistic synaxis, results in a vision of the Church in which 'beings have been ecclesialized'.

It follows that charisma and clerical orders are disposed in a dynamic, hieratic arrangement. In contrast to the Neoplatonic pattern, in which the 'sanctifying powers of the hieratic order' unfold on the level of ontology, in Dionysios they 'depend absolutely on their participation in God, or rather on God himself' who acts 'through the agency of the hieratic orders'. Each priestly rank is thus 'valid as a reference to the whole', inasmuch as it 'subsists and operates with God', being a 'unified manifestation of the divine energy universalizing the particular charisms'. Each priestly rank 'presents the whole of God's universalizing activity in each of its particular grades', in a 'specific manifestation, or rather, charism proper to itself'.[8] The same phenomenon is evident in the sacraments, each one of which is a locus and point of convergence for the other, so that 'baptism is completed in chrismation

[8] I.e., the Dionysian notion of 'analogy', which, as the author explains in detail, was subsequently developed by Maximus the Confessor.

which is perfected in the Eucharist, while baptism and chrismation are the mode whereby the Eucharist is received'. This convergence is 'strengthened by the existential interior structure of the orders as reciprocally gift-giving'. This means that grace is not 'conferred or received unless it can be presented anew to the other divisions', a movement which begins and ends in the self-giving of God and the return of creation to him in the Eucharist, which is the 'fundamental pattern of a eucharistic ontology'.[9] Here, the emphasis on the differentiation of these gifts does not imply the insufficiency of any particular one of them but to the contrary 'implies a deep communion of all of them in each one', which is the very basis for the resulting ecclesial ontology. Loudovikos discovers in the Dionysian synthesis an initial, 'summary interpretation of the primitive experience of the Church', emphasizing the 'objective' function of a particular order in the hierarchy, along with the demand for the personal holiness of those conferring and receiving the sacraments.

Though Dionysius marks a clear advance on the development of Orthodox ecclesiology, Loudovikos argues that the Areopagite did not sufficiently address a number of problems posed by his system, given the complexities (both theoretical and practical) which arise in a synthesis of the structural and the existential. Instead, ecclesiology 'reaches its fullest expression only in the theological thinking of Maximus the Confessor'.

Maximus the Confessor

According to Loudovikos, Orthodox theology has remained too narrowly focused on Dionysian ecclesiology and has 'not yet exploited the extraordinarily suggestive theological lines opened up by St Maximus the Confessor'. He describes Maximus as the 'greatest ecclesiologist among the Fathers', who brought the 'early Church's ecclesiology to completion'. This was done through an 'appropriation and correction' of both Origen and Dionysius. The key, he argues, is found in Maximus' 'novel treatment of the central difficulty in Dionysius' ecclesiological system', namely, the relationship between 'an apophatic charismatic existentiality and ecclesial structure'. Here the word 'apophatic' does not simply refer to 'negative theology' in a reductively linguistic sense, but encompasses the negation of all *stasis*, whether it is objective or subjective, internal or external, institutional or charismatic. It is the corrective, in other words, to the reification of either extreme in the polarization of charisma and institution, along with any ecclesial office, charism, symbol or sign taken as an end in itself.

The argument begins with a reading of the *Mystagogy.* At the outset of this work, Maximus emphasizes the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of God,

[9] On which, see Nikolaos Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity,* trans. E. Theokritoff (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2010).

who is at once the very 'being of beings' and 'beyond all being', and thus is 'more fittingly referred to as nonbeing'. Loudovikos describes this theological principle as the 'preface to a phenomenological quest for the essence of the Church as the image of God.' This might be true, but Maximus has a more immediate reason for invoking this principle, namely, to establish the limits of theological language before embarking on the various analogies between God and the Church that are central to the *Mystagogy*. This follows the qualification that Maximus imposed on himself with respect to the ecclesiological discourse of the anonymous elder (mentioned in the work's preface). Maximus acknowledged that he could not fully or accurately convey the words or meaning of that discourse, which in turn becomes a larger qualification about the limits of all language and all representation. Ending the preface on this apophatic note, the Confessor subsequently takes up the notion of God as Cause, so that the Church, as the 'image' of God, becomes the locus of the divine causal structure and its providential activity. All things are united to each other and to God inasmuch as they have God as their Cause, who is not only their point of origin but also their final, eschatological goal.

Presenting the Church as the 'mode and locus' of divine activity, Maximus is not content merely to provide a description of the Church's institutional structure, but makes the 'existential and the ontological interior to each other'. Here Loudovikos might have also cited another passage from the *Mystagogy,* which presents intelligible and sensible realities not in separation but as interior to each other:

> The entire intelligible world impresses itself mystically in the entire sensible world in symbolic forms. And the entire sensible world exists in the entire intelligible world simplified in the form of the *logoi* in accordance with the knowing power of the intellect. The sensible world is present in the intelligible world by means of the *logoi,* and the intelligible is present in the sensible by means of figures, yet their function is one.[10]

As Loudovikos notes, Maximus presents the 'mode of ecclesial being' not as something parceled out between structural and existential categories, but as a 'dynamic fact of participation in the divine being', which is brought about by the apophatic negation of *stasis* (mentioned above). The result is that rather than provide us with a 'way of defining the Church', we are given simply a perspective, an existential vantage point from which we can 'only observe the way in which the Church's being is constituted in Christ through the Spirit', a notion which underlines the title of the book, *Church in the Making*.

In his ecclesiological interpretation of Maximus the Confessor, Loudovikos relies on the related categories of 'consubstantiality' and 'imitation'. The use of 'con-

[10] *Mystagogy* 2 (CCSG 69:16–17, lines 241–47); cf. the parallel passage in the *Responses to Thalassios,* Qu. 27.4 (CCSG 7:193, lines 44–48).

substantiality' here (and elsewhere) refers to the ontological unity of creatures and creation as a whole, which takes place in, and through, and by virtue of Christ's (created) human nature, which is absolutely critical to the entire formulation. It is a Christological consubstantiality that, through Christ, grants creation a share in the life of the consubstantial Trinity. Christological consubstantiality is also what enables Maximus to go beyond the ecclesiology of Dionysius, whose own Christology is relatively muted.

As the Body of Christ, the consubstantial Church both participates in and 'imitates', in a mode proper to it, the very activity of God, and thereby realizes consubstantiality among created beings. The category of imitation means that the Church is a 'mimetic structure imitating the activity of God', and Loudovikos sees this as the primary mode of the Church's 'participatory and apophatic constitution'. Imitation is thus closely tied to consubstantiality, and is the 'second decisive term in the Maximian corrective appropriation' of Dionysius and Origen.

Through consubstantiality and imitation, the Church is the 'image' of God, 'fulfilling God's eschatological will for the consubstantial unification of beings in Christ through the Spirit', which is why this condition is properly termed an 'eschatological consubstantiality'. God's activity in and through the Church unfolds on several levels as the Church extends to include not simply human beings but the entire created order of 'visible and invisible essences', which are also unified through the Church and find their proper end in God. This event of unification is the 'providential binding together' of all things to God as their Cause and End, an ontological convergence that is a 'pure and unconfused identity of movement and existence', an 'absolute ontological communion without confusion or conflation of the natures'. This not only demonstrates the relation of all things to their common Cause, but it also reveals the 'consubstantiality of created beings, not by negating the differences of their natures, but by joining them without confusion in a harmonious and undivided identity'.

The Church as the 'image of God' is the first of several analogies that Maximus explores in his differentiated account of the Church. In the second analogy or image, the Confessor moves from the theological to the anthropological, noting that the Church is also an 'image' of the human person, because the human person himself has been created according to the 'image and likeness of God' (Gen 1:26). Loudovikos argues that, in particular, the Church is the 'eschatological mode of the human person's unity', while the human person is the 'consubstantial mode of the unity of the Church'. Through the processes of transformation available in the Christian life, the person becomes a 'mystical Church', with his or her body, soul, and mind symbolically corresponding to the physical aspects of the church building. The body (the outer narthex) is purified and enriched through the keeping of the commandments; the soul (the interior space of the nave), is engaged in more cognitive and contemplative projects; while the mind (as the image of the inner sanctuary) turns

toward the mystical vision of God. In this way, the visible Church, which is itself a manifestation of ecclesial life and order, is 'existentially introjected' in the physical life and consciousness of the believer, being ordered and unified through eschatological reference to its divine cause.[11]

From this, it follows that the human person becomes an 'iconic representation of the consubstantial mode of ecclesial unity', demonstrating existentially the 'supernatural and spiritual identity of the Church's charisms'. In this way, theology, anthropology, and ecclesiology converge as the charisms of the Church—the priestly, the ascetical, the contemplative, as well as the institutional—are unified through created natures as these are 'taken up consubstantially into their eschatological unity in Christ'. When unified through the dynamic of its eschatological orientation, creaturely consubstantiality creates the possibility for the Church to eliminate the gap between institution and charism, having found a deeper ontological context for both of them. The result is that 'each charism or ecclesial structure constitutes a consubstantial manifestation, in communion with all the other charisms.' Each charism is an 'imitation of or participation in a specific and consubstantial divine energy,' an 'ecclesial iconization of God' in the orders and charisms of the Church.

By virtue of their natural consubstantiality, which is consubstantial with the divinized human nature of Christ, and ordered to their proper eschatological end, the diversity of charisms in the Church exists in a perichoretic mode through which each is present and internal to the other. 'Each abides interchangeably in the other', in the words of Maximus, so that each exists 'reciprocally in the other, guaranteeing that the Church remains one and the same in both: one, whole, integral entity in each one and severally and in all of them together'.

For Loudovikos, the reality of consubstantiality overcomes any ontological dialectic between what is 'charismatic' and what is 'structural' or 'institutional', since consubstantiality insures that every charism or order or ecclesial ministry unfolds and expresses the whole of ecclesial being. Through the apophatic process of participation, both the charismatic and the structural share in God's own activity, and thus become productive of consubstantiality. Moreover, each and every activity contains all the others in a consubstantial action, unifying all things ecclesially within it. This principle has important consequences for understanding the nature of the episcopal charism, which the bishop does not bear as some separate or isolated power. 'On the contrary, the charism of the bishop, in virtue of having only an eschatological primacy, is the first to teach consubstantiality to all the other charisms'. The bishop's charism is not reducible to mere outward coordination or management,

[11] These themes were touched on in the discussion of the Macarian corpus, which Maximus was familiar with. Loudovikos perceptively notes that this 'existential introjection is not a merely psychological process' but is the 'existential personal reception of the Church, by deliberate choice through grace, as the now existential content of the human being.' It is an 'introjection' of the Church with its structures and sacraments, the 'ecclesialization' of the inner human being, which he sees as an 'ontological refashioning' of humanity's personal being.

but 'ontologically contains all the other charisms just as they contain it'. It follows that there is no 'primate' in the Church as the 'pinnacle or center of a structure that images the last things', but only as the 'stimulus of a consubstantial perichoresis from below of all the other charisms within each one of them'.

Whatever 'structure' can be posited within such a framework can never be a mere given, a fixed and static datum, but is a living, active fact of participation in the uncreated activity of God. The ecclesial body is certainly an objective fact, but at the same time a potential. It is fixed and permanent from the perspective of the immutable will of God to draw the whole of created reality into ecclesial existence, but remains in a state of potential with respect to the free acceptance of its imitation.[12] Once again, we return to the theme announced in the book's title: an apophatic ecclesiology of consubstantiality describes the process of 'Church in the making', that is, of the Church as the potentiality of the image of God realizing and being assimilated to the fullness of the divine likeness.

The author at this point brings out in greater detail the Christological elements in his argument, specifically the manner in which each charism is a particular mode of Eucharistic participation in the Body of Christ. Loudovikos rightly notes that, for Maximus the Confessor, the mystery of the Church is the supreme Christological mystery. Each charism and each activity flowing from Christ extends the fact of his incarnation, and, through the Spirit, is realized as a living member of Christ's body. Thus each charism (or ecclesial activity or ministry) becomes a particular mode of Eucharistic participation in the body of Christ, which implies a mode of participation in the whole Christ.[13] Participation in Christ by the different ministries, which Maximus presents as the consumption of the various parts of the Christ-Lamb, places Christ in his entirety, in each one of the saints, in a manner that is 'analogous' (or in proportion) to the participant, that is, relative to the charism of the believer and according to the measure of his or her faith.[14]

In Maximus' spiritual interpretation of the eating of the paschal lamb—which reverses Adam's transgressive consumption) the organic and biological image of the body comes to the fore. Through this process, the believer is, through the Spirit, assimilated to the whole Christ, so that the charism renders the believer an 'unrepeatable and particular presence of Christ by grace in the Church.' This is the manner in which Christ becomes 'wholly incarnate in various ways in each one of his charismatic members that are in the communion of his body'.[15] With this for-

[12] This theological principle is at the core of Maximus' theology of baptism, outlined in the *Responses to Thalassios,* Qu. 6 (CCSG 7:69–71), in which the baptized receive the whole Holy Spirit in potential but not in actuality, which requires their freely chosen cooperation. Incorporation into the body of the Church contains the whole dynamic of that body in terms of being and becoming, potential and actualization.

[13] According to the traditional doctrine of participation, the whole of the participating being shares in the whole of the participated.

[14] *Ambiguum* 47 (DOML 2:207–11).

[15] See *Ambiguum* 21.15: 'Those who choose the life of the Gospel … take possession of the likeness of the good things of the age to come … and will be spiritually vivified by their union with the archetype of

mulation, Loudovikos provides us with an extraordinary framing of a well-known Maximian doctrine—the embodiment of the Logos in the believer[16]—in the context of ecclesiology. This is in marked contrast to the majority of commentators who understand it as a somewhat free-floating event in virtue ethics or moral psychology, with no reference to its proper ecclesial setting. This is but one example of Loudovikos's profound ecclesiological interpretation of the theology of Maximus the Confessor, which is a remarkable feature of this book.

By virtue of this ontological, participatory ecclesiology of consubstantiality, 'all charisms without exception are Christological,' and thus are 'absolutely and unequivocally equal and consubstantially inclusive of each other in the Spirit, when they function properly'. In other words, there is 'no ontological difference between the charisms; there is only a difference of function'. From this, Loudovikos concludes that 'there is no real unity of the Church in the bishop' when and to the extent that his 'episcopal charism does not function as an existential struggle to imitate the divine activity of Christ', which is a 'struggle he undergoes as a bishop who consubstantially contains within himself all the other charisms', and who does not merely 'coordinate or administer' these charisms, but who 'preserves them in their fullness'.

As a result, the manifestation of the Church's truth can occur in any of the charisms, when it functions in a consubstantial, Christological manner. Then, and only then, is the Church's truth manifested in its unity. This is why the Church's unity in truth has been expressed throughout its history by various charisms, 'whether of martyrs, monks, teachers, or bishops', without disturbing either the Church's conciliarity or its hierarchical structure. In this regard, it is worth recalling that Maximus the Confessor expressed the truth and unity of the Church at a time when the majority of the hierarchy was in a state of formal heresy, though he himself was a simple monk. Loudovikos explains: 'A holy hermit or charismatic layperson, by preserving the whole Christ consubstantially within himself, and therefore also the truth of the other charisms, including even that of the bishop, could maintain the truth of the Church's unity. He is able to do this, of course, not by standing in place of the bishop, but by creating the spiritual conditions manifesting the unity of the Church's truth' in such a way as to 'revivify' the other orders in the Church.

these true things, and so become living images of Christ, or rather become one with Him through grace (rather than being a mere simulacrum), or even, perhaps, become the Lord Himself' (DOML 1:445).

[16] See *Ambiguum* 7.22: 'In honoring the *logoi* and acting in accordance with them, the human person places himself wholly in God alone, forming and configuring God alone throughout his entire being, so that he himself by grace is and is called God, just as God by His condescension is and is called man for the sake of man, and also so that the power of this reciprocal disposition might be shown forth herein, a power that divinizes man through his love for God, and humanizes God through His love for man. And by this beautiful exchange, it renders God man by reason of the divinization of man, and man God by reason of the Incarnation of God. For the Logos of God (who is God) wills always and in all things to accomplish the mystery of His embodiment' (DOML 1:105–107).

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Church in the Making is an important and challenging book. Reading it is less about working through a series of rigorous, detailed arguments (of which there are many), and more about becoming accustomed to a radically different way of seeing fundamental theological questions, especially in regard to the author's complex and constructive vision of the Church. To be sure, some readers will find the author's writing style to be an obstacle to understanding his thought. They might question the need for what appears to be unnecessarily novel categories and inflated theological jargon. However, there is something to be gained by breaking the hegemony of older, entrenched concepts and vocabularies—which are freighted with unproductive concepts and ideas—and replacing them with new ones. If the older, theoretically misconceived ecclesiologies are to be corrected, then we need to start speaking a new language.

Perhaps part of the difficulty is that what Loudovikos endeavors to describe is not an object or even a concept but rather a kind of experience that is not reducible to a simple verbal formula. Like the flattening of a sphere onto the surface of a plane, an entire dimension is lost in the shift to language. The mystery of the Church is available to the life of the spirit but not to language, at least not fully. Loudovikos says something similar regarding Maximus the Confessor, whom he sees as merely 'describing in theoretical terms the Church's experience of the Holy Spirit—yet nobody except Maximus has expressed this richness so fully in theological language'. This suggests that the nature of the experience itself—the very dynamic of an apophatic ecclesiology of consubstantiality—overwhelms the capacity of language to signify adequately.

Loudovikos is a brilliantly insightful and often exhilaratingly creative interpreter of Maximus the Confessor. One may question the degree to which his interpretations accurately represent the content of the Confessor's thought, or to what extent he develops that thought in a manner consistent with Maximus' original context, aims, and intentions. This reviewer, having spent no small amount of time with the writings of St Maximus, believes that, in *Church in the Making,* we have a deeply perceptive and compelling interpretation of Maximus' thought and how it might be best developed to respond to the current crisis in ecclesiology. Loudovikos's profound *ecclesial* reading of Maximus the Confessor is surely this book's major achievement, making explicit what the Confessor only implied or left unstated, either because, in the words of Florovsky, it was 'self-evident and required no explanation', or because the particular question or problem Maximus was engaged with did not require the ecclesial dimension to be specifically thematized.

To bring together and reintegrate the divided fragments of the world is not simply the task of genuine theology, but is itself a kind of Eucharistic event, a *synaxis,* a 'gathering of what was scattered' and the unification of their elements into one, 'just as wheat is transformed into bread', to recall a well known image from the *Didache.*

Church in the Making deftly brings together disparate and often contradictory ecclesiologies, and offers its readers a fresh, creative, and deeply insightful vision of the Church, which is at once traditional, integral, authentic, and fully engaged with the concerns of the modern world.

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