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Analogia

Ecclesial Dialogues: EAST AND WEST II

"Analogical creation means [for God] to create an Ecclesia out of nothingness..."

(Nikolaos Loudovikos, Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality)

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Guest Editors
Sotiris Mitralexis & Andrew Kaethler

NOTE
FROM THE SENIOR EDITOR

The beginning of the Roman Catholic/Orthodox Theological dialogue during the 20th century raised to some high hopes for an imminent canonical unity between the two Denominations, and this, though premature, is not of course to be blamed; it is impossible for any contemporary Christian theologian not to suffer from the division within this very womb of the ontological unification of all things, which is the Church of Christ—precisely because this division gives to many the impression of a fragmentation of the Church's very being and subsequently weakens her witness. However, indeed, it is the Church that matters, beyond any political, sociological or historical 'necessity', which perhaps has ensouled some Church leaders' wishful thinking, over the centuries, for such an imminent canonical unity. And that means that the unity is a matter of Theology. I think that this was precisely the underlying motive of the organisers of the Syros Conference, the fruits of which are published in this two-volume publication of Analogia. As the Senior Editor of this Journal, but also as a participant in the Syros Conference, and in the ongoing academic dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, I wish to thank both the organisers, and the two Guest Editors, who did their best and put significant work into this enterprise; I hope that this publication will be a particular opportunity for this theological communication, which wishes to build a wiser reciprocal dialogue upon a deeper mutual fathoming.

– ***Nikolaos Loudovikos,*** Senior Editor

EDITORIAL

We are overjoyed that *Analogia*'s issues 9 and 10 are dedicated to *Ecclesial Dialogues: East and West*—that is, to peer-reviewed and revised versions of papers first presented at the international conference exploring this subject and convened in the island of Syros, from the 10th to the 14th of June 2019. This conference would not have materialised without the generous support of Loyola Marymount University's Revd Professor Cyril Hovorun and the generous support of the University of Winchester (which provided the conference's academic aegis) and our co-convenor, Revd Reader Andreas Andreopoulos; we extend our cordial gratitude to these individuals and institutions, as we remain with the hope that a particular *vision* (or rather, *perspective*) was articulated during those days in Syros, rather than merely yet another ecumenically-oriented scholarly gathering.

The guest editors deem it important that this conference (and the *Analogia* issues stemming therefrom) did *not* form part of any level of official ecclesial dialogue and exchange but consisted in a bottom-up scholarly endeavour at ecclesial enquiry, exploration and discovery. The reader shall be spared the guest editors' theological musings in this editorial note (yet these musings shall return vengefully in the guest editors' respective papers). We have opted for one introduction to both issues, so that the interested reader will be made aware of the contents of the other issue, apart from the one you are currently holding in your hands.

Ecclesial Dialogues: East and West I (i.e., *Analogia* 9) opens with Dr Sotiris Mitralexis' (Orthodox, University of Winchester & University of Athens) 'A Spectre Is Haunting Intercommunion', an introduction to the conference's problematic. Professor Edward Siecienski's (Orthodox, Stockton University) paper follows, entitled 'Unity of the Churches—An Actual Possibility: The Rahner-Fries Theses and Contemporary Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue', highlighting from a contemporary perspective the eight theses that Karl Rahner, SJ and Heinrich Fries proposed in 1983, in the hope of healing Christianity's many divisions. Revd Professor Thomas O'Loughlin (Catholic, University of Nottingham) then proceeds in his 'The Origins of an Ecumenical Church: Links, Borrowings, and Inter-dependencies' to examine the ecclesiology of early churches as *nodes* within a network, established and maintained by constant contact and by those who saw it as part of their service/vocation to travel between the churches; this culture of links, of sharing and borrowing, could perhaps form a model for a practical way forward today towards a renewed sense of our oneness in Christ. In 'Crusades, Colonialism, and the Future Possibility of Christian Unity', Professor George Demacopoulos (Orthodox, Fordham University) presents the historical conditions more extensively laid out in his recent monograph *Colonizing Christianity: Greek and Latin Religious Identity in the Era of the Fourth Crusade* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019) in order to develop a more constructive theological argument regarding the ecumenical implications of that his-

torical work. Revd Professor Andrew Louth (Orthodox, Durham University) focuses in his 'Eucharistic Doctrine and Eucharistic Devotion' on comparing the Western Rite of Benediction, Exposition of the Host and adoration, with the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in the East; the nature of Eucharistic devotion expressed in these two rites is in most ways strikingly different, and this leads Revd Professor Louth to highlight differences that are rather rarely discussed in ecumenical discussions. Revd Dr Manuel Gonçalves Sumares (Orthodox, Catholic University of Portugal, Braga) centres on the late Fr Alexander Schmemann (and Sergius Bulgakov, among many others) in his 'Schmemann's Approach to the Sacramental Life of the Church: its Orthodox Positioning, its Catholic Intent'. Revd Professor Adam AJ DeVille (Catholic, University of Saint Francis) offers an Eastern Catholic perspective in his 'Approaching the Future as a Friend Without a Wardrobe of Excuses', including moral questions around marriage and divorce, historiographical and liturgical-hagiographical questions centred on the canonization and commemoration of saints in one communion who left and/or were used in conciliar debates and liturgical texts to condemn the sister communion; and questions of synodal organization and structures in both Catholicism and Orthodoxy in the face of centralizing tendencies. The first issue concludes with a rich Anglican perspective presented by the Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet and Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Orthodox Church: in his 'Anglicans and the Una Sancta', Bishop Jonathan stresses the Anglican self-understanding as '*part* of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'.

Ecclesial Dialogues: East and West II (i.e., *Analogia* 10) starts with the Senior Editor of Analogia, Revd Professor Nicholas Loudovikos (Orthodox, University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki, University of Winchester, IOCS Cambridge, Orthodox Secretary of the 'St Irenaeus' Joint Catholic-Orthodox International Working Group) and his paper on 'Christological or Analogical Primacy: Ecclesial Unity and Universal Primacy in the Orthodox Church', according to which 'the only way Christ makes himself *analogically* present as the head of his Church, through a universal Primate, is as manifestation of a *consubstantializing Synodality*'. Professor Andrew TJ Kaethler (Catholic, Catholic Pacific College), in his 'Manifesting Persons: A Church in Tension', begins from a theological notion of personhood in order to provide a broad framework or an imaginative construct to conceive of Church unity, in light of Joseph Ratzinger's and Romano Guardini's respective theologies. Kaethler suggests that the East and West will, perhaps, most flourish in a united tension, a coming together of difference rather than a complete dissolving of our respective distinctions. Following this, Professor Jared Schumacher (Catholic, University of Mary) formulates 'An Ignatian-MacIntyrean Proposal for Overcoming Historical and Political-Theological Difficulties in Ecumenical Dialogue', focusing on three difficulties in achieving practical unity: the recognition of plurality, the problem of synthesis or integration, and the problem of orientation implicit in any synthesis.

Returning *ad fontes*, Professor Christos Karakolis (Orthodox, University of Athens) examines the character of Simon Peter in the narrative of John's Gospel in his 'Simon Peter in the Gospel According to John: His Historical Significance according to the Johannine Community's Narrative', in order to help us better understand the biblical foundations of the theological debate on the papal office. Fast-forward to the 6th century with Professor Anna Zhyrkova's (Catholic, Akademia Ignatianum, Krakow) 'The Scythian Monks' Latin-cum-Eastern Approach to Tradition: A Paradigm for Reunifying Doctrines and Overcoming Schism', which presents the historical case study of the Scythian monks, who united Western and Eastern traditions, seeing both traditions as one and not hesitating to address problems simultaneously of concern to both Rome and Constantinople, putting forward a solution based on a synthesis of Augustine's and Cyril's theologies. Escaping doctrinal differences *per se* and turning our attention to aesthetics —a perspective rarely addressed in East-West dialogues—, Professor Norm Klassen (Catholic, University of Waterloo) offers in his 'Beauty is the Church's Unity: Supernatural Finality, Aesthetics, and Catholic–Orthodox Dialogue' an understanding of beauty vis-à-vis the nature/grace question, *inter alia* via a reference to Rowan Williams' thought. The conference's co-convener Revd Reader Andreas Andreopoulos (Orthodox, University of Winchester) proposes in his 'Ecumenism and Trust: A Pope on Mount Athos' a hypothetical scenario, an exercise in imagination, an ecumenical *Christian-fi* in the manner of *sci-fi*, according to which a particularly humble Pope of Rome visits Mount Athos, the bastion of Orthodox asceticism, in search of unity and in an ecclesial version of the famous 1971-72 dictum 'only Nixon could go to China'; the point is that it is necessary to recognize the multitude of levels and dimensions of dialogue and the question of the reunification of the East and the West, well beyond the remit of joint theological commissions, and that establishment of mutual trust among clergy, monastics and laity on both sides is the first necessary step. Remaining on Mount Athos and its attempted Catholic equivalent, Dr Marcin Podbielski (Catholic, Akademia Ignatianum, Krakow) shares in his philosophically-informed 'God's Silence and Its Icons: A Catholic's Experiences at Mount Athos and Mount Jamna' his 'bewilderment [that] there seems to be almost no room in contemporary Catholic spirituality for silence and isolation' and presents Athos and Jamna as two different realizations of an icon given to us by Christ himself, as human instruments which we create to point to true participation in the Divine presence of the New Jerusalem. Whereas the Catholic experience tries to bring everyone into participation in the life of the New Jerusalem, the Orthodox Athos, in its silent uniqueness, testifies to a unique and ineffable transcendence. Returning to more mainstream themes in East-West dialogue, Revd Dr Johannes Börjesson (University of Cambridge) offers in his 'Councils and Canons' a Lutheran perspective on the Great Schism and the 'Eighth Council' via Lutheran ecclesiology. From a 'Radical Orthodox' perspective within Anglicanism and beyond, Professor John Milbank

(University of Nottingham) argues in his 'Ecumenism done otherwise: Christian unity and global crisis' for a connection of ecumenism to politics, and suggests that any relevant dialogue should theologically assume that Church unity already exists but has been obscured and obfuscated—with our task being to recover and disclose this unity. Completing our *Analogia* issues, Professor Marcello La Matina (Catholic, University of Macerata) offers the closing thoughts of this collective endeavour from the perspective of a scholar of the philosophy of language in his paper 'Concluding Reflections on Mapping the Una Sancta: An Orthodox-Catholic Ecclesiology Today', proposing an understanding of the schism *as the stage of the mirror*, as Jacques Lacan would have it.

In closing this editorial note, we would like to thank the following institutions and sponsors: again, Loyola Marymount University and the University of Winchester, for making the conference possible; Catholic Pacific College and the Municipality of Syros for their support, as well as His Excellency J. Michael Miller, CSB, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Vancouver. We are filially grateful to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, His Beatitude Ieronymos II, Orthodox Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, to His Eminence Dorotheos, Orthodox Metropolitan of Syros, Tinos, Andros, Kea and Milos, and to His Excellency Petros Stephanou, Catholic Bishop of Syros, Milos, Santorini and Apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Crete, for their kind permission and blessing of the conference. Revd Professor Nikolaos Loudovikos has kindly proposed the publication of the Syros papers in *Analogia* following successful peer-review; we are most thankful to him for this invitation. We remain with the hope that this collective endeavour forms the *beginning*, rather than the *completion*, of an attempt at seeing ecclesial dialogues between East and West from a particular and hopefully fresh perspective.

– Dr Sotiris Mitralexis & Dr Andrew Kaethler, Guest Editors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Manifesting Persons: A Church in Tension

ANDREW T.J. KAETHLER
Academic Dean and Assistant Professor of Theology, Catholic Pacific College

In the *Republic* Plato views the city as the human soul writ large, and by exploring the visible nature of the city he seeks to unravel the invisible mystery of the soul. Likewise, but in the inverse, this paper begins from a theological notion of personhood in order to provide a broad framework or an imaginative construct to conceive of Church unity. This framework will be formed in light of a relational notion of personhood inspired by Joseph Ratzinger. It will be argued that an ecclesial dimension is necessary for the fulfilment of what it means to be a human person, a being in relation; the Church manifests persons. As human persons exist in the midst of history it means that an important aspect of personhood also concerns how one interacts within the present. To interact, to participate, rightly requires right perception. Following Romano Guardini's conception of personhood formed in tension, it will be contended that right perception, a proper harmony in this life, requires tension, a tension that only the Church can provide. Analogously, this paper suggests that the Church, East and West, will most flourish in a united tension, a coming together of difference rather than a complete dissolving of our respective distinctions.

I. The Church is a house of living stones

'I am their great union, I am their eternal oneness.
I am the way of all their ways, on me the millennia are drawn to God'.[1]

Relational ontology is arguably a trinitarian truth that resides at the heart of all Christian theology.[2] Joseph Ratzinger writes, 'the idea of the Catholic, the all-embracing, the inner unity of I and Thou and We does not constitute one chapter of theology among others. It is the key that opens the door to the proper understanding of the whole'.[3] In this trinitarian mystery we are given a glimpse of personhood in its perfection.[4] The Father is person, the Son is person, the Holy Spirit is person. And

[1] Gertrude von Le Fort, *Hymns to the Church*, trans. Margaret Chanler (London: Sheed & Ward, 1937), 21.

[2] The title for this section is from Origen found in Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 91.

[3] Ratzinger, 'Foreword' to Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 11–12; at 11.

[4] 'I believe a profound illumination of God as well as man occurs here, the decisive illumination of

yet, each person is fully God, and each person is fully united, so that we cannot say that there was a time when there was the Father but not the Son, or there was the Son but not the Holy Spirit. This unity is not contrary to personhood. There are three sides to this. First, a unity is the coming together of difference.[5] Thus, to speak of the unity of the Trinity necessitates three persons. Second, it is in relational unity that distinctions can be made. That is, for example, we know the Son because he is not the Father.[6] Third, unity of persons, which never dissolves the person but elevates the person, also forms a unity so closely related that it is inseparable; it is one being.[7] Briefly then, trinitarian theology reveals to us that personhood is found in relation; the unified whole and unique person are not opposites.

There is a clear distinction between individuals and persons. The fierce individualism present in Western culture is contrary to Christian anthropology. Ratzinger points out that modern man seeks to be God, so far so good—in theological parlance we call this deification. However, the problem is that for modern secular man the image of God 'is of a "divinity that is conceived as purely egotistical". With this purely monotheistic-egoistic divinity, there is no bi-directional "relationality". Whereas, the true God, the Christian God is "of his own nature, being-for (Father), being from (Son), and being-with (Holy Spirit)"'.[8] To put it differently, the modern desire is not deification but 'demonification'.[9]

The fall of man, mirroring the fall of angels, is the breakdown of relationship and the attempt to build a fortress of autonomy. This individualistic self-imprisonment rips and tears at the image of God imprinted on man's very being. Christ came to pour the oil, the salve of his life on this wound of existence to restore the relational *imago Dei*. Henri de Lubac writes, 'That image of God, the image of the Word, which the incarnate Word restores and gives back to its glory, is "I myself"; it is also the other, every other. It is that aspect of *me* in which I coincide with every other man,

what person must mean in terms of Scripture: *not* a substance that closes itself in itself, but the phenomenon of complete relativity, which is, of course, realized in its entirety only in the one who is God, but which indicates the direction of all personal being'. Joseph Ratzinger, 'Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology', in *Joseph Ratzinger in Communio,* vol. 2 *Anthropology and Culture*, eds David L. Schindler and Nicholas J. Healy, trans. W. J. O'Hara (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 103–118; at 109.

[5] Without difference there is no unity but rather sameness. Hence, for example, marriage between a man and a woman is a proper unity, two become one flesh. John Paul II writes, 'Together they thus become one single subject, as it were, of that act and that experience, although they remain two really distinct subjects in this unity'. John Paull II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 207.

[6] Ratzinger describes the trinitarian unity as 'a unity that takes its being from the dialogue of love'. Joseph Ratzinger and Peter Seewald, *God and the World: A Conversation with Peter Seewald*, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 267.

[7] 'It is the nature of the trinitarian personality to be pure relation and so the most absolute unity'. Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J.R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 187.

[8] Andrew TJ Kaethler, 'Freedom in Relation: Joseph Ratzinger and Alexander Schmemann in Dialogue', *New Blackfriars* 95.1058 (July 2014): 397–411; at 404.

[9] See Joseph Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions*, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 245–249.

it is the hallmark of our common origin and the summons to our common destiny. It is our very unity in God'.[10] The living reality through which Christ unites us is the Church.[11] The role of the Church, as Alexander Schmemann posited, is to transform individuals into persons.[12] But, we must ask, 'Are there no other forms of community that crack open the shell of the autonomous individual? And why choose the Church as the social program for this end?'

The Church is *sui generis*; she is not a social program, one option among many, and because, as de Lubac argues, 'the idea of unity is not unity itself'.[13] That is, the Church is not a community akin to a local club or society. In clubs and societies we have the idea of unity but not unity itself.[14] But is there that much of a distinction between the Church and other communities? Guardini makes an interesting claim in this regard. He argues that true community fosters unique personality without sliding into individualism, a collected aggregate, or a monolithic oneness that destroys the person (e.g., communism). Such true community, what I refer to as unity, Guardini claims is beyond the scope of man's natural powers: One of two things must happen. Either the power of the community will burst all bounds, swamp the free personality of the individual, and strip him of spiritual dignity, or else the individual personality will assert itself victoriously, and in the process sever its organic bonds with the community. So deeply has original sin shattered the fundamental structure of human life.[15] To add to this, William Cavanaugh astutely points out that,

> The state *mythos* is based on a 'theological' anthropology that precludes any truly social process. The recognition of our participation in one another through our creation in the image of God is replaced by the recognition of the other as the bearer of individual rights, which may or may not be given by God, by which serve only to separate what is mine from what is thine. Participation in God and in one another is a threat to the formal mechanism of contract, which assumes that we are *essentially* individuals who enter into

[10] De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 340.

[11] 'Today's widespread tendency to relegate faith to the private sphere thus, contradicts its very nature. We need the Church in order to confirm our faith and in order to experience the gifts of God: his Word, the Sacraments, the support of grace and the witness of love. Like this, our "I" can be perceived in the "we" of the Church and, at the same time, be the recipient and the protagonist of an overwhelming event: experiencing communion with God, that is the foundation of communion among men. In a world in which individualism seems to rule personal relationships, making them ever more fragile, the faith calls us to be the People of God, to be Church, bearers of the love and communion of God for all mankind'. Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience Sainte Peter's Square Wednesday, 31 October 2012*, found September 19, 2019 at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121031.html

[12] Alexander Schmemann, *Of Water and the Spirit* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 143.

[13] De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 342.

[14] Although there may be a pale reflection.

[15] Romano Guardini, *The Meaning of the Church* (Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2018), 106.

> relationship with one another only when it is to one's individual advantage to do so.[16]

The same logic of the state *mythos* set out by Cavanaugh applies to communities. Guardini suggests that there are commonalities between natural communities and the Church, even similar means; however, fundamentally they are different because natural communities do not have the sacrament of community, the Eucharist. This brings us to the need for there to be unity *itself* and not just the *idea* of unity, but before dealing with this directly one more point needs to be highlighted. In natural relations there is a collision of rights. Therefore, a community can only come together if people are willing to give up a certain amount of individuality in order for there to be some semblance of unity.[17] To put it differently, naturally speaking, individuality is in opposition to community. Hence, any community thus formed is somewhat artificial. In contrast, the community of the Church is not comprised of the bumping and jostling of individual rights with the whole, but is rather one aspect of the whole meeting with another aspect of the whole. That is, the Church is the Kingdom of God on earth, and so is each human person. Where Christ is there is the Kingdom (Luke 17:21).[18] Quoting Origen, Ratzinger asserts that Christ 'is *hē autobasileia*, "the Kingdom in person" [das Reich in Person]'. Therefore, if the Christ life is within you, then the kingdom is present in you. Thus, the community of the Church is the gathering of the Kingdom, the unique aspects of the Kingdom—you and I—coming together with the Kingdom whole.[19]

Returning to unity, where is unity itself? Properly speaking, it is only fully manifest in the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the Love between the Father and the Son, and thus 'his particular quality is to be unity'.[20] Where the Spirit is, there is unity. The Spirit unites, the devil divides. Where is the Spirit? One place for sure: the Church.

[16] William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2002), 44.

[17] See Guardini, *Meaning of the Church*, 34.

[18] Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 34.

[19] Guardian, writing about St Francis and God's command to him to repair his house, posits, 'This is not a question of the Church as a merely juridical institution enforcing its laws with regard to the individual who could and might live by his own inner freedom and fullness. Here stands the Church, objectively, expressing the universality of everything Christian, independent of the individual. Not only does it stand before the individual; it exists in him'. Romano Guardian, 'St. Francis and Divine Providence', in *The Human Experience: Essays on Providence, Melancholy, Community, and Freedom*, trans. Gregory Roettger O.S.B. (Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2018), 1–30; at 24.

[20] Joseph Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 41. Here Ratzinger is unpacking St Augustine's work on the Holy Trinity. The full citation is worth noting: 'If he [the Holy Spirit] is called by what is divine about God, what is shared by Father and Son, then his nature is in fact this, being the communion of the Father and the Son. The particular characteristic of the Holy Spirit is obviously being what is shared by the Father and the Son. His particular quality is to be unity'. Emphasis is in the original text.

It is the work of the Spirit that takes individuals and forms them into the body of Christ. It is the Spirit that takes individuals and forms them into the bride of Christ. The nuptial imagery is apt: like marriage, in the Church persons are formed. By being united to the Father in the Son and through the Spirit we are not only united to the Holy Trinity but to all in all. In baptism we die to the self and are cracked open to the divine through the work of the Spirit in the Church. This divine opening of the self puts us in relation with all things. And as I set out earlier, a person, as revealed in the Trinity, is one in relation. Thus, the Church, so to speak, births persons. Personhood is a type of ecclesial becoming. The Church is not simply the means but, in a sense, is also the end. The Church is the manifestation of Christianity. It is the manifestation of redemption, for it is in her that Christ pours his salvific ointment into the fracturing festering wounds of sin, reforming individuals into persons. She is the reality of redemption that we can touch and see.[21]

II. Objectivity: Participating in Reality

'I carry in my womb the secrets of the desert, on my head
the noble web of ancient thought'.[22]

The Church is the reality of redemption. Being united with the Holy Trinity and thereby with all things one is being transformed from an individual to a person. One aspect of personhood concerns the way in which we participate in reality. Stated differently, relating involves perceiving. To relate rightly we must perceive rightly. There are three key areas of perception: (1) intellectual perception concerning knowledge, (2) moral and social perception, and (3) religious perception. In what follows I will unpack Guardini's thoughts on this matter, his claim that the Church is necessary for perception and is the way to personality.

To understand the import of the Church and personality from Guardini's perspective one must grasp his basic anthropological approach. Guardini maintains that human personality only flourishes, perhaps only exists, in tension.[23] Broadly conceived, the tension exists between what *is* and temporality.

Guardini argues that the human creature is deeply sunk in relativism. We have watched nations rise and fall, political and economic structures collapse, and traditional conceptions of morality disappear in the face of ideologies. All of these

[21] This raises an interesting question: if the Church is both the manifestation of personhood and its means does it follow that a split Church (East-West) affects our personhood?

[22] Le Fort, *Hymns to the Church*, 21.

[23] 'Life has numerous levels in its constructions and progress. It cannot be known by a single, uniform act of judgement, but only through several contrary ones, that is, in terms of tension. Life simply cannot be lived as movement in one direction. Hence the apparent contradictions in the life of a genuinely vital person'. Romano Guardini, 'The Meaning of Community' in *The Human Experience: Essays on Providence, Melancholy, Community, and Freedom*, trans. Gregory Roettger O.S.B. (Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2018), 83–107; at 84.

observations highlight the flux and instability that is part of human existence. As long as this experience of constant change is balanced (held in tension) by naive conviction or deeply rooted religious traditions, life can endure. However, in periods of transition in which fixed beliefs have been worn away stability is eviscerated from the human mind:

> a sense of transience and limitation takes possession of the soul. It realizes with horror how all things are in flux, are passing away. Nothing any longer stands firm… Every valuation is only provisional. Man thus becomes uncertain and vacillating… He is at the mercy of the fashions prevalent in his surroundings, the fluctuations of public opinion, and his own moods. He no longer possesses any dignity. His life drifts. He lacks everything which we mean by character… he cannot overcome error by truth, evil and weakness by moral strength, the stupidity and inconstancy of the masses by great ideas and responsible leadership, or the flux of time by works born of the determination to embody the eternal values.[24]

Guardini's diagnosis of the human condition continues. He posits that along with the debilitating spiritual and intellectual poverty of relativism comes pride: 'Every social class deifies itself. Art, science, technology—every separate department of life considered itself the sum and substance of reality. There is despairing weakness, hopeless instability, a melancholy consciousness of being at the mercy of a blind irrational force—and side by side with these a pride, as horrible as it is absurd, of money, knowledge, power, and ability'.[25] Following close behind pride is violence.

As a Catholic, shored up by the hope of the Gospel, Guardini does not fall into existential despair. Rather, Guardini acknowledges man's weakness, transience, and power. To be human is to recognise these weaknesses, but *also* we are to recognise the other side, the other pole that provides tension. Man is weak, yet this can be overcome. Man is transient, yet he can aspire for the eternal. Man 'is to be aware of one's powers, of one's limitations, but to be resolved to accomplish deeds of everlasting worth'.[26] The complete human is he who lives in these tensions, when, as Guardini writes, 'they neither destroy each other nor drive each other to extremes, but blend in an evident unity replete with inner tension yet firm, imperilled, yet assured, limited, yet bound on an infinite voyage, this is a complete humanity… A man is human insofar as he truly and humbly combines these two aspects'.[27]

This equilibrium can only fully occur within the Church. It is she who presents us with both the historical and the unconditional. She arouses in us these tensions.

[24] Guardini, *Meaning of the Church*, 61–62
[25] Ibid., 62.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 63.

In her we meet the absolute and our creatureliness is transformed; in this encounter, we become persons. By providing us with this tension the Church teaches us to see, giving us the lens to intellectually, morally, and religiously see. How tension provides these modes of seeing needs to be enucleated.

Modern man is a relativist. He recognises that all historical facts must be interpreted. Furthermore, the success of the scientific method has flooded into all areas of inquiry and with it the assumption that only the repeatable is truly knowable. Outside the realm of mere facts, the realm of things, man has become hesitant about truth. The Church counters this uncertainty with dogma. Truth is divinely guaranteed and unconditional. There is truth; man does not need to endlessly tread water in the horizonless sea of relativity; he can gain traction; there is a horizon. And with this knowledge man's valuation of himself is corrected. Guardini writes, 'his [man's] judgments are clear, free, and humble. But at the same time, he is aware that there is an Absolute, and that it confronts him here and now in its plenitude. By his faith he receives the Absolute into his soul. Humility and confidence, sincerity and trust unite to constitute the fundamental disposition of a thought adequate with the nature of things'.[28]

Following from intellectual relativism is moral relativism. Moral relativism creates a despot of man's arbitrary impulses by giving them free reign. Moral relativism unleashes the irrational and reduces man to a beast. The Church confronts man on this moral level with absolute values, a pattern, a person of perfection (i.e., Jesus Christ). Likewise, this applies to the life of practice and production, the social teachings of the Church. Through this pattern man is at peace, at rest. 'He rejoices in the fact that he is a creature, and still more that he is called to be a "partaker of the divine nature". His inner life becomes real, concentrated around a fixed centre, supported by eternal laws. His goal becomes clear, his action resolute, his whole life ordered and coherent—he becomes human'.[29]

Lastly, the Church confronts man's ever shifting vision of God. Left to his own devices, each man conceives of God in a different way: God is in nature, God is the strict lawgiver and judge, God is the distant architect, God is found in community and relationships, God is encountered in the vagaries of human emotion, God is a pure and clean abstraction. While some persons retain one such dominating description others move from image to image. By picking and choosing these descriptions man makes God in his own image. Prayer becomes a conversation *with* and justification *of* the self. Reflection and meditation become navel gazing. God is a self-portrait. The Church corrects this with her liturgy, and I would add, her teachings, her catholicity, and her vision of the whole. Guardini beautifully describes the liturgical import:

[28] Ibid., 66.
[29] Ibid., 68.

> In the liturgy the Church displays God as He really is, clearly and unmistakably, in all His greatness, and sets us in His presence as His creatures. She teaches us those aboriginal methods of communion with God which are adapted to His nature and ours—prayer, sacrifice, sacraments. Through sacred actions and readings she awakes in us those great fundamental emotions of adoration, gratitude, penitence and petition. In the liturgy man stands before God as He really is, in an attitude of prayer which acknowledges that man is a creature and gives honour to God. This brings the entire spiritual world into the right perspective. Everything is called by the right name and assumes its real form—face to face with the true God, man becomes truly man.[30]

In summary, the Church provides the necessary tension that reverberates into the hollows of man filling him with the unconditional in the midst of temporality and thereby making him what he is meant to be, a son of God.

III. The Truth Will Set You Free

'I was the desire of all times, I was the light of all times, I am the fullness of all times'.[31]

Ratzinger writes, 'If there is no truth about man, then he has no freedom. Only the truth makes us free'.[32] What is this truth? Man is created in the image of God, and 'can only rightly be understood from the viewpoint of God'.[33] In a similar vein, Guardini claims that each of us possesses a pattern of God's divine idea. This is comprised of the universal—we are each human—and the particular—what is absolutely uniquely me. Freedom is when one's total existence is determined by both the universal and the particular, when one lives from the centre of his being. To put it differently, freedom is when man lives in harmony with the divine idea of his personality. Additionally, not only must man live in harmony with his unique divine personality he must also be in harmony with the whole of existence. The unique divine personality must encounter the divine idea that is external to him. He must see things as they are which includes recognising a hierarchy of worth, recognising the great as great, the small as small, the valuable as valuable. This recognition must arise out of the centre of his uniqueness and not out of compulsion. In short, the free man recognises otherness. Thus, Guardini claims, 'it is that the man who is truly free

[30] Ibid., 68–69.
[31] Le Fort, *Hymns to the Church*, 21.
[32] Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, 258.
[33] Ibid., 254.

is open to God and plunged in Him. This is freedom for God and in God'.[34] God is the ultimate other that man must recognise and enter into.

Yet, our predicament is that we are not free. We are impeded and our perception is clouded by the Zeitgeist. We do not recognise things as they are because we are blinded by cynicism and the current fashions. The antidote, argues Guardini, is the Church. In the Church eternity enters into time. In her time is balanced but not destroyed. She too is part of time, but because of her eternality she is not imprisoned by it. She is Catholic; she transcends race, politics, and temporal limitation. Guardini writes, 'The Church of her nature is rooted, not in particular local conditions or particular historical periods, but in the sphere above space and time, in the eternally abiding. She enters, of course, into relation with every age. But she also opposes each. The Church is never modern… The present always reproaches the Church with belonging to the past. But this is a misconception; the truth is that the Church does not belong to time'.[35] Thus, whenever political slogans, moral ideologies, gender theories, and psychological fashions claim absolute validity she opposes them. The Church breaks the fetters of the present. Guardini poetically quips, 'In every age the Church opposes what is *here* and *now* for the sake of *forever*'.[36]

It is not just the Zeitgeist that imprisons us. Our own character, our own unique divine pattern, imprison us as well. Perception is both enhanced and enclosed by our unique God-given character. For example, some persons are naturally prone to abstraction (an element of our uniqueness). Such a person atomizes, formulates, and rationalizes well. However, such a person tends to be impersonal, lacks empathy, and struggles to relate to those who are not like him. These interrelation aspects may be present but to a lesser degree, and left to himself the more dominant abstract way of perceiving will take over. Hence, he becomes fragmented. This one-sidedness is corrected by being fit into the whole, by being brought into relation with others who complete his own insights. Guardini writes,

> His distinctive character must always remain the foundation. But character must become vocation, a mission to accomplish a particular work, but within an organic whole and in vital relation to it. Then one-sidedness will become fruitful distinction, bondage be replaced by a free and conscious mission, obstinate self-assertion by a steadfastness in that position within the whole which a man recognises to be his appointed place.[37]

[34] Guardini, *Meaning of the Church*, 77.
[35] Ibid., 80.
[36] Ibid., 82.
[37] Ibid., 93.

The corrective is found in the Church. In her catholicity she opens man beyond himself and thereby he finds himself.[38]

Before concluding this section, one final point of Guardini's should be made. The answer to the narrowness of each individual is the experience of the whole, but this whole cannot simply be an idea. Rather, it involves a personal experience of the whole, and for this, argues Guardini, 'a subject is required which itself is a whole, and this is the Church. She is the one living organism which is not one-sided in its essential nature'.[39] In other words, it cannot be an invisible Church, nor a national Church, nor a community Church, but it must be a living universal Church.[40]

IV. Tension Writ Large: The Two Lungs of the Church

'For I am mother to all Earth's children: why do you scorn me, world, when my Heavenly Father makes me so great?'[41]

In what follows I will *broadly hint* at how this understanding of unity in tension can move beyond personhood to Church unity by providing four general examples. The emphasis is on 'broad', applying this framework to the specific complexities and nuances at hand is not the intent of this paper; I leave this for the scholars who are more deeply immersed than I am in ecclesiological history and theology. First, the relational notion of persons set out in Ratzinger's notion of the I-Thou-We combined with Guardini's language of tension naturally lends itself to a way of conceiving of primacy *and* collegiality. Personhood and community are not mutually exclusive. Ratzinger makes clear that the Church in its universality must be embodied by a person. Likewise, John Manoussakis claims that 'in Christian theology *the principle of unity is always a person*'.[42] Applying Ratzinger's I-Thou-We construct, we could say that there is no St Peter without the twelve, and there are no twelve without St Peter. Collegiality keeps in check the personal failures of the *Primus*, exposing, as Ratzinger writes, 'whatever in him is not a *vicarious* power but rather his own power'.[43] While, as Ratzinger continues, 'there is even in division itself a unifying function of the papacy… criticism of the papacy by non-Catholic Christians remains

[38] The Church is 'co-extensive with being as a whole'. Guardini, *Meaning of the Church*, 94.

[39] Guardini, *Meaning of the Church*, 94.

[40] There is no such thing as a universal subject in the abstract. I cannot personally relate to the state of Washington, or even to this vast geographical political thing one calls Canada. Neither Washington nor Canada are a subject in this sense.

[41] Le Fort, *Hymns to the Church*, 21.

[42] John Panteleimon Manoussakis, *For the Unity of All: Contributions to the Theological Dialogue between East and West* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 32.

[43] Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism and Politics: New Endeavours in Ecclesiology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 50. Bear in mind the vicarious power Ratzinger refers to is the power of obedience, of martyrdom.

an incentive to seek an ever more Christlike actualization of the Petrine ministry; for non-Catholic Christians, in turn the pope is the abiding, visible challenge to achieve the concreted unity to which the Church is called which ought to be her identifying feature in the world's eyes'.[44] Is this not a tension that can be healthily maintained between East and West?

Second, the objectivity of the Church put forth by Guardini immediately brings to my mind the relationship between the apophatic and the cataphatic. The rampant relativism of the modern world and its concomitant plague of uncertainty are serious problems that both East and West must face without denying the flux of temporality. To generalize, in this situation the West seeks clarity and often, although not necessarily, with this comes rigidity (e.g., neo-scholasticism) and moralism. In contrast, the East prefers to remain in the undefined apophatic cloud of mystery. The danger of this latter position, what Schmemann sought to address in *For the Life of the World*,[45] is secularism (i.e., the separation of the sacred and the secular). That is, the Church is reduced to the mere spiritual (the mysterious known-unknown), and is to remain in the cloud of incense locked within the walls of the Church building. Following this logic, it is conceived that the Church should stay out of the rest of life, out of the realm of morality, politics, relationships, the marriage bed, intellectual activity, et cetera. Viewing this in terms of tension, it is conceivable that the East could constantly push the West reminding it that 'now we see through a glass, darkly' (1 Cor. 13:12). The ontological must be kept in relation with the eschatological. In the inverse, the West could remind the East that the Kingdom is present in Christ and thus in the Church, the faithful, and wherever truth, goodness, and beauty manifest. The eschatological must not be disconnected from the ontological, from the doctrine of Creation. Such a tension would realize the 'now but not yet'.

In terms of our vision of God, the tension between East and West could provide a bulwark against conceiving of God as a self-portrait. In contemporary Western Catholicism there is a renewed interest in the liturgy and in liturgical formation. Guardini, Ratzinger, and for that matter, the *ressourcement* school of thought at large, have sparked a renewed desire for a full and robust liturgy. There is the recognition that Mass is not about me but about encountering the wholly Divine Other. The East, with its profound sense of the liturgical could bolster this renewal and keep the West from sliding into Protestant forms of 'pro-me' worship. Catholicism, with her social teachings, extends this liturgical reality into all life.

Third, Guardini's argument that the Church sets one free from the spirit of the age points to another healthy tension. Orthodoxy, at its best, is historically rich (i.e., patristics). Yet, for various reasons, it appears that Orthodoxy has not, until the latter part of the twentieth century, deeply faced Enlightenment thought, Modernity,

[44] Ibid.

[45] Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973).

and Postmodernity (Western thought). To paint with broad strokes, it appears to me that the result is often twofold: (1) Orthodox thinkers adamantly reject all things Western—Babylonian captivity—or (2) because it does not have a long relationship with Western thought and its history of development, Orthodox thinkers often capitulate and wholeheartedly accept contemporary philosophical constructs (e.g., reject metaphysics). Catholicism, on the other hand, at its best, has been in constant dialogue with her surrounding milieu evidenced by, and I know this is contentious for Orthodoxy, Newman's development of doctrine, and historically in her councils, not to mention the shift in thought brought about by Vatican II. In this sense, Catholicism provides a continuous living voice. Yet, of course, there is also the obvious danger of peering in too closely that she too falls into modernity. Perhaps what Orthodoxy offers in this regard to Catholicism is a constant reminder of what/whom she is anchored to (i.e., the councils, the liturgy and the Fathers), and thus to slow down. On the other hand, Catholicism, with its united voice—united both in history and space—and her development of doctrine, enables her members to engage with contemporary thought through a long unbroken, albeit somewhat tangled, chain of thinking.

Finally, with the current tragic sexual abuse crisis in the Church, and there will always be tragedy and brokenness in the Church, it is important to add one more thing. Guardini profoundly quips, 'Christ lives on in the Church, but Christ crucified. One might almost venture to suggest that the defects of the Church are His cross. The entire Being of the mystical Christ—His truth, His holiness, His grace, and His adorable person—are nailed to them, as once His physical body to the wood of the Cross. And he who will have Christ must take His cross as well. We cannot separate Him from it'.[46] Guardini argues that this crucified Church is the reality of the Incarnation. The Son did not remain distant but entered into the fray of history. This means that we are not to flee from the cruciform Church but to humbly live, love, and worship within her—there is no other option. Of course, this does not exclude reform and the call to holiness. With this in mind, there is one last tension, a tension we touched on with a slightly different emphasis concerning the objectivity of the Church: the tension between the typically Catholic incarnational emphasis and the typically eschatological emphasis of Orthodoxy. The brokenness of the Church reiterates that these must be held in tension. If we are too eschatological we succumb to a type of escapism and the Church remains an empty shell; if we are too incarnational we overlook that the Church is a pilgrim Church, 'Thy Kingdom come'. What *is* and what *will be* must remain in tension.

[46] Ibid., 56.

Conclusion

Painting with broad brushstrokes, this article has utilized elements of Ratzinger's and, to a greater extent, Guardini's theological anthropology to provide a framework for conceiving of Church unity in terms of tension.[47] Appropriately, Guardian writes that life 'cannot be known by a single, uniform act of judgement, but only through several contrary ones, that is, in terms of tension… The same holds true of the experience of community when we consider it as a history'.[48] East and West each have unique strengths and weaknesses. By existing in a type of fruitful tension it is arguable that their respective strengths and weaknesses will be offset, and in addition even their respective strengths will increase.

In 'The Meaning of Community' Guardini explores the differences between the individual person and the community and the difficulties that beset any attempt to form healthy communities. One important means of overcoming these difficulties is understanding. By knowing and understanding the other a shared sense of responsibility as well as confidence is developed. In line with this, arguably, any rapprochement between East and West will involve a thorough attempt to understand the other.[49] Guardini writes, 'all true relationship to another proclaims, "Be what you are; continue to grow, so that you may become what you ought to be"—but only because personalized understanding is essentially possible only through the movement of approach and sight'.[50] Translated into the arena of East and West ecclesiological rapprochement, we could restate it in the following way: by approaching each other in full recognition of the respective unique strengths and weaknesses a unity of tension could be formed in which the Church becomes what it is meant to be, two lunges functioning together. To be clear, existing in a healthy tension does not mean that we ignore differences, nor that we remain exactly the same. Rather, it would require change, perhaps difficult change. Nevertheless, it would be change that would increase the respective unique strengths while bolstering the other's weaknesses.

While this article began by explicating the concept of personhood as relations in tension and then turned this notion in the direction of Church unity, it is fitting to conclude by resetting, so to speak, the dial. That is, if the Church is necessary for the development of persons, to transform individuals into persons (I-Thou-We), then it seems all the more important that the Church be united, an image of unity writ large. How can the Church manifest and form persons when she herself remains

[47] Theological anthropology is arguably an appropriate place to begin ecumenical dialogue. John Zizioulas notes in *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* that theological anthropology 'provokes and invites contemporary theology to work with a view to a synthesis between the two theologies, Eastern and Western'. John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Trowbridge, Wiltshire: The Cromwell Press, 1985), 26.

[48] Guardini, 'The Meaning of Community', 84.

[49] as is A. Edward Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[50] Ibid., 106.

divided? How can she fulfill the poetic voice of the Church given to us by Gertrude von Le Fort?

I am their great union, I am their eternal oneness.
I am the way of all their ways, on me the millennia are
drawn to God.[51]

[51] Le Fort, *Hymns to the Church*, 21.

Ab astris ad castra:[1] An Ignatian-MacIntyrean Proposal for Overcoming Historical and Political-Theological Difficulties in Ecumenical Dialogue

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Beginning from a footnote in Kant, this essay argues that the Orthodox and Catholic ecumenical dialogue must confront three preeminent difficulties to achieve practical unity: the recognition of plurality, the problem of synthesis or integration, and the problem of orientation implicit in any synthesis. An Ignatian 'star' will be posited by which future ecumenical dialogue—especially concerning primacy—might be steered, as well as a MacIntyrean proposal for the achievement of unity through the pragmatics of tradition in the face of epistemological crises caused by the historical conflict of traditions.

Introduction

In a concluding footnote to his essay 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', Immanuel Kant makes a claim that, although dubious in its theological verity, is nevertheless perspicuous in its practical import, especially as it bears upon

[1] 'From the stars to the camps'. Kant uses the motto in a genealogy of naming military and academic offices, recognizing their theological (or in his terms, 'astrological') source. Immanuel Kant, 'The Conflict of the Faculties,' in *Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, transl. and ed. by Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), note on p. 247. Its designation here is meant to recognize the political-theological problem inherent in ecumenical dialogue, and thus, the unavoidability of recognizing potential metaphysical disagreements lying behind remaining disputes 'between camps', so to speak: Whose stars do we steer by? By which constellation should we orient ourselves? Here, too, Ignatius provides an answer: 'A star shone forth in heaven brighter than all the stars; its light was indescribable, and its strangeness caused amazement. All the rest of the constellations, together with the sun and moon, formed a chorus around the star, yet the star itself far outshone them all, and there was perplexity about the origin of this strange phenomenon, which was so unlike the others'. The One star lights the way. Ignatius of Antioch, 'Letter to the Ephesians,' in *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. by Michael William Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 199.

[2] The author would like to thank student research assistant Regina Zabinski for her invaluable aid accumulating resources for the project.

seeking knowledge of historical truth in a situation clouded by ignorance and the fog of warring narratives of history. He argues,

> Only an *educated public* which has existed uninterruptedly from its origin to our times can authenticate ancient history. Beyond that all is *terra incognita;* and the history of peoples who lived outside this public can begin only from the time at which they entered it. This occurred with the *Jewish* people at the time of the Ptolemies through the Greek translation of the Bible, without which their *isolated* reports would meet with little belief. From this point, once it had been properly ascertained, their narratives can be followed backwards. And it is the same with all other peoples. The first page of Thucydides, as Hume puts it, is the only beginning of all true history.[3]

What is remarkable about this passage in the first instance is that, for all of Kant's characteristic flights of abstraction—by which I mean, the purity of his reason is all-too-often the homogeny of an atomized and history-less modern subjectivity—what appears in this quotation is a patient recognition of the socio-existential difficulties posed by competing histories in pursuit of true understanding. A recognition of the difficulty such competition causes a plurality of subjects embedded in time and limited by the contingencies of their received history in addition to a suggestive methodology for overcoming such conflicting legacies in the unity of a shared story.

These three things, then, are all indicated, if not fully explicated, in this short excerpt: first, the recognition of historical plurality; second, the problem of synthesis, or how to give a unified account of 'history' in the condition of a recognized narrative plurality; and third, what I would call, following Kant in another essay, 'the problem of orientation', or how to choose a direction of integration in light of competing narrative proposals for how to remember the events of the past.[4] This essay will focus on these three more systematic considerations, transposing them into the idiom of ecumenical dialogue in hopes of contributing to the practical reunification of the Eastern and Western churches. Shortcomings of Kant's position will be recognized, and an Ignatian-MacIntyrean alternative will be proposed, compensating for these limitations.

1. Historical plurality

With regards to the first point, narrative plurality, I think there is little need to demonstrate or dwell upon what I take to be self-evident in the current *status quaestionis* of

[3] Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', in: *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. by H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 52. Italics in the original.

[4] Kant, 'What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?' in *Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, 7–18.

Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, summarized so well by Ed Siecienski's recent book—specifically, his epilogue, concluding as it does on its chaste, even somber, note. Siencienski argues that although 'the potential for resolution is there' concerning the theological points of separation between the ecclesial East and West, 'a sober analysis of the history also demonstrates that optimism… is often unwarranted…'.[5]

Part, if not most, of the problem we have in understanding each other in our dialogue originates from the plurality of our historical narratives, or the 'prejudices' of our received traditions, to use Hans-Georg Gadamer's term.[6] Given the term's positive designation in Gadamer, the problem is not that we have such prejudices; rather, the issue is the seeming irreconcilability of our specific prejudices. Or, in the words of Charles Taylor, it seems to me that the prejudicial differences we see in each other have always been obvious (if not fully understood); what is more problematic is the fact that our differences threaten to redound to the level of constituting different 'social imaginaries'.[7] The danger of them doing so amounts to a mutual recognition that 'East' and 'West' are not simply historical designations recognizing contextual differences within one 'hermeneutical horizon'[8] (distinct Christian traditions within a larger shared Tradition), but different and irreconcilable life-worlds altogether (different religious Traditions).

So, if we are to move towards a practical as well as principled unity, we must face the difficulties posed by such competing metaphysical-historical narratives head on. This has been the primary task of the official ecumenical dialogue between the two hierarchies, and progress has indeed been made. My one suggestion here, given the radicalizing pessimism of the postmodern age in which we live, would be that we do well to remind ourselves that we do share belief in a God of mystery and miracle, capable not only of turning water into wine in the Eucharistic miracle, but also, through the example of Christ's patient suffering on the cross, capable paradoxically of the inverse: refusing the vinegar offered to us by our enemies—the

[5] A. Edward Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 417. Ellipses in the original. In context, Siecienski is discussing both the filioque controversy and divergent accounts of the office of primacy, the two major remaining theological sticking points in this ecumenical dialogue.

[6] Gadamer argues that 'the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being', in as much as these prejudices constitute the necessary 'conditions of understanding', thus leading ineluctably to a 'rehabilitation of authority and tradition' in discourse concerning truth. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2004), 278 ff. Briefly put, prejudices—pre-judgments or inclinations—are precisely what a 'tradition' exists to confer upon us, guiding our moral actions. A conflict in prejudices between distinct traditions only becomes problematic when such prejudgments are incapable of reform or development, or otherwise incapable of unification from a higher perspective.

[7] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Siencienski puts the point in terms of improvement over past polemics: 'Catholic and Orthodox authors still had differences in interpreting their common history, but they were at least [now] reading that history together' (*The Papacy and the Orthodox*, 380). This is an improvement indeed, but there still remains conflict in social imaginaries which push back against an easy hope for synthetic inevitability.

[8] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 300–5.

'sour grapes which set teeth set on edge' (c.f. Jer 31:29; Ez 18:2) to the third and fourth generation—and using his own body as an instrument of renewal, producing the purifying water of baptism and the sacrificial blood of his Eucharist. Which is to say, God is more than capable of rejecting the stale wine of our past historical conflicts, and instead offering himself as a sacrifice so that our sour grapes might be broken down and brought back to their essential elements, that more savory wine might in time be made to fructify in us. Let us not be given over to despair, despite our present suffering of historical estrangement. As in all things, it will be our Eucharist which saves us.[9]

2. A translational solution?

Turning now to the second point: should we choose to believe that the project of unity should be undertaken—and we must if we are to bring to fruition the work which Christ's high priestly prayer laid out for us: '…that they may be one as we are one' (Jn 17:11)—, then we are left with the problem of synthesis, how to form the many into one. At the practical level, in the context of historical plurality, this is ultimately the problem of which method we choose as best capable of achieving the unity we seek. Taking a cue from Kant, universal or objective history in the condition of conflict can only come through a process of 'translation', whereby the 'isolated reports' of one community are fact-checked (so to speak) in a process of translational synthesis, allowing the ancient stories of one community to be rendered in an idiom proper to the other. Translation thus becomes a *communicatio idiomatum*, a method of integration which both assures a communicative unity while preserving the integrity of each form of life actively living within it.

Having myself once been a very committed Protestant and having undergone a process of 'translation' to the Catholic faith, I can personally attest to the phenomenological accuracy and effectiveness of Kant's unifying methodology. Indeed, this is very much a description of how we converts undergo the therapy of a 'purification of memory' (to appropriate the papal term for it)[10], whereby one's received history—

[9] It is not surprising that the first three publications of the renewed ecumenical dialogue post-Vatican II have been focused on the Eucharist as the life of the Church ['The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity' (1982), 'Faith, Sacraments, and the Unity of the Church' (1987), 'The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church, with Particular Reference to the Importance of the Apostolic Succession for the Sanctification and Unity of the People of God' (1988)] The Catholic recognition of the validity of Eastern sacramental life is surely the greatest fruit of the official ecumenical dialogue. It remains a tragedy that this recognition is one-sided.

[10] The purification of memory is thus 'an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name of Christian.' International Theological Commission, 'Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past,' in *International Theological Commission, Texts and Documents*, Vol. 2. ed. by Rev. Michael Sharkey and Fr. Thomas Weinandy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 188. Ultimately from *The Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000: Incarnationis mysterium*, §11 (29 Nov 1998). All magisterial documents have been consulted at the Vatican's official website.

in my case a Protestant view of history, with all its flaws and defects, but its partial truths as well—is integrated into the truth of the Catholic narrative of history. But integral to this process was the mutual recognition of historical wrongdoing which gave birth to the need for Reformation in the first place, making sense of the partial truths and thus the 'prejudices' of my initial tradition.[11]

I wanted to begin with this quotation from Kant because, *mutatis mutandis*, the work of ecumenical dialogue is just such a joint process of translation, a healing of memory, a learning to tell a unified 'true history' from another point of view. Each of us brings the historical narratives of our various 'educated publics' and the metaphysical grammar we have learned from such stories to bear on this pressing matter of Orthodox-Catholic unity, as we learn to tell the truth of our collective experiences together in a 'dialogue of charity'.[12] Indeed, this process of translation can only take place through 'dialogue', which is why I can but echo Pope St. John Paul II's statement, sounding forth in the final chapter of Siecienski's book, that 'dialogue, guided by the light and strength of the Holy Spirit',[13] should be the translational *modus operandi*: dialogue in view of translation, translation as the practice of integration in the context of historical plurality.[14]

3. The problem of orientation

However, there is another, much more critical reason I began with the passage from Kant, which brings me to the third point, what I called the 'problem of orientation' in the overall process of any unification achieved through 'translation'. This is ultimately a metaphysical problem of knowing how to select our ends, not simply the methods appropriate to them. My critique of Kant's description is in a sense post-modern, for what Kant himself failed to see was the agonistic aspect of his account of history and the historical prejudices (in both its positive and negative senses) he himself brought to the table. This is most clearly manifest in his presumption of the political-theological *subjugation* of Jewish history *to* Greek history—pitting the 'isolated reports' of the Jews against the 'educated public' of the Greeks, straining the metaphysical substance of the former through the grammatical and political constructs of the latter. In so doing, Kant uncritically allowed what John Milbank has called (without prejudice to our Conference hosts here on the island of Syros) the 'Greek *mythos*'

[11] Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012) is an excellent historical account of Catholic failures necessitating the Protestant Reformation, while also recognizing the problems of specifically Protestant solutions to these problems. Of particular insight is his chapter, 'Excluding God' (25–73).

[12] 'Common Declaration of his Holiness Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I' (28 Oct 1967).

[13] Siencienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox*, 411. C.f. *Ut Unam Sint*, §61, 72.

[14] It should of course be borne in mind that translation has two meanings: rendering in another idiom *and* a movement so as to achieve a new or higher state (of unity). Both are intended here.

and its metaphysical 'agonism'[15] to provide the limiting concepts to the process of translation; in so doing, Kant stacked the deck in favor of a merely political, rather than properly theological, narrative of history. Thus, Kant's more modestly termed 'translation' is in reality much more of a domineering imposition of Imperium: another kind of Babylonian captivity for salvation history.[16]

Therefore, Kant's 'translation' does turn out to be a totalizing rather than integrating methodology, one that merges the diversity of the many into a homogeny eclipsing all legitimate difference, replacing a theological anthropology with a merely political one. Or put in Christological terms, Kant's process of translation replaces a *communicatio idiomatum* in dialogue with a *distentio imperiorum*; the theological metaphysics of the Jewish people are lost in 'translation'.

But postmodern criticism, while great at unmasking power dynamics through its hermeneutic of suspicion, is a poor tool in itself for integration and synthesis. Its radicalization in times of crisis turns the Many into a One of absolute suspicion, or even worse, turns the recognizable Many-in-search-of-One, into Lyotard's mere 'islands of determinism'[17], temporary and solitary concrescences thrown into an ever-dissolving sea of relentless, meaningless, and subject-less change. If the Imperial One of the prejudiced modern is to be avoided, equally also the 'abject'[18] one, ever-dissolving in the astringent solution of a postmodern radical criticism.

As much as we would like to dismiss it, 'the problem of orientation'—how to direct ourselves in the realm of many stories to the One Truth each (hi)story aspires to achieve—remains, even after the critique of Kant's *Critiques*. The problem which metaphysics seeks to address cannot be eschewed or forgotten, nor the contest of metaphysical systems avoided. The Many ontologically presuppose the One. How then can it be achieved? What kind of 'One' are we Many seeking?

4. An Ignatian lodestar: theological unity through obedience

In conclusion I would like to offer a vision of the kind of One we need to become in contradistinction to either the totalizing One of modernity or the abject 'one' of postmodernity, and appeal to a methodology which I believe is more adequate to the existential recognition that this One must arise in a condition of conflicting traditions and their seemingly insuperable differences.

[15] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), esp. Ch.11: 'Difference of Virtue, Virtue of Difference', 327–381.

[16] Exemplary is his claim that '[t]he first page of Thucydides, as Hume puts it, is the only beginning of all true history' (*supra*, n. 2). The implication is that all history prior to Greek history was simply mythology, inclusive of the Jewish biblical narrative. The theological anthropology and monotheism of the Jews is replaced with the political anthropology and polytheistic metaphysical agonism of the Greeks.

[17] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 59.

[18] C.f. Julia Krestiva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. By Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

First, the vision of unity. St Ignatius, writing in his *Letter to the Ephesians*—and writing, we should remember, in a context of political captivity himself—argued that the unity of the Church was secured in a singular, and singularly theological, way. He averred:

> It is proper, therefore, in every way to glorify Jesus Christ, who has glorified you, so that you, joined together in a united obedience and subject to the bishop and the council of presbyters, may be sanctified in every respect…. But since love does not allow me to be silent concerning you, I have therefore taken the initiative to encourage you, so that you may run together in harmony with the mind of God. For Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, just as the bishops appointed throughout the world are in the mind of Christ.[19]

In the following passages, Ignatius develops his Christocentric unity in the musical metaphor implicit in 'harmony' to depict the bishop as a lyre upon which the council is strung:

> Thus, it is proper for you to run together in harmony with the mind of the bishop, as you are in fact doing. For your council of presbyters, which is worthy of its name and worthy of God, is attuned to the bishop as strings to a lyre. Therefore in your unanimity and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. You must join this chorus, every one of you, so that be being harmonious in unanimity and taking your pitch from God you may sing in unison with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, in order that he may both hear you and, on the basis of what you do well, acknowledge that you are members of his Son. It is, therefore, advantageous for you to be in perfect unity, in order that you may always have a share in God.[20]

To allow a deeper kind of unity to flourish, a unity deeper than any known to the world, we are given the rather shocking injunction to practical 'obedience'. Unity looks like unanimous personal submission to another person, a theological person, Jesus Christ, whose Incarnation, death, and resurrection won for humanity a 'share in God'. But Ignatius does not imagine this personal submission simply as the private judgment of an individual to trust another private individual, so creating a kind of atomistic social contract; rather, it is a very public and practical kind of submission, that of a social person to a Being-in-Relation. For this reason, it is imagined as a

[19] Ignatius of Antioch, 'Letter to the Ephesians,' in *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. by Michael William Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 185.

[20] Ibid., 187. One should bear in mind the similarities to the 'chorus of stars' mentioned in n.1 above, from the same epistle.

socially embodied act. Hence, the relational anthropology of Ignatius is at one with his ecclesiology, leading him to insist upon unanimous submission to the bishop as manifest head of the social body of the church, going so far as to argue that '[i]t is obvious, therefore, that we must regard the bishop as the Lord himself'.[21]

'Unanimity' here should be taken to mean both unified intra-personally (being of one mind with one's self) and inter-personally (of one mind amidst a plurality of minds); and I should add the crucial caveat that this 'unanimity' is not simply a practical one, or rather is a practical one because it flows out of a shared understanding of truth, implicit in the image of mental unanimity and its harmony. A variant reading of these same passages of the longer version of Ignatius' epistle includes a reference 1 Cor 1:10 as the practical import of what submission to one bishop accomplishes: '…that by a unanimous obedience "ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, and may all speak the same thing concerning the same thing…"'.[22] Unanimous obedience to Christ through practical obedience to the bishop is the visible sign of a metaphysical agreement on a substantial understanding of truth, allowing us 'to speak the same thing concerning the same thing'. It is for this reason that Ignatius' example foreswears any attempt to put into agonistic relation 'top-down' vs. 'bottom-up' approaches to ecclesial rapprochement.[23]

An Ignatian metaphysical understanding presides over Hans Urs van Balthasar's *A Theology of History*, when he summarily states, after dismissing false understandings of history (Hegel's and others), a truly Catholic view of history:

> And so we come back to the question of what it is, theologically, that is adequate to act as subject for the whole of history. It is Christ and the Church, and through them, integrated in them, both the consciousness of mankind as a whole and at different epochs (with the cosmic 'powers' in the background) and the personal consciousness of the individual. In explicit or implicit faith this personal consciousness (which cannot be separated entirely from that of the epoch) can share in the consciousness of the Church, who through obedience remains always in sympathy with her Lord and Head.[24]

What we need to reassert in our historical unity is not simply a unity of speaking the same words, but meaning the same thing by those words, and, as St. Ignatius

[21] Ibid.

[22] See ibid., 184 n. 2.2; and 'Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians,' in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol.1. ed by Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979), 50.

[23] In his conference paper delivered *in absentia*, Adam DeVille offered just such an unsatisfactory appeal 'from below' to begin mixed eucharistic participation in spite of ongoing magisterial disagreement. Such a suggestion would threaten the vision of harmonious unity underlying Ignatius' ecclesial vision and the theological axiom according to which all meaningful communion is manifest: *Lex orandi lex credendi*. See the Joint Commission's statement: 'Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church', §14 (June 1987).

[24] Hans Urs van Balthasar, *A Theology of History* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 147.

also anticipated, a practical means of testing or demonstrating whether we have accomplished this fact. Otherwise, claims-to-unity might be construed from the outside as idealistic or merely formal appeals rather than falsifiable claims about practicable realities. And his proposal has long been that tried and true method from the Catholic perspective: collective obedience harmonized under one bishop—at every ecclesial level and full integrated within each of the levels—is the *symbolum* of Trinitarian unity.

Inasmuch as Orthodoxy is organized under its patriarchs as bishops, I suspect general agreement on this practical proposal can be reached. However, the question of unity *between* bishops is left to be addressed. While in the West the issue has been articulated in terms of 'jurisdiction', it is important to remember that what is at stake is making visible the theological unity presupposed in Christ's high priestly prayer, a unity so crucial not only to the very life of the Church but to the earliest Christian apologists as demonstrative *intra et extra ecclesiam* of Christian truth.[25] Now that the Church has developed beyond the borders of Jerusalem and Judaism—indeed, in its universal dimension, beyond the world—the universality of the Church's life and mission cannot rest content with the ecclesiastical version of *cuius regio, eius religio*. Unity under one demands a coherent harmony at the level of ideas and in concrete praxis.

5. Conclusion: a MacIntyrean solution to the conflict in social imaginaries concerning primacy

Therefore, I concur with the judgment of John Zizioulas that primacy must be exercised at the universal level of the Church, while not being divorced artificially from synodality/collegiality, which serves to ensure the preservation of harmonious and legitimate difference.[26] Inasmuch as Orthodox ecclesiology recognizes three

[25] On the argumentative centrality of unity, see Eph 4:11–13; Jn 17:23; 1 Clem, esp. 46:1–47:7; and Ignatius of Antioch's *Letter to the Philadelphians*, §1–4.

[26] Siencienski's analysis of the intra-Orthodox debate on primacy is instructive (401–3). Ecclesiologically speaking, Zizioulas critiques some Orthodox historical myopia, with its focus on locality and synodality at the expense of the universality of the One Church assured through primacy. Moreover, the Orthodox fixation on synodal legitimacy in reaction to developments in the doctrine of primacy in the West has led to the neglect of the insight that there must be *some* form of meaningful primacy at the universal level of the church—at least, if the church is to avoid lapsing into an ecclesial idealism, where its claim to universality can never be embodied or exercised as a concrete fact. Nor can it be a mere 'primacy of honor' because, as Siencienski notes, 'primates [must] have power.' Yet what Zizioulas seems to give with one hand he takes with the other, as he attempts to deny this universal primacy any meaningful universal 'jurisdiction', which is of course the only way such primatial power could ever be meaningfully exercised or seen as performing any function beyond the *merely* symbolic. From the Catholic perspective, this debate reads as an Orthodox attempt to concede a Catholic universal ecclesiology at all three levels of the Church, while denying it any principle for concrete embodiment at the universal level: namely, the right to intervene in disputes between bishops (i.e., 'jurisdiction'). If it is not too presumptuous for a Catholic to suggest: the present-day mutual exclusions from joint recognition experienced between Constantinople and Moscow seem to evince a need for someone exercising jurisdictional oversight to mediate the irreconcilable claims

levels of the Church,[27] an operative primacy must exist at each level, meaning that primacy must have a legitimate form of practical expression *between* bishops as well.

But of course, the problem is that our potentially divergent social imaginaries might threaten, in a Kantian way, our own prejudicial understandings of both primacy and synodality. We have been taught by our age to be skeptical of the good will of those seeking unity with us, which has meant in practice that we are unwilling to unify with another if that means that we are at all bidden to a revision of our terms or our own understanding of them.

What then shall we do to unify, if submission is the key to oneness in the context of historic abuses? We are called to One and afraid of the method we have been given to be One. Are we stuck in an insoluble *aporia*?

I would like to suggest that Alasdair MacIntyre's solution to the problem of the competition of philosophical traditions be extended beyond the sphere of philosophy into ecumenism as a provisional solution to 'the problem of orientation' in ecumenical dialogue. Its great advantage is that it does not ask us to abandon our inheritances (our traditional 'prejudices'), but asks us to invest them—to risk them, in other words—in the conflict inherent in any dialogical exchange. I read this risk as a kind of kenotic gesture on behalf of healthy traditions, an act of trust in the health of their animating powers; or, if they are sickly, an act of faith in a God who raises from the dead. I think both of our traditions are not so proud as to think either of the 'sister churches'[28] are operating at full strength. Many in our communions fear what MacIntyre calls 'an epistemological crisis', the disorientation experienced when the strength of our traditional understandings might fail us, and we are brought to recognize the insufficiency of our own tradition's self-understanding of its received history. But such a risk is required to avoid an unhealthy fundamentalism of tradition. Here is MacIntyre's characterization of what we must do in the case of an arising epistemological crisis to vindicate tradition, which is but a MacIntyrean expansion of Newman's theory of the development of doctrine.[29] According to MacIntyre,

to primatial power in disputed territories. This is why the 'crisis in Ukraine' is not simply practical but more exactly 'epistemological', in MacIntyre's sense.

[27] Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Church and the Orthodox Church, 'Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church' (13 Oct 2007), §10; §32–44.

[28] The term was first used in the 'Common Declaration of his Holiness Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I'. Siencienski documents the debate about the term's adequacy and potentially misleading implications from the Catholic perspective (391–4).

[29] Siencienski mentions the intra-Orthodox debate on doctrinal development, Andrew Louth arguing against the idea for the Orthodox mind, but Siencienski himself eschews pronouncing upon it (xi–xii, n.10). Daniel Lattier, to the contrary, finds the idea commensurate with the best of Orthodox philosophy and theology and argues for a greater reception of Newman in Orthodoxy as a result. In my estimation, this has become the greatest potential point of conflict in the ecumenical dialogue, as the Catholic understanding of development undergirds the social imaginary behind its articulation of papal primacy. Therefore, addressing this potential source of conflict seems to me crucial for the establishment of future unity. C.f. Daniel Lattier, 'The Orthodox Rejection of Doctrinal Development', *Pro Ecclesia* 20.4 (2011): 389–410; esp. 410, where Lattier quotes the similar judgment John Courtney Murray.

> [A] dissolution of historically founded certitudes is the mark of an epistemological crisis. The solution to a genuine epistemological crisis requires the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new type or types of theory which meet three highly exacting requirements. First, this in some ways radically new and conceptually enriched scheme, if it is to put an end to epistemological crisis, must furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way. Second, it must also provide an explanation of just what it was which rendered the tradition, before it had acquired these new resources, sterile or incoherent or both. And third, these first two tasks must be carried out in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry had been defined up to this point.[30]

In the realm of ecumenism, these criteria constitute a practical test for ecclesiological claims and a nuanced methodology for seeking unity in the situation of the conflict of traditions, but from principles found *within* tradition itself. Without such a practical test, theological and ecclesiological claims threaten to be reduced to ideologically motivate prejudices, incapable of providing a compelling 'answer' (1 Pet 3:15) in a new situation to those we see as 'other'. MacIntyre's practical consideration, which he frames as 'knowing how to go on'[31] when conflict arises, offers evidence of a tradition's vivacity in cases of extreme epistemological crisis.

It is my theological opinion that, despite all of its manifest shortcomings, the Second Vatican Council and its subsequent magisterial reception can be seen, at least from within the Catholic perspective, to vindicate the Catholic tradition amidst the crisis of (post)modernity, which crisis is at once the recognition of pluralism of historical Christian traditions and internal and external challenges to the conception of traditional authority and primacy. Its authentic developments stand to vindicate its historical account in a way any Protestant Church of which I was a part has failed to (which, anecdotally, is of course why I converted to Catholicism). In facing this plurality and moving beyond it, I argue that the Catholic church has 'oriented' itself quite literally, by facing 'East' and gleaning from its wisdom. In the context of primacy, this has meant renewing its mutuality with collegiality and declaring the validity of Eastern sacraments, while insisting on the primatial powers of the Pope as symbol of ecclesial unity.[32] The very calling of the Council, not to mention its un-

[30] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 362.

[31] Ibid., 383 ff. It is relevant that the idea comes from a chapter titled 'Tradition and Translation', as MacIntyre's practical insight is here offered as an alternative to Kantian 'translation'.

[32] *Lumen Gentium* §22–3.

contested continuance after the death of Pope John XXIII, are MacIntyrean 'proofs' of the papacy's integrative power, evidence of its 'knowing how to go on'.

From the Catholic perspective, it remains an open question whether the East has reciprocated. Moreover, the lack of an identifiable Ignatian unanimity *between* the patriarchates, the reactionary rejection of 'jurisdiction' and 'legalism', and the inability to call unchallenged ecumenical councils or demarcate a universal primacy beyond a merely consultative 'service'[33] held individually by the patriarchs raises the question of whether the Orthodox have proven capable of generating formulations that overcome the epistemological and political-theological crises of legitimacy raised against it in (post)modernity.

This article therefore stands as both a Catholic proposal for imagining unanimity in a way consistent with its tradition yet potentially open to Orthodoxy (Ignatius) and a suggestive methodology adequate to historical developments in philosophy and theology (MacIntyre). Whether the Orthodox can follow such a recommendation remains to be seen.[34] Yet the most catholic of hopes is that the God of grace will unify us in truth; it is in Christ, the Truth himself, that we must continue to place our faith amidst great differences in understanding our history.

Feast of the Epiphany, 2020

[33] Catholic primacy does not pit service against power, and thus its own rendering of 'service' is not devoid of power or jurisdiction, however unlike worldly power it is in other respects. Orthodox proposals for a primacy of service at the universal level, precisely to appear non-Catholic, tend to render such service as consultation, leaving concrete power of decision making at lower levels.

[34] Aristotle Papanikolaou has admirably attempted such an Orthodox appreciation of MacIntyre's challenging insights: 'Tradition as Reason and Practice: Amplifying contemporary Orthodox Theology in Conversation with Alasdair MacIntyre,' *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 59.1 (2015): 91–104. On my reading, Papanikolaou correctly anticipates the danger to Orthodoxy of failing to address MacIntyre's understanding of tradition-dependent rationality and the concrete manner in which Christian tradition both did and must continue to develop historically, so that Christian theology is not in the end rendered an otherworldly mystagogy but the offering of convincing proofs of its claims *in concreto*, principally because Christian tradition is also 'an extended history of moral enquiry into how one can appropriate the good that is inherent in the idea of what it means to be human' (98). In sum his paper shows that MacIntyre's understanding is compatible with patristic thinking, particularly the pre-Schism Eastern fathers; but this begs the question of whether explicitly 'Orthodox' theology is not constituted *essentially* in reaction to developments in the West, as these patristic figures are also claimed by Catholic tradition. Papanikolaou himself recognizes that *the* major challenge to an easy Orthodox application of MacIntyre is the fact that Orthodoxy itself has, since the Schism, developed according to a logic in reaction to Catholic and Protestant developments — i.e., as proceeding in a decidedly anti-rational mode (reason vs. mystery). But equally important, the tradition which Papanikolaou fears is becoming constitutive of 'Orthodoxy' today is a reactionary and fundamentalistic one, 'a static set of propositions, rules, and practices that are often identified as crucial to the tradition because the Other does not do it' (104). It is difficult to see how this appeal to a Catholic understanding of tradition-constituted reason (MacIntyre himself is Catholic, working from Thomistic and Newmanian presuppositions), coupled with the fact that Papanikolaou himself teaches at a Catholic University (Fordham), could possibly be received by a larger constituency of Orthodoxy *qua Orthodox*. I agree with Papanikolaou that incorporating a MacIntyrean critique is important for Orthodoxy today so as to avoid the trap of fundamentalism; but the question is, what would remain of Orthodox tradition *qua* Orthodoxy if it did?

Simon Peter in the Gospel according to John: His Historical Significance according to the Johannine Community's Narrative

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In the interconfessional theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman-Catholic Church, there has been much discussion about the famous passage 16:16–19 of Matthew's Gospel. However, not much attention has been paid to the testimonies of other New Testament books about the Apostle Peter's person, work, and historical impact. This paper examines the narrative character of Simon Peter in John's Gospel to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the great apostle's historical significance in early Christianity. In our analysis, we make use of the narrative-critical method focusing on the comparison between Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple. This approach opens a window to how the Johannine community evaluated Peter's person and significance at the time of the composition of the Fourth Gospel, and, thus, helps us better understand the biblical foundations of the theological debate on the papal office.

1. Introductory Remarks

Although the New Testament does not play an essential role in Orthodox-Catholic theological dialogue, it has been often used in Roman-Catholic discourse to support the papal office as it is understood in the modern-day Roman-Catholic Church. The *locus classicus* is, of course, Christ's praise of Peter for his christological confession, as well as his giving him the keys to the Kingdom of God in Matthew 16:16–19.[1] This reference is usually combined with Christ's triple command to Peter to shepherd his sheep in John 21,[2] as well as with the legend of Peter having been the first bishop of the Church of Rome.[3]

[1] See the relevant discussion and bibliography in A. Edward Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 24–28.

[2] *Ibid*., 86–89; cf. also the analysis of Jean Zumstein, *Das Johannesevangelium*, Kritisch–exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 788.

[3] Siecienski, *Papacy*, 3–44.

Of course, in the contemporary academic community of New Testament scholars, such arguments are usually considered plain ideological products and are rejected as being devoid of any solid scholarly basis.[4] We have long ago reached the conclusion that the Gospel of Mark, which provides a very different account (8:27–29) of the above mentioned Matthean narrative, is older than the Gospel of Matthew, thus functioning as its source that the first evangelist often completes, corrects, and adapts to his authorial strategy.[5] In any case, we have to call into question that Mt 16 indeed reflects the very historical words that Jesus Christ himself addressed to Peter. On the contrary, we should rather assume that these words are most probably *Gemeindebildung*.[6] In this sense, the relevant traditional arguments on the Orthodox side, claiming that the stone (*πέτρα*) upon which Christ will build his Church means Peter's confession and not Peter himself as a person, are beside the point.[7]

However, the New Testament contains many more pieces of information about Peter in a variety of texts, the study of which enables us to capture the image and evaluate the impact of the great apostle in various early Church communities. In the present paper, I will attempt to examine the narrative character of Simon Peter in the Gospel of John as a whole by utilizing the narrative-critical method.[8]

On this basis, I will not be raising the question about whether the Gospel's references to Peter are indeed historical or not. Here, I am not primarily concerned with history but with the narrative, because in and through each narrative, ideologies, imageries, authorial intentions, and strategies open windows to the historical reality that gives birth to it. Simply put, I will not deal with the historical, or even the remembered Peter[9] but with the narrative character of Peter in John's Gospel. The latter reflects Peter's perception by both the fourth evangelist and the recipients of his Gospel, which in research are usually referred to as the Johannine community or communities.[10]

[4] See already Franz Mussner, *Petrus und Paulus — Pole der Einheit: Eine Hilfe für Kirchen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), mainly 69–73, who as a Catholic New Testament scholar offers a very balanced view of the New Testament references to Peter; see also the relevant discussion in Tanja Schultheiss, *Das Petrusbild im Johannesevangelium*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/329 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 314–22.

[5] See J. Andrew Doole, *What Was Mark for Matthew? An Examination of Matthew's Relationship and Attitude to His Primary Source*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), mainly 195–96.

[6] See among others Ulrich Luz, 'The 'Primacy Saying of Matthew 16:17–19 from the Perspective of Its Effective History', in *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 165–82, at 173–75.

[7] See on the relevant discussion Siecienski, *Papacy*, 70–73.

[8] See on the application of narrative criticism on New Testament texts James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

[9] Cf. the approaches of William Thomas Kessler, *Peter as the First Witness of the Risen Lord: An Historical and Theological Investigation*, Tesi Gregoriana: Serie Teologica 37 (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1998); Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado, eds, *Peter in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 19–95; Markus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 262 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

[10] See, for instance, M. Eugene Boring, *An Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature,*

In the context of this paper, I take it for granted that the Gospel's author is closely connected or perhaps even identical with the Beloved Disciple, namely John, the son of Zebedee and a disciple of Jesus, although this is a disputed subject in research.[11] Consequently, the recipients of the Gospel appear to be a 'Johannine church', which may extend to several local communities, probably somewhere in Asia Minor, perhaps in the area of Ephesus.[12] The recipients are also connected with John's person since, in the text of the Gospel, the authority of the Beloved Disciple seems to be immense.[13] John of Zebedee a.k.a. the Beloved Disciple is, then, the patriarch of the community, as is evidenced by the indirect justification of his death at the end of the Gospel, which betrays the erroneous belief of the Johannine Christians that their master would not die until the Lord's Parousia (21:23).[14]

While analyzing Peter as a narrative character, I will also draw some comparisons both intertextually with corresponding synoptic narratives and intratextually with the narrative characters of other disciples and particularly of the 'beloved' one. Given the fourth evangelist's knowledge of at least Mark's Gospel,[15] our analysis should reveal the Johannine community's perception of Peter, at least in broad lines.

2. Simon Peter as a Narrative Character in the Gospel of John.

In the Gospel of John, Peter does not appear as the first disciple called by Jesus to follow him, as opposed to the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 4:18–20; Mark 1:16–18; Lk 5:3–10). Quite differently, it is Peter's brother Andrew who, alongside an unnamed disciple, firstly believes in Jesus and subsequently brings him to Jesus.[16] However, Peter's special significance is apparent from the fact that elsewhere, Andrew is referred to as Peter's brother and not as the son of John (cf. 1:42), as he should have been according to Jewish practice (6,8).[17] On the other hand, Jesus predicts that in

Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 626–27.

[11] See R. Alan Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend*, Studies on Personalities of the New Testament (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994). See also my analysis in Christos Karakolis, 'The Sons of Zebedee and Two Other Disciples: Two Pairs of Puzzling Acquaintances in the Johannine Dénouement', in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, eds Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 663–76, at 671–72.

[12] See Martin Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage: Ein Lösungsversuch*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 67 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 219–25.

[13] See James L. Resseguie, 'The Beloved Disciple: The Ideal Point of View', in *Studies*, eds Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann, 537–49.

[14] Cf. Zumstein, *Johannesevangelium*, 791–92.

[15] See the presentation of the relevant research in Ian D. Mackay, *John's Relationship with Mark: An Analysis of John 6 in the Light of Mark 6–8*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 182 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 9–54.

[16] Cf. Arthur H. Maynard, 'The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel', *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 531–48, at 532–33.

[17] See Michael Theobald, *Das Evangelium des Johannes: Kapitel 1 – 12*, Regensburger Neues Testament (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009), 181; cf. also the analogous usage in Matt. 4:18.21; 10:2; 17:1; Mark 1:16.19; 3:17; 5:37; Luke 6:14; John 6:8; Jude 1.

the future, Simon will be called Peter, probably meaning that Jesus himself never attributes that name to him during his earthly ministry. John could be implying here that the name Peter was assigned to Simon post-easterly by the Palestinian Aramaic-speaking Christian community.[18] This fact is of particular importance if we compare it with the corresponding references of the synoptic Gospels, in which it is Jesus himself who attributes to Simon the name of Peter (Matt. 16:18; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14). This is a subtle but significant differentiation between the synoptic and the Johannine traditions.

In John's sixth chapter, after Jesus' sermon on the bread of life (6:32–59), many disciples are scandalized and cease following him (6:60–66). At this point, Jesus turns to the Twelve and asks them if they too want to leave him (6:67). Peter then speaks on their behalf, expressing their loyalty and faithfulness to him (6:68–69). Specifically, although he has not understood the content of Jesus' previous sermon, he states that they do not have anyone else to go to because Jesus is the one who has words of eternal life and because they know and have firmly believed that he is the holy one of God. Here, Peter utters a christological confession, which in essence, bears the same meaning as his corresponding synoptic ones (Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20), despite their different terminology.[19] The disciples share the belief that Jesus is indeed the expected Messiah of Israel, as is evident by their confessions of faith in the first chapter of the Gospel (1:41.45.49), not however the Messiah according to later Christian understanding. At this point, Peter trusts Jesus because he firmly believes him to be the expected Messiah and not because he understands the content of his teaching or the spiritual character of his work (cf. 13:7).

Peter appears again in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel at the scene of the Footwashing (13:3–17). Jesus reaches Peter after having washed the feet of a few other disciples. However, Peter appears to be the only one to protest against this initiative of Jesus by saying to him: 'Lord, you are the one washing my feet?' (13:6). Under normal circumstances, in ancient Judaism, the washing of feet was to be carried out either by slaves or servants.[20] By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus gives them an example of humility, service, and love towards each other. However, Peter not only fails to understand the deeper meaning of Jesus' act of service but also to accept it.[21] Thus, while at first sight, in John 13, Peter seems to exceed all other disciples in humility and respect towards Jesus, the fact that he does not accept Jesus'

[18] Cf. Udo Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 5th ed., Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 4 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 83.

[19] Cf. Maynard, 'Peter', 534; Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 381.

[20] See the relevant conclusions of Bincy Mathew, *The Johannine Footwashing as the Sign of Perfect Love: An Exegetical Study of John 13:1–20*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/464 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 125–27.

[21] At this point, Peter's attitude resembles his corresponding stance in the synoptic Gospels when, after Jesus' first prediction of his upcoming Passion, he attempts to prevent him from going to Jerusalem (Matt. 16:22; Mark 8:32); cf. Maynard, 'Peter', 534–35.

act of service separates him from his master. This is why Jesus answers to him: 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with me' (13:8). This causes Peter to ask Jesus to not only wash his feet but also his hands and head (13:9). As a result, after all, Peter's position among the disciples is not compromised. Despite Peter's inclination to stand out from the other disciples, Jesus brings him back to order. Any separation from the other disciples is also a separation from Jesus himself, which is precisely what happened in the case of Judas (cf. 13:25–30).

A little later during the last supper, Jesus predicts his betrayal by Judas (13:21). Peter himself does not dare ask Jesus about the traitor's identity (13:24). This is a task for the Beloved Disciple who sits right next to Jesus, the most honorary position (13:23.25).[22] While it is the first time in the Fourth Gospel that this disciple is explicitly mentioned, yet an anonymous disciple, the first to follow Jesus along with Andrew, has already been mentioned in the Gospel's first chapter (1:37–40). I have argued elsewhere in favour of this anonymous disciple's identification with the Beloved Disciple of chapters 13 onwards.[23] On this basis, it is significant that the Beloved Disciple follows Jesus and believes in him before Peter does, as well as that he is the only disciple of whom it is expressly stated that Jesus loved him.[24] To return to the last supper, the Beloved Disciple lies beside Jesus in an intimate position, close to his bosom (13:23). When Peter requires him to ask their master about the traitor's identity, he bends his head onto Jesus' chest to transfer Peter's question (13:25). This scene overturns the hierarchical order of the disciples as we find it in the synoptic Gospels. Thus, while in the synoptic Gospels, the narrow circle of the top three disciples consists in Peter, James, and John, in this hierarchical order,[25] in the Gospel of John, the Beloved Disciple appears to be much closer to Jesus than all other disciples Peter included.[26]

After the last supper, Jesus predicts his departure from the world by stating that where he goes, his disciples cannot follow him (13:33). Peter wants to remain close to him not being able to accept that the Messiah of Israel will abandon his disciples. Therefore, he declares himself willing to follow Jesus wherever he goes, and even to

[22] Cf. 1:18 and see Maynard, 'Peter', 535–36; Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 779.

[23] Karakolis, 'Sons', 671; see also the relevant extensive analysis of Michael Theobald, 'Der Jünger, den Jesus liebte: Beobachtungen zum narrativen Konzept johanneischer Redaktion', in *Frühes Christentum*, vol. 3 of *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hermann Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 219–255, at 220–222; cf. Udo Schnelle, 'Der ungenannte Jünger in Johannes 1:40', in *The Opening of John's Narrative (John 1:19–2:22): Historical, Literary, and Theological Readings from the Colloquium Ioanneum 2015 in Ephesus*, eds R. Alan Culpepper and Jörg Frey, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 385 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 103–5.

[24] In 11:5, the evangelist mentions that Jesus loved Martha, Maria, and Lazarus. However, all three of them are not considered as Jesus' disciples, at least not expressly.

[25] See Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 568.

[26] Cf. Michael Labahn, 'Simon Peter: An Ambiguous Character and His Narrative Career', in *Studies*, eds Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann, 151–67, at 158–59; Richard Bauckham, 'The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 49 (1993): 21–44, at 35.

sacrifice his life for him (13:36–37). Again, Peter presents himself as having more faith, greater willingness for self-sacrifice, and more profound love for Jesus than all other disciples. However, Jesus brings him back to reality by predicting not only his failure to sacrifice his life but also his three denials of him (13:38). Peter, who considers himself as the most faithful and dedicated of the disciples, will eventually be found in a much lower state than them as to his relationship to Jesus.

Indeed, at the scene of Jesus' capture, Peter pulls out his sword and cuts the ear of the high priest's servant (18:10). Here, it seems that Peter really intends to defend Jesus even at the risk of his life, since he exposes himself to the members of the armed guard who could easily take him out. Consequently, he seems to be surpassing the other disciples moving, however, in the wrong direction. To his mind, Peter tries to defend the earthly Messiah of Israel, while Jesus is the heavenly divine king.[27] As Jesus himself states in front of Pilate, if his kingdom were from this world, then his followers would have fought to protect him from being handed over to the Jewish authorities (18:36). However, here, Peter's main problem is not that he does not grasp the spiritual character of Jesus' messianic identity—almost nobody does at this stage of the narrative—but that he does not fully put his trust and faith in him, since he attempts to take the initiative himself, pushing things in the opposite direction from Jesus' purpose and will (cf. 16:5–7; 18:8–9).[28] Thus, Peter not only fails to understand Jesus and follow his lead, but he also acts against his command (18:8). Instead, the other disciples abstain from any rushed action, thus leaving the possibility open for Jesus to guide them through his words and actions. Therefore, after Jesus tells his persecutors to let them go, they eventually leave not abandoning him but instead accepting his protection according to his previous saying: 'I did not lose a single one of those you gave me' (18:9; cf. 17:12).

A little later, Peter, who had just drawn his sword and was about to sacrifice his life to defend Jesus, experiences acute fear in front of a young woman and of servants in the high priest's courtyard (18:16–18.25–27). Peter's narrative development shows that his expectations and convictions have now fully collapsed. To Peter's mind, the fact that Jesus allowed his enemies to capture him without any resistance on his part is a clear sign that he was not the expected Messiah of Israel after all. Having lost his hope and faith in Jesus, Peter expectedly prioritizes saving his own life, since he now lacks any reason whatsoever to offer it. Unlike the parallel synoptic narratives (Matt. 26:75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62), the fourth evangelist does not convey Peter's reaction upon hearing the crowing of the rooster (18:27). At this point, Peter's narrative character disappears altogether only to reappear in the post-Easter stories

[27] See on the image of the heavenly king in the Gospel of John the relevant monograph by Jan G. van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[28] Cf. Jason S. Sturdevant, 'The Centrality of Discipleship in the Johannine Portrayal of Peter', in *Peter*, eds Helen K. Bond and Larry W. Hurtado, 109–20, at 116; Arthur J. Droge, 'The Status of Peter in the Fourth Gospel: A Note on John 18:10–11', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 307–11, at 310–11.

(20:2). On the contrary, the Beloved Disciple follows Jesus to the end, he is at the foot of the cross along with Jesus' mother, and Jesus names him her son. He then takes her to his house (19:26–27). Thus, the Beloved Disciple becomes a model for the believers, since he never abandons or denies Jesus, while the latter loves and trusts him to such an extent that he even entrusts his mother to him practically making him his brother.[29] It is also noteworthy that the Beloved Disciple does not fail to provide for Peter as well, as he is the one to enable his entrance into the high priest's courtyard (18:15–16).

The above indirect narrative comparison of Peter and the Beloved Disciple is continued in the post-Easter narratives. In chapter 20, Mary Magdalene informs both of them that Jesus' body has mysteriously disappeared from the tomb (20:2). Both run towards it, but the Beloved Disciple does not enter, although reaching it first, thus showing his respect for Peter (20:3–5).[30] When Peter arrives, however, he enters the tomb and sees Jesus' wrappings and handkerchief (20:6–7). Only then does the Beloved Disciple enter the tomb as well, sees and believes (20:8). Peter, on the other hand, does not yet believe, as it seems, and fails, therefore, once again to reach the Beloved Disciple's level of connectedness to Jesus.[31]

Both disciples also appear in the twenty-first and final chapter of the Gospel, which I will here regard as being in organic unity with the Gospel's first twenty chapters, regardless of its literary history.[32] In the list of the seven disciples present in 21:2, Peter's name is importantly the first one to be mentioned. The narrative begins with Peter stating his intention to go fishing, followed by the other disciples (21:3). These two details probably hint at Peter's leading role among the apostles[33] especially concerning missionary activities being symbolized by the miraculous catch of the large number of fish that follows a little later in the narrative (21:11).[34] While fishing, however, it is the Beloved Disciple who firstly recognizes Jesus standing at the shore

[29] On the characterization of the Beloved Disciple in John's Gospel see Christos Karakolis, 'The Mother of Jesus in the Gospel of John: A Narrative-Critical and Theological Approach', *Analogia: The Pemptousia Journal for Theological Studies* 1 (2016): 1–16, at 2–6.

[30] Cf. Johannes Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 518.

[31] Cf. Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 602; D. Francois Tolmie, 'The (not so) Good Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterisation of Peter in the Fourth Gospel', in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*, eds Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 353–367, at 360.

[32] See on John 21 as an appendix to the Gospel's initial text Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 555–56. However, from a synchronic point of view, it is possible to view the present form of John's Gospel as a unity representing the end-product of its redaction.

[33] Cf. Bradford B. Blaine, Jr., *Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple*, Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 27 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 144; Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 399; Schultheiss, *Petrusbild*, 153.

[34] On the missionary connotation of the great catch in 21:11 cf. Richard Bauckham, 'The 153 Fish and the Unity of the Fourth Gospel', in *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 271–84; Blaine, *Peter*, 154–55.

and shares this insight with Peter (21:7). Thus, again, the Beloved Disciple would seem to refer to Peter as the leading disciple, while at the same time also caring for him (cf. 18:16; 20:5–8). Subsequently, Peter dives into the water to reach Jesus before the others (21:7). Once again, he appears as being more zealous than the rest of the disciples. His attitude, of course, is not meant as blame towards the other disciples, but apart from being a distinct trait of Peter's narrative character, it also probably implies Peter's sense of guilt for his previous denial of Jesus. Peter is also the one to obey Jesus' command by pulling the net onto the land (21:11).

The ensuing dialogue of Jesus with Peter brings the latter's story to its conclusion. Three times, Jesus formally asks Peter if he loves him (21:15–17). In fact, Jesus asks Peter at first if he loves him more than the other disciples (21:15).[35] According to our previous analysis, Peter might well have responded positively to this question, had he not in the meantime denied Jesus. As it is, however, he cannot anymore do so. Peter has now been made aware of his faith's weakness. He, therefore, simply responds to Jesus that he loves him, thus avoiding the comparison with the other disciples (21:15). At the same time, he recognizes Jesus' omniscience, which he failed to do during the last supper. Jesus asks Peter twice more if he loves him (21:16–17) so that Peter's three denials of Jesus are resolved through his three declarations of his love towards him. In this sense and on this basis, Jesus' three commands to Peter to shepherd his sheep restore him to the order of being a disciple and an apostle.[36] From a narrative-critical point of view, there is no proof here for the notion that Peter receives some exclusive authority that the other disciples lack. Quite differently, Jesus categorically confirms that Peter shares the authority of all other disciples who had not denied Jesus in the first place.[37]

Finally, after hearing about his future martyrdom, Peter asks about the fate of the Beloved Disciple (21:21). Jesus then replies that this does not concern him. Peter should restrict himself to his own matters (21:22). The life and the end of the other disciples only concern Jesus, their Lord and God (cf. 20:28). Peter is entirely devoid of any authority over or responsibility for them.[38]

3. Conclusions

The Gospel of John presents Peter's narrative character in a manner corresponding to his counterpart in the synoptic Gospels, that is to say, as a spontaneous, loyal,

[35] Thus, among others Schultheiss, *Petrusbild*, 154; contra Ilaria Ramelli, 'Simon Son of John, Do You Love Me? Some Reflections on John 21:15', *Novum Testamentum: An International Quarterly for New Testament and Related Studies* 50 (2008): 332–50, who understands *τούτων* as neutral and, therefore, not referring to the other disciples present.

[36] Cf. Zumstein, *Johannesevangelium*, 787.

[37] Cf. Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 787–89; R. Alan Culpepper, 'Peter as Exemplary Disciple in John 21:15–19', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37 (2010): 165–78, at 165–66.

[38] Cf. Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 344; Labahn, 'Simon', 166.

and devoted disciple, with evident leadership traits but at the same time also ignorant to a great extent and spiritually immature. Peter puts his life at risk to defend Jesus, but finally refuses him three times when his misconceptions are falsified and his messianic expectations fall apart. He believes in Jesus in his way but is unable to accept that Jesus is different from his own perception. He seems to be erroneously thinking that he loves Jesus more than the other disciples do. On the other hand, he remains within the disciples' community, even after all hope and expectation have left him. In sum, John's Gospel presents Peter as a narrative character who has marked weaknesses but also essential virtues; a character who faces extreme challenges, wavers between self-sacrifice and denial, but who will ultimately be restored to the apostolic order and will indeed offer his life for Christ.

Concerning the synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel's novelty is that it introduces the Beloved Disciple as a narrative character from a unique perspective, namely as a paragon of a disciple. He is the first one to follow Jesus along with Andrew, and he is Jesus' one and only beloved disciple. He is closer to Jesus than any other disciple, he continues following him even after his capture and up to the cross, he becomes the son of Jesus' mother and, thus, Jesus' brother, he believes in Jesus' resurrection before everybody else does, and he is the only one to recognize the resurrected Lord from afar. From the very beginning, the Beloved Disciple is wholly devoted to Jesus. He never appears to be in doubt, to disagree with Jesus, to question his words, to mistrust him, to despair, abandon or deny him.

Notwithstanding the sharp contrast between Peter and the Beloved Disciple, there is a remarkable unity and cooperation between them.[39] The Beloved Disciple enables Peter to enter the courtyard of the high priest's house. He transfers Peter's question to Jesus. He waits for Peter and allows him to be the first one to enter Jesus' tomb. Finally, he lets Peter know that it is the Lord who is standing at the shore of the lake. On the other hand, Peter seems to care about the fate of the Beloved Disciple. Both remain in Jesus' communion as his disciples. Although they are very different from each other, they share a common faith and common goals. Both of them observe Jesus' new command, namely, to love each other, just as Jesus has loved them. In such a community, there is no place for destructive antagonisms.[40]

All the above-presented characterization of the two disciples is not random but serves a strategic goal. The Johannine narrative echoes the perceptions of its author, as well as of its recipients. The existence of a historical community of recipients of the Fourth Gospel that embraced its author's views is evident among other things from the fact that the Gospel uses a very demanding theological language that only

[39] As Blaine, *Peter*, 177, rightly puts it, 'Peter and the Beloved Disciple are not rivals but colleagues… cooperating when possible.'

[40] Cf. the conclusions of Kevin Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures for a Community in Crisis*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 32 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 162–70.

people familiar with it can understand to an adequate extent. Moreover, much information is taken for granted and not mentioned expressly, such as the name and identity of the Beloved Disciple himself.[41]

Based on the above, for the Johannine community, there is no primacy of Peter over against the Beloved Disciple or any other disciple for that matter. On the contrary, the Beloved Disciple is regarded as the most prominent disciple and being closer to Jesus than Peter. On the other hand, Peter's leadership qualities and role are recognized in accordance with the synoptic tradition, while at the same time, his weaknesses are also emphatically highlighted.[42]

According to our extant sources, we have to assume that first-century Christianity contained 'islands' often associated with particular apostolic personalities and that in principle, no single apostle had prevailed upon the other apostles and their communities. There seems to be no way for Peter, as he is presented in the Fourth Gospel, to have been able to function as a guarantor of faith for Johannine Christians or being their primate. These particular Christians had founded their faith upon the testimony of their own 'Beloved Disciple.' Just like the other early Christian stories (e.g., of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul), the Johannine narrative does not claim exclusivity, but accompanies and enriches such stories, thus contributing to the diversity and the plurality of the early Church as a whole.

I believe that until now, the New Testament has not been sufficiently taken into account, at least by those representing the Orthodox side in interconfessional theological dialogues. However, as a commonly accepted authority by all churches, the New Testament can help Christian churches realize their shortcomings, which mainly consist in the absolutization of their narratives over all other alternative narratives. If we really wish to approach one another to eventually achieve Church unity and if a minimum of commonly accepted contents of faith is a prerequisite for such an approach, we can only begin with the New Testament, the holy book of all Christians, the treasury of the apostolic voices, and the authentic birth-story of the Christian Church.

Finally, regarding papal primacy, it is clear that it cannot be biblically founded but is a much later historical development. Of course, the Bible does not rule out later historical developments. Christianity is a living organism and, therefore, it develops, and it evolves. However, it is necessary always to be aware of the biblical testimony, because this testimony offers us alternate models, in our case ecclesiological ones, which can even coexist with one another and not necessarily be mutually exclusive.[43] If in the New Testament itself Peter's position is fluid and negotiable,

[41] On the so-called Johannine Community see among others David A. Lamb, *Text, Context and the Johannine Community: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Johannine Writings*, The Library of New Testament Studies 477 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015).

[42] Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1983), 122.

[43] Cf. the very similar conclusion of Theodore Stylianopoulos, 'Concerning the Biblical Foundation of

this could be the case in later historical periods as well with regard to his so-called successors. John's story of Peter shows us the way of reformulating and renegotiating even what appears to be carved in stone, for the sake of Church unity and welfare.

Primacy', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 49 (2004): 1–31, at 24–26.

The Scythian Monks' Latin-cum-Eastern Approach to Tradition: A Paradigm for Reunifying Doctrines and Overcoming Schism

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In trying to find a proper way to proceed in respect of a dialogue between churches that have already been living for centuries under the shadow of schism, we struggle to see that there is already a paradigm for such a dialogue to hand. This was furnished already in the first half of the sixth century, in the midst of what was probably one of the most important theological quarrels afflicting both East and West: one which concerned two issues, the union of natures in Christ and the doctrine of grace. Those who stood behind this paradigm were the Scythian monks, who united, in both their faith and their overall way of thinking, Western and Eastern traditions. The Scythians saw both traditions as one, and therefore did not hesitate to address problems simultaneously of concern to both Rome and Constantinople, putting forward a solution based on a synthesis of Augustine's and Cyril's theologies. Their proposal was not well received in Rome, but was surprisingly welcome in Constantinople and exercised a significant influence on the defense of the Chalcedonian faith. The present paper will be devoted to analyzing it from a methodological point of view, as well as to the question of whether and how it could be adopted as a model for modern theologians.

1. Historical and Theological Background

Today, hardly any scholars would doubt that the theology of Chalcedon (451) was very much in accord with Cyril's own thought.[1] The evidence shows that the Council relied on his theology to such a great extent that Cyril can justifiably be said to have been considered the ultimate embodiment of orthodoxy, and an unquestioned doctrinal authority. Even the *Tome* of Pope Leo received its endorsement in the form of a recognition that it was in accord with the Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius.[2]

[1] This article presents some results of the author's research carried out within the framework of the project 'Neochalcedonian Philosophical Paradigm', financed by Poland's National Science Centre (grant UMO-2016/22/M/HS1/00170).

[2] Richard Price, 'The Council of Chalcedon (451): A Narrative', in *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils, 400–700*, ed. Richard Price and Mary Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 78; and Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, Translated Texts for Historians 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 2:117–18.

And yet it seems that much of the East took the Chalcedonian doctrine to constitute a betrayal of Cyril's teaching.[3]

If we take a closer look at the Chalcedonian achievement as a whole, the reaction of its opponents does not seem entirely unreasonable. First of all, the Chalcedonian definition employed some terminology whose provenance and connotations were theologically dubious. More specifically, the clause from the *Tome* of Leo referring to 'the distinctive character of each nature being preserved and coming together into one person' was incorporated almost verbatim into the *Horos*.[4] The term 'person' was used by Pope Leo to refer to an independently existing individual subject, and most certainly, such an understanding would have been by no means alien to Eastern thought.[5] The problem, though, lay in the fact that Leo was using this term while simultaneously emphasizing the distinction between the two natures in Christ. In this context, a unity of natures described using the terminology of 'one person' could easily appear to resemble Nestorius' notion of the 'personal mode' (*prosopikōs*) of the unity of Christ, which is only relational, not real. To be sure, Leo's clause was modified in the Council's own definition, through the addition of terminology that better reflects Cyril's teaching, the expression 'one person' being replaced by that of 'one person and one hypostasis'.[6] Besides, the Council, in its documents, employed the term 'hypostasis', which was known to have been introduced into Christology by Apollinarius. To be sure, the same expression was used by Cyril as well, but he mainly employed it in the formula 'union/united according to hypostasis' in order to clarify how natures were united.[7] In contrast, in the Chalcedonian definition it was employed to refer to the very subject of the union.

Secondly, although the *Horos*, in affirming that Christ is one person and one hypostasis in two natures, seems to agree with Cyril's essentially dyophysite thought, the Chalcedonian teaching refrained from embracing the entirety of Cyril's Christology. That is to say, the formulation in the *Horos* appeared to be in conflict with Cyril's famous formula of 'one incarnate nature of God the Word' through which he sought to describe the inseparable unity of human and divine natures after the incarnation. Cyril, primarily for soteriological reasons, put special stress on the unity of Christ. Even when recognizing the distinctness of the two natures, and their differences, in Christ, he underlined that they were only distinct in contemplation, not separated in reality as two independent entities. On the other hand, Cyril also emphasized a point not embraced at Chalcedon, which was that the one who died on the cross was

[3] Cf. Andrew Louth, 'Why Did the Syrians Reject the Council of Chalcedon?', in *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils, 400–700*, ed. Richard Price and Mary Whitby, Translated Texts for Historians, Contexts 1 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011).

[4] Leo, *Tomus*, 54–5: '*Salva igitur proprietate utrisque naturae et in unam coeunte personam.*'

[5] Cf. Basil Studer, '"Una persona in Christo": Ein augustinisches Thema bei Leo dem Grossen', *Augustinianum* 25 (1985).

[6] On the changes made to Leo's clause, see Price and Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 2:17, n. 43.

[7] Cf. Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 508–9.

not just a man associated with God, but the only-begotten Son of God (the doctrine known as 'theopaschism'). Moreover, Chalcedon passed silently over Cyril's third letter to Nestorius and *Twelve Chapters* (i.e., Cyril's polemical works), whose terminology emphasizes the unity of Christ. This omission only served to reinforce the impression that Chalcedon had embarked upon a deviation from Cyril's teaching as a whole.[8]

Thirdly, the Council also condemned Cyril's successor as the Alexandrian see, Archbishop Dioscorus. To be sure, neither Dioscorus nor the Second Council of Ephesus that he summoned—known as the 'Robber Council'—were condemned on grounds of heterodoxy. Instead, they were found guilty of antagonizing the Church and violating its peace and its order. For all his doings, Dioscorus was widely perceived as a zealous follower of Cyrilian Christology and opponent of Nestorianism. Likewise, Ephesus II was viewed as a confirmation both of Nicea and of Cyril's teaching (since it fully endorsed Ephesus I), and thence as a strong anti-Nestorian voice. In addition, Chalcedon rehabilitated two widely known supporters of Nestorius, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa, who had been condemned at Ephesus II. Given such circumstances, it is not surprising that the Council of Chalcedon had sparked off such a negative reaction. It was viewed as apostasy from the standpoint of the orthodox Christological doctrine laid down by the First Council of Ephesus, and at the same time as bringing in Nestorianism through the back door.[9]

It is safe to say that with the exception of the relatively small group represented by the Constantinopolitan Church, the Roman legates, and a small number of Palestinians and Antiochenes, the teaching offered by the Chalcedon Council almost immediately aroused vehement opposition in much of the East, from Egypt to Palestine, and ultimately also in Syria. The sharp and sometimes even bloody quarrels over Chalcedonian doctrine lasted for decades, if not centuries (since one can argue that the rise of miaphysitism and monotheletism can be seen as a result of those quarrels). Moreover, the attempts to reunite the pro- and anti-Chalcedonian factions led, in turn, to an even deeper division—one that brought about the Acacian schism with Rome that lasted for thirty-five years.[10]

Communion with Rome was restored on Easter Sunday of 519 by Emperor Justinian. Still, prior to the consensus with Rome being achieved, there took place, in 518, an event of ostensibly little significance, but which in fact proved to be of the utmost importance from the standpoint of the present study. It is often referred to as 'the affair of the Scythian monks'. It was on that occasion, and long before being

[8] Richard Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553; with Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy*, Translated Texts for Historians 51 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 1:66, 276.

[9] See, for instance, Zacharias Rhetor, *Historia ecclesiastica* III, 1.

[10] For my take on the debates over Chalcedon, and a concise presentation of the events that took place during those debates, see Anna Zhyrkova, 'The Council of Constantinople II: 553; A Christology Seeking Refinement and Subtlety', in *Seven Icons of Christ: An Introduction to the Oikoumenical Councils*, ed. Sergey Trostyanskiy (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2016), 223–75.

named Co-Emperor, that Justinian entered the arena of ecclesiastical politics. A group of Scythian monks, backed by Vitalian, was given the opportunity of presenting, at the court in Constantinople, their proposal to the effect that the proper elucidation of Chalcedon required the introduction of the theopaschite formula asserting that 'one of the Trinity was crucified'. This would have then placed the Chalcedonian teaching firmly in the domain of Cyrilian Christology and prevented any Nestorian readings. The initiative of the Scythian monks met with sharp rejection. They then had to take their chances in Rome, where they also failed to gain support for their cause, and were expelled. However, their doctrine did have a profound effect on Justinian. At first, he was probably apprehensive about endangering the union with Rome, since immediately after the meeting he sent a letter to Hormisdas denouncing the Scythian proposal. Yet, in a letter sent to the Pope only a few days later, he supported it wholeheartedly, arguing that it was absolutely essential to 'the peace of the Church' ('*pax sanctarum ecclesiarum*'). It seems that Justinian realized that the theopaschite formula could, after all, bring about true peace between the pro- and anti-Chalcedonian factions. He himself became a champion for theopaschism and adopted this doctrine as part of the imperial orthodoxy, which was officially and ecclesiastically affirmed at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. To be precise, the Council proclaimed that the Christ who suffered on the cross was indeed one of the Persons of the Trinity.

The monks, led by their champion John Maxentius, were from Tomis, a town located in the region of Scythia Minor and known for its quite specific multicultural ethos and bilingual (Greek-Latin) customs. The Scythian monks themselves were rather Latinists, who depended on translations of Greek texts made by one of their own group—the exceptionally talented and renowned sixth century linguist Dionysius Exiguus. Yet it is quite possible that it is just because of this particular culture, and the mentality that accompanied it, that the monks not only had a deep appreciation and sound knowledge of Eastern theology but also understood this as constituting, together with Western theology, one catholic tradition—that of the one Church. It is both thanks to, and within the context of, such an understanding of Church tradition that the Scythian monks brought onto the scene their own quite unprecedented Christological conception—one that in their view amounted to a solution to the problem of how to properly elucidate Chalcedonian doctrine, and consequently also to a way for the divisions that had opened up within the Church as a result of the debate over the significance of the Chalcedon Council to be healed.

To be sure, the Scythian Monks were clear about their own acceptance of the Chalcedon Council and its doctrine.[11] Still, it is certainly hard not to notice that

[11] *Libellus fidei oblatus legatis apostolicae sedis,* 8.12.161–3; *Epistula ad Episcopos* II.3, V.12. All texts of Scythian Monks and John Maxentius are cited according to the edition of François Glorie, *Maxentii aliorumque scytharum monachorum necnon Ioannis Tomitanae urbis episcopi Opuscula, accedunt Capitula S. Augustini*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 85A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978).

in their works they placed the utmost emphasis on the importance for theological doctrine of including into the discourse the aspect of Christ's suffering and crucifixion—precisely what seemed to have been given less prominence in the Chalcedonian *Horos*, even if it was not entirely omitted there.[12] For in contrast to the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds, both of which admitted this truth crucial to the Christian faith, in the Chalcedonian *Horos* there was no mention of the suffering and/or crucifixion of the Son of God and the true God. It appears, then, that the Scythian monks believed strongly that through a reconciliation of Chalcedonian teaching with this pivotal truth—which, in the Scythians' view, was a part of the Catholic faith and an important part of Cyril's Christology as expressed explicitly in his *Twelve Chapters*—it would be possible to arrive at a proper elucidation and interpretation of Chalcedonian doctrine, redeem it from accusations of Nestorianism, and forge some kind of peace between pro- and anti-Chalcedonian factions. Meanwhile, if the above amounted to one of the two main theological projects undertaken by the Scythian monks, then the other can be identified as their attempt to defend and properly elucidate yet another quite problematic issue: namely, Augustine's doctrine of grace. In order to accomplish both of those honorable projects, they employed a highly original and innovative understanding of Church tradition and doctrine—one not only far beyond the time in which they found themselves, but also potentially innovative and relevant when viewed even from a contemporary perspective.

2. The communio theologorum and the Perichoresis of Teaching

The Scythians' approach to tradition was constituted out of several elements, the first of which is linked to the issue of how to pursue a proper reading of the teaching of a given theologian—something that can be illustrated by analyzing their treatment of Cyril's and Augustine's works, which did not meet with unanimous ecclesiastical acceptance.

In the case of Cyril, what were indubitably at stake were his *Twelve Chapters*, given that these (a) contained his account of theopaschism, (b) had been passed over by Chalcedon, and yet (c) were fiercely supported by the anti-Chalcedonian faction. Having as the ultimate goal of their approach a corrected and clarified interpretation of the Chalcedonian *Horos* that was to be achieved through a reintroduction of the theopaschite doctrine, for which the Twelve Chapters served as the best available support, the Scythian monks faced two quite difficult challenges. They needed (1) to show to the defenders of Chalcedonian doctrine that Cyril's *Twelve Chapters* were not against it, while (2) proving to adversaries of the Council that neither this same doctrine nor Leo's teaching were opposed to the *Twelve Chapters*. The Scythian

[12] It should be noted that Severus of Antioch, in *Homiliae Cathedrales* 1.12–25 (PO 38:260–67), also criticized the *Horos* for omitting the truth about the crucified Christ.

monks accomplished both goals by adopting a kind of hermeneutical approach to the work under consideration.

First of all, the Scythians set out to show that Cyril's theological thought is coherent as such. By juxtaposing the texts from Cyril's works that were accepted by pro-Chalcedonians with texts from the *Twelve Chapters*, they showed that the content of the work under scrutiny did not contravene the thrust of his own teaching as disclosed through the entirety of his other works. For instance, Cyril's belief that the Word of God became flesh (*Verbum caro*) is expressed in works solidly accepted by all factions, as well as in his *Twelve Chapters* itself.[13] The next step was to show that Cyril's teaching on incarnation presented *inter alia* in *Twelve Chapters* was in accord with Chalcedonian doctrine. While, as was shown, for Cyril, the Word of God and Son of God became flesh, the Council proclaimed that the Word of God became a human being, consubstantial with God in accordance with His divinity and with us in accordance with his humanity. Both of these views—or, rather, ways of expressing the very same theological truth—are in absolute accord with each other.[14] Not only that, but also Pope Leo—who quite evidently represented for the Scythians the voice of Latin orthodoxy and Catholic faith, and whose Christological teaching had been affirmed by the Council's Fathers—recognized Christ to be a true Son of God, coeternal, equal, and not different in essence from Father.[15]

It was in this manner, then, that the Scythian monks sought to demonstrate that Cyril's work *Twelve Chapters*, being in agreement with the entirety of his teaching as endorsed by the Council of Chalcedon, was not opposed to the Chalcedonian *Horos*. Such a line of argumentation can be illustrated with the help of a basic (Darii) syllogism: if the teaching presented in *Twelve Chapters*, as a part of Cyril's thought, was in accord with Cyril's teaching in its entirety (SiM), and Cyril's teaching in its entirety was embraced by and in Chalcedonian doctrine (MaP), then the teaching presented in *Twelve Chapters* had also to be agreement with Chalcedonian doctrine (SiP). Still, this was only one half of the Scythians' argument, as the other half contained a proof to the effect that since Leo's teaching was accepted and approved by the Catholic Church and Council, which in turn had already been shown to itself be in agreement with Cyril's thought, Leo's teaching could not run counter to Cyril's account as such, and consequently could neither be opposed to that presented in the *Twelve Chapters*. In other words, not only was the part of Cyril's thought questioned by pro-Chalcedonians but fully endorsed by anti-Chalcedonians in agreement with Chalcedonian doctrine, but also those parts of Chalcedonian doctrine regarded as

[13] See for instance Joannes Maxentius, *Libellus fidei*, XII.23, where the text of Cyril's *Scholia de incarnatione Unigeniti* IV (ACO I.V–I, p.186, 16/18; ACO II.IV, p.131, 2/4) is compared to and shown as being in agreement with the text from the *Twelve Chapters* anath. α′ (ACO I, I–I, p. 40, 22/24; I.I–5, p. 16, 29/30; I–6, p.111, 17/19).

[14] See Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* XIII.24.304–7, citing Chalcedon's Definitio fidei 34 (ACO II, I–II, p. (325) 129, 27/29).

[15] See Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* XIII.24.307–18, citing Leo I, *Epistula 28*, 2 (ACO II, II–I, p. 25, 13/20).

of questionable character by anti-Chalcedonians were not at odds with the teaching they themselves had accepted and acclaimed—namely that of Cyril himself.

There is, however, more to the Scythians' reading of Cyril's and Leo's texts. For instance, when speaking of the revealed truth that Christ is one and the same entity, being simultaneously God and man, they first cited the text of Pope Leo, which states that an impassible God did not refuse to became a man capable of suffering, and that the one who is immortal submitted himself to the laws of death. This citation is immediately followed by one from *Twelve Chapters*, where Cyril declares that if someone does not profess that God the Word suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, etc., they should be anathematized.[16] When those two texts are put together in this particular order, a reader or listener will naturally tend to interpret the second text in the light of the first one. In this way the questionable theopaschite statements of Cyril get to be clarified by being properly viewed against a backcloth of ubiquitously and ecumenically accepted truths. On the other hand, Leo's thought is shown to be in perfect accord with Cyril's teaching, and a key to its proper interpretation. Therefore, it is possible to say that the Scythians interpreted Cyril and Leo in light of one another, or, as Matthew Pereira has put it, 'melted Cyril and Leo into a singular proclamation of the Gospel'.[17]

Within the framework created by the Scythian's interpretation, Leo and Cyril appear to be in perfect accord with one another. What is important to note, however, is that this state of affairs should not be equated with a mere synthesis of complementary components. Leo and Cyril never differ on the subject: they are rather just expressing the same truth in different ways. The teachings of Leo and Cyril are not parts of one puzzle, such as might be said to complete each other. Instead, they express two points of view—those of two different spectators contemplating the same picture. And still, because they are two and not one, they do notice different details, emphasize different things, and so on. Even so, it is not that they are looking at the picture in question, as it were, from different angles, as would be the case if each saw only a part of the whole picture. Quite the opposite: their views are complete, and do not need completing. Each description is to some extent self-sufficient in its truth. Moreover, in order to express what they see they need to recreate this picture using human words and expressions. Hence, in addition to the fact that we have two different spectators, thanks to their personalities, cultural environment, preferences, etc., while looking at one and the same picture they inevitably give us two quite different descriptions—ones that differ also with regards to the words and expressions employed. Given this, in order to get closer to a proper understanding of the object observed by them both, their teachings do each need to be

[16] Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* XIII.26.329–39, citing Leo I, *Epistula 28*, 4 (ACO II, II–II, p. 28, 5/6); Cyril. *Epistula 17 (ad Nestorium)*, anath. ιβ′ (ACO I, I–I, p. 42, 3/5; I. I–V, p. 25, 13/15; I. I–VI, p. 144, 15/17).

[17] Matthew J. Pereira, 'Reception, Interpretation and Doctrine in the Sixth Century: John Maxentius and the Scythian Monks' (PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 2015), 279.

seen in the light of the other. Thus, what the Scythians are really doing is situating their teachings within a dialogue of faith—that within which, and through which, orthodox doctrine and tradition are themselves formulated.

What this dialogical approach towards the interpretation of theological teachings amounts to can be seen more clearly in the context of the Scythian monks' reading of Augustine's doctrine of divine grace—one that raised, and still continues to prompt, numerous questions as regards its orthodoxy. Certainly, the monks were committed to Augustine's doctrine of divine grace. However, they did not see it as an independent and complete achievement of one of the biggest authorities in Western theology, to be accepted on the basis of the ecclesiastical authority and role of St Augustine himself. I dare say that they had not been blinded by Augustine's authority and did not support his heritage uncritically. They rather accepted and adhered to the latter's doctrine of divine grace because they saw it as being grounded in the tradition of the one Catholic church of East and West. Therefore, without being blind to such problems as could issue from Augustine's thought, the Scythians proposed a way of interpreting him using viewpoints afforded by the tradition that would allow them to achieve an orthodox and proper reading of his teaching. This approach can be illustrated by their attempt to elucidate one of the problematic elements of Augustinian teaching on the matter of divine grace—namely, the issue of so-called *massa perditionis*.

The notion of *massa perditionis* captures the thought that on account of sin, the whole of humanity has become a mass of perdition. Out of this mass, God chooses those who, by sheer grace, are predestined to receive absolution and eternal life, while the rest are left to await the judgement they deserve, belonging as they do to the mass of perdition itself.[18] In order to elucidate this questionable conception of St Augustine, the Scythians, after having presented the more or less standardly accepted points of Augustine's doctrine (such as original sin, Christ as the source of solvation, understanding faith as a gift of God, the incomprehensibility of the judgements of God, etc.), introduce a concise description of *massa perditionis* based on Augustine's own text.[19] This discerption was followed first by a question also posed by Augustine: that of why it is that Christ, as one 'who wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim 2:4), while accomplishing so many great works in Chorazin and Bethsaida, did not opt to pursue any in Tyre or Sidon.[20] The Scythians also added to this a question of their own: Why was Paul the Apostle prohibited from preaching the word of salvation in Asia and Bithynia? In their view, it was necessary to admit that there are things that cannot be understood. Thus, one

[18] Augustine, *De gratia Christi et de peccati originali* II, 29.34. See also Donato Ogliari, 'Gratia et Certamen: The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-called Semipelagians', (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 343–4, n. 209.

[19] See *Epistula ad Episcopos* VI.14–VII.21; the discussion of *massa perditionis* starts on VII.21.272, with a reference to Augustine's text mentioned in the above note.

[20] Augustine, *Enchiridion* XXIV.95.

simply had to adhere to the fact that the Lord's judgements are beyond comprehension. Otherwise, one would oppose truth as revealed by Holy Scripture.[21] Augustine's conception of *massa perditionis* is shown, therefore, as being in agreement with the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of the Lord's judgements, and with truth as revealed in Holy Scripture. In other words, the questionable part of Augustine's teaching, as with the case of the *Twelve Chapters* of Cyril already discussed, is shown to be in line with the teachings of the same author that had received ecclesiastical endorsement.

Now what comes after that is of even greater importance. In order to show what a proper approach to reading and interpreting Augustine's doctrine would look like, the Scythian monks invoked St Basil:

> The blessed Basil, bishop of Caesarea, in his Prayer at the Sacred Altar, which almost the whole East frequently uses, among other things says, '*Grant, Lord, strength and protection, make those who are evil to be good, preserve those who are good in goodness, for you can do everything and there is no one who could contradict you. When you will — you save, and no one resists your will.*'[22] See how briefly and definitively the eminent teacher already in the past had brought an end to this controversy [Ecce quam breuiter quamque districte doctor egregius olim huic controuersiae finem posuit], teaching through this prayer that not by themselves but by God that bad people are made good, and not by their virtue by an assistance of the divine grace they persist in that goodness. (*Epistula ad Episcopos*, VIII.25.307–16)

The monks were not attempting to correct or adjust Augustine's doctrine of predestination when they invoked the words of St Basil: just as they were not aiming to say that Basil shared the very same ideas as Augustine. What they were doing was essentially different: namely, they were asserting that Basil had anticipated a future controversy (i.e., the Pelagian-Augustinian Controversy) and brought an end to it through his liturgical prayer, which taught that evil persons are made good by God alone, and are sustained thereafter in a state of divine goodness through the assistance of divine grace. Therefore, it seems that in line with the Scythians, Augustine's teaching on predestination should be viewed in the light of, and read in accordance with, two of Basil's assertions: firstly, that God and only God is the sole cause of human goodness, and secondly, that God and only God is the sole cause of the preserving of that state of goodness. Viewed through Basil's eyes, Augustine's

[21] See *Epistula ad Episcopos*, VII.22.278–23.299.

[22] The prayer is ascribed to Basil also by Petrus Diaconus in *De Incarnatione et Gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ad Fulgentium et alios episcopos Africae*, Epistle 16, VIII.24, in the collection of epistles by and to Fulgentius Ruspensis, PL 65, 449CD. See John Anthony McGuckin, 'The "Theopaschite Confession" (Text and Historical Context): A Study in the Reinterpretation of Chalcedon', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35, no. 2 (1984): 253–4, n. 66, doi:10.1017/S0022046900026968.

teaching remains within the limits of orthodoxy. It is also important to note that the Scythians stressed that Basil's Prayer was in use by almost the whole East ('*quam paene universus frequentat Oriens*'). It is Eastern theological teaching and liturgical customs that give directions as to how Augustine's teaching is to be interpreted. In this respect, the Eastern theology does not merely impose certain constraints; rather, it also furnishes a perspective, informing how Augustine is ultimately to be read and understood. Nevertheless, the Scythians did not content themselves with that, but continued to also give examples from Latin authors exhibiting similarities to the liturgical language of Basil's Prayer at the Sacred Altar. Hence it is not the Western or Eastern tradition as such, but rather just the one tradition of the Holy Catholic Church that is supposed to shape our reading of a given author.

I should emphasize that neither in the case of the questionable views of Cyril, nor in that of Augustine, did the Scythian monks try to correct elements of their theological legacy that had proved controversial. Instead, they proposed reading the elements in question in terms that would be consonant with the overall teaching of the theologian in question. And, what is of even greater importance, they advocated viewing those elements from the standpoint of the entire Catholic Tradition. In this way, the legacy and thought of a given theologian becomes a part of something that I would like to call the '*communio theologorum*' and '*communio theologiarum*'—the communion of theologians and their teachings that received recognition and endorsement by and within Church Tradition. Thus, this or that theological teaching and its elements are not looked at in separation, but rather viewed and interpreted in observance of the code of the orthodox doctrine as formulated by both theologians and the Holy Fathers themselves. The teaching of a given theologian becomes, then, a voice sounding—or perhaps a chord sounded—in a dialogue whose overall unfolding could be described as a symphony of faith. All the voices—or all the chords—of the latter pervade and complete each other as they contribute to forming a new and greater whole, which is more than any one of them, or even several of them together, could ever be. Consequently, the whole made up of all of these, and only this whole, is what furnishes the proper perspective and source of guidance when it comes to determining how each of the constituent theological teachings should be interpreted.

One may, of course, quite reasonably wonder whether all theological views and teachings can be put forward and interpreted as seen through the eyes of the Tradition itself—(i.e., seen as a part of the latter and on this basis given an orthodox reading). The answer, very simply, is 'no'. The example actually discussed by the Scythians was the case of Nestorius. In their *Disputation on Twelve Chapters of Cyril*, the monks showed that even Cyril's most radical claims could be read in the light of his other texts — meaning ones both accepted and properly explicated by the Tradition. They could therefore be construed as not being in disagreement with, for instance, Chalcedonian doctrine. Yet the same could not be done with Nestorius,

whose teaching is simply unorthodox, going as it does against both Church Tradition and the truth received through revelation and through sacred texts. Invoking once again the image of voices or chords in a symphony, one might say that there some voices are performing (or that some chords are being executed) following a separate score, so that they are out of tune or out of sync with the overall unfolding (and the overall score) of the symphony. The other image I would be tempted to use here is that of a prism. We know that the light going through a prism becomes a spectrum of colors (a rainbow), but I propose to look at it from the other direction — such that all of those different colors come to be seen as right and compatible inasmuch as they together make up one light. Tradition and Church doctrine, one might say, are such a prism: one that shows us what colors can be part of the light.

3. Theological Discourse within the Tradition of the One Church

In the works of the Scythian Monks, the issue of proper interpretation is not limited to the question of how one should approach the teachings of particular authors claiming to speak for the Church: it also bears on theological discourse as such. In each of the cases discussed, the Scythians did not just show that this or that Church Father was in accord with Tradition, but rather went much farther, creating interpretative tools and explaining the rules governing how theological teachings generally were to be read, such that one might continue to adhere to the Catholic tradition. Similarly, they went far beyond just giving a defense of Chalcedonian doctrine in the sense of merely showing that it was in accord with the entirety of Cyril's thought, in that they managed to express the very norms responsible for regulating how theological discourse itself is to be conducted.

It is worth noting that even when it came to supporting and defending Chalcedon, they did not hesitate to single out a weak point in Chalcedonian teaching—this being, in their view, its omission of the actual mystery of the cross and the suffering and death of the Son of God, the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. To say that the Scythians saw the theopaschite doctrine as a potential link connecting Cyril's *Twelve Chapters* with Chalcedon and so providing a solution to the conflict over the Chalcedonian *Horos* would be a great simplification. For while the Scythians really did, to say the least, regard theopaschite teaching as highly important for theological discourse, they found Chalcedonian doctrine to be lacking in regard to this crucial element.

Compared to the Creeds of Nicea and Constantinople, the Chalcedonian *Horos* passed over a not unimportant issue firmly located at the very center of our salvation — i.e., the suffering (see the Nicene Creed) and crucifixion (see the Constantinopolitan Creed) of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is possible to argue that Chalcedon-based Christology was, to some extent, a Christology without the cross. Considering theopaschism to be an integral part of the Christian faith, the Scythians

saw its omission as a very serious problem. This was because excluding the theopaschite element from Christological doctrine could be viewed as tantamount to a rejection of the Gospel in all its fullness. Therefore, the Scythians wanted to repair the Chalcedonian *Horos* by filling this serious doctrinal lacuna. However, when they actually dared to remind the Church about theopaschite teaching, they were accused of seeking to foist something novel onto existing doctrine.[23] In order to answer to such accusations, they were obliged to explain with the utmost clarity the underlying premises of theological argumentation itself.

First of all, the monks stressed that in their argumentation they were referring to authors already recognized by, and in the context of, Church Tradition as orthodox and authoritative teachers. Therefore, they were not introducing anything new that would contradict orthodox doctrine. Secondly, they explained the difference between novelty or, as they called it, 'augmentation' (*augmentum*), explanation (*explanatio*), and corruption (*corruptio*) of the theological faith. They asserted that the Catholic faith not only does not need any augmentation, but also cannot in fact receive any such thing, as it is perfect and complete in everything, while only something imperfect could do so. What, however, the Catholic faith can be in need of is explanation. Thus, as and when required, there could be instances of addition in the form of explanations of faith. Still, we should be concerned about the possibility of introducing some additional and new content that in itself is not an explanation but rather a corruption of faith, or that contradicts it.[24] Just as Cyril and Leon did not perform any augmentation or addition, but instead simply explained and defended Catholic faith, being in agreement with the Symbol of Faith and the Holy Fathers, so in the same way the Scythians did not undertake any augmentation, but rather drew upon the words of the Holy Fathers mentioned by the Council itself.[25] Thirdly, the Scythians strongly objected to the claim that nothing should be said beyond what had been expressed by Council. They pointed to the fact that there were many things not covered by the Council or pronounced in any canonical Scripture that we nevertheless absolutely do not hesitate to speak about or assert: for example the Trinity, the Father's being unbegotten, and several others.[26]

In accordance with those three premises, the Scythians, in their *Libellus Fidei*, presented their take on the theopaschite doctrine. Their principal declaration, to the effect that they believed that the 'Word of God, the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who for us suffered in the flesh, is one of the three hypostases of the one Deity (*unum de tribus subsistentiis unius deitatis*)', was substantiated by providing arguments based on the Greek and Latin Fathers. The argumentation

[23] See Dioscorus' correspondence with Pope Hormisdas in *Dioscori Diaconi ad Hormisdam*, *Ep*. 224 in Coll. Avel. (CSEL 35.2: 686).

[24] Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* I.1.9–II.2.27.

[25] Ibid., II.3.27–43; III.4.43–IV.6.71.

[26] Ibid., IV.8.85–93.

consists of two parts. In its first part, it seeks to demonstrate that in the West and East (i.e., throughout the entire Church) a belief reigned to the effect that one of the Trinity was crucified. The second part then goes on to lend further support to this, showing that in the East and the West it was accepted as orthodox doctrine that Mary was the mother of the true God, who was one of the Trinity.

The first part starts with the Scythian monks presenting the relevant material from Augustine. To be sure, the latter did not explicitly claim that one of the Trinity was crucified or suffered in the flesh, but, according to the Scythians, he did nevertheless assert that Christ is both: He is 'from the Trinity' (*ex trinitate*) and 'One of the Three' (*unus trium*). Moreover, the monks point to the fact that Augustine, in his works, poses such questions as, for instance, whether it can be the case that when any One of the Three is named in connection with a certain divine action, the whole Trinity should be understood to be involved in that action, whether God appeared to our forefathers in some more undefined way prior to Christ's appearing in the flesh, or whether it was a definite person of the Trinity that did so—or, for that matter, whether persons from the Trinity may appear in sequence, so to speak, one after the other. Augustine also stated that it is unclear whether one person of the Trinity, or God Himself as the Trinity, appeared to Abraham.[27]

Obviously, those claims and questions are insufficient, to say the least, when it comes to furnishing the basis for a proper explication of Augustine's thought on the subject. However, in the Scythians' opinion, the words of Augustine can be explained and clarified by viewing them in the light of the teaching expressed by Proclus the Patriarch of Constantinople (434–46). Hence, they present the texts by Proclus in which he most clearly explains that the Christ who was crucified was One from the Trinity. According to Proclus, the One who was incarnated (*incarnatus*) was the very same One who was crucified (*crucifixus*), for the cross is the cause of incarnation. Therefore, the One from the Trinity who became flesh also suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh. Proclus underlines that the One of the Trinity suffered and was crucified in *His flesh*, and *not in the same essence* and *Divinity* that He shares with, and which unites Him with, the Father and the Spirit. In other words, it firstly is not that the entire Trinity suffered in the flesh, but just One of the Three, and secondly, even though One of the Trinity suffered and was crucified, the nature of the Trinity remained passionless.[28]

It is in the light of Proclus' account that the questions asked by Augustine can be given clear answers, and it is also evident that Proclus' teaching is not foreign to Augustine's thought. Thus, it can be justifiably regarded as a voice of the entire Church Tradition. In the Scythians' opinion, disagreeing with the teaching so lucidly

[27] Ibid., IX.14.185–16.206, referring respectively to Augustine, *Enhiridion* XII.38 and *De Trininitate*. II 9.16, 10.19. For '*ex trinitate*' in Augustine, see De Trinitate II 9.16, 10.19, 15.26; III, proem. 3; for '*unus trium*' — *Enhiridion* XII.38.

[28] Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* X.17.207–19.248, citing Proclus, *De fide* 3.

formulated and argued for by Proclus would be comparable to accepting the Sabellian account of the Trinity, which in fact proclaimed one hypostasis for the latter in its (the Trinity's) entirety.[29] On the other hand, rejecting the truth that Christ is both One of the Trinity and He who suffered for us in the flesh would be tantamount to rejecting yet another theological truth unambiguously acclaimed by the Church tradition—namely, that which states that the Virgin Mary was the mother of the true God. This then brings us to the second part of the Scythians' argumentation.

As has already been explained, the Scythians accepted Proclus' highly logical argument that the One who was crucified was the very same One who was incarnated. In other words, the One who was crucified was the very same One believed to be born from the Virgin Mary. Therefore, if we do not hold that it was One of the Trinity that was crucified, it follows that we cannot, at one and the same time, believe that the One who was incarnated was One of the Trinity. Consequently, we would be challenging the core doctrine of Christology itself: namely, that Jesus Christ who was born from the Holy Virgin is a true human, given his humanity as received from the Virgin Mary, and a true God by virtue of His very nature as the incarnated Word of God the Father.

The Scythians thus took care to show that the entire Church as represented by such authorities as Cyril of Alexandria and Pope Leo had accepted the truth that the Jesus Christ given birth to by the Virgin Mary as a human was also the true God, and thus the incarnated second hypostasis of the Trinity. The very same Christ was crucified — i.e., the second hypostasis of the Trinity itself suffered in the flesh and died. Moreover, both of the aforementioned ecclesiastical authorities had maintained the opinion that the incarnated Word of God as a true human became subject to suffering and (the laws of) mortality, was crucified and died in the flesh, and was made first-born from among the dead.[30]

Summing up, we may say that the Scythian monks managed to show that the theopaschite doctrine proposed by them was hardly a novelty, but rather an established and essential part of Christology. On the one hand, it was a logical consequence that followed from acceptance of such theological truths fully acclaimed by the Church as the Divinity of Christ and the doctrine of Theotokos, and on the other, it had already been accepted and implicitly affirmed by even the highest theological authorities of the Church as a whole. Thus, theopaschism was not to be passed over, so much as recovered and reinstituted within Christological discourse, and this so that Chalcedonian doctrine could itself be properly understood—through

[29] Maxentius, *Libellus fidei* XI.20.249–63.

[30] Ibid., XI.21.263–XIII.26.339, citing and referring to Cyril, *Scholia de incarnatione Unigeniti* IV (ACO I, V–I, p. 186, 16/181; *Epistula 17 (ad Nestorium)* anath. α′ and ιβ′ (ACO I, I–I, p. 40, 22/24, p. 42, 3/5; I, I–V, p. 16, 29/30, p. 25, 13/15; I, I–VI, p. 111, 17/19, p. 144, 15/17); Chalcedon, Definitio fidei 34 (ACO II, I–II, p. (325) 129, 27/29); Leo I, *Epistula 28* 2 and 4 (ACO II, II–I, p. 25, 13/20, p. 28, 5/6).

being viewed from the perspective of a complete and orthodox Christology in all its integral entirety.

Conclusions

So what can we ourselves take from this Scythian endeavor? What is there about this that could prove useful and relevant for us?

First of all, I must point to the obvious: for them there were no two traditions or two churches. They treated Latin and Greek theological teachings as forming just one tradition and also viewed the entire Catholic Church as one. Secondly, it needs to be stressed that the Scythians came up with their proposal at a time when a schism that lasted for 35 years was still in force. Therefore, the argument to the effect that one hardly can speak at all about one Tradition of one Church after the Great Schism seems less than persuasive. Thirdly, even though the Scythians recognized the Catholic Faith as a perfect one, they did not hesitate to stress that at a certain point the Church's teaching was in need of further explanation in respect of its own doctrine. My fourth point would be that this need for further explanation, in the opinion of Scythian monks, was not to be understood as requiring the introduction of any novelty into the existing Tradition, but rather consisted in a recapitulation and a new verbalization of what had already been put forward in the context of the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, this should not be construed as implying that the Scythians brought nothing new to the table. The monks did indeed express in a clear way what they saw as growing from the Tradition, and as being a necessary corollary of already accepted truths. Their argumentation was, moreover, built on the basis of the multiple voices of different Church Fathers, representing the entirety of Church Tradition. And it is not that they failed to see the differences that existed between the various authors they invoked. Nevertheless, they saw them as different voices or instruments — ones that, put together, constitute a symphony, where it is the sound of the orchestra as a whole that shows the idea of the composer, determining the line or melody sung by a particular voice or played by a certain instrument. What is also important is that there is no single author — not even the most authoritative and holy — whose teaching could be held equivalent to the whole tradition (much as there is no single voice or instrument equal to an entire symphony, in which it plays only a part assigned in the score). Each author must be experienced and interpreted through the prism of the Tradition that alone can afford a proper interpretative perspective, and as just one of the plurality of voices making up the entirety of ecclesiastical doctrine.

So what should we do if we want to be members of one Church? The answer, if it is to be in accordance with the Scythians' account, should be that we ought not to forget about our differences. Rather, we should inspect and interpret our theo-

logical positions and views from the viewpoint of the totality of the Tradition and the entirety of the one Catholic faith. If one wants to be a member of one Church, one should start to think and behave as if there were indeed only one Church, one Tradition, and one Truth. For no matter how much we may disagree with each other, there is one Christ, who is One of the Trinity and who was incarnated and suffered in the flesh for us all.

Beauty is the Church's Unity: Supernatural Finality, Aesthetics, and Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue

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The subject of church unity can be approached through the nature/grace question. The Catholic and Orthodox communions are joined by their shared recognition of supernatural finality. It underscores their shared ontology (despite a recent assertion that they have become ontologically different). This paper takes up Rowan Williams's implicit claim that their shared stance on the nature/grace question gives the two communions a common understanding of beauty as well. The approach to beauty of Catholic and Orthodox artists reveals ecumenically meaningful shared theological commitments. To reflect on beauty in the context of fraught ecumenical discussions is to resist modernity's fact-value split, in which questions of beauty might well seem secondary to more practical and pressingly specific issues of difference confronting the two communions. Building on Williams's conjunction of ecumenism and beauty, the paper highlights two instantiations of a Christian aesthetic: the emerging consensus that the Church needs a pope who sees himself as the servus servorum Dei; and the historic determination of the positive implications for the arts of the Incarnation. To reflect on beauty in the search for greater visible unity, as Pope Benedict and others have recently stressed, is to turn to a resource of encouragement and hope.

The doctrine of supernatural finality (the nature/grace question) is relevant to ecumenism, and understanding Christian aesthetics is relevant to understanding the relationship between nature and grace. The nature/grace question always alerts us to ontological issues. When Patriarch Bartholomew says, heartbreakingly, that the churches in the East and West have become 'ontologically different', he signals the relevance of reflection on the relationship between nature and grace.[1] In that context, we can talk meaningfully about aesthetics, and need to do so, even though questions of beauty can seem esoteric, while the challenges facing Orthodox-Catholic dialogue are, by contrast, practical and specific. Beauty is central to the Church's self-understanding.

[1] Bartholomew I, '*Phos Hilaron*: Address at Georgetown University (21st October, 1997)', http://www.oocities.org/trvalentine/orthodox/bartholomew_phos.html, qtd in A. Edward Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate*, (New York: Oxford UP, 2017), 411.

Ultimately, in this essay I express hope that the churches in the East and West have *not* become ontologically different, but I will take an indirect route to doing so. I will first elucidate Rowan Williams's work on aesthetics as making the claim that their shared understanding of the relationship between nature and grace draws the Orthodox and Catholics together in terms of their aesthetic commitments. Williams is tacitly (and tactfully) making an ecumenical claim about the two communions in his treatment of aesthetic issues. I will then go on to press the notion that, in beauty, the Orthodox and Catholics can find that they have much in common. The modern acknowledgement of the need for a pope, sheltered by the shared understanding that he must see himself as the *servus servorum Dei*, bears traces of Augustine's revision of the classical understanding of revelatory beauty. The ancient recognition of the implications of the Incarnation for the arts, meanwhile, was and remains a powerful expression of common belief even as forces undermining the Church's unity were gathering. Under the pressure of modernity's fact-value split, questions of beauty can seem to be of secondary importance. Yet meditation on the Church's beauty—which, after all, is bound up with the goal of *visible* unity—and its persistent deep reflection upon and affirmation of beauty, can be a source of great encouragement and hope in the context of mapping the *una sancta*.

In three book-length meditations on art, Rowan Williams tacitly makes an ecumenical suggestion: that ecumenical dialogue may depend on the joint recovery or elevation of the nature/grace question. In *Lost Icons* (2000), *Grace and Necessity* (2005), and *Dostoevsky* (2008), the former Archbishop approaches questions of art alternately from an Orthodox and a Catholic perspective.[2] Throughout, he explains aesthetics in terms of nature and grace. He suggests that we need both Catholic and Orthodox perspectives to understand aesthetics properly and that, in its turn, meditation on beauty (and attentiveness to theological art) helps to deepen our appreciation of the mystery of supernatural finality that we affirm in common. Put another way, their commonality on a sacramental ontology is more fundamental than those questions that divide them.

The nature/grace question is crucial to our understanding our being-in-the-world and our representation of reality, our witness, to the world. In Williams's Dostoevsky book, these issues come to a head in the Russian novelist's attitude towards papal authority. 'Dostoevsky might well have claimed that a good Catholic, by his definition, could not write a good novel', says Williams.[3] This claim has to

[2] To focus on these three works is not to discount the related significance of other books by Williams written in this time period, like his meditations on praying with icons of Christ, *The Dwelling of the Light* (2003), and of the Virgin Mary, *Ponder These Things* (2006). This essay makes no attempt to characterise Williams's tireless work on ecumenical dialogue as a whole. I do note, though, that in his address at a conference to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 2010, Williams focused on the *idea* of unity and, in this way, on ontological considerations. Archbishop's address at 50th anniversary of PCPCU', 17th November 2010, http://aoc2013.brix.fatbeehive.com/articles.php/803/archbishops-address-at-50th-anniversary-of-pcpcu.

[3] Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction* (Waco: Baylor UP, 2007), 13.

do with the capacity to represent religious uncertainty 'held or healed within a narrative of the interaction of persons'.[4] Such a narrative can authoritatively point 'to a mended universe'[5] just because of what it makes 'morally and imaginatively possible'.[6] A good novel, the kind of novel a Catholic apparently could not write, is a dialogical, polyphonous novel. It has a quality of invitation about it; it points to a mended universe.

How and why does it do that? That is the nature/grace question. Dialogue depends on the presence of another to whom I can respond, even though my response may be one of contradiction. Dialogue yields freedom, not freedom *from* all others, but freedom arising out of the presence of the other addressing me, challenging me further to define my position, to define myself. At the same time, dialogue requires that we make ourselves recognizable to one another. Recognition is possible 'because we are all at the most basic level of our being made to resonate with the interdependent life of a universe that is addressed and sustained by a Word from God'.[7] That is a fine Trinitarian formulation on Williams's part. I become more myself, more free, as I respond to the other, a process that attests interdependence and, obliquely, resonance. Dialogue yields a more robust picture of freedom than the individualism of modernity that must inevitably see all others as a threat, and it invites reflection on dialogue as analogical or as participation-in a greater reality that enables and enhances the reality of this dialogical realm itself.

In apologetic as well as novelistic terms, importantly, we can deny that any such resonance, any dependency, is operative: 'The fiction is like the world itself — proposed for acceptance and understanding but unable to compel them, since compulsion would make it impossible for the creator to appear as the creator of freedom'.[8]

Freedom, in this apologetic, is paramount. Nonetheless, Dostoevsky's strategy of polyphony, spelled out in the analysis of the novels, yields a picture of the relationship between nature and grace for those willing to accept it.

Williams describes the relationship in Orthodox terms similarly in *Lost Icons*. In this work of cultural criticism, representation as an artistic concern again figures prominently. An icon, Williams tells us, presents a figure or group of figures against a background of gold, which is 'a source of illumination independent of them',[9] yet gives them their definition and distinctness: 'the point of the icon is to give us a window into an alien frame of reference that is at the same time the structure that will make definitive sense of the world we inhabit'.[10] (Williams here offers another fine

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 14.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 12.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Rowan Williams, *Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 2.
[10] Ibid.

formulation of the paradoxical relationship between nature and grace, and I do not know to whom I ought to be more grateful for drawing me further into this mystery, the Orthodox iconographer or Williams the commentator.) The point applies to the way images work in Dostoevsky's novels. They are not there for stage-setting, but rather offer 'basic theological perspectives on creation and incarnation'.[11]

Dialogism and the imagery of icons alike reinforce the sense of dependency without control. It is in this context that Williams folds in Dostoevsky's view of the Church and why a Catholic cannot be a good novelist. The problem consists in what Dostoevsky, following Orthodox theologians, sees as a secularising move on the part of Catholics:

> Appealing not to the free consensus of persons united in the Body of Christ but to a supreme executive authority, the papacy, … simply by being a supreme executive, becomes a monarchy on the model of other monarchies, and so sets itself up as a rival *political* power.[12]

Doing so destroys the tension, the mystery, of a dialogical reality that resonates with the interdependent life of a universe addressed by God.

Given the chequered history of Catholic interpretation of the nature/grace question, so well told by Henri de Lubac,[13] and the rise of Neo-Scholasticism,[14] Dostoevsky is not necessarily wrong. For Williams, however, certain Catholic artists evince a similar concern to preserve the mystery of supernatural finality.[15] The novelist rescues language and enacts freedom by creating space that 'represents' the way the world's creator 'generates dependence without control'.[16] In his book *Grace and Necessity* (2005), Williams proposes that the Catholic artists Flannery O'Connor and David Jones achieve something very similar. They share an ontology much like Dostoevsky's, though one gleaned from the writings of Jacques Maritain. Rowan describes Maritain's approach to the nature/grace question in the following way:

> Maritain, in terms of the theological politics of the period, stood very much alongside those who argued that if grace were really to be God's free gift, the

[11] Williams, *Dostoevsky*, 13.

[12] Ibid., emphasis his.

[13] Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études Historiques* ([1946], [Paris: Lethielleux, 1991]); see also Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

[14] For a brief introduction to Neo-Scholasticism, its tendencies, and its effects, see Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), esp. 107–12, 157–64.

[15] In *Dostoevsky*, Williams allows that 'how the holy is represented' may be '*more readily* intelligible in an Eastern Christian than in a Western (Catholic or Protestant) framework'. Williams, *Dostoevsky*, 13 (emphasis mine). However, that is not to say it is not intelligible in a Western framework *at all*. Williams suggests as much when he admits that Dostoevsky's 'opposition to Roman Catholicism is often as intemperate as it is ill-informed'. Ibid., 14.

[16] Ibid., 12.

> distinction between the natural order of creation and the added dimension of grace had to be absolutely clear. But…it would be wrong to think of him as defending a static idea of human activities with goals that are intrinsically unrelated to God. His concern is to suggest how apparently unrelated goals can be understood coherently, so as to avoid that trivializing of human agency that occurs when theological judgements are invoked at the wrong level.[17]

Here one sees again the centrality of supernatural finality and, in that context, the union of creaturely freedom and dependency. Humans have genuine agency; and their goals are not intrinsically unrelated to God.

Coming down where he does on the nature/grace question, Maritain helps Catholic artists to see that they have the capacity to reveal hidden dimensions of reality that ordinary forms of analysis and description fail to represent. The inner life of an object resonates with one's own sense of it as an artist. The language of metaphor is inescapable. Mimesis consists not in holding up a mirror to nature but in creative redescription such that previously unknown patterns emerge. Both Jones and O'Connor fold Maritain's aesthetic into their art.[18] Williams especially draws out the emphasis on the freedom of characters within a story. The treatment of characterisation in O'Connor's 'A Good Man is Hard to Find' closely resembles Dostoevsky's achievement in his novels.[19] The rhythm of the characters' interactions with one another uncovers 'a consonance that is well beyond any felt harmony or system of explanation but is simply a coherence and connectedness always more than can be seen or expressed'.[20] That dialogical resonance, even between two characters one of whom is about to shoot the other, preserves the mystery of creaturely freedom within a context of an even more fundamental dependency. For Williams, a particular way of construing the nature/grace question unites Orthodox and Catholic aesthetic projects.

A form of the nature/grace question unites Eastern and Western thought elsewhere in Williams too. He has been working in an ecumenical vein ever since his doctoral thesis. In that early work, he promotes Augustine's reading of the *imago trinitatis* to shield the Church Father from interpretations that characterise him as a rationalistic theologian.[21] He is rather a foundational source for a theology of *ek-stasis*.[22] Augustine's trinitarian theology tends towards the mystical and relational.

[17] Rowan Williams, *Grace and Necessity: Reflections on Art and Love*, (London: Continuum, 2005), 10.

[18] In this work, Williams takes care to correct an overly hierarchical view of Maritain's politics. He may already have a view to Dostoevsky's concerns on this point. Ibid., 7.

[19] Ibid., 102–8.

[20] Ibid., 100.

[21] Rowan Williams, 'The Theology of Vladimir Nikolaievich Lossky: An Exposition and Critique'. D.Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1975, http://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:15b86a5d-21f4-44a3-95bb-b8543d326658, esp. 122–28.

[22] Ibid., 81–89.

Williams distinguishes sharply, though not unkindly, between that and the rationalism that Lossky would ascribe to the Western Father.[23]

On the one hand, one can only be grateful for the emphasis on mystical theology in Orthodox Christianity. It represents a plea for wholeness. Mysticism must accompany and augment considerations which are otherwise arid and rationalistic. Western thought is susceptible to such one-sidedness. Not only does mysticism complement reason, it is a dimension of what reason is, properly understood. On the other hand, Augustine is a person in the West who well represents the respect for wholeness and the mystical vision, as Williams shows. Augustine's trinitarian theology illustrates the centrality of supernatural finality. For Williams, the point is that Augustine is more a source of likeness than unlikeness between the two communions. The Church, as a whole—East and West—has wrestled with the problem of rationalism. In connection with the emphasis on likeness, one thinks also of the burden of de Lubac's argument in *Surnaturel* and the magnificent closing chapter in praise of Augustine in *Corpus Mysticum*. I note with keenness Siecienski's mention of the latter book in the surge of *rapprochement* in mid-twentieth-century East-West discussions.[24] For de Lubac, as for Nicholas Afanasiev, Eucharist and Church are linked. In Siecienski's telling, this common emphasis fosters dialogue in the context of a fresh, shared return to the sources.

The Orthodox and Catholic communions have in common, I read in Siecienski, apostolic succession, priesthood, and the eucharist.[25] Appreciation of supernatural finality constitutes another point of commonality. Despite 'theological politics' and diverging views among Catholics, and presumably among the Orthodox, there is an identifiable tradition shared by both of these groups, and by others too. It has been recovered in Catholicism by *nouvelle théologie* and further described by Williams, John Milbank, and others.[26] Donald Allchin, Williams's doctoral supervisor, draws extensively on Orthodox theologians to remind Anglicans of its relevance in their tradition as well.[27] A (recovered) shared sensitivity to our intrinsic need of grace, to participation in God, to supernatural finality has made ours a fresh moment for ecumenical dialogue. Furthermore, ironically, the best picture that we have of the relationship between nature and grace is the Church, even when, like in the O'Connor story, it looks like someone is about to shoot someone else.

Our goal, then, is visible unity, though not a unity achieved in a 'secularising' way. In 2005 and in 2006 Benedict stated and reaffirmed his commitment to 'rebuild-

[23] For a more modern example of this tendency, see John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 100.

[24] Siecienski, *Papacy*, 381–82.

[25] *Unitatis Redintegratio*; Eng. trans: Tanner, ed., Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils 2, 916, qtd in Siecienski, 389.

[26] John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[27] A.M. Allchin, *Participation in God: A Forgotten Strand in Anglican Theology*, (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow, 1988).

ing the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers'.[28] He echoes statements in John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* that likewise stress *visible* unity.[29] The question is whether the presence of a pope necessarily represents a secularising move. In Dostoevsky's novels, 'the free consensus of persons united in the body of Christ' is inherently attractive. The dialogical body suggests a resonance with a transcendent source from which it seems to emerge, distinct and free though dependent. It does so in Catholic writers like O'Connor as well. In claiming that Catholic artists are capable of enacting the nature/grace synthesis, Williams seems to be suggesting that the mere presence of a pope is not determinative. The Church still has the ability to be beautiful and to body forth the mysterious relationship between nature and grace. In fact, one can go further and say that our *present* reality is unity on some level: 'I believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church'.

'Visible unity' involves a double gesture towards beauty. (1) visibility—*id quod placet visum*—is Aquinas's famous definition of beauty. The unity of the Church is pleasing to behold. (2) To apprehend unity—to perceive the coherence, the wholeness, the form of a thing—is to have an aesthetic encounter. Visibility and unity combine in Balthasar's phrase 'seeing the form'. The form is Christ. We are the body of Christ, we make Christ visible.

The notion of being beautiful, of being that which pleases when seen, ought to give the Church incentive and energy to work towards this goal. Examples of the power of beauty can help. Here are two. The first is an excerpt from *The Bell* by Iris Murdoch, impenitent Platonist though she is. In it the protagonist Dora has escaped to the National Gallery to reflect on a complicated situation in a lay Anglican community in which she finds herself. The visit turns into a meditation on the power of beauty:

> Dora had been in the National Gallery a thousand times and the pictures were almost as familiar to her as her own face….She wandered a little, watching with compassion the poor visitors armed with guide books who were peering anxiously at the masterpieces. Dora did not need to peer. She could look, as one can at last when one knows a great thing very well, confronting it with a dignity which it has itself conferred….It occurred to her that here at last was something real and something perfect….Here was something which her consciousness could not wretchedly devour, and by making it part of her fantasy

[28] Pope Benedict XVI, 'Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity', Friday 17th November, 2006. https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20061117_pc-chrstuni.html. Benedict opens this address by quoting this statement from the previous year. 'Initial Message of Pope Benedict XVI', 20th April 2005, *L'Osservatoro Romano* English edition, 27th April 2005, 4.

[29] Siecienski, *Papacy*, 410. Williams likewise emphasises visible unity in his address at the 50th anniversary of PCPCU: '…the life of the Church called to be *visibly one* in the one Lord, *visibly one* with his one prayer to the Father, *visibly one* in the common search for holiness'. Williams, 'Archbishop's Address', np (emphasis his).

> make it worthless….The pictures were something real outside herself, which spoke to her kindly and yet in sovereign tones, something superior and good whose presence destroyed the dreary trance-like solipsism of her earlier mood.[30]

Mapping the *una sancta* involves recognising that we are the masterpiece. The beauty of our unity confers a dignity upon onlookers, as well as the promise of a reality beyond their dreary solipsism, beyond that which their consciousness can wretchedly devour. In the midst of our activity, we do well to recognise that our goal is, in part, the passivity of a beautiful object. We have tremendous incentive to be beautiful, and ought to take much solace in knowing that we already are. We will qualify this Platonic apprehension in a moment, but it has a place in our ambitions.

A different sort of example comes from a painting done by van Gogh done in 1889 near Arles in the south of France. It was included in an unusual show called 'Mystical Landscapes' at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Curated with the help of theologians (hence its unusualness), it attracted unexpectedly large audiences, as it did in the Musée d'Orsay to which it travelled. The intensely moving picture of the olive trees was at the centre of a disagreement Van Gogh had with his friend Paul Gaughin. Responding to Gaughin's picture of Christ weeping in Gethsemane, Van Gogh said, 'When I want to think about Gethsemane, I look for an olive orchard. You don't need to put Christ in the picture'.[31] There is an old slippery slope here that has incarnational thinkers like John of Damascus at the top end and Matthew Arnold at the bottom, but Van Gogh is arguably articulating the mystery of the relationship between nature and grace. The presence of the *Logos* cannot be manipulated as a conceptualisation. Our unity cannot be achieved as a manipulation. Our beauty must be a participation in the divine life that necessarily is bound up with mystery. Whatever *could* be read as secularising, the depiction of mere olive trees, the presence of an executive structure, can also be seen as caught up in cruciform energies and dependent upon supernatural finality. The art of both can only extend an invitation.

Perfection of form means something different to Christians, East and West, than it does to the ancient Greeks. Von Balthasar spells out the development in a memorable paragraph on Augustine from his essay on revelation and the beautiful. Augustine is regarded as the founder of Christian aesthetics 'through the measure and current…of a pastoral office with its humiliations'.[32] 'The most christian objects

[30] Iris Murdoch, *The Bell* ([1958], [London: Penguin, 2001]), 174–75.

[31] 03_MysticalLandscapes_VanGoghTheOliveTrees_Final.mp3. This soundfile from the exhibit has since been removed from the internet. Lead curator Katharine Lochnan discusses the disagreement in a piece by CBC News. Jessica Wong, 'Mystical Landscapes brings Monet, van Gogh masterpieces to Toronto', CBC News, 21st October, 2016 https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/mystical-landscapes-brings-monet-van-gogh-masterpieces-to-toronto-1.3814343.

[32] Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'Revelation and the Beautiful', *Word and Revelation: Essays in Theology I* (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1964), 121–63; at 130.

art depicts are precisely the least esthetic ones:' he goes on to write: 'the ignominy of the passion, the repugnant facts of martyrdom'.[33] For Balthasar, Christian ideas of beauty are rooted in suffering and abnegation, which constitute cruciform going-out-from-oneself. David Bentley Hart likewise reads Augustine in a deeply positive way. For him, the Augustinian aesthetic issues in the infinite revisability of a self grounded in the divine being:

> The interiority that opens up in the *Confessions* possesses no center in itself, nor does it depend upon an idea in relation to which it is a shadow tormented by its simulacral drift; instead, it is an infinitely revisable, multiplicit, self-contradictory text, whose creaturely contingency is restless in its longing, founded in nothing, and open to what it cannot own by nature.[34]

Hart here expresses the mystery of self-transcendence. It produces an aesthetic that he places in direct contrast with that of Nietzsche. Nietzsche exalts the classical virtues of nobility. He has no place for a gospel narrative that can include 'the tears of a rustic' like Peter.[35] They 'could appear only grotesque from the vantage of a classical, noble aesthetic'.[36]

We can be energised by the call to Christian unity in the knowledge that that unity entails a bearing of witness. At the same time, Christian beauty always involves the way of the cross. If we are unified, it is in our self-sacrificial service. One of the most encouraging themes of Siecienski's book is the papacy's desire again to embrace the slogan *servus servorom Dei*.[37] One sees this in the *Communio* emphasis on the papacy as '"a power which is pastoral and oriented toward service" and in particular the service of unity'[38] and John Paul II's description of the pope as the '"first servant of unity"'.[39]

In a great irony, the time of the iconoclasm controversy coincides with the growing separation of East and West. The approval of images represents a significant milestone in the Church's understanding of the gospel. As Aidan Nichols says, 'A faith based on divine Incarnation will eventually find expression in the realm of the *visible*'.[40] The Second Council of Nicaea emphasises this point. Ambrosios Giakalis writes that 'The iconophiles…sought through the icon to enable the holy to permeate the material world….On the deepest theological level the iconoclast con-

[33] Ibid., 131.

[34] David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 114.

[35] Ibid., 125.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Siecienski, *Papacy*, 369.

[38] Ibid., 395.

[39] Ibid., 410.

[40] Aidan Nichols, *Redeeming Beauty: Soundings in Sacral Aesthetics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 21 (emphasis mine).

troversy was about deification'.[41] That Council contributes decisively to Christianity's understanding of its relationship to culture and to the puzzle that is the nature/grace question. (I've always found it striking that John Milbank uses as an epigraph to *The Suspended Middle* the filmmaker Robert Bresson's quip, 'Le Surnaturel, c'est du réel précis'.[42]) The Incarnation induces the Church to arrive at a point in its history that unifies it in terms of visibility.[43]

It is astonishing that, at the same time, the Church should be moving towards schism. The issue is ontological. Tantalisingly, the Church is working out its theology of beauty in ways that unite East and West; at the same time, in Siecienski's narrative, it is inscribing fixed reference points that look and feel like instantiations of *natura pura*.[44] The question of the papacy is about visible politics, geographical boundaries, offices. These matters would seem to be about earthly realities, but is that necessarily to secularise? One wonders if the categories are accorded a status according to the logic of *natura pura*, accorded a level of reality they do not possess. Daniel Sahas suggests something along these lines when he says that Leo III took actions that 'made the jurisdictional borders of the Church coincide with the borders of the State. The Church was now defined in terms of the *imperium*. From "catholic" in the theological sense, meaning whole, encompassing, and all-inclusive, the Church

[41] Ambrosios Giakalis, *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 3. Catholic theologian Michael Patella agrees with this emphasis on deification or divinization. Michael Patella, *Word and Image*: *The Hermeneutics of the St John's Bible* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013), xii, 10.

[42] Milbank, *Suspended Middle*, ix.

[43] In the introduction to his English translation of the Definition (*horos*) and other texts related to the controversy, Daniel Sahas writes, 'The theology of the icon, and its reaffirmation, was another manifestation of the "catholicity", that is of the wholeness of truth, that the Church embodies. That is why the victory of the Church over the issue of the icons was hailed in 843 as a triumph of "Orthodoxy" for the entire Christian Church'. Daniel J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1986), 30. Andrew Louth likewise emphasises the overwhelming importance of the episode: 'Christian worship throughout Christendom articulated a sense that the worshippers on earth were joining in their worship of God with all the saints who had lived on earth before them….The Triumph of Orthodoxy in the Byzantine Empire meant that there was an officially enunciated theory about the significance of icons—they were no mere illustrations, but windows on to heaven, mediating between the earthly worshippers and the saints in glory¼'. Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681–1071* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 198. Elsewhere, though, he describes the situation in such a way as to accentuate the distinctness of the Eastern Church: 'The emergence from the period of iconoclasm of an Eastern theology of the nature, and indeed necessity, of Christian art meant that the development of Christian art in the East was guided by a much more clearly articulated theology than the development of Christian art in the West from the Carolingian period onwards'. Ibid., 8. Louth, however, is quick to make the following qualification: 'This, added to the way in which iconoclasm had led to estrangement between the papacy and the Byzantine emperor just when the papacy needed military support against the Lombards, forcing the papacy into the arms of the emerging Carolingians, means that the iconoclast controversy marks a crucial point in the deepening estrangement between Greek East and Latin West that would eventually lead to the Great Schism'. Ibid., 8–9. One wonders whether the latter point is not the more determinative one. That the default position in the West seems to have been iconodule does not in itself argue for a distinction between East and West on the theology involved. The East may nonetheless have come to a more considered appreciation of the implications for art and culture of the Incarnation for having gone through this searching process.

[44] Siecienski, *Papacy*, 207–19.

becomes "catholic" in the political sense, that is "universal"'.[45] One wonders whether the debate at this time, in Dostoevsky's, or in our own represents a failure to apply the insights of the iconoclasm controversy regarding the relationship between nature and grace to the issues dividing the Church.[46]

That is, the affirmation of images implies the strangeness of the implications of the Incarnation. Yet the oddness seems not to have been put into the sort of comprehensive frame of reference that theologians of supernatural finality encourage. When one reads Siecienski's pages on this time period, the two controversies lie side by side, but do not appear to affect one another. The iconoclasm controversy is one thing, the growing unease about papal jurisdiction another. The terms of reference, however, suggest cross-over. The very idea of representation, understood incarnationally, is destabilised and, with it, whatever is meant by 'geography', 'politics', or even 'Rome'.[47] This effect of the iconoclasm controversy itself does not seem to cross over to contemporary (in both senses) anxieties about the papacy.

Perhaps Sergei Bulgakov's analysis of the iconoclasm controversy accounts for the lack of interaction. Bulgakov tells us that the iconophiles did the Church no favours. In Aidan Nichols's summary, Bulgakov found Nicaea's key doctrinal statement 'insufficiently connected with the main corpus of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine issuing from the earlier ecumenical Councils'.[48] For the Russian theologian, the iconophile arguments depend on assumptions that tend in iconoclast directions. He addresses the lack by supplying a sophiological metaphysic: 'Bulgakov selects a concept at once biblical and philosophical — namely, wisdom, in order to lay out a theology of beauty in nature and grace'.[49] Bulgakov (and, through him, Nichols) is supplying a hint of how questions of beauty and representation were and are bound up with the Church's unfolding understanding of its core doctrines.

Nichols, meanwhile, in making 'soundings in sacral aesthetics' in both Eastern and Western sources, like Williams tacitly wants to draw the two communions together. Sacral aesthetics remind us that our discourse is always in need of purification in a manner that reminds us of the constant temptation to look at and think about reality in reductive ways. We misstep in our participation in the divine dance;

[45] Sahas, *Icon and Logos*, 29–30.

[46] Jaroslav Pelikan draws attention to this problem, in a way, in his Mellon lectures when he puts heavy emphasis on the relationship between religion and politics in describing 'the context'. Jaroslav Pelikan, 'The Context: Religion and "Realpolitik" Byzantine Style', in *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), 7–39.

[47] For an account of the nomenclature surrounding 'Rome', see Pelikan, *Imago Dei*, 29–30. "'The fathers rightly granted privileges to the throne of Old Rome, because it was the royal city". Therefore, the ecclesiastical position of Old Rome was derived from its political position as the capital of the Roman Empire. From that it would necessarily follow that Constantinople, as the new "royal city", was now entitled to "equal privileges"'. Ibid., 30. Admittedly, such considerations do not necessarily rise, in Pelikan's suggestion, to the level of poetry or ontology.

[48] Nichols, *Redeeming Beauty*, 72.

[49] Ibid., 74.

our mental energies flag. Beauty reminds us of this, of the goal as well as the already present reality of our being-in-the-world.

Questions of art open onto the mystery of nature/grace. They matter wherever questions of politics, geography, and our being-in-the-world are at issue. They matter precisely where Patriarch Bartholomew can say East and West have grown 'ontologically different'. That statement, as shocking as it may have been on the day it was uttered and as heartbreaking as it is to read, may represent a breakthrough. To identify ontology as a descriptor of the two communions potentially puts issues of schism where they can be got at otherwise. One of those ways is through the arts.

To countenance 'the arts' is not a question merely of decoration, but it does have practical dimensions. Williams and Nichols suggest one of these in writing on nature and grace with reference to artists. Artists can be theologians. Saying so convincingly without falling into Matthew Arnold's error of making Culture a surrogate spirituality[50] has been one of the great accomplishments of recent Christian cultural apologetics.[51] Our ecumenical challenges require all our theological resources.

Another practical application is to renew and extend the place of art in the Church. At the end of *Redeeming Beauty*, Aidan Nichols observes that the Church (he tells us parenthetically that he means in the first instance the Catholic Church, but he includes the Orthodox Church and 'much of Protestantism' in this assessment)[52] uses art for two purposes. It uses the arts to throw light on Christ; and it baptises them, letting them be transfigured by the light of Christ. But neither is happening very much today, because dogmatic Christianity has failed 'to commend itself as a unifying framework for all the legitimate activities and aspirations of contemporary culture'.[53] He sees bringing art back to 'the sacred foyer of the Church' as part of a 'multi-pronged' mission to make the Church's vision 'plausible' once more.[54]

Perhaps, in the first instance, bringing the arts back would help parishioners to experience a vision for wholeness and to realise how important it is that it be embodied by the Church. Sacral art can help to instil that yearning. While all art tacitly assumes and promotes coherence, two (ekphrastic) themes suggest them-

[50] On Arnold's error, see C.S. Lewis, 'Learning in War-Time', in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 20–32; at 26.

[51] The Institute for Theology, Imagination, and the Arts in St Andrews, the Theology Through the Arts programme in Cambridge, and the Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts are among the initiatives that have done much to draw attention to this fact. So too have individual studies like Alison Milbank's *Chesterton and Tolkien as Theologians* (2007), Malcolm Guite's on Coleridge (2017), and Vittorio Montemaggi's work on Dante's *Commedia* (2016). This vein of inquiry deeply influenced my own study of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales, The Fellowship of the Beatific Vision* (2016).

[52] Nichols, *Redeeming Beauty*, 148.

[53] Ibid., 149.

[54] Ibid.

selves.[55] There is a pleasing, somewhat uncanny[56] artistic resonance of *Theotokos* at the Council of Ephesus with the Second Council of Nicaea over questions that develop and liberate Christian aesthetics.[57] For many artists, Mary has profound associations with showing, with revelatory fulness. The iconography of the *Panaghia* gives expression to the way the Marian body (including the Church) mirrors the activity of Christ within. Marianism encourages reflection on beauty, especially the beauty of visible unity.

Another potent theme is martyrdom. As with Augustine's pastoral duties, there is nothing aesthetic about it, and it is part of what Christian aesthetics most fundamentally is. Contemporary interpretations of martyrdom in the church foyer would certainly align with Nichols's vision. One wonders whether unity in the suffering and persecution of the body of Christ will cause ancient quarrels simply to burn away, to be replaced by clearer cruciform logic. Or perhaps sudden Christian unity, as powerful as it is difficult to imagine, will just as suddenly incite martyrdom. If it does, it may happen at the hands of some ancient religious foe. More likely it will occur at the hands of some gang that holds to the even more primordial impoverished creed of *natura pura*.

Theological aesthetics can enable us to see that we are and are called to be a work of art in our visible unity and can encourage us in the task of mapping the

[55] Pelikan seems not to have a full grasp of the paradox involved, in artistic terms at least, of Maritain's discussion of art. If, in terms of nature/grace, one wants to take care not to invoke theological judgements 'at the wrong level', in artistic terms that translates into the fact that art 'does not in itself *tell* you anything' (Williams, *Grace and Necessity*, 12). Yet in his short Introduction, Pelikan wants to marry images (the icon) and ideas (things that tell one something). He quotes Nabokov at length, who says that 'literature is not a pattern of *ideas* but a pattern of *images*…. Let us keep an eye on the imagery and leave the ideas to pile up as they please. The word, the expression, the image is the true function of literature. *Not* ideas'. Qtd in Pelikan, *Imago Dei*, 3, emphasis Nabokov's. Pelikan disagrees with this asseveration: 'Whatever may be the validity of that judgment as applied to literature, and specifically to Tolstoy, it does not do justice to the intricate relation between image and idea in philosophy and theology, above all in Byzantine (or, for that matter, Russian) philosophy and theology…'. Ibid. An icon or the interior of a church can indeed carry an idea. Pelikan is surely right to emphasise this point and to rescue art (not least as a Mellon lecturer) from some privileged and hermetically sealed environment. Yet for Maritain (a fellow Mellon lecturer!), as for Williams, 'idea' may not be the appropriate word, for the work of art replicates the relationship between creator and created reality, in which the creator generates dependence without control. It does not tell you anything. In preserving the sense of the work of art as its own integrated world of images, Nabokov retains something of the sense of freedom that attaches itself to art.

For the purposes of the discussion in this paper, as a bearer of the nature/grace question, art consistently challenges the 'ideas' (political, theological) into whose service one can try to press it. This is so not because it truly stands apart in some precious, self-contained sphere, but because of the depth of mystery involved in participation and supernatural finality. The ekphrastic quality of art is not truly reflexive but an invitation to discover even greater depths in the mystery of the Incarnation and the meaning of Trinitarian relationality.

[56] In the full, Freudian twofold sense of being both obvious and hidden at the same time.

[57] Niki Tsironis helpfully observes that 'Although her cult began in the early Christian era, it took centre stage when it became identified with the cult of icons during the period which conventionally we term as iconoclasm'. Niki Tsironis, 'From Poetry to Liturgy: The Cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine Era', in I*mages of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, edited by Maria Vassilaki (London: Ashgate, 2005), 91–102; at 91.

una sancta. The laity have a role to play in that achievement. But ecumenism is no task for populism, nor is engagement of art. Beauty is a transcendental, at once accessible and forbidding. As such, it requires deep thought and deep commitment. Equally, though, it cannot be ignored; it demands our attention wherever technical and seemingly narrowly definable theological challenges confront us. In disrupting our categories, in reminding us of suffering and service, in urging us to see the cruciform whole, Beauty will indeed save the world.

Ecumenism and Trust: A Pope on Mount Athos

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The usual way to address interdenominational differences and even the question of the (re)union between the Eastern and the Western Church is usually modelled after legal or political negotiations, (i.e., with meetings at higher levels of clergy), with extensive references to the canonical tradition, which aim to achieve some sort of theological illumination, clarity, and eventually agreement or compromise. Nevertheless, the distance between the Eastern and the Western Church today (as well as between other similar historical rifts, as well as rifts that are being formed today) is more a question of psychology and (the lack of) trust, rather than politics and philosophical theology. This pursuit of trust would necessarily include the monastic tradition (Athonite monasticism in particular), which is quite influential in the way the ecumenical movement is received in the Orthodox world. To this end, along with the ongoing theological interdenominational dialogue, it is necessary to establish ways to address the lack of trust between the Eastern and the Western Church, and to recognize the pastoral need to include the contribution and voice of monasticism in the process of rapprochement between them.

Interdenominational dialogue has passed through several phases since the (somewhat elusively defined) separation of the Greek East and the Latin West, where 1054 is usually referred to in a somewhat arbitrary way as the year of the formal separation, or perhaps since the less formal alienation of the two ecclesial cultures, which took place gradually, over several centuries. In the historical context of the last few centuries, we can recognize that in addition to the various doctrinal differences between the two sides, there are a few other factors that have contributed significantly to their separation. We can certainly identify a cultural rift, dating approximately from the time the Greeks stopped reading Latin theologians (if they ever did) and the time the Latins stopped reading Greek theologians systematically. Perhaps we can see the beginning of this rift with Augustine, who articulated a serious Trinitarian theology, which became quite influential in the West in subsequent centuries, but which nevertheless ignored to a certain extent the trinitarian conversations of the Ecumenical Councils until then because of his lack of eagerness in keeping up with Greek theology. This kind of cultural rift has multiple aspects and repercussions. All of the seven Councils that are recognized as Ecumenical by Eastern Christians

took place in the East (Constantinople, Nicaea, Chalcedon and Ephesus), and were conducted in Greek. Thus, it is safe to conclude that ecumenical conciliarity (the celebrated Pentarchy) became more difficult and impractical in the West, and less relevant and meaningful to Western Christians. From a Western European, non-Roman perspective, in the period where Christology and Trinitarianism were formulated, the theological conversations that formulated them were, practically, 'owned' by the East.

We can also identify a philosophical rift between East and West, which, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, is not usually attributed to the differences between Latin and Greek philosophy (where after all it is possible to imagine that Latins and Greeks participated in the same conversations), but one that dates from the time that the same philosophical texts led to different, and perhaps incompatible philosophical interpretations. This brings us to the time when the West started reading Aristotle in a different way than the East, because it relied on translations whose timing determined a different order of reading, and therefore a different foundation of his logic: works that were concerned with logic, such as *Categories* and *On Interpretation* had been available to Western Europe since the fourth century, but their metaphysical basis, in works such as *Physics* and *Metaphysics* followed only eight centuries later. This difference in philosophical outlook perhaps became evident when Greek theologians started to consider Western thought, Aquinas specifically, as a theological thought 'parallel', and therefore incompatible, to the one they had known. As Christos Yannaras reminds us in his *Europe was born out of the 'Schism'*,[1] the translation of the *Summa Theologia* to Greek by Demetrios Kydones in 1354 failed to facilitate a meaningful dialogue between Thomist and Orthodox theology—something that has still not happened. Instead, in a way reminiscent of the Cretan iconographers under Venetian rule, who could accept commissions for Greek and also for Latin-style icons, rather than attempt a synthesis between the two styles, fourteenth-century Greek theologians with an interest in Western theology, such as the Kydonis brothers and the Chrysovergis brothers, received Thomist thought as a parallel, equally valid yet different theology, abandoning the hope to integrate the two. This is perhaps when Eastern and Western Christian thought 'agreed to disagree', giving up the possibility of a theological synthesis, or at least a direct dialogue between them.

It is also necessary to acknowledge a political rift between the East and the West, dating from the time of the creation of a second Roman Empire in the West, while the legitimate political continuation of the Old Roman Empire in the East was still extant. When Pope Leo III, for reasons of his own, created a parallel Roman imperial universe when he crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans in 800, he moved the political centre of legitimacy of the Western European kingdoms from Constantinople to Rome—or perhaps to Aachen. Until then, as the East maintained

[1] *Η Ευρώπη γεννήθηκε από το 'Σχίσμα'* (Αθήνα: Ίκαρος, 2015).

the unbroken line of Roman Emperors that started with Augustus, the one Emperor confirmed the political legitimacy of Western kingdoms, maintaining a sense of political unity in the Christian world, even if this unity was more symbolic than political. Almost predictably, immediately afterwards, the West and the East engaged in an unprecedented war of theological purity, issuing multiple lists of theological errors the other side had committed, such as the *Contra Graecorum haeresim de fide sanctae Trinitatis* (Council of Worms 868), up to the more famous *Contra Errores Graecorum* of Thomas Aquinas in 1263—a war that was clearly motivated by politics. The historiographical effect of this appropriation of the Eastern Roman Empire by the West as the political body that carried forth the legitimacy of the Christian Empire, for whatever this was worth, was the introduction of the term 'Byzantine' by Hieronymus Wolf in 1557, which replaced the designation 'Roman', used by the Eastern Empire and its inhabitants, even centuries after the fall of Constantinople.[2]

At any rate, the political background as a factor of the separation of the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church since that time has passed through many phases, with blows dealt from both sides. The more immediate situation is quite different: whereas Western Christianity tries to achieve some sort of spiritual unity, fostering dialogue and surpassing old political rivalries (and thus denominations such as the Anglicans, the Methodists, the Lutherans, and the Old Catholics have entered into intercommunion in the last few years), Eastern Christianity faces tensions and divisions it has not faced before. The recent standoff between the churches of Moscow and Constantinople over Ukraine, which rests on the political question of whether Ukraine should remain within a Russian sphere of influence or move towards the West, is indicative of these difficulties. Be that as it may, the rift between the Christian East and the Christian West still remains: although there are currently four countries with a predominantly Orthodox population in the EU (Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus and Greece), the political and cultural identity of the EU is decisively Western European (Frank-based) rather than Pan-European (Greco-Roman). This is quite evident in that the highest prize of the European Parliament, dedicated to the integration of Europe, bears the name of Charlemagne, the person who legitimized, with his ascent to the Western Imperial throne, the political separation between the East and the West, and this says something about what 'European integration' means to the European parliament. This means, quite clearly, that the EU does not understand the political and cultural divisions of the past, at least not just yet. The sense of a political separation between the East and the West is very much still present, compounded by the more recent 70-year long division of Europe between an alliance of liberal democracies and the communist bloc.

In the end, the differences in thought, in culture, and in politics between the East and the West culminated into an ecclesiological rift. While the Eastern Church

[2] Cf. John Romanides, *Franks, Romans, Feudalism, and Doctrine: An Interplay Between Theology and Society*, (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982).

operated within a collegiate system (the Pentarchy) whose unity was maintained by the civil authority of the Emperor in Constantinople—after all, Ecumenical Councils were usually convened by an Emperor—the lack of such a political unity in Western Europe and the distance from the Eastern Patriarchates necessitated, at least for some time, that the bishop of Rome emerged as the guarantor of Christian unity—until even Rome was too far from the rest of Western Europe. While the East rested in the balance of the Pentarchy, the theological discussions that were conducted in the context of the Ecumenical Councils had not made sufficient provisions for the inclusion of Western thought, which was left to develop on its own in the first millennium, although this is something that was noticed much later. We can imagine how this might have played out in the Western Middle Ages: if a theological discussion emerged in a Western Christian land outside the Roman Empire, necessitated (as it was usual) by a political difficulty, it would make a lot of sense to try to address that problem then and there, rather than refer it to a future council which would take place in a different land, in a different language, where the majority of participating bishops had a different philosophical and cultural training, and where the ruler who guaranteed the unity of that council, had possibly a very different political agenda. Looking at this from the situation on the ground, perhaps it is no accident that the formal insertion of the *filioque* to the Creed by the Third Council of Toledo in 589 was a result of a practical and immediate need of the Spanish Church of the time in its attempt to integrate the Arian converts. Toledo was too far from Rome, and even further from Constantinople and from the culture of Ecumenical Councils, and, given the ecclesiological framework of the time, it is hard to see how they could have acted in a different way. This is supported by the fact that the Eastern Church, despite the early observations of Maximos the Confessor on the cultural understanding of the *filioque* in his *Letter to Marinus*,[3] realized the theological problem that was caused by that council, and reacted to it only several centuries later. While we may criticise the young king Reccared who convened the Toledo council for addressing his political problem through a hastily articulated Trinitarian theology, and in assuming the authority to change the Creed, we also have to recognize that this problem, which eventually was raised to the level of the most important doctrinal difference between Eastern and Western Christianity, demonstrates the failure of the imperial model of the unity of the Church (where the Emperor guarantees the unity of the Church), and also it acknowledges the distance that resulted in further alienation of East and West, despite (or because of) the church structure or administration, in the following centuries.

On the other hand, the Papacy, especially after the first millennium, acted not only as the *de facto* leader of the Western Christian world, but also as the *de jure* leader of the entire Christian world—something we see in the question over whether

[3] Maximos the Confessor, *Letter to Marinus* (PG 91:136).

the supreme temporal authority in the Church rests with the Papal office or with an Ecumenical Council if that Council were to disagree with the Pope. The proclamation of the Papal infallibility in 1870 by Vatican I followed in the same path. Quite interestingly, this took place at the end of the era of a politically strong Papacy, just as the troops of Victor Emanuel II were about to storm Rome.

Perhaps much of what has been mentioned so far is not new. The linguistic, philosophical, cultural, political, and ecclesiological differences between Eastern and Western Christianity have been studied for a long time. Nevertheless, it seems to me that in most of the Eastern-Western dialogue so far, the two issues that dominate this dialogue are the doctrinal differences between the two traditions (such as the *filioque*), and also the question of the authority of the Pope. While the question of theological differences is indeed important, it is a much smaller difficulty compared to some of the issues that had divided the early Church and were settled in the early Ecumenical Councils, surely something that could have been examined and illumined much more easily than, say, the fullness of the divinity of Jesus Christ or the balance between his two natures, the subjects of theological thought for several centuries, if the mechanisms for addressing such theological questions still existed today.

The question of the ultimate administrative authority in the Church is more difficult to address, but perhaps a first step towards it is to simply acknowledge that the fragmentation of the Christian world demonstrates that no single model of authority in the past has been entirely successful, or suffices for our times. Thus, the Papal model, where authority is imposed from the top by the bishop of Rome, who has virtually absolute power over clergy and laity (the authority of the Vicar of Christ, which is not shared with other bishops), has not worked effectively, since it failed to avoid the Eastern Schism as well as the Protestant Schism. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church still operates within this model, which certainly does not look attractive or convincing enough to people who do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church—on the contrary, it seems to discourage any expectation of agreed unity—and therefore it is unlikely to think of it as forming the basis of an ecumenical Christianity.

Equally, the Imperial model, where unity was enforced by a political overseer with absolute power, has not been successful in the long term either. After all, it is only for a short time that such a ruler could govern all Christendom. Such large political formations with a strong central authority in our days can only be thought of as strongly authoritarian dictatorships. Therefore, there is no wish anywhere to encourage the emergence of such a political formation or a ruler. Because of the lack of an Emperor, the Eastern Christian ecclesiological system is facing a crisis of unity. The first bishop among the Orthodox, traditionally *primus inter pares*, even if his authority extends to the convocation of Panorthodox Councils in the absence

of an Emperor,[4] does not have the authority to enforce unity in the Orthodox world. The current schism between Moscow and Constantinople shows that the first bishop of the Orthodox world does not even have the authority to make other Orthodox churches participate in a long-prepared council.

The third model of Church administration is one that is not exercised in the Roman Catholic nor in the Orthodox world. While the ecclesiological model of the Anglican Church is surprisingly similar to that of the Orthodox Church (although in its intent to avoid a clearly visible schism it has opted for a loose confederation of theological tendencies that have ultimately failed to avoid schisms within that Church), the non-episcopal Protestant churches largely reflect the way pre-Constantinian Christianity operated in the first few centuries AD: without a strong centre. Without getting into questions such as apostolic succession or sacramental validity, this situation reflects the same problems of early Christianity, where the claim to the catholic Christianity (understood both as universal and as complete) is sacrificed to local independence. The same principle more recently has led to the creation of state churches, where the limits of church community are the same as the limits of the state in which it operates. The Orthodox Church is gradually slipping towards that model, since instead of Patriarchates as they were understood in the ancient Church (expressing a transnational unity), and especially after the Council of Crete in 2016, which accommodated national representations, we tend to think of a communion of ethnic Churches.

In addition to the macroscopic view of Church administration, it is also useful to remember that at the local level the church has largely moved away from the time when the Eucharistic gathering was the cell of the Church, and there was little difference and distance between the priest and the bishop since their primary function was that they were celebrants/presidents of the Eucharistic event. Developing along the lines of the Imperial model, the Eastern and the Western Church adopted the administrative structures of the Roman Empire, with a nearly absolute power of bishops over their priests, and virtually no participation of the laity. The hierarchically synodal system, so much stressed by Orthodox theory,[5] has been largely surpassed by a rigid, vertical administration. Although the East routinely accuses the West for its lack of synodality at the level of bishops, as the power of the Pope surpasses the power of the college of bishops, we can see that the current structures in the Eastern Church do not allow any kind of synodality at the level of the diocese and the parish: the relationship between a bishop and his priests in the Orthodox Church reveals a vertical, absolute authority, very similar to the relationship between the Pope and

[4] Cf. Elpidophoros Lambriniadis, *First without equals: A response to the text on primacy of the Moscow Patriarchate*, https://www.patriarchate.org/-/primus-sine-paribus-hapantesis-eis-to-peri-proteiou-keimenon-tou-patriarcheiou-moschas-tou-sebasmiotatou-metropolitou-prouses-k-elpidophorou

[5] Cf. Ierotheos Vlahos, https://www.romfea.gr/epikairotita-xronika/29570-naupaktou-ierotheos-to-politeuma-tis-orthodojou-ekklisias

his bishops. This is certainly a gap in Orthodox ecclesiology that only recently is being explored.[6] Perhaps before we approach the difficult question of a single office or see as a symbol of unity, as opposed to a number of (not very well coordinated) autonomous or autocephalous churches, we may have to explore the meaning of parish, diocese, metropolis, patriarchate, synodality, ecumenicity.

In addition to the above ways to describe the distance between the Eastern and the Western Church, perhaps we can acknowledge a lack of trust, or perhaps a psychological rift between the East and the West. It seems ludicrous, but a strong component for this lack of trust may be traced in the fiasco of the Fourth Crusade. While it may be true that Pope Innocent III had nothing to do with the sack of Constantinople in 1204 (which was planned behind his back, mostly to advance the military and financial aims of Venice, as well as the interests of the Angeloi imperial family), and in fact he had initially reacted strongly against it, he nevertheless accepted quickly the legitimacy of the political conquest and also of the establishment of Latin sees in formerly Orthodox lands, becoming an accomplice after the fact. After this unexpected move, and the occupation of the East by the West, that is, after Greeks saw their churches being pillaged by crusaders and their lands taken over by Franks, Venetians and Catalonians, and after they saw that Rome took advantage of the situation setting up Latin bishops in the East, they could never again trust Western kings, bishops, or Popes, and to this date a good part of popular Eastern, especially Greek reaction to ecumenical dialogue is based precisely on the concern of a papal wish to subjugate the East, exactly as it happened in the thirteenth century.

We can also see how important this occupation was, and how long-lasting is the psychological effect, in the visit of Pope John Paul II to Greece in 2001. In a highly anticipated move, during the visit Archbishop Christodoulos presented the Roman pontiff with a list of complaints against the Catholic Church, with the sacking of Constantinople and the pillaging of the city by the Crusaders most prominent among them. The reply of John Paul II included these words: 'Some memories are especially painful, and some events of the distant past have left deep wounds in the minds and hearts of people to this day. I am thinking of the disastrous sack of the imperial city of Constantinople, which was for so long the bastion of Christianity in the East. It is tragic that the assailants, who had set out to secure free access for Christians to the Holy Land, turned against their own brothers in the faith. The fact that they were Latin Christians fills Catholics with deep regret'.[7] This was an apology that was met with positive comments in the Greek press and among Greek clergy,

[6] Cf. Demetrios Bathrellos, 'Church, Eucharist, Bishop: The Early Church in the Ecclesiology of John Zizioulas', in Douglas Knight, ed., The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 133–146.

[7] Address of John Paul II to His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and Primate of Greece, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010504_archbishop-athens.html (posted on 4 May, 2001).

without which it would not be possible to entertain any hope in the ecumenical dialogue. Unfortunately, it was not followed by any similar acts that might restore trust in the two sides.

Therefore, despite a few such gestures of good will, the lack of trust between the two sides, or at least the lack of trust among the Orthodox, is still, I believe, the most important impediment towards an effective rapprochement and perhaps ultimately the reunification of the Eastern and the Western church. The anti-ecumenical movement in the East is quite strong, because it is often seen as a way of compromise without sufficient theological depth—a 'catalyst for a total liberalization of the Christian Faith'[8]—but mostly because at the popular level it is seen as a ploy of the Papacy to subjugate the entire Christian world. The intent of the anti-ecumenical movement, which is largely motivated by fear, is to preserve the genuine Orthodox tradition against political compromise and theological erosion. Nevertheless, this fear of compromise with the West has largely discouraged the open and honest exchange of views on many theological and pastoral issues, even outside the context of the ecumenical dialogue. As a personal example I can attest here that a few years ago, a high-ranking bishop of an influential Orthodox Church (who cannot be named, for obvious reasons), visited the UK and gave a series of lectures that touched on ecumenical dialogue. After one of these lectures, in a private communication the bishop told me that he would have to modify his text before he published it, and make sure that he replaced words such as 'ecumenical' by different words, such as 'interdenominational', which would not refer to the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church as directly, otherwise he would face a huge reaction in his home country, from clergy and laity alike. It is obvious that the bishop was not naïve: he simply knew that at this stage the psychological reaction of many bishops, monks and laity in his home country against ecumenical dialogue was still high, and it could be expressed in a violent way. According to his experience and judgement, trying to address their concerns and to encourage a willingness to embrace ecumenical dialogue would be futile. This simply demonstrates that any formal dialogue is a hostage to the perception of ecumenism among monks, clergy, and laity 'back home', people who may not be involved in the dialogue themselves, but who need to be convinced about its honesty and usefulness, before they legitimize their representatives in it. In other words, it is hard to see how the relations of the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches could be improved in a meaningful way in the context of a top-to-bottom ecclesiology.

How can such a problem be addressed? It seems to me that the nature of the dialogue as it is exercised today resembles to some extent a legal debate, as a lot of importance is given to canon law, with recourse to precedents and legal formulas that

[8] Timothy Evangelinidis, *Orthodoxy and Ecumenism*, presentation at the Tasmanian Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission on 20 July 1993, http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/orth-ecum.htm.

were drafted centuries ago, without always recognizing the pastoral needs that necessitated them, and how they may or may not apply to our time. Furthermore, with an eye to formal dialogue, the aforementioned observation about the impossibility of a top-to-bottom directive in the Orthodox Church, shutters the presumption that each church operates in a clearly hierarchical bureaucratic way, similar to the way the civil service or the military works. This would imply that if sensitive matters such as the nature of the procession of the Holy Spirit are agreed at the top level, the lower levels will follow without question, in the same way that troops who were shooting at each other are given the command of ceasefire and end of hostilities, and immediately fall in line, recognizing as an ally the side that was identified as the enemy minutes ago. While this model of vertical authority is true to some extent in the Roman Catholic Church, it cannot be applied to the Orthodox Church.

Despite the aforementioned criticism on the lack of synodality at the diocesan and at the parochial level in the Orthodox Church, there is much to be said about the power and the consent of the laity—perhaps not in a formal way that may ensure some sort of participation of lay community leaders in the dialogue, but in the informal way of the *vox populi*. At a theoretical level this may be seen at the liturgical level, as it is not possible for a priest to celebrate without the participation of the laity, but closer to our discussion, it has been possible in the past for the laity to block or to oppose imperial and episcopal decisions. Sometimes this has meant the laity at large, such as the Council of Ferrara-Florence, but more often it has meant the monastics, as in the case of iconoclasm, where the main centre of opposition within the Empire was the Stoudios monastery, with additional monastic voices from outside the Empire, such as the one of John of Damascus. In the case of the modern ecumenical dialogue it is imperative to realize that much of the opposition is related to monasticism, most specifically Athonite monasticism.

In this context we may recall the distinction of the two golden chains that describe two kinds of authority in the Church, as described by Symeon the New Theologian.[9] In what constitutes leadership in the Church, we can recognize the visible, administrative line of priests and bishops, but also the (sometimes) less visible line of charismatic elders and saints, who play an active role in the formation of Orthodox conscience, who sometimes see themselves or are recognized by the people as the guardians of the faith and the Church. The sensitivity of Athonite monks to matters relating to ecumenical dialogue has been known for a long time, at least since 1965, when they ceased commemorating their bishop, the Patriarch of Constantinople, when Patriarch Athenagoras met with Pope Paul VI in order to lift the excommunications of 1054. Most of the Athonite monasteries eventually restored their relationship with their bishop, yet the monastery of Esphigmenou, where Gregory Palamas was abbot a few centuries ago, never did. In 1972 it severed

[9] Symeon the New Theologian, *Practical and Theological Chapters*, 3:4, 5–19.

its links with the Athonite Monastic Community, and it remains defiant to this day, even though a new monastic community was appointed in 2001, which nevertheless has not yet set foot at the monastery.

Therefore, to return to the question of the dialogue between the East and the West, we need to consider that while the administration of the Church is carried out by priests, bishops and patriarchs, spiritual leadership is more diffused, and in some way, formal or informal, the dialogue needs to be equally diffused. While it may not be a formal part of the dialogue, the monastic community has the power, as it did in similar cases in the past, to confirm it or to block it, as in several ways it represents the spiritual conscience of Orthodoxy. In the case of Orthodox monasticism, this practically points to the Athonite peninsula, the spiritual head of all Orthodox monasticism.[10]

Perhaps we do not have a clear structure for how Athonite monasticism might be included in the procedure. It is hard to imagine that it would benefit the dialogue if one of the seats were reserved for an Athonite abbot, as the most likely result of this might simply be that none of the Athonite abbots would accept to do this. Nevertheless, I believe that the way ahead will have to be drafted with creativity and imagination. To see how this could possibly happen, we can consider two imaginary possibilities:

The first possibility follows the hopes and the intents of the formal interdenominational dialogue in its current format, which concentrates on the doctrinal differences between the East and the West, as well as their differing models of ecclesiastical primacy, trying to find an acceptable compromise. Let us assume that in a couple of decades from now the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, which would certainly include notable theologians and bishops from both sides, certainly among the ones who have declared their trust in this procedure, managed to find a theological formula in the *filioque* that would satisfy both sides, something to the effect of the removal of the *filioque* clause from the Creed, so as to honour the Symbol of Faith as it was known both in the East and the West in the first millennium, with a simultaneous recognition that the Son does indeed play a role in the procession of the Holy Spirit, even if the ultimate, first procession of the Spirit comes from the Father alone—something that could even be articulated with Augustinian terms.[11] We may also imagine that the question of the primacy may be resolved in a similar way: the Church could abandon all futile guarantees for temporal infallibility, the East would recognize the bishop of Rome as the first among all Christian bishops, with the power to convene

[10] Cf. Andreas Andreopoulos, 'The Challenge of Spiritual Guidance in Modern Greece', in Graham Speake and Kallistos Ware, eds, *Spiritual Guidance on Mount Athos* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 111–130.

[11] Naturally, this is not an empty hypothesis. There have been several agreements along these lines, such as the 1979 recommendation of the World Council of Churches, the 2003 agreed statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation on the *filioque* http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/orthodox/filioque-church-dividing-issue-english.cfm and the several declarations of the Anglican Church on this subject, towards the same effect.

Ecumenical Councils, as long as it would also be recognized that the ultimate authority or power of decision rests with the college of bishops and not with the office of the Pope. Based on these compromises, the Pope and the primates of several Orthodox Churches could decide that they may be ready to sign an agreement of the restoration of communion between the Eastern and the Western Church. Before the restoration of the communion, the Pope would convene a Council at the Vatican and the Patriarch of Constantinople would convene a Panorthodox Council, in order to ratify the agreement. In broad lines, this is the ostensible hope of the dialogue as it exists today. I am afraid however, that although it may be possible at some point to find formulas to these crucial and thorny issues that are usually put forth as the substantial obstacles for the reunification of the East and the West, I doubt that this kind of procedure would be sufficient.

As these kinds of dialogues are carried out by the members of the two parties who actually have some hopes for the dialogue, while many other members of the two jurisdictions may have merely tolerated the dialogue—or worse, they may see the dialogue simply as an opportunity to convince and convert the other side—a good part of the Orthodox, and perhaps also of the Catholic world would not feel included. In the imaginary example of the agreement, we may also entertain the strong possibility that four or five out of the fifteen Orthodox Churches might decide, perhaps even at the last moment, not to come to the Panorthodox Council—after all this is what happened in the 2016 Panorthodox Council of Crete, which examined much less divisive issues. The ecclesiological problem that we come across here is that there is no mechanism to force independent Churches to participate in such a council if they do not want to. With respect to any developments that may need daring steps forward, the usual fall-back position is to stay within the safety of the tradition and centuries-long established practice, rather than to plunge into the unknown of the future. In other words, the accusation of conservatism does not hold much weight in a church context. This means that it would be an easily tenable position for individual bishops as well as for any of the autocephalous Churches to simply hold back and refuse to participate in such moves.

At the first stage, it would take only one influential figure to rally against the agreement of communion between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church—it would not even have to be a primate of an autonomous or autocephalous Orthodox Church, although it most likely would be. Many monastics would follow immediately, repeating their defiance to the 1965 rapprochement between Paul VI and Athenagoras.

This gives a very clear indication of what would be the next step in our imaginary scenario. At least some, if not all of the Athonite monasteries, would protest against the agreement of union. This would be a very serious blow to the proposed unity, as Mount Athos and its satellite monasteries (such as the numerous monasteries founded by Archimandrite Ephrem in North America) have often expressed or in-

fluenced the thought of the laypeople at least as successfully as their bishops, if not more so. In a very short time, the dissenting primates, bolstered by the support of Mount Athos, would sever communion from the Orthodox Churches who participated in the dialogue. The most senior among them would convene a Council that would break communion with the Orthodox Churches that had hoped to encourage the union with the West, it would condemn the leaders of the ecumenical movement, and it would declare that they are not able to recognize the grace of the Uniate churches. The laypeople in traditionally Orthodox countries, as well as in the diaspora, would be deeply divided for several decades, but perhaps over time they would settle in one of the two Orthodox factions (pro-Western or anti-Western).

It is also hard to imagine, on the other hand, what kind of backlash there might be among traditionalist Catholics, who would see that the universal power of the Pope has been compromised by this agreement. That strong central reference of the bishop of Rome has defined the identity of many Catholics for centuries, and it is possible that there would be similar reactions in the West. Even if this is not the case, on the whole, it is possible that this type of approach may try to resolve one schism, but it may end up with two new ones.

So far, this example simply expresses the, perhaps pessimistic, position that it will not be possible to expect a true and effective rapprochement between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church merely through addressing theological and ecclesiological issues if there is no sufficient and wide trust and good will between the two parties, well beyond the number of the people who conduct the dialogue. Nevertheless, this is not the end of our imaginary expedition. After the above-mentioned pessimist—or dystopian—scenario, we may also consider a very different course of events, perhaps a more unlikely one.

In this utopian scenario, we start with the exasperation of a future Pope—let us call him Pope Basilius—who realizes, after years of consultations and meetings, that ecumenical dialogue has been a succession of thorny issues with no end, that somehow the trust of the East to the West has to be restored, and that a psychological wound should be treated in a psychological manner. Pope Basilius also realizes that his responsibility is to serve the servants of God, as one of his titles states (Servus Servorum Dei) instead of exercising his authority over them, and therefore that the true administration of the Church requires more humility than strength. He also realizes that what scares Eastern Christians is that too much power has been concentrated to his office, something confirmed by the way papal power has been exercised in the past. He wants to serve the unity of the Church instead of commanding it, and he needs, therefore, to become humble and allow them to see him as vulnerable. Finally, Pope Basilius realizes, in contrast to our previous example, that a meaningful rapprochement can only be done if the members who hold the most rigid opposition to the cause of reunification are also included in the process—or, as generations of

politicians since Senator Mike Mansfield in 1971 have discovered, 'only Nixon could go to China'.

Pope Basilius asks whose voice carries more respect and weight among the clergy and the laity in the camp of the anti-unionists, and he is told that the most influential opposition comes from Mount Athos, and among the Athonites, Abbot Aristarchos of Filotheou has been the most active, with public lectures and publications that caution against ecumenical relations. Pope Basilius invites Abbot Aristarchos to the Vatican, in order to have a constructive conversation with him. The venerable abbot replies that his age does not allow him to travel, but also that he does not think there is much to say between them, after all he has expressed himself and his discomfort with ecumenical dialogue very clearly in his writings.

The Pope is not going to give up. He writes back to Abbot Aristarchos and asks to visit him in his monastery on Mount Athos. Abbot Aristarchos gets alarmed, and after he consults the abbots of the other Athonite monasteries, he replies to the Pope that they do not think it is appropriate for the one who, according to their view, is the self-proclaimed leader of all Christianity, to make such a visit, which will, undoubtedly be perceived as an exhibition of Western Catholic power in the peninsula of ascetic prayer. They commend him for his interest in Orthodox monasticism, but they refuse politely.

The Pope proves to be more obstinate than the Athonites, and writes back that he is ready to enter the Holy Mountain while reporters are kept away, and he is ready to accept any terms and limitations they impose on him. In addition, in order to prove how serious his interest in the world of the Athonites and their resistance to Christian unity is, he asks to be allowed to stay there for six months.

Abbot Aristarchos, once again having consulted the Athonite community, replies to Pope Basilius that he can come and stay there for as long as he wishes, if a) his visit is kept away from the media; b) he does not bring an entourage with him, although security will be provided by the Athonites; c) he can pray in his cell in any way he wishes, but he does not perform any priestly act, not even a blessing, outside his cell; d) he does not wear his Papal robes, but only a black robe, similar to the ones worn by novice monks; e) while he attends services he is treated as an unbaptised layman, and he is dismissed with the catechumens. Abbot Aristarchos and the Athonites believe that these terms are humiliating and impossible, and presume that this will be the end of it. To his surprise, Pope Basilius accepts these unlikely terms, and a few months later he arrives, as a simple pilgrim, to the harbour of Daphne on Mount Athos, having arranged for his secretary to act as his locum tenens and carry on with the administration of the Roman Catholic Church in his name for six months.

What could happen after that is probably beyond our imagination. Pope Basilius would do precisely as he was told, going to the offices they allow him to go to, seeing all these monks worship as their predecessors did a thousand years before them, and walking in the paths of Athos as much as he would be able to. He would find the time

to visit all the monasteries, as even the ones that had stood more fiercely against ecumenical plans, would not be able to refuse entry to a man with a simple *rason* (cassock or soutane), who simply wished to enter and venerate the icons. Abbot Aristarchos would follow all of those visits with amazement, and quickly he would start suggesting places the pilgrim Pope could visit, icons to see, stories to hear, and people to talk to.

A short distance from the monastery of the Great Lavra on the east coast, on a hill overlooking a small bay,[12] Pope Basilius might notice a lonely tower in the midst of some ruins, and if he asked someone what used to be there, he would be told that this is where the Benedictine monastery of the Amalfitans stood for three centuries, founded almost at the same time as the oldest monasteries on Athos. This monastery worshipped in Latin, but disappeared quickly and quietly after the Fourth Crusade. A Latin monastery on Athos… There were Latins on Athos when the Church still had hope of a unity beyond Greek and Latin, beyond Parthians, Medes, Elamites and Mesopotamians. Abbot Aristarchos would be ready to lament this as much as Pope Basilius, and perhaps for the first time, after he saw this monastic ghost through the eyes of his visitor, moved by the experience, he would invite him to pray together for the first time. Perhaps the acknowledgment of a joint failure is the first step that could bring them closer.

The Athonites would be humbled by this unprecedented act of humility, seeing the most unusual Pope in the history of Christendom among them walk like a simple pilgrim, feeling a newfound trust towards him. It would be impossible to avoid the question of whether an Orthodox bishop, or even an Orthodox priest would be able to do something like that if the roles were reversed. The Pope, on the other hand, would have felt, in a way never before understood by a Western bishop, the depth of the dedication of that weird crowd, which includes professors and lawyers, who quit their jobs in order to worship next to ex-criminals and bricklayers. Surely, in Western Europe it is possible to find old institutions like this, perhaps even older than Mount Athos, but nothing really like that, nothing quite as alive in the depth of time, where ten centuries become flattened into a time just beyond our immediate memory. The voices of Dionysios the Areopagite, Maximos the Confessor, Gregory Palamas, John of Damascus and the Greek Fathers would begin to sound to him increasingly like the voice of these monks; not anymore the systematic philosophical theologians he was taught in the Orientale and the Gregoriana, but people who found new ways to talk about their experience and their inspiration, who sought new ways to worship God. Pope Basilius would have learned to hear the breathing of the saints in the walls of the medieval churches, and he would have noticed how in the beginning of Matins it is easy to confuse a living monk who moves quietly and

[12] Graham Speake, *A History of the Athonite Commonwealth*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 51.

quickly, prostrating in front of an icon, with an icon of a saint, barely illuminated by a single flickering candle which seems to flicker as quickly as the prostrating monk.

Pope Basilius would come out of Mount Athos six months later with a deep understanding of the unspoken life that is Orthodox liturgy. If he were also able to continue his hidden pilgrimage in a Greek village, that experience would have shown him the importance of freedom for these people, who created democracy because they would not trust one person to become their superior—something very different from the vertical line of authority that the higher clergy feels comfortable with. He would have also seen, as many of my Western friends who have visited Greek villages with a priest, that the priest is acknowledged as one of them, rather than as an agent of the central administration of the Church. In short, our pilgrim Pope would have gained a very different perspective of the East.

The Athonites, on the other hand, would not object to talk about the unity of the Church with *that* Pope, the one who came to know their community and to witness their own unity. And if after that the Athonites had something positive or hopeful to say about interdenominational dialogue, the rest of the Orthodox world stop in order to hear them very clearly. It is only at this stage that the interdenominational dialogue could actually *begin*.

Something that may seem out of balance in this story is that in an apparent attempt to bring two sides together, only one of them takes a real initiative and receives the humiliation in the process of reaching out. In this example it is only Pope Basilius who completely shutters his comfort zone, whereas Abbot Aristarchos is the one who sets the rules and the conditions, while he remains in his own spiritual and cultural sphere—not to mention any Orthodox bishops, who have no participation in this story. The reason for this is that in the real negotiations between the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox there is no confusion as to who held the primacy of honour in the pre-schismatic Church, and by the same token, who will hold it again, in a post-schismatic Church. Here we are not talking simply about the merger of two equal organizations, but about the restoration of a relationship where the one of the two parties, as a more senior one, bears more responsibility for the relationship—even if this primacy is only honorific. It is necessarily an unequal bargain, because the East has no more humility to give.

I realize that the imaginary story of Pope Basilius and Abbot Aristarchos is so naïve, that it may not even be thought of as a proposal, not much more than a fairy tale of hope. Yet, the point I hope I was able to make here is that it is necessary to recognize the multitude of levels and dimensions of the interdenominational dialogue and the question of the reunification of the East and the West well beyond the remit of joint theological commissions and that establishment of mutual trust among clergy, monastics, and laity on both sides is the first necessary step. After that we may be able to look at the Church as the legacy of the Crucified Christ, with humility, compunction, and hope.

God's Silence and Its Icons: A Catholic's Experiences at Mount Athos and Mount Jamna

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This essay grows from a sense of bewilderment: A Catholic who encounters Orthodoxy starts wondering why there seems to be almost no room in contemporary Catholic spirituality for silence and isolation. Reliving two experiences, those of Mount Athos and Mount Jamna—the latter apparently a failed attempt by a Dominican monk to create a Catholic mount of solitude—I try to understand them from the perspective of an ordinary believer who happens to be familiar with philosophical language. Comparing the experience of silence at Athos, described in terms of an absence of Heideggerian dwelling, and Pascal's *divertissement*, with the much more ordinary life going on at Jamna, I seek to present them both using a theoretical scheme drawn from Plato that opposes participation, icons, and idols. Viewed through the incomplete metaphor that this scheme provides, Athos and Jamna emerge as two different realizations of an icon given to us by Christ himself, as human instruments, which we create to point to true participation in the Divine presence of the New Jerusalem. Though imperfect, they are still true icons because they lead to true sacramental participation while anticipating the transformative *θεωρία*, the view from the Mount which alters the one who has attained it. While similar in this respect, the two icons also differ deeply: whereas the Catholic experience tries to bring everyone into participation in the life of the New Jerusalem, the Orthodox Athos, in its silent uniqueness, testifies to a unique and ineffable transcendence.

Introduction

The image of the mountain is deeply embedded within our Christian way of speaking about human destiny. We would not be able to remove it from our language or our imagination, given its prominence in the New Testament. Christ chose to lead Peter, James, and John 'by themselves' to go to a 'high mountain', '*ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν*' (Mt 17:1, cf. NJB), in order to show them who He is. Then He died on a prominent rock—as tradition says, very close to the walls of the Jerusalem of his era. Pilgrims will forever see this place rising as a hill within the Mount of the Holy City, lower possibly only than the Temple Mount. Jerusalem herself, the Holy City topped with the Temple, raises her gaze above, in anticipation of the New Jerusalem, one which is to descend from Heaven, '*καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*' (cf. Rev 21:2). In the religious imagery that we allow and use in our churches, we will always represent

some of the most important events of the Divine Economy as taking place on a mountain.

Nevertheless, a mountain cannot be perceived just as a static image, merely adorning our iconography. By the very nature of the fact that, while on this Earth, we are bound by gravity, when ascending a mountain, we strain our body much more than when walking on flat terrain. The long, steady effort of climbing is rewarded once we get to the summit. The satisfaction of achieving a difficult goal, the rest that brings calm to the heart, and the view that a mountain offers seem to encapsulate the teleology of human life. And naturally, the experience of climbing a mountain can hardly be removed from how we think of mountains, be they spoken of or represented. The image whose meaning is given to us in Revelation will be the very same image we learn through living it.

However, the living of it is not something that happens just as a matter of course. Even if a great many people want nowadays to reach the peak of the world at any price, most of us do not climb even much lower mountains every day, and many do not try it even once in their lives. Most summits are, for most days of the year, beautiful though empty places. Only one who is not afraid of staying alone, 'by himself', '*κατ' ἰδίαν*', and can be satisfied just by the view, the '*θέα*', will make the effort. Christians, however, do climb the mountains from time to time—even if, for reasons of convenience, the mountains on which various religious establishments are located are not usually the highest peaks. Catholics ascend their Calvaries (in southern Poland, these are seated on hills somewhat harder to climb than Jerusalem is). In the Eastern world, meanwhile, chapels and monasteries on mountaintops abound—much as Saint George's Cathedral crowns Ano Syros. We try to relive the experience of the Apostles and truly see, feel, and experience what they did.

I want here to tell a story of two such experiences, one in the East and one in the West, rather than theorizing about what mountains mean. First and foremost, this is probably what we need to do, given the nature of the image. Secondly, I do not feel authorized to offer any theological analysis of the meaning of the image of a mountain. As someone educated philosophically, who has spent much of his life studying texts of pagan Greek philosophers, I am, in matters of theology, a layman, and merely a simple believer. I do not feel competent to speak theologically about the vision at the top of the mountain, the *θέα* that makes possible *θεωρία*, contemplation of divine matters—one which those who escape to the solitude of mountains, or the solitude of the deserts, hope for, as I may have learned from my (mainly philosophical) encounter with Evagrius. I am hardly qualified, as a philosopher, to analyze any object, as Evagrius says, '*πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον βλέπων*'.[1] The path of a philosopher, in

[1] *Gnosticus* 50.1. All references to classical works are standard. I only give citations for quotations and less well-known texts from the tradition. Evagrius' *Gnosticus* is cited according to the edition *Le gnostique, ou À celui qui est devenu digne de la science. Édition critique des fragments grecs*, edited and translated by Antoine and Claire Guillaumont, Sources chrétiennes 356 (Paris: Cerf, 1989).

respect of knowing the archetype of all things, does not differ so much from the path of a simple Christian believer: I see and experience things of this world, and I have faith, hope, and possibly also, in my case, some theoretical conjectures, concerning the other world.

Still, I believe a voice like mine has a place in a volume like this stemming from a conference devoted to 'Una Sancta'—above all because the unity of the Church we hope for will have to descend to the level of ordinary believers and imbue their imaginations, their practices, and their everyday expression of faith. Next to being an ordinary believer, due to my philosophical interests, I have also had to delve somewhat into the intellectual history of the Christian East and West, experience their physical realities, and acquaint myself to some extent with their close, yet different, languages. As a philosopher, I can offer the services we philosophers are probably best at: those of a conscientious translator, careful when it comes to noting both similarities and differences.

As such, I need to start with a caveat. Before I lead readers to the two mountains to show what can be seen there, I must state what kind of view should not be looked or hoped for. For even if I cannot claim to know what Christian contemplation turns its gaze to, I can be certain that it is not the *θεωρία* devised by Pythagoras, who according to testimony preserved by Cicero, compared himself to those who 'came [to the Olympic games] in order to watch and observed with zeal'.[2] The name given to the parties sent by cities to the games, and to their members, was '*θεωρία*'. This name, even if not mentioned explicitly by Cicero in his Latin, is undoubtedly implied in the story which Cicero recounts after Plato's student and contemporary of Aristotle, Heraclides of Pontus. By then, the contemplation of truth in the invisible '*οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα*' and in the pure Forms had been presented by Plato in the myth of the *Phaedrus* as the way in which the souls are nourished through their intellect (*Phaedr.* 247c7–e1). Such contemplation was embraced by Aristotle as the activity of the First Mover, one which is by itself 'the sweetest and the best', and which makes it divine (*Metaph.* Λ7, 1072b22–26). Aristotle considered our theoretical activity as only akin to the perfection of divine theory. Yet, as he believed, it is thanks to this kind of intellectual activity that humans can share in happiness (EN 10.7, 1178b20–24). It is in *Protrepticus* that he says without hesitation that wisdom, *φρόνησις*, is the goal of human life, and that its practice is the path of a Pythagorean contemplation of nature (cf., esp., fr. B17–20 Düring).[3]

This natural contemplation cannot be one that is practiced on a mountain climbed by Christians. One should not even mention, in this context, Plotinus' creative con-

[2] Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.9.8–9: 'sed visendi causa venirent studioseque perspicerent'. Text according to the edition Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, ed. Max Pohlenz, fasc. 44 of *M. Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1918).

[3] Edition in Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle's* Protrepticus: *An Attempt at Reconstruction* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1961).

templation, such as is discussed in *Ennead* 3.8. Firstly, the object of any such contemplation, or at least the *θεώρημα* produced in the mind, is a purely formal, purely abstract reality. Secondly, this contemplation relies on natural potentialities, either of human or of a divine intellect, or of the soul—or even, in Plotinus, of nature as such. Pagan philosophers affirm, through their theories of contemplation, that the nature of intellect is both most perfect and most divine, and that intellect is self-sufficient. Contemplation, as discussed by them, and even by Plotinus, is possible because there is, in their world, no gap between the natural and the supra-natural. The divine and the mortals are parts of one and the same world, in which there is no division between creation and Creator. We can contemplate, and thereby share in, divinity because we are, at least potentially, divine. The image of the mountain, embodied in Mount Tabor, in Golgotha, and in the Holy City, teaches us something to the contrary: we need to be elevated above ourselves. Let us go, then, at least in words, through two experiences of this image, one proper to the East, and one to the West.

The First Experience

The first experience I want to recall is that of a young non-Orthodox pilgrim on Mount Athos. It must be admitted, this experience differs a little from what Orthodox pilgrims can encounter at Athos, but for someone who speaks some Greek, it is not totally different. Undoubtedly, it is an experience of being overwhelmed by the vastness of the non-human space, in which it takes time and effort to climb, or descend, to a human settlement. For even if a monastery is located somewhere just above water, a poor pilgrim still needs to go back to the era in which travelling actually exacted a toll on the heart and the legs. In this sense, the entire peninsula of Akte deserves the name of a Mount.

It is also, truly, a Holy Mount. For a non-Orthodox pilgrim, perceived sometimes possibly as a weird tourist spending hours in the narthex, the entire place testifies to an unseen truth. The way of life of an ordinary monk must be considered absolutely pointless if a worldly measure is applied. Everyday non-Lenten food seems to a Catholic not different from what we call fasting. Early-morning coffee, replacing breakfast, gives hardly any nourishment for the toil of the day. Long liturgy is followed by long prayers. There is nothing to satisfy everyday needs. If there is any sense to the place, it must lie beyond this world. Yet there must be a point in living there, since the place exists and is even being expanded.

More important, however, is the experience of void. The latter is not immediately perceived—as with any true void, for what we perceive is always something. This void consists, first and foremost, in an absence of human activity. Nature has been left alone at Athos to do the things it usually does. Athos is not a place abandoned after some cataclysmic war, as some areas in Poland still are 70 years after the end

of World War II. It is not a desert. It is a place where humans have chosen to limit their most distinctively human form of activity—that which Martin Heidegger calls dwelling (*Wohnen*), which involves, inevitably, turning the world into our own image.[4] For even if, as Heidegger holds, dwelling, which is the most basic character of inextricably mortal human being, consists in preserving the world, it is impossible without building—that is, creating—'things'. Heidegger believes that it is through 'things' that the world unveils its essence (*Wesen*) to us. He is right to connect human nature with the relentless activity of producing large objects, without which we do not have what we call 'space': the reality we can inhabit. He is even possibly right in emphasizing the role of the *τέχνη*: in saying that it is through our art that we can receive the directives of what he calls the 'Fourfold' of sky, earth, divinities, and mortals, he encapsulates the very fact that our knowledge of things is mainly instrumental. As mortal bodily beings, we know best that which we can put to use, or at least turn into an object of our own operations and experiments, without which we would be lost in pure speculation. But in Heidegger's Fourfold, each component brings about another one: when sky, earth, and divinities rule our art, it is an art of mortal human beings. The things we make, and that he describes, are just like us: they are measured by the size of our bodies, comply with the requirements of our bodies, tend to the needs of our bodies, imitate the structures of our bodies through a maze of ducts and roads for carrying materials, food, energy, and networks of data cables—and, as such, are likewise vulnerable and mortal.

At Athos, all this effort to understand the world through indwelling—of dwelling in it by assimilating it to us, of interiorizing the 'divinity' of this world by bowing to our mortality, of awaiting the impossible salvation of mortal life that, it is hoped, the 'divinity' of the Fourfold will give us—seems to have been abandoned as pointless. The few human constructions—farms, fields—are reduced to the bare necessities. Humans have left the world of nature, as much as they could, untouched, alien, and thereby deprived of the senses we create when using it and giving names to our tools; they have left it silent, at least if silence means the absence of human speech.

This void with respect to dwelling, reshaping, rebuilding, imposing onto the world our short-term goals, is accompanied by a void with regard to *circenses*, games, circuses, and *divertissement*. In consequence, it is also a void as regards all the things described by Pascal as the efforts we undertake in order to divert ourselves from ourselves, seeking in this way an impossible happiness. All those efforts—be

[4] The remarks made in this paragraph are inspired by Heidegger's essay *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000), originally published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske) 1954, 139–56. In the terminology adopted, I mainly follow the translation Martin Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). The only divergence is my preference for 'unveiling essence' as a translation of *Wesen*, rather that Hofstadter's 'presencing'. The essay, based on Heidegger's lecture given on 5th August 1951 in Darmstadt, is short, and my remarks allude to claims made over the course of its entire unfolding. Even so, they relate in particular to his statements on pages 149 [145 in translation], 151–3 [147–9], 156 [152], 159–63 [155–58].

it a futile conversation, a pleasure, scientific inquiry focused on one's own self-aggrandizement, politics, or war—are mere manifestations of the human misery that consists in not knowing how to stay at rest in one room: '*ne savoir pas demeurer en repos dans une chambre*'.[5] At least in the era in which I visited Athos, just before the advent of any mobile-phone technology, there was not much to distract oneself from oneself.

Those two external voids face one with the inner void. The mind, liberated from things apparently important—that is, from problems we ourselves create and strive to resolve—cannot find much nourishment, except for silence. Having ascended Athos, one cannot hope for the fullness of Plato's contemplation, nourishing oneself directly from that Essence that Essentially Is. The Forms of Justice and Order do not shine directly on us. If a pilgrim is filled with something, it is overwhelming silence, which does really take over both the senses and the mind. The silence of Athos is a densely sensuous silence of eye-piercing sun, the noise of waves battling over the rocks, the cold stones of the churches, and the quiet effort of monks, in which a pilgrim may sometimes join. Thus, somewhat strangely, the void that philosophers love to call 'potentiality' is not a painful experience. It is the void of me as I experience a world that is larger than me and that fills me with its own void with respect to signs. I am overwhelmed with a reality that does not speak in a language but is just there.

Living in a world which, as Jean Baudrillard emphasizes in his last essays, cannot but produce meaning from nothing,[6] we may either painfully accept this silence or run away from it into the *divertissement* we create for ourselves. And if we accept it, this silence starts speaking to us about the One who is ineffable. I do not know whether we can hope here for a different contemplation, for a different direct vision from that of void. If there is more, anyway, it cannot be spoken about. Such speech, entangled in signs we produce for things of this world, could not but divert us from what we see.

Readers will surely understand me when I say that I was tempted never to leave Athos. It was a temptation, doubtlessly, because one cannot ascend a Holy Mountain without taking upon oneself one's cross. The burden of the sins we have committed,

[5] Blaise Pascal, Pensées, Fragment Divertissement n° 4 / 7 = Brunschvicg 139 = Lafuma 136; http://www.penseesdepascal.fr/Divertissement/Divertissement4-moderne.php. Cited according to the electronic scholarly edition of *Pensées* (Clermont-Ferrand: Pôle de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur Clermont Université, 2011), http://www.penseesdepascal.fr.

[6] I have in mind here, in particular, Baudrillard's essays 'The Spirit of Terrorism' and 'Requiem for the Twin Towers', published in English together as *The Spirit of Terrorism, and, Requiem for the Twin Towers*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2002). By contrasting apparently senseless acts of terror with the production of meaning, which is the main characteristic of what he calls 'the system'—the organized capitalist production of goods, meanings, and values that are created for and through those goods— Baudrillard shows the destructive act, aimed at overwhelming global power, as the only truly meaningful event. As a matter of fact, he views humans as creators of what we call 'sense', but this sense is merely a self-enclosed set of circular references. The only true meaning seems to emerge when someone shows the void that is this self-referential network of things and symbols.

or of the so-called 'social evil' we have succumbed to, cannot be left aside. Some people are called upon to assume it when going to Athos, while others need to carry it when walking the path of their lives, as if their entire life consisted in climbing a steep hill. I understood that I should not hope for a resolution of all my problems by escaping from them. A Holy Mountain is a place of seclusion, but it cannot be a refuge from oneself. It cannot be viewed as a *divertissement*.

Athos still stays in my mind as an image, possibly an image of things-to-come. It also remains there as a question: Why do not Catholics have their own Athos? Well, it is true that we have the order known as the Camaldolese: very few of their monasteries survive to this era, but those that do will not, I think, be shutting their doors soon, as there are always people wishing to spend their entire life in silence. The monastery of Bielany in Kraków, located at Srebrna Góra (Silver Mountain, Mons Argenteus), towers over the valley of the Vistula and, nowadays, over the airport, taking the highest part of a forested chain of hills that splits the western outskirts of the city. Well visible from the airport, from trains, and from the freeway, it reminds us of a different kind of life—but its inner life is much more closed to Catholics than is the inner life of Athos. For most practical purposes, in order to experience the absolute silence of the Mountain, we need to visit our Orthodox brothers.

The Second Experience

The Mountain we can experience is usually much less silent. Even when a place of seclusion is aimed for, strangely, quite a different reality emerges. The second experience I want to tell about is the experience of the recently established Dominican monastery at Mount Jamna. One can view it as one would a failed attempt to create a hermitage, or one can treat it as a true experience of a Holy Mountain, only of a different kind. As I want to focus on this experience, I will not illustrate my discussion with pictures of the place. It is not how things look like that I want to ponder over.

One thing, however, must be recounted, and this cannot be shown in pictures: there is an impression that the entire compound has grown in the pattern of a wildflower, sprouting new stalks where it is able and willing to. There is no particular logic to how the compound is established, except for two things: while the monastery itself is located on a steep hill, both the church and the Way of the Cross occupy even more elevated places. The monastery sits on a saddle between two even more prominent points, one of which makes one think of Mount Calvary, the other of the Temple Mount.

The history of this place is, besides, more important than its geography, and defines geography itself. Before World War Two, the village of Jamna, located on the hilltop, was much larger than it is now, even if, as nowadays, it was enclosed by forests. The Pre-Carpathian hills are lower at this place in southern Poland, just

south of Tarnów, than similar hills around Kraków. The latter, however, are densely populated, while the entire region of Pogórze Ciężkowickie, just north of the Little Beskids, still remains to a large extent woodland. It does take time and effort to reach the hilltop, even if the most taxing physical exertion is usually delegated to the engine of a car. The inhabitants of the village were massacred by the Nazis in 1944 on account of their support for partisans, and its population has never recovered. Jamna is a place of seclusion not because humans sacrificed a piece of their land, but because they destroyed its human way of life.

When this was happening, one family decided that God does not allow the harming of good people. The father took an icon of the Virgin Mary, and carrying it before him, led the entire family out of the carnage. As the local legend tells, German soldiers either did not see them or preferred not to notice them. Historians believe, however, that the family was killed. The icon they carried, a very simple image of the type printed in large numbers in the 1930s, is now located under the altar of the chapel of Saint Hyacinth House, the first building in the compound.

No other buildings were initially planned. While for all pilgrims the place is a monastery and a sanctuary, in terms of ecclesiastical law it is merely 'Saint Hyacinth Academic Pastoral Center', a dependency of the Dominican Monastery in faraway Poznań, and only two friars live there. They are helped by a number of lay people, and by some nuns from the Congregation of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus, who live in a separate building, the most remote in the compound. Indeed, the place, according to the intentions of the late Dominican who devised and established it, was to be devoted to spiritual retreats for the leaders of his youth ministry. As usual, however, this friar had other aims as well. Jan Góra, whose family name means, in Polish, 'Mountain', was a man of many talents and a forceful presence. Tens of thousands used to come to the celebrations he organized. Jamna was, for him, both a place to focus on God and a place from which Christ's message could be spread. It was also to be a kind of home, possibly for him, possibly for some of his dearest friends, where they could retire later on in their lives. He was proud that 'mountaineers gave a mountain to Fr. Mountain', and he developed the retreat into a sanctuary.

Thus, the compound has grown. Saint Hyacinth House is now surrounded by the blessed Czesław House, with a new kitchen and a new library, a 'café hut', an art gallery hut, living quarters with so-called 'Rector's rooms', another set of newer living quarters for friars and pilgrims, a stable for oxen, horses, and goats, two other houses for pilgrims, a wooden home for the nuns, and two open-walled huts for barbecuing. There is a flagpole, and there are multiple memorials, including a separate memorial and chapel for war remembrance and reconciliation at the location of the 1944 massacre. Rosary paths were created in the forests, and a rosary garden was built for those who do not like forests. A small chapel informally known as 'Our Lady of Skiers' sits above a steep slope descending to the compound. Most importantly, the densely forested hill on the northern part of the saddle in which

the compound sits became a Calvary, while the southern hilltop was crowned by a beautiful modern wooden church.

This church is the sanctuary of Our Lady of Infallible Hope. The church was preceded by the Icon it hosts. It was painted to commemorate the carnage of Jamna and the peasants who trusted in God. The Virgin Mary resembles a peasant girl, while the face of Jesus was inspired by a child whose mother died in childbirth . The Icon, remote in its simplicity from traditional Catholic painting, is revered as miraculous, in spite of being only some twenty years old.

There is only one building which remains empty. This building is the hermitage, a stone hut without electricity or running water, built in the forest close to the top of the Calvary hill. It was to be occupied by Father Góra. No one spends any time there, even if invitations are frequently extended. Apparently, no one feels a need to live in a true *σκήτη*. This kind of life does not fit the two modes in which Jamna functions.

If a pilgrim comes there on a festive day, even on an ordinary Sunday, he or she may be shocked how many people are there. Groups and individuals, tourists and pilgrims, march all over the place in large flocks, absent only from the thickly wooded paths outside the compound. The carpark fills with cars, and the church with local people from across the entire region who, apparently, prefer the mass at Jamna to that celebrated in their own parish churches. While the church has no organ or choir, there is usually a musical group there to sing. And this festive atmosphere culminates in large commemorations, gatherings, even a yearly ball.

Still, what most people come there for is the liturgy. One flock comes for the main liturgy, sometimes known as the 'liturgy according to Jan Góra'. To be sure, this is a liturgy celebrated according to the new rite and, measured by the standards of Western Europe, free of any excesses. For the critics, it sounds noisy and seems infantile. Many gestures are exaggerated. The communal aspect is emphasized, or even overemphasized, through a long improvised Prayer of the Faithful and a Sign of Peace in the form of an all-inclusive human chain. Such gestures are not unknown to anyone familiar with various Catholic communities and brotherhoods. The main difference is that at Jamna all of the faithful are invited into the community, with the energy of celebration simply coming across as utterly sincere.

Another flock comes in the afternoon, to the Extraordinary Rite, the Tridentine Liturgy celebrated with all due diligence, and accompanied by Gregorian chant performed by a professional cantor. The very strict practice of this liturgy, paralleled by the very strict practicing of pre-Tridentine Dominican liturgy on weekdays, shows the faithful clearly what the only thing is that matters in this liturgy: giving praise to, and showing reverence for, the Trinity. Here, there is no room for innovation, for an exaggerated gesture, or for an omitted gesture. The cantor proceeds in parallel with the liturgy already delivered by the priest, while the priest waits quietly, with no organ music and no peri-liturgical hymns or chants, so that throughout the

time when the priest is praying *secreto* there is no sound whatsoever to be heard in the church, making this celebration a celebration of silence.

The non-festive mode is that which Jamna lives most of its time. Not so many people happen to experience it, though. The entwining of prayer and work, known to anyone who has witnessed a typical day's arrangement in Catholic Orders, is modified a little at Jamna, as the Mass is said in the evening, together with Vespers, to allow occasional pilgrims to participate. The life of the Liturgy of the Hours, with common meals for all inhabitants that bring together friars, nuns, lay workers, lay volunteers and guests, and that interrupt otherwise incessant daily duties and errands, have, apparently, nothing special about them, and are, as everywhere, mixed with challenges and sorrow. Still, for a pilgrim, the place seems strangely happy. This is because the burden of life can somehow be felt there to be lighter. This burden is not lighter by itself, but it feels easier to carry. One can see there more clearly that this burden is not everything we can have. There is, every day, some time set aside for anticipation of the life to come, celebrated together, but also revered in silence, as everyone has time for silent prayer and Eucharistic adoration. The pilgrim feels invited to this prayer and is shown, just through example, that the time of silence, prayer and adoration is not time lost.

Undoubtedly, on weekdays, one has the impression that Jamna is secluded from the world. The world comes to visit it, and its caretakers need to visit the world, but Jamna lives a life of its own. No matters of church, society, and politics disappear there, are passed over silence, or are even distant. If there is a distance at Jamna, it is different from the physical sort: it is the distance of warm irony. All matters human just seem less important there, because what matters is our true aim and the path we walk, the path which is our Lord himself.

If a pilgrim ascends Mount Jamna and takes the time to look around and see beyond the beautiful landscapes, what they will see is this truth: that our life, by its very nature, moves us beyond this reality. Life, in all its exaltations, pains, and sorrows, can be lived only because it begins rather than ends. Life can be lived, in spite of exaltations, pains, and sorrows, because Christ is Life, now and forever. Life can be lived because He is present, tacitly, when we invite Him to live with us. This is the view that Jamna gives to someone who ascends it. This is the *θεωρία* and the contemplation that we encounter as a gift for us to receive when we go there: a *θεωρία* in anticipation, a contemplation of things to come which we now know only in faith.

A Contemplation: Two Icons

One may wonder whether the way the monastery at Jamna has grown, abandoning its hermitage, testifies to the impossibility of establishing, in contemporary Catholicism, a true place of seclusion. No answer to this question, however, can even be proposed if we do not understand what actually occurred during its short history.

Coming to an understanding of such a mixture of matters human and divine is no easy task to complete. In trying to accomplish this, I will propose something which might be dubbed a 'conceptual scheme', but is probably closer to what Byzantine authors, like Saint Maximus the Confessor, would have called a *θεωρία*: an interpretation of matters of faith, expressed in human language that has, at least in part, been borrowed from what philosophers have offered up as a theory of human affairs. I must emphasize that once this small 'contemplation' is completed, the question of whether or not the story of Jamna is one of failure may emerge as unwarranted.

The conceptual scheme I would like to have recourse to is one of Plato's, and not foreign to ecclesiastical tradition. I want to apply it in its original Platonic arrangement. In *Republic* 10, Plato opposes Forms of things, established by the Divine Gardener, or Father of Nature, to things themselves and their images and imitations (*Resp*. 10.1–2, 596a10–597e2). Forms are true realities of what things are, but things, both those that emerge by nature and those which are created by humans, are not 'false' or 'untrue'. They are truly what they are thanks to the relationship of participation: a form is partially, yet truly, present in an object.[7] Images, imitations, and idols only pretend to be what they are, and are usually made by humans as similar to things rather than to Forms. The difference between things and their images is, however, not merely one of degrees of similarity. If one considers other texts by Plato, such as the *Phaedo* or the *Cratylus*, one realizes that participation and similarity are one and the same thing. According to the *Cratylus*, if things are so similar that they do not differ at all, they are one and the same thing.[8] In the very same Book 10 of the *Republic*, mentioned just above, Plato argues for the unity of Forms, claiming that there can only be one Form for each thing (*Resp*. 10.2, 597c1–d4). It is so because a Form, in its pure essentiality, is precisely that which is the determining factor in and of something, one which makes it such and such, and in so doing makes it precisely as it is. Therefore, a Form simply does not differ from the very reality that is being such and such a Form. 'Being bed' is only one and always identical with itself.

Thus being merely similar, and not identical, is what distinguishes things from Forms in the *Phaedo*. Ostensibly, this is also what distinguishes images from things—as one might conclude somewhat hastily from various passages of *Republic* 10. Images, however, are not merely cases of imperfect similarity to Forms. The way that similarity works in them creates only the apparent presence of the Form. They do not fully participate in a Form, they are not in-formed so as to be something, but they are sufficiently similar to remind us of that thing and its Form. As such, they can show us what a thing is, and be an *εἰκών* – that is, an image or a simile. They

[7] The bed that a craftsman makes is not 'that which bed is' and is something 'dim with respect to truth', yet it still deserves the name of 'some bed'. Cf. *Resp*. 10.2, 597a2–11.

[8] Cf. *Crat*. 432a8– d3 and *Phaedo* 74c11–e5.

may pretend to be something else and be a *μίμημα*. Ultimately, they may cheat us, pretending and deceiving us about what they are. These are *εἴδωλα*.[9]

This Platonic construal of the distinction between the thing itself, the icon, and the idol can also be applied, to an extent, to the case of both Mounts. Obviously, the Platonic distinction has no direct relevance for divine matters. We can make use of the scheme through a metaphorical movement involving an incomplete metaphor, in which one term can be known, but another is impossible to be directly spoken of. Such a metaphor speaks more about the *terminus comparationis* than about its true reference. What it says about the true object is, however, not tantamount to pure verbiage. So far as the proper object of the metaphorical language has been recognized as related to what we can experience directly, the conceptual scheme that *terminus comparationis* involves makes it possible to utter claims about realities which are, by their nature, absolutely unique, not known directly, or veiled in and by what we can easily know and experience.

Such a veiled reality is Divine presence. We express our hope of coming face to face with this presence in our efforts ascending the Mountain. Facing this presence, experiencing it, is what we look for in the metaphor of *θέα*, the vision that we acquire as we climb. Our *θεωρία*, then, is our state, pertaining to mind, senses, emotions, and will, as we interiorize this *θέα* and let it change us. *Θεωρία* thus requires the true presence and givenness of its object. Givenness, however, is not mere external presence, 'next to us'. What gives itself to us needs to transcend the boundary between things. In the physical world, this transcendence is both ordinary and mysterious: it is the presence of the same forms, repeated in the air as sound waves, repeated in space as electromagnetic waves of light. The name for this presence—both ordinary and mysterious—of identity across different media and across matter comes from Plato: it is participation.

What we hope for, thus, in ascending a Holy Mount, is participation, not in the light and sounds of the world, which a mountain-top allows for, but in Divine presence. And while God is veiled, His presence is not. We believe, both in the East and in the West, that there is such true presence and that it was granted to us in the Sacraments. Sacraments are true Divine presence in this world, and can be accounted for, however imperfectly, in terms of participation. In turn, a simile of this presence, if not misleading, can be called an icon, but if misleading, an idol.

'Misleading' is an important word here, for the distinction between an icon and an idol is not a matter of degree of similarity. We make both of them as similar to a true Form, and both are created when participation is less essential or impossible to achieve. Something is thus an idol if it turns us away from the truth. Deception and misguidance, one should remember, are more important than just inaccuracy in

[9] Cf., e.g., *Soph*. 265b1–2 as opposed to 235d6–36b3; and *Resp*. 2.20, 382a1–c5, 10.2, 598b1–8.

what in Greek is called *ψεῦδος*, for we always speak in an imperfect and inaccurate way but do not thereby have to lead our interlocutors astray.

Undoubtedly, this way of defining the words 'icon' and 'idol' differs from the definitions of Christian theology. I hope, however, that it does not distort the theological usage too much, while allowing one to look for icons made by humans not merely in pictorial material. And one can easily see, in Mount Athos and Mount Jamna, these kinds of icon. A pilgrim's experience is, in itself, a kind of depiction of the things to come, of the transformative *θεωρία* we may hope for once we leave this world.

Some of the simplest elements of both depictions are, by the very nature of the image, similar. We need to depart, at least to a degree, from the everyday course of our efforts. We come to be separated, at the top, from our temporal concerns. Both Mountains offer the pilgrim a degree of seclusion from those concerns. Alongside that, both Mountains show how those unescapable concerns need to be lived: as a part of a path that leads upwards. And what we find at the top of the Mountains, possibly unregistered by those who actually live there, is a human icon of the New Jerusalem—of the reality to come and the fullness of life that awaits us there.

Mount Athos, through the radical abandonment of *divertissement*, brings pilgrims to themselves. Through the abandonment of dwelling, of producing signs, creating sense, and marking spaces, it leaves the pilgrim, who cannot but focus on what is important, focused on absence and silence. Absence and silence speak, in turn, about what cannot be spoken of. It is the only way we can speak about the existence of the ultimate Mystery we are to see, about the light of the Lamb that shines in the New Jerusalem. Such an icon, in the simplicity of its silence, does not allow anything else to be spoken of.

In Jamna, a pilgrim encounters two visible icons, and also one that is still more important but invisible. The visible icons, the mountains over the Mountain, depict the Calvary and the Mount of Transfiguration. The Calvary at Jamna is not particularly different from other Catholic Calvaries, with maybe one exception: leading him or her through a dense forest, it gives the pilgrim the idea that the Way of the Cross is not just a painful experience, but one of feeling alone and abandoned.

On the other hilltop, the pilgrim encounters Christ in the Eucharist. The manner in which the liturgy is celebrated makes it clear that things that happen every day in every church are miracles greater than all kinds of religious wonders we hope for. People go to this church to avoid the grim experience of priests rushing their way through the liturgy, passing quickly through the greatest mystery that has been given to us, in order to finish the mass on time and apply their due diligence to parish announcements. Someone who comes to Jamna is told by the gestures, attitudes, and diction there that what is happening in the moment of Transubstantiation is actually the most important part of the Catholic Liturgy. Faith in the real presence of our Lord in front of us and in us is, simply, not at all undermined by the physicality

of the celebration, by the physical icon—one created by the manner in which the liturgy is focused on and celebrated. For someone looking from outside, the fact that two liturgies, the new one and the old, have to find a frequently uneasy cohabitation at Jamna, speaks most eloquently: the Lord's feasts with his disciples, truly celebrated in the 'liturgy according to Jan Góra', is completed by the silent celebration of the Mystery present in this feast. While liturgies celebrated with dignity and faith can be experienced in a number of places in the reality of Polish popular Catholicism, this strange connecting up of the best of the new and the old in the observance of the greatest Mystery that we encounter on Earth makes Jamna an accidental, or possibly a providential, icon of reverence.

As a whole, however, Jamna is the icon of the Life to come. This life is to be a fullness of community, a fullness of celebration, and a fullness of the Lord's presence. Its fullness is not merely imitated by the festivities and the gatherings. It is truly depicted in the experience of pilgrims, because all that depiction surrounds and leads to the most important experience: that of participation. Participation which is true yet comes in a veil seems to be in need of an image, and it makes this image an icon of truth.

Jamna is not a failed attempt to create a place of seclusion. It is a true, even if imperfect, icon of things to come. It is not mere chance that has shaped it: the needs of people that live around it and the needs of the time have given a peculiar shape to the Christian icon of the Mountain. No less true is the icon that Athos gives us. Hence, just as the reality to come is unique, so is this icon made of silence yet animated internally and invisibly for many pilgrims by prayer and the Eucharist. It is as unique as the truth it expresses is one and simple. Jamna is in many ways different: it is a truly catholic icon, for it tries to welcome and teach everyone, conforming to the needs of those who come and showing them where they should turn their gaze. Both Mounts are icons of *θεωρία* to come, and both are its anticipations, for they give a place to true participation in what is to come. So long as they remain focused on making room for this true participation, so long as they are instruments that winnow out all that diverts us from this true participation, there can be no danger of them becoming idols, revered in themselves as cultural symbols of Christianity. Yet the two Mounts are also deeply different, thereby testifying to the imperfection of all images and icons we make, even if the type of the icon of the Mountain was given to us by the Lord himself. And indeed, it does seem very difficult for us to preserve in one place, in one spirituality, and in one liturgy, the two apparent extremes: both the fullness and the ineffability of the Life to come.

Councils and Canons: A Lutheran Perspective on the Great Schism and the So-Called Eighth Ecumenical Council

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The Lutheran tradition shares with the Catholic Church a *reformatio* ideal, which is a striking feature of the Western ecclesiological tradition of the last millennium more generally. This paper first examines some aspects of Lutheran ecclesiology as it relates to the *Una Sancta*, the canonical and synodical tradition, and ecumenical pursuits. It then goes on to use the '*reformatio*' lens to reflect on the councils of Constantinople of 869–70 and 879–80 and the current estrangement between Rome and the Eastern churches in regard to the diverging standings of these councils. A solution is provided, it is suggested, in the call of *Unitatis redintegratio* (1964) to 'continual reformation' in the context of ecumenism as well as to an honouring of the conditions that held between East and West before the schism.

Introduction

The Lutheran Churches that date back to the sixteenth century were both born in and would henceforth be formed in schism. Pre-Tridentine Western Catholic provinces and communities, mostly in Northern Europe, were ruptured from communion with Rome and embarked on a journey through history that for almost five hundred years has kept them, as well as the churches they helped found elsewhere, separated from their brothers and sisters of the larger Roman Catholic community. This rupture has also separated them from the Western patriarch, as well as from every other chair with an apostolic predecessor. Through this long history, Europe has gone through violent wars based on the reformation lines, a transformative enlightenment project which aimed to create a new common ground for public life on the continent, a remarkable process of globalisation, and a recent century of both unprecedented decline of Christian practice in the West and increase of ecumenical dialogue worldwide. The relationships within Western Christianity look very different on this side of history compared to in the sixteenth century.

In the following, I will sketch a Lutheran perspective on the *Una Sancta* as it relates to Orthodox-Catholic relations.[1] In that regard, this paper is given with the eye of an outside observer, by someone not in communion with either church. It is my point of departure in the following that while the Orthodox Churches make less changes to their conciliar and canonical past, it has been a hallmark of the Western tradition to find new perspectives that alter both ecclesial life and the way the canonical and conciliar tradition is appropriated. Here, I take that to be a great possibility for the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. In this paper, I will apply this possibility to the current estrangement in regard to which council should be considered the 'eighth ecumenical council', if any. Today, the Catholic Church lists the Constantinopolitan council of 869–70 as the Eighth Ecumenical Council, but this council was reversed by another Constantinopolitan council ten years later, in 879–80, which the Orthodox hold in high regard—not normally as an ecumenical council, though. Full communion could not be established until this situation is salvaged, since the current Catholic Eighth Ecumenical council condemns one of the foremost Eastern orthodox saints, Photius. After a section on Lutheran ecclesiology—ecumenical and otherwise—I will apply some reflections from this section, regarding the Western tradition's ability to reform itself, on the matter of these councils. This paper aims to highlight a possible solution on this issue, a solution which has been suggested by others, and is by no means new, but nevertheless deserves to be repeated.

Lutheran Ecumenical Ecclesiology—Then and Now

1. The Reformation and Western Concept of 'Reform'

The concept of *reformatio* has played an integral part in ecclesial life in the West since the era after the *saeculum obscurum*. Starting with the Cluniac reforms in the tenth century, this concept has formed movements in the West, both monastic and of the greater church. Martin Luther published his 95 theses in 1517 in a period of tremendous focus on reform at the late-medieval great church councils, at many German diets and through the efforts of humanism.[2] Martin Luther was formed in such environments, and the movement he inspired would come to be known by this term. In the 95 theses Luther used precepts of canon law to argue against the concurrent praxis of indulgences, calling—at least apparently at this point—only

[1] I would like to thank the Rt Revd Dr Carl-Axel Aurelius, the Revd Dr Caesarius Cavallin O.S.B. and the Revd Dr Daniel Wihlborg for kind help and valuable insights in the preparation of this paper.

[2] Many accounts of the Lutheran reformation exist. See for example Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, ed. and trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Viking, 2004); Richard Rex, *The Making of Martin Luther* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). A brief official shared Lutheran-Catholic historical account of the Lutheran reformation is now available in *From Conflict to Communion* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2013), 23–39.

for a *return* to canonical standards, not their abrogation. Within the following three years he went through a drastic transformation in his understanding of ecclesiology, all while he was the object of great theological and legal debate within the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire. After receiving the papal bull against him, *Exsurge Domine*, he and the faculty of Wittenberg went out to the city gate in December of 1520 and burned the bull together with the whole collection of Roman canon law, *Corpus iuris canonici*—an event about which Luther afterwards would state that he was more pleased with than 'any other action' of his life.[3] This was a definite break with Rome and its ecclesiology. A movement informed by the Renaissance ideals of *ad fontes* had taken these ideals far beyond what the unity of the Western Church could bear. For many years, Luther would still hope that a great council should settle the disputes within a unified Catholic Church. The main Lutheran confessional document, the *Confessio Augustana*, was produced by Philip Melanchthon and presented to Catholic representatives at the diet of Augsburg in 1530 precisely with this *stated* purpose: a unified Western Church. However, the text did not accomplish this purpose. At the same time, crises had erupted in Lutheran areas due to the loss of canon law. The reformers responded to this challenge by simply starting to re-import canon law and transform it to their purposes.[4] Distinctly reformed pre-Tridentine communities started to evolve around Europe. At the time of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, many ecclesial provinces in Germany and beyond, which formerly had been in communion with Rome, were already independent and politically and ecclesiastically estranged from the larger Roman Catholic community. The settlement of this year ended the wars which followed the schisms and organised religious life in Germany on the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* ('whose realm, his religion')—a sign that the division was no longer sought to be healed, but a new reality which Europe would have to live with.

2. Luther's Ecclesiology

A Lutheran concept of the *Una Sancta*, then, is not built on the inherited canonical tradition of the Western Church, although Lutheran churches can carry many features of the same. It instead takes its departures from the Lutheran interpretation of the Gospel, that the sinner is made righteous through faith alone in Christ and that the church is the global community of believers in him. This is, for example, stated in *On the Papacy in Rome* (1520), where Luther defined 'Christendom' as 'an assembly of all the people on earth who believe in Christ', maintaining that 'the essence, life, and nature of Christendom is not a physical assembly

[3] *Letter to John von Staupitz,* in *Luther's Works* [=LW], vol. 48 (Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House), 192. Account from John Witte, *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 53.

[4] Witte, *Law and Protestantism*, 84.

but an assembly of hearts in one faith'.[5] Luther's ecclesiology was thus not primarily institutional or structural, but soteriological. Rather than the institution being the underpinning reality for salvation, it is, primarily, the salvific message and its reception that demarcate and define the institution. Since it is faith in the Gospel that constitutes the church, the unity of the church is also based on that criterion, despite both organisational divisions and human efforts to construe unity on other grounds. Luther writes that the spiritual unity of faith 'alone is sufficient to create Christendom'. Since the kingdom of Christ 'is not of this world' (Joh 18:36) and since Christendom is distinguished 'from all worldly communities as being nonphysical',[6] it is impossible to make 'Christian *unity* or community physical and external, equal to other communities' [emphasis mine].[7]

But although Luther in this way emphasised the invisibility of the church, he did not teach that the church does not have materiality and concrete existence in this world. Throughout his life, he developed his notion of *notae ecclesiae*, the marks of the church, as a way for people to recognise where to find the true church. In 1521 he gave three such marks for the church: 'baptism, the bread and, above else, the gospel'. Wherever these marks are found, regardless of place and people, 'there is without doubt also the church'.[8] He extended these marks in 1539 to the number of seven: the word of God, baptism, the sacrament of the altar, the keys, the ministries of the church, prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God and persecution.[9] In 1541, he extended these to the number of ten and altered them slightly: baptism, the sacrament of the altar, the keys, the preaching office, the apostolic creed, the Lord's prayer, honouring of temporal power (without subordinating them to the pope), marriage as a divine ordinance, the suffering for Christ, taking no revenge.[10] With the aid of these lists he, unfortunately, criticised the Catholic Church for not being a true church, but elsewhere also recognised the presence in the Catholic Church of such Christian marks and of much good and maintained that Christianity under the Pope is truly the body of Christ.[11]

In regard to the conciliar tradition, Luther asserted that it is only Holy Scriptures that are infallible, and that councils can and have erred.[12] Nevertheless, he affirmed that much depends on the 'main councils' (he considers only the first four), held them in high regard and considered them 'the highest judges and greatest bishops under Christ'.[13] At one instance, he states that councils cannot err in matters of the

[5] *On the Papacy in Rome* (*LW* 39, 65).
[6] Ibid., 65–66.
[7] Ibid., 67.
[8] *Ad librum Amrosii Catharini* (*Weimar Edition* [=*WA*] vol. 7, 720.32–38).
[9] *On the Councils and the Church* (*LW* 41, 148–67; Cf. *WA* 50, 624–44).
[10] *Against Hanswurst* (*LW* 41, 194–8; *WA* 51, 479–85).
[11] Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 285, who points to this ambivalence in Luther's assessment of the Catholic Church.
[12] *Luther at the Diet of Worms* (*WA* 7, 838.2–8. Cf. *WA* 2, 288.30–35).
[13] *On the Councils and the Church* (*WA* 50, 606.5–6).

faith,[14] but this should be understood in light of his later expositions that councils cannot issue new doctrine. Councils have no right to *promulgate* new articles of faith, only to *condemn* such. The same type of pairing he applies to the lack of power in a council to decree new good works or ceremonies, or to interfere with worldly legislation or to strengthen the authority of the clergy by tyrannically commanding people's action. A council has however, in the reverse, the authority to condemn such decrees and attempts. It also has the authority to promulgate some ceremonies that do not wrongfully strengthen the power of the clergy but are ordained to be helpful for the people.[15] Thus, councils are to defend and maintain the ancient faith based on the scriptures, and, on this ground, deal with matters relating to their own era.

3. Lutheran Ecclesiology

For the Lutheran tradition, it is only Holy Scriptures that are the norm for the church. This means that Lutheran ecclesiology stands quite free in relation to other aspects of the inherited tradition. These are regulated under the auspices of *adiaphora*—as long as they are not obscuring the Gospel, they can be preserved. In this way, many aspects of tradition not explicitly regulated in Holy Scriptures have been maintained in many Lutheran Churches (such as the Western mass, the liturgical year, the episcopal structure etc.). But this is not the case with the canonical tradition, although, as stated above, aspects thereof have survived. Instead, Lutheran Church Order (*Kirchenordnung*)—the replacement of Canon law in many Lutheran churches—can be constantly updated and changed. This testifies to the volatile nature, at least in possibility, of Lutheran church structure. In theory the theology, however, remains the same, but naturally that too goes through changes and adaptions in different historical eras—just as the theological reflection of other churches do. Although the Lutheran confessional documents remain the same for most Lutheran Churches, the interpretation of them varies, as do the application and the understanding of their purpose. The historical developments since the sixteenth century have, for example, led the Church of Sweden to state, in the introduction of the Church Order section that treats its evangelical Lutheran identity, that while 'the three oldest creeds are unique catholic expressions of the continuity of the faith and the church through time', the Lutheran confessional writings from the sixteenth century are 'guiding testimonies of how the faith was interpreted in response to the questions of that time'.[16] This is a clear relativisation of the status of the confessional documents in relation to the lasting standing of the ancient creeds. This differenti-

[14] *WA* 59, 547.3577–79. For context, see Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 124. Cf. Heinz Schütte, *Martin Luther und die Einheit der Christen* (Paderborn: MuNe Verlag, 2007), who takes this saying as an ecumenical point of departure.

[15] *On the Councils and the Church* (*WA* 50, 607.613–14).

[16] Gunnar Edqvist, Maria Lundqvist Norling, Anna Tronêt, Migelle Wikström, *Kyrkoordning för Svenska kyrkan: med kommentarer och angränsande lagstiftning* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2018), 39.

ation also reveals the self-understanding of this Lutheran Church: while remaining a Lutheran church, it has moved beyond the sixteenth century to a point at which it must view its confessional writings as the primary *examples* of theological reflection of *another* era.

As for other churches, the movement through time has brought the Lutheran Churches to the era of ecumenism. The New Testament abounds with an ecclesiology that emphasises unity. A church given to scripture as the only binding norm is bound to be guided and inspired by its vision. In the Gospel of John, the oneness of all believers is based on the Trinitarian life and is prayed for by Christ himself: 'that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us'.[17] Such a unity is explained earlier in the Gospel, chapter 14, as manifesting in words and deeds—a shared *energeia*, as it were. Further, in 1 Corinthians, Paul presents a notion of catholicity which includes not only a perfect union of speech, *nous* and *gnome*, but a reception of the whole Christian inheritance: you do not belong to a Paul or a Peter; but Paul, Peter, ten thousand teachers, the world, life, death— 'all things belongs to you, and you to Christ'.[18] Finally, in Ephesians chapter 4, the final unity seems to be in the future. Now, is a 'unity of the Spirit', a shared Trinitarian life in faith, baptism, ecclesial body, and future hope. Then, through the building up of the church, a time when all will participate in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, in which the church like one mature person will stand firm in doctrine, holding on to the truth together. Exegetically, there is every reason to assume that this state had not yet been obtained from the perspective of the author.

4. Current Developments in Lutheran Ecumenical Dialogue

The Holy Spirit is calling to such a unity. In an openness for rediscovery, the ecumenical dialogues have altered Lutheran relations to other churches and redefined crucial elements of prior conflicts. In relation to the Catholic world, statements have been made that have brought us closer in word and sentiment. Four examples:

First. Lutherans stated with Catholics in 1981, that the *Augsburg Confession* was formed in a time of critique which no longer applies, that a broad consensus now exists on the doctrinal matters raised even in its most critical parts, and that Lutherans cannot remain content with the *Augsburg Confession* but instead should seek to articulate the faith anew together with the Catholic Church.[19]

Second. The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* in 1999 declared a 'core consensus' on the disputed matter of justification and was accomplished

[17] Joh 17:21. NKJV, altered.

[18] 1 Cor 3:21–3. A similar langue about unity is found in Philippians 2:2: 'fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind'.

[19] *All Under One Christ* 3.19.28.

through the recognition that the contemporary Churches do not *longer* fall under the condemnations expressed in the sixteenth century (although the anathemas still apply). Aside of from the core consensus, remaining differences regarding the doctrine of justification are no longer considered to be 'occasion for doctrinal condemnations'.[20] The interesting situation has then occurred that while the Lutheran signatory churches are in agreement with the Catholic Church about justification (the major contended topic of the reformation era), they are *not* in agreement regarding the theological correctness of this settlement with a minority of Lutheran Churches which have not signed the *Joint Declaration*.

Third. In 2016, Pope Francis and Lutheran World federation president the Rt Rev Dr Munib Younan signed a document stating that Catholics and Lutherans 'realize' that they 'belong to the one body of Christ' and that 'the struggle of the sixteenth century is over'.[21] This document encourages commitment of Catholics and Lutherans to 'always begin from the perspective of unity', not from division; to learn from one another; and, most significantly for this discussion, 'to seek visible unity, to elaborate together what this means in concrete steps, and to strive repeatedly toward this goal'. Hence, according to these definitions, to be a Lutheran is now to be committed to seek for visible unity with the Catholic Church.[22]

Fourth. In the wake of the *Joint Declaration*, the Finnish Lutheran-Catholic dialogue have made important statements regarding a Lutheran acceptance of the papal ministry. In this case, it is argued that these developments have been made possible since the obstacle of papal resistance to Lutheran soteriology is now removed.[23] (Remember that papacy is judged to be Antichrist in Lutheran confessional writings—a position now rejected in the ecumenical dialogue.)[24] Lutherans of this Finnish dialogue have come so far as to acknowledge both the divine charism of the petrine ministry as residing in the Bishop of Rome and the need for a universal 'ministry of leadership and of pastoral supervision'.[25]

All this to say that the Lutheran Churches are in processes of changes, and today at a very different place in relation to the Catholic Church than in the sixteenth century.

This is also true in relation to the Orthodox Churches. While the first Lutheran-Orthodox contact seems to have been the deep friendship between Philipp Melanchthon and a deacon named Demetrios Mysos, envoy of Patriarch Joasaph

[20] *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* 1.5.
[21] *From Conflict to Communion*, 90.
[22] Ibid., 89–90.
[23] Virpi Helena Mäkinen, Veikko Ilmari Karimies, Simo Eerik Peura, Tiina Marja Sisko Huhtanen, Karttunen Tomi, Teemu Sippo, Jari Juhani Jolkkonen, Olli-Pekka Vainio, Raimo Goyarrola, Jan Aarts, Anders Hamberg, Toan Tri Nguyen, *Communion in Growth: Declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry: A Report from the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission for Finland* (Helsinki: Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, 2017), 113.
[24] *From Conflict to Communion*, 82.
[25] *Communion in Growth*, 114.

II to the Lutherans, it is the correspondence between the Lutheran Faculty of Tübingen and Patriarch Jeremiah II between 1573–81 that is of more significance.[26] This exchange of letters reveals a deep cleft of theological presuppositions, not the least in relation to, for example, the sacraments, theological anthropology, and the force and meaning of tradition. The Lutherans here pointed to scriptures as the only secure source for divine revelation, and therefore maintained that only those things 'which are based on the witness of the scriptures' should be accepted in response to disputed issues. That which cannot be explicitly derived from scripture do not need to be believed or received.[27] The Lutherans further likened scriptures to a pure fountain of water in comparison to the writings of the Fathers and the conciliar decrees which, they claimed, like a downstream channel have muddied the same water with notions of their own times.[28] Even so, the Lutherans maintained that there is much in the Fathers and the Synods to be grateful for and to accept, but, since scriptures on their own are able to make a man perfect (with reference to 2 Tim 3:16–17), 'there is no need of tradition'.[29] Hence, while the Lutherans, on the one hand, greatly benefited from the writings of Fathers in so far as they understood them to be rightly interpreting scripture, they also, on the other hand, guided by the hermeneutical principle *sensus literalis unus est*, did not tolerate the fathers' 'diverse and opposing interpretations and explanations' of scripture, which they found 'obstructed and limited'.[30] The Patriarchal responses to the Tübingen letters, which highlights the insurmountable differences, are today counted among the Symbolical Books in the East.

But much has happened since. In the official Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue, Lutherans now recognise that 'The Holy Tradition is the authentic expression of divine revelation in the living experience of the Church'.[31] With the words of Basil of Caesarea we state that scripture and tradition 'have the same value' in regard to the faith.[32] The Orthodox, on the other hand, 'hear with satisfaction' that *sola scriptura* was 'always intended to point to God's revelation' and therefore *also* 'to the Holy Tradition' in order to preserve the church from merely human inventions.[33] Further, we Lutherans acknowledge that the function of Holy Scriptures was never meant 'to undermine the authority of the Church',[34] and that the teaching of the Ecumenical

[26] Published in translation in George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople: The Correspondence between the Tübingen Theologians and Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople on the Augsburg Confession* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005).

[27] Ibid., 112.

[28] An image from Bernard of Clairvaux, also used by Luther. See *On the Councils and the Church* (*WA* 50, 519.33–520.10).

[29] Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople*, 114.

[30] Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople*, 220 and 223.

[31] *Agreement on Scripture and Tradition* 3.

[32] Ibid. 9. With reference to St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* 27.66 (*PG* 32:188A).

[33] Ibid. 11.

[34] Ibid. 10.

Councils is 'normative'[35] and 'authoritative'[36] for our churches today. But not only that, in a quite far-reaching formula, we speak also of *other* aspects of tradition as authoritative**:**

> The Holy Tradition as ongoing action of the Holy Spirit in the Church expresses itself in the Church's *whole* life. The decisions of the Ecumenical Councils and *local* synods of the Church, the *teaching of the holy fathers and liturgical texts and rites* are especially important and *authoritative expressions* of this manifold action of the Holy Spirit. [emphasis mine][37]

Thus, we have come a long way from the polemic stances of old, and I believe this too is a part of the application of the Lutheran *reformatio*-ideal on our own churches. It should of course be noted that these statements do not in themselves constitute changes in the life of the churches, neither that their spirits already permeate sentiments clearly held and articulated by most Lutherans, but they are indications of change—unprecedented in our ecumenical history.

5. 'Reform' in the Catholic Church

We Lutherans share this trait of *reform* with the Catholic Church, which, based on this trait, seems to able to renew and reform herself, to switch perspectives, and to manage new situations by canonical and conciliar tools. In this regard, the Gregorian Reform-movement, the Council of Trent, and the Second Vatican Council, for example, were significant changes for the Catholic world, altering and developing ecclesial life in ways that opened up new eras. In regard to twentieth century developments, the *ressourcement*-movement paved the way for the retrieval of, as John O'Malley has called it, 'a more normative past',[38] which took expression in the vital force of Vatican II: *aggiornamento*, 'updating'—resulting in both a recovering of a lost past and formulation of new solutions. The concept of a 'continual reformation' is even related to as an indispensable tool for the pursuit of unity in *Unitatis redintegratio*, Vatican II's decree on ecumenism:

> Every renewal of the Church is essentially grounded in an increase of fidelity to her own calling. Undoubtedly this is the basis of the movement toward unity. Christ summons the Church to *continual reformation* as she sojourns here on earth. The Church is always in need of this, in so far as she is an institution of men here on earth. Thus if, in various times and circumstances,

[35] Ibid. 4.
[36] Ibid. 7.
[37] Ibid. 8.
[38] John W. O'Malley, 'Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?', *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 14.

> there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church discipline, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself—these can and should be set right at the opportune moment. Church renewal has therefore notable ecumenical importance. [emphasis mine][39]

This tendency to emphasise the continual need of reformation seems to be the ability of the Western tradition at large in a higher degree than of the Eastern.

The Question of the Eighth Council

1. The Issue at Stake

Now, if full visible unity between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches should be achieved, it is not feasible to ask the Orthodox Churches to alter their ancient legacy to accomplish this. Certainly, that would cause severe schism in these churches. On the other hand, the Catholic Church has a tradition of *reformatio* and *aggiornamento*, which can be a of great usefulness to solve the schism, and most likely be applied to the post-Vatican II church without severe rupture. I will here apply this reflection on the question of the eighth council, ecumenical or otherwise. The difference of which council should be regarded as the eighth—the Council of 869–70 or the Council of 879–80—is one important indication of the growing separation between the East and the West in the Middle Ages. For a long time, though, the two halves of Chalcedonian Christendom were unified in the understanding of these councils. This have been amply demonstrated by modern research. I will now first briefly present the councils and their reception before I give a Lutheran perspective—if I could call it that—on what I think could be done.

Both councils were largely embedded in two major ecclesial conflicts between the East and the West in the late ninth century. On the one hand, the rupture between Rome and Constantinople on the matter of Patriarch Ignatius' removal from office and Photius' rapid elevation to the patriarchy in 858; on the other, the clash of Byzantine and Frankish missionaries in Bulgaria and their respective teaching in the mid-860s—a conflict which grew beyond Bulgarian borders and included the first major altercation on the matter of the *filioque*.

2. The Council of 869–70

The Council of 869–70,[40] sometimes called the Ignatian Council, gathered to condemn the then deposed Photius and to confirm the reinstatement of his pre-

[39] *Unitatis redintegratio* 6.

[40] For the acta, see *Gesta sanctæ ac universalis octavæ synodi quæ Constantinopoli congregata est An-*

decessor Ignatius. Convoked by the emperor and summoning representatives from Rome and the other four Patriarchates, it was not, however, well-attended to start with. Only twelve bishops attended in the first session, but participation grew, and one hundred and ten bishops signed the acts. The council condemned Photius as usurper and had the bishops sign a document assuring communion with Rome. Rome demanded that the Byzantine missionaries be kept out of Bulgaria, and mostly likely only accepted Ignatius on this condition.[41] The council further issued twenty-seven canons and officially listed the Second Council of Nicaea (787) among the Ecumenical Councils as the seventh.

3. The Council of 879–80

Photius was sent into exile after the council but recalled three years later. He reconciled with Ignatius, at whose death in 877 Photius was reinstated as Patriarch. A new council convened in 879–80,[42] also summoned by the Emperor and attended by representatives from the whole Pentarchy. This council is sometimes referred to as the Photian Council. It was well-attended, with three hundred eighty bishops present already in its first session. Since the emperor was grieving his son, Photius presided. The council was occasioned by the achieved unity in regard to the Photian matter and dealt with issues still remaining to be solved, not the least between Rome and Constantinople. The anti-Photian Council from ten years earlier was nullified,[43] and the enumeration of Nicaea II among the Ecumenical Councils therefore redone. A papal demand for jurisdiction of Bulgaria was referred to the Emperor. Three canons were issued. At the end of the council, the Nicene creed was cited with an attached *Horos*, stating that anyone changing the creed by addition or subtraction would be condemned.[44] The natural backdrop of this statement is the *filioque* inter-

astasio bibliothecario interprete, ed. Claudio Leonardi with Antonio Placanica, Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Mediolatini d'Italia 27 (Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012); *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* [=Mansi], ed. Giovanni D. Mansi (Florence and Venice: Expensis Antonii Zatta Veneti, 1758–1798), vol. 16. Cf. Anastasius Bibliothecarius' report on the council (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica* [=*MGH*] *Epistolae* 7 [Brepols], 403–415). On the Council, see Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 132–58; Daniel Stiernon, *Constantinople IV*, Histoire des conciles œcuméniques, no. 5 (Paris: Éditions de l'Orante, 1967); Pelopidas Stephanou, 'Deux conciles, deux ecclésiologies? Les conciles de Constantinople en 869 en 879', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 39:2 (1973): 363–407, at 363–88.

[41] See Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 156, on this point.

[42] For the *acta*, see Mansi 17. On the Council, see Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 159–201; Stephanou, 'Deux conciles, deux ecclésiologies?', 388–406; Johan Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union: A Theological Analysis of the Photian Synod of 879–880*, Analekta Vlatadōn, no. 23 (Thessalonikē: Patriarchikon Hydryma Paterikōn Meletōn, 1975); George Dion. Dragas, 'The Eighth Ecumenical Council: Constantinople IV (879/880) and the Condemnation of the Filioque Addition and Doctrine', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44:1–4 (1999): 357–69; Clarence Gallagher, 'Patriarch Photius and Pope Nicholas I and the Council of 879', *The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry* 67:1 (2007): 72–88.

[43] Mansi 17, 489E.

[44] For the *Horos*, see Mansi 17, 516A–517A. See also Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union*, 267–68.

polation and the dissension which had originated about it in Bulgaria. Even though this is not explicitly stated, it is obviously the context.[45]

Before the council, Pope John VIII had sent instructions with his delegates. These instructions were adapted to the situation in Constantinople and read at the council. The original is not preserved, but in the altered version the pope states that he wishes them to proclaim that the Ignatian synod (of 869–70) 'be ostracised and without authority and invalid, and not to be included among other holy synods'.[46] Such explicit instructions on this matter is not preserved in any of the other letters sent by John VIII in preparation for the council. These circumstances have raised doubt about the text's reliability, but Francis Dvornik, who defined twentieth century Photian scholarship, has shown that the extant version suits what we know about John VIII's general intentions before the council, and that the altered text therefore is a sound representation—although altered—of the pope's agenda.[47] After the council, John VIII affirmed, in ambiguous terms, the settlement made in Constantinople in letters to Photius and the Emperor.[48] Although the pope complained about the fact that many changes had been made in his documents, he only concretely brought up the point that Photius had been reinstated without asking the council for mercy, which the pope had demanded, but then went on to approve of everything that was done 'for the case of your reinstatement by synodal decree in Constantinople' (*pro causa tuae restitutionis synodali decreto Constantinopoli*).[49] Dvornik states that '[n]o other conclusion is logically tenable' than that this also included, among other things, the annulment of the Ignatian synod, which had been revoked for this purpose.[50]

4. The Historical Reception of the Two Councils

Historically, this was the situation for about two hundred years.[51] The Ignatian Council had been repudiated and the Photian Council had replaced it as a valid union-council between East and West. The Photian Council was not listed among

[45] Cf. Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 196.

[46] Mansi 17, 472A.

[47] See Frances Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 175–77. Dvornik refers to a letter written to the Ignatian leaders before the Council in which John VIII warns them that they will be excommunicated if they do not accept union with Photius and admonishes them not to try to find excuses in writings which have been composed in this cause, since 'all fetters are unfastened', 'what is bound is undone by our pastoral authority' and 'there is no tie that cannot be unfastened, except for those who persists in their error'. (Cf. *MGH Epistolae* 7, 187). Dvornik points out that it is obvious that this refers to the previous anti-Photian Council of 869–70, and that the logic of the restoration of Photius demanded that the condemnations against him at this earlier convocation be undone. The alterations must, in addition, have been surveyed by the legates (cf. *Photian Schism*, 198–201). Dvornik also gives further arguments which I do not repeat here. Cf. Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union*, 40–56.

[48] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 205–10.

[49] *MGH Epistolae* 7, 228. His letter to the Emperor contains the same recognition of the 879–80 synod (*MGH Epistolae* 7, 230).

[50] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 207.

[51] See Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 309–30.

the ecumenical councils, even though it was sometimes referred to as the 'eighth' in the East. Nevertheless, during the investiture controversy and the Gregorian reforms, the annulled council, which had survived in the Roman archives, started to be catalogued in the West as the Eighth Ecumenical Council. The reason was that its twenty-second canon provided ample support against the influence of laymen on ecclesiastical appointments.[52] Dvornik, whose research I am relying on in this section, argued that it was to add 'more weight' to this canon that the whole council was elevated to the rank of an ecumenical council.[53] Dvornik stated about this whole process: 'we must conclude that the said Eighth Council was listed among the oecumenical councils by an extraordinary error committed by the canonists at the end of the eleventh century'.[54]

Possibly as a response to this new Latin enumeration, Byzantine authors from the fourteenth century and onwards sometimes bypassed the ordinary Eastern tradition of listing only seven councils and instead referred to the Council of 879–80 as the Eighth Ecumenical Council.[55]

These two perspectives clashed at Florence. The Byzantines correctly maintained that the earlier council had been condemned by the subsequent one.[56] The Latins, who had forgot about the later council, stated in contrast that Photius was considered an enemy of the Roman Church and that it was very unlikely that a second synod had abrogated the first. Due to these conflicting perspectives, the title of the eighth council was not given to any synod in the conciliar definitions.[57]

Most Latin authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries listed the Florentine Council as number eight. Some referred to the Ignatian Council as number eight and then instead gave Florence the number nine.[58] Also Cardinal Cesare Baronius (1538–1607), who in his *Annales Ecclesiastici* relied on a ninth century anti-Pho-

[52] For the canon, see *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, ed. Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 182–83. Dvornik, 'Which Councils are Ecumenical?', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3 (1966): 314–28, at 323, observed that this canon was employed as the 'most powerful weapon' by '[a]ll canonists and reformists of the Gregorian period' against secular interference with ecclesial appointments.

[53] Dvornik, 'Which Councils', 323. For more on the history of the elevation of the synod of 869–70 to an ecumenical council, see Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 314–30.

[54] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 328.

[55] The council is first listed in Byzantium as the eighth ecumenical council in 1357 by Neilos Diasorenos of Rhodes, a firm supporter of hesychasm who listed it as the eighth and the synod of 1341 against Barlaam as the ninth. Some manuscripts composed soon after 1341 also list these councils as the eighth and ninth without giving them the character of ecumenical councils. Dvornik believed that the Easterners started to enumerate this councils as the eighth either in an attempt to counterbalance the Latin promulgation of the council of 869–70, or as a necessity when the synod of 1341 should be given this status. See Dvonrik, 'Which Councils', 316–18. Cf. *Photian Schism*, 384–85.

[56] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 362–64.

[57] Dvornik, 'Which Councils', 324. When the Greek Uniats translated the act of the Florentine council in 1526, they deliberately numbered *this* council the eighth with the approval of the curia during Pope Clement VII (1523–1534). Also, Laurence Surius, one of the first editors of conciliar acts, gave the council this title.

[58] Dvornik, 'Which Councils', 325.

tian collection that would shape the Western negative image of Photius—but which Dvornik later would prove to be unreliable—enumerated the Ignatian Council as the eighth.[59] Another way of numbering the councils in this period is found for example with the Spanish canonist Antonio Agustin (1517–1586), who counted nine councils common to Greek and Latins—the ninth being the Council of Florence—and seven *Latin* councils; or with Andreas Jacobazzi (1538), who made a division between the original first eight councils and the following Latin synods.[60]

It was Cardinal Bellarmine who established the modern Catholic way of listing the councils, adding to the eight councils all later Latin convocations, making the Council of Florence the sixteenth council. In 1595, a papal congregation tasked to facilitate the printing of the Roman edition of conciliar acts, *Collectio Romana* (printed 1608–1612), decided to follow this numbering (numbering Florence not as the eighth, but as the sixteenth). It has since become the Catholic standard for enumerating councils.[61]

5. The Current Situation

Today, Dvornik's research on the authenticity of the Photian Council and the fact that it once was considered a valid union-council has been broadly accepted. Even the text of introduction to the *Ignatian* Council in Tanner's edition of the *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* argues strongly for the illegitimacy of *this* council but states that its decrees are included 'for the sake of historical completeness'.[62]

We are, then, in a situation in which the Catholic Church lists the Ignatian Council as ecumenical that has been annulled by another council, the Photian Council, to which the pope afterwards gave his assent regarding what it decreed on Photius' reinstatement, which included, according to Dvornik, the nullification of the Ignatian Council. The Photian Council has, in fact, been approved by Rome through the participation of its envoys and affirmed afterwards by the pope in writings but is currently *not* listed among the holy synods. This situation is a problem for a full reunion between the Churches, not only because Rome adheres to a council that is nullified by a council which is rightfully held on to by the Orthodox, but also because Rome currently lists a council as ecumenical that excommunicates an Orthodox saint and patriarch, Photius, who is even designated the title 'pillar of orthodoxy' in the East and whose excommunication was certainly revoked with assent by the pope.

[59] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 371–75; 'Which Councils', 325.
[60] Dvornik, 'Which Councils', 325.
[61] Ibid., 325–27.
[62] *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 157.

6. A Proposed Solution

What would be a Lutheran perspective on this issue? The Lutheran reformation was born out of the renaissance ideal of *ad fontes*, which emphasised that truth could be gained from rigorous and critical study of historical sources. In the case of the eighth council, the insights gained through historical criticism converge with the fundamental fact that the Orthodox Churches could never so radically alter their conciliar legacy from the first millennium so as to deny the Photian Council, nor to agree to a council which excommunicated one of their foremost saints, or even to enter into full union with a church that holds on to such a council. The historical facts and their obvious solution also converge well with the ability of the Western tradition to reform itself and to change perspectives.

Theologians on both sides have suggested that Rome change on this matter. Francis Dvornik called for a Catholic repudiation of the Ignatian Council's status. Although he did not suggest that Rome should re-acknowledge the Photian Council, the following suggestion is given in direct relation to the fact that the East rightfully holds on to the Photian Council:[63]

> There is only one way to achieve an understanding. The Western Church has to revive the tradition which she herself had followed up to the twelfth century, and the memory of which was alive in the West up to the seventeenth century, … and recognize only the seven primitive councils, excluding the so-called Eighth.[64]

John Meyendorff believed that a *joint* Catholic-Orthodox recognition of the Photian Council …

> … might be decisive in solving the problem of authority between Rome and Orthodoxy. … It would imply a return to the situation which existed for more than two centuries. For the Orthodox such an act would require the agreement of all the local Orthodox churches; and it would mean that union is really based on identity of faith, expressed in the common creed. … What is needed is a union of minds and a basic agreement on institutional forms of unity. The council of 879–80 accomplishes both.[65]

The first step in this process would, of course, be an in-depth study of the issue, which would require a critical edition of the 879–80 *acta*. Following that, and given that the case as presented here stands, I see no reason why a re-acceptance of the Photian Council could not simply be an internal Roman Catholic affair to begin

[63] Dvornik, 'Which Councils', 327.
[64] Ibid., 327.
[65] John Meyendorff, *Living Tradition* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 71.

with. In that way, these changes would not be made initially for the sake of union, but because they are right and just. Making these changes within the logic of its own tradition, the Catholic Church would also prepare for a union with the Orthodox world in a way that does not directly demand the immediate participation of all the local Orthodox Churches in such an endeavour. But such a step by Rome would be a clear sign of sincerity and goodwill and an outstretched arm to the Orthodox world. It would also indicate possibilities for future dialogues by concretely accommodating aspects of the tradition of the first millennium in a current-day solution.

A Roman update would not only be an important step towards harmonising the two conciliar traditions; it would also provide a framework for a future unification. The way the Photian Council solved the Roman-Constantinopolitan tension is an ideal template for church unions. When Rome, in the fourth session, requested that Constantinople would no longer elect laypersons to the patriarchate—as had been the case with Photius—the synod stated in reply:

> Every see has certain ancient customs which it has inherited. It is not necessary to contend with one another and quarrel about them. The Roman Church should, on the one hand, preserve its customs; this is appropriate. The Church of Constantinople should, on the other hand, also observe its customs which it has received from above. Similarly, also the Oriental sees.[66]

This is a prophetic structure for unity. It allows varieties in customs: Latin, Byzantine, Oriental, and *presupposes* them in the accomplished unity. In the ninth century, the East and West already had different canonical traditions—for example in the different receptions of the apostolic canons and of the Quinisext Council—but this did not prevent the union of 879–80. Photius had elaborated on the theme of variation in ecclesial customs in an earlier letter to pope Nicholas in which he states that everyone must hold on to the ecumenical councils, but 'a particular opinion of a church father, or a definition issued by a local council, can be followed by some and ignored by others'.[67]

Perhaps the council's solution of such distinctive ecclesial spheres could be used as a template for the conciliar traditions formed *beyond* the time of the Photian Council. Certainly, there are still many theological issues to be solved in relation to the remaining Western ecumenical councils and Pan-Orthodox synods: the universality of Palamite theology, papal jurisdiction, etc., but a good start would be to see these as conciliar expressions without the whole church in attendance or agreement, which therefore apply only to respective realm. In the case of the West, this would mean to radically build further ecclesiastically as well as theologically on a retrieval of *largely* the enumeration of councils still found in canonists through-

[66] Mansi 17, 489B.
[67] Cited in Meyendorff, *Living Tradition*, 24. Cf. *PG* 102:604D.

out the Middle Ages into the sixteenth century that made a distinction between, on the one hand, eight ecumenical councils (or nine, if Florence was included) and, on the other, the so-called Latin councils. The Eastern or Western councils beyond the seven ecumenical could simply be designated 'General Councils', [68] to follow Paul VI's phrasing; or 'Great Councils', which is the vocabulary used by the Council of Crete to contrast them to 'Ecumenical Councils'.[69] Also the Ravenna document differentiates between 'Ecumenical Councils in the strict sense of the term' and the later councils of both East and West. This document also includes, in its description of how the situation of dissension and estrangement was created for which it calls for a solution, the fact that the Catholic Church has continued to consider some of these other councils ecumenical.[70] The Photian synod would provide a template for such a solution: all subsequent development that has taken place without the whole church in attendance or agreement could be considered traditions applicable to only each respective sphere.[71]

Canon one of the Photian Council further balances the tendency of papal primacy with regional self-governance, as it is withdrawing the Roman court of appeal-prerogative for the residue of the Ignatian-Photian conflict, but stating—in the context of Eastern-Western relationships—that Roman privileges still apply and shall not be changed *henceforth*.[72] If Rome today were to acknowledge the validity of the council, here might be a canonical precedent even to limit to the Western sphere papal jurisdictional claims made beyond the ninth century; but also, if one wished to build on the exception made in this canon, to enhance Eastern self-governance also in relation to Rome's ancient prerogatives in certain cases.

Further, the Roman acceptance of the Photian synod would provide a solution to the *filioque* issue. The *Horos* of the council explicitly states that the creed cannot be changed, and the historical context of this statement should be understood as the discussion regarding the *filioque* interpolation. Even though no statement has been made yet from Rome about what to do with the creed in a united church, the American dialogue has already clearly suggested that the version from 381 be used from now on.[73] From a Lutheran perspective, I see no reason to keep the addition in the creed. The Lutherans of the sixteenth century who engaged with this question were so deeply entrenched in the Western tradition that even if they were appre-

[68] In a letter to Cardinal Willebrands. *Acta apostolicae sedis* 66 (1974): 620, speaking about the Council of Lyon *quod sextum recensetur inter Generales Synodos in Occidentali*, 'which is enumerated the sixth among General Councils in the West'.

[69] *Encyclical of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church* 1.3 (2016).

[70] *Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church. Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority* 39.

[71] Cf. Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union*, 202–11.

[72] Mansi 17, 497D–E, 504A–C; Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union*, 269–70.

[73] North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation, 'The Filioque: A Church Dividing Issue?: An Agreed Statement' (Washington, DC, October 25, 2003), https://www.usccb.org/committees/ecumenical-interreligious-affairs/filioque-church-dividing-issue-agreed-statement.

ciative of the Eastern standpoint and accepted it as another valid perceptive, they kept faith with the Western view.[74] But if we Lutherans continue to update our Bible translations based on the latest critical editions of the New Testament, why would not the same principles apply to the creed? Nevertheless, I believe Lutherans should tread carefully here, in unison with the Catholics and with other Western churches with whom we are in communion.

Regarding the status of the Photian Council, I do not know if it needs to be recognised as an ecumenical council. If the Catholic Church, by internal apparatus, simply switched the Ignatian Council for the Photian Council it would perhaps be wise to wait for the Orthodox before numbering it among the ecumenical councils in order to tread carefully on the, in that case, newly gained common ground in this matter. Even more so if, at the same time, Dvornik's advice is followed and the Catholic Church also returned to numbering only seven council. In any case, the Council fulfils all the characteristics of an ecumenical council, except that it did not issue a doctrinal statement, even though its *Horos* could be interpreted in this way in relation to the *filioque* controversy of that time. It titled itself 'Ecumenical Council' in its first canon. However, the heading of the acts reads: 'the Holy Synod convoked … for the union of the Holy and Apostolic Church of God'.[75] In the wait for a mutual Orthodox-Catholic recognition of the Council as ecumenical,[76] this is perhaps a good designation: a holy union council.

In the end, the issue of the council of 869–70 is a large ecumenical obstacle. Ask any Orthodox representative if they would enter into full ecclesial union with a church that numbers as ecumenical a council which had as the primary purpose to condemn Patriarch Photius, one of their saints? The answer would certainly be that it is impossible. Perhaps a union 'from below' would be possible before a change has taken place in this matter, an entering into a shared sacramental life while awaiting further solutions. But sooner and later this issue needs to be dealt with. And when it is, I believe Rome should lead the way. It was the Western church that made a mistake in relation to the historiography of ecclesial validations and abrogations. The road to unity in this case coincides happily with the historical reality that the Western tradition has a demonstrated ability to make adjustments within its received tradition.

If the case of the Ignatian and Photian councils is a problem to be solved, it seems to me that the Catholic Church has already provided the larger framework for its solution. I am thinking here of statements made about the fundamen-

[74] Robert W. Jenson, 'Lutheranism and the Filioque', in *Ecumenical Perspectives on the Filioque for the 21st Century*, ed. Myk Habets (New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 160–61.

[75] Mansi 17, 373–74. Full title: 'The Holy Synod convoked in Constantinople under the most holy and ecumenical patriarch Photius for the union of the holy and apostolic Church of God.'

[76] At the conference, I initially suggested that the council should not be accepted as ecumenical. After a conversation with Ed Siecienski I have nuanced my opinion on this matter. I extend my gratitude to him for his nuancing suggestions.

tal characteristics of the Eastern dialogue. As stated above, *Unitatis redintegratio* encourages a continual *reformation* of the Church as a way to unity. What is also stated later in that document is that, in the pursuit of 'restoration of full communion' with the Eastern Churches, 'due consideration' must be given to their local inherited traditions and 'to the character of the relations which obtained between them and the Roman See before separation'.[77] In the humble opinion of an outside observer, if the abrogation of the Ignatian Council and the validation of the Photian Council certainly belong to that pre-schismatic character of Roman-Constantinopolitan relations referred to here, is not the solution of this problem already given in the call for *reformation*?

[77] *Unitatis redintegratio* 14.

Christological Or Analogical Primacy. Ecclesial Unity And Universal Primacy In The Orthodox Church

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What is primacy, then, in the Church, if not precisely the initiation and protection of this step-by-step consubstantial unification of all things in Christ, in which consubstantial unification the very ecclesial being consists? And since Christ is himself not only the ontological/hypostatic event of this consubstantial unification, but also the foremost teacher and initiator of it, through the mystery of the Cross, and in the Spirit, he is indeed the only head and leader of his Church, he is her primordial and ultimate primate. But this means that when we speak of primacy in the Church**,** *we always mean a Christ-like primacy* (i.e., an *analogical primacy*). That means, *a primacy-in-participation in Christ's unique primacy*. And the way of this participation is, according to Greek Patristic theology, *analogy,* which is identified, in the Areopagitic texts, for example, with *syn-ergy,* which means precisely participation in the divine energy as manifested in Christ-as-primate. How can this be discussed in the context of the contemporary ecclesiological dialogues?

1

The ecclesiological dialogues between East and West over the last fifty years, and especially those between the Roman-Catholic and the Orthodox theologians, have led some theologians from both sides to realize that the basic underlying problem is that, over the course of the centuries—even before the Great Schism, and, of course, in a more decisive way, after the Schism—two different ecclesiologies were gradually created, all the more so in gradual alienation between them. I think that Edward Siecienski's book *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate*[1] is far the best book ever written by an Orthodox theologian on this issue, precisely because it succeeds, by using a highly objective scholarly method of approaching the texts and the problems (it is revealing that one of the book's eminent Roman-Catholic critics wrote that it is impossible for anyone to discover the author's denomination

[1] Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017.

by reading his book), in making this alienation absolutely clear. Thus, according to the book, a gradual over-exaltation of the divine right of Peter's successor to demand absolute primacy—a demand that started, step-by-step, centuries before the Schism—a primacy becoming more and more strictly jurisdictional and pressing for absolute submission and veneration, was met with growing theological scepticism on the part of the East. This was not because a sort of Roman primacy was initially explicitly rejected, but because its Biblical roots were differently fathomed, and it was considered as a privilege bestowed on the bishops of the Old Rome 'by the holy Fathers and the Councils', mainly for political reasons,[2] and without any universal jurisdictional dimension. It was mainly a spiritual primacy, expressing the unity of the Christian Church, along with the right to appeal to the Popes for a final solution of difficult ecclesial issues. Of course, when the *Filioque* was decisively added to the *Credo,* the Popes, according to the Eastern theologians, became heretics, and no primacy could anymore be accorded to them at all. Things became dramatically worse after the invasion of Constantinople by the Western Crusaders in 1204 and the merciless destruction of the city along with the long occupation that followed. The only reasons for union between the two separate Churches in the following centuries were clearly and exclusively political, stemming from the desperate efforts of some Byzantine emperors to save the remnants of their sinking empire. In the line of thought of the Byzantine theologians of the last Byzantine centuries (such as Niketas Seides, Niketas of Nicomedia, Nilos Doxapatris, George Tornikis, Basil of Ohrid, Andronicos Kamateros, Theodore Balsamon, Patriach John X Kamateros, Symeon of Thessalonica, Gregory Palamas, Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos, Nikolaos Cabasilas, and others), Christ is the head of the Church, all the Apostles are spiritually equal, and the 'emperors made primates, not the other way around'.[3] Even the Roman primacy 'of honour' is now for the first time doubted because of the 'Western heresies'.

But what most concerns us in this paper, is the underlying difference between the two ecclesiologies that were crystallised step-by-step during this period of time; it is precisely for this reason that even on the eve of the departure of the Byzantine delegation to Ferrara, some of its preeminent members would have explicitly preferred to go to the Conciliarist Council of Basel instead. And the difference does not simply mean that there existed a, say, supposedly solid 'Papo-centric' party against a supposedly convinced 'Conciliarist' one. It is rather a growing difference between two different 'ontologies' of the unity of the Church, one that could be perhaps called 'institutional', and another that could be perhaps called 'existential' or, much better,

[2] According to Siecienski, this happened because in the East 'there were several sees that could claim apostolic origin (e.g., Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus), not to mention all those cities visited by Paul. This relativized the significance of apostolicity and added weight to the principle that church structures were intended to mirror political divisions' (Ibid.,155).

[3] Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox,* 276.

'participatory'. While these different 'ontologies' of the Church represented tendencies rather than a dialectic opposition—and (this is important to stress) they co-existed, more or less, for centuries, after the Great Schism, (and even more after the thirteenth century)—they become two distinctive ecclesiological approaches, culminating, for the West, in Vatican I.

But let us leave for now our historical account in order to switch to some systematic reflection, as is the purpose of this paper. It is a pity that in our ecclesiological, official or academic, discussions we almost never start by asking ourselves and then our opponents what sort of definition of the Church we or they have in mind when we discuss delicate issues such as that of primacy. Or, perhaps better, what is the prevailing characteristic in the image of the Church that each one has in mind: is it the institutional-as-sacramental or the sacramental-as-institutional? For the majority of Roman-Catholic theologians the former prevails, while for the vast majority of Orthodox theologians it is the latter that holds priority. In simple words, the former understands the Church as sacrament in light of her functional/institutional/canonical structure and efficacy; here, even the Eucharist usually tends to be construed in submission and service to this structure.[4] The latter understands the sacrament as the very essence of the ecclesial structure; it is an ecclesiology of participation, as I have called it, construing the Church as aiming at participating dialogically and analogically, through Christ, in God's very mode of existence.[5] In the former case one may wonder whether the unity of the Church is primarily sacramental or canonical/moral and consisting in more or less common ideas and opinions, or ontological, and, finally, whether it implies any ontological change of the mode of our existence or not (i.e., just an ethical/canonical conformity). In the latter case one may, at times, search for the canonical aspect of the Church, not because it does not exist, but because it is clearly of less importance. For an Orthodox Christian, the very being of the Church is deeply connected to the theology of Transfiguration. Because this is what we need the Incarnation for: it is needed in order to have an infusion of divine life into created life. This is the meaning of salvation in ontological terms: now the mode of existence of created nature can change into divine by grace, so that this nature can act, or be acted upon, beyond its limits, to use Maximus the Confessor's remarkable terms. Resurrection, which is prefigured in Transfiguration, represents the ultimate change of this created mode of existence of beings; as this is prolonged by the sacraments, the Church is revealed as a fundamental event of analogical participation in divine life, since the characteristics of divine life can be

[4] See on this my *Church in the Making: an Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016), 143–160. Almost all the basic arguments of this paper are extensively discussed in this book, and particularly the First Study (pp. 15–130). For an excellent review of this book see the review essay by Fr Maximus Constas, in *Analogia 7,* 2019. For the terminology used in this paper see also my *Eucharistic Ontology; Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity,* Boston: Holy Cross Press, 2010.

[5] Cf. ibid., 100ff

transferred to the created life, precisely in an *analogical way,* through Christ, in the Spirit. And, according to the Patristic tradition that culminates, in my view, in the Areopagite as he was read by Maximus the Confessor, the fundamental characteristic of the divine mode of existence that has to be analogically transferred in creation is precisely the *homoousion/consubstantiality.*[6]

2

Thus, the only purpose for the Church of Christ to exist on earth is to introduce us to God's Kingdom, as a participation in God's consubstantial mode of Tri-personal unity, which, as we are going to see, is something that, in a way, starts already now, in history. The Church is not, of course, a duplication of the Trinity, as some Orthodox theologians claim today (usually underplaying, at the same time, the Trinitarian concept of consubstantiality, in order to exalt the 'monarchy' of the Father, and subsequently, of the Primate) but a Christological event, becoming Trinitarian only through and in Christ. That means that she is rooted upon the dialogical/analogical unity between divine and human nature in the one hypostasis of Christ, through the Spirit. This unity is dialogical and analogical because it expresses the unity of all of the divine *logoi* and energies with all of the responding human *logoi* and energies in the one hypostasis of Christ. The Church is the Body of Christ, spiritually growing through a step-by-step mimetical/imitational participation in Christ's loving obedience to the Father's love, in the Spirit, through the mystery of the Cross, which is selfless love, unifying all created beings between them, and, at the same time with divinity. Of course, the Church does not represent an already perfectly achieved consubstantial unity of all beings; the latter is pre-eternally achieved, in the form precisely of a timeless *dialogical inter-givenness of essence*, within the Trinity[7]. The Church is an event of a step-by-step *analogical* imitation of/participation in this divine inter-givenness within the limits of history, as this inter-givenness is being realized as a unifying, or, better, *consubstantializing* activity of the Spirit, who extends through human synergetic response, this Christ-event of consubstantial, ecclesial pan-unity, in creation (and when we use the term *consubstantial, consubstantiality, etc.* regarding creation here, we do not mean any abolition of the differences between the created things, but their joining together without confusion in a harmonious and undivided integrating 'identity', in God—that means in Christ's human nature, i.e., in the Church).

What is primacy, then, in the Church, if not precisely the initiation and protection of this step-by-step consubstantial unification of all things in Christ, in which

[6] Cf. Loudovikos, *Church in the Making*

[7] This *intergiveness of essence* is precisely what we call *homoousion (consubstantiality).* See my 'Dialogical Nature, Enousion, Person and non-ecstatic Will in St Maximus the Confessor: The Conclusion of a long Debate', *Analogia* 2 (2017): 79–110, at 92–96.

consubstantial unification the very ecclesial being consists? And since Christ is himself not only the ontological/hypostatic event of this consubstantial unification, but also the foremost teacher and initiator of it, through the mystery of the Cross, and in the Spirit, he is indeed the only head and leader of his Church, he is her primordial and ultimate primate. But this means that when we speak of primacy in the Church**,** *we always mean a Christ-like primacy* (i.e., an *analogical primacy*). That means, *a primacy-in-participation in Christ's unique primacy*. And the way of this participation is, according to Greek Patristic theology, *analogy,* which is identified, in the Areopagitic texts, for example, with *syn-ergy,* which means precisely participation in the divine energy as manifested in Christ-as-primate. In such a perspective, primacy seems to be a primacy of loving sacrifice and *perichoresis* of all, a Christological/analogical/synergetic primacy as participation in Christ's unique primacy, which took the form of a decisively selfless self-givenness 'for the life of the world'—this is the only divinely given 'authority' to Christ's pupils, and there exists an abundance of Patristic texts that connect, following Paul, all the ecclesial charisms precisely with this divine wisdom of consubstantializing love, which finally forms the very essence of the Church's *esse*.

The idea that the monarchy of God the Father is the direct image of the ecclesial charism of primacy is alien to the Patristic tradition of both East and West. All the many ecclesial *charismata* are particular uncreated energies, and they are necessarily *Christological,* since the ontological unity of divinity with humanity in Christ is their only source—and it would consequently be absurd for the charism of primacy to be an exception. This happens because the life of the Church is built upon the mystery of Christ through the Spirit as an analogical and synergetic step-by-step ascetical struggle to achieve consubstantiality—i.e., the unification of fragmented created nature, which is fragmented due to the inimical narcissistic divergence of our wills. And it is extremely important to note that (as I tried to show in the first study of my *Church in the Making* above) all those particular Christological energies/charismata are indeed ways of achieving consubstantiality, according to Denys the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor—and not only that of the bishop. Each one of them, when properly exercised, unifies all the others in it, while the charisma of the bishop teaches them how to function in this consubstantial way, and it finally expresses this pan-unity in person.

Thus, to project the Trinity directly upon the Church's *esse* can be extremely dangerous, since it can practically underplay history (since history is now *a history of salvation,* deeply connected with Incarnation)—i.e., to underplay the existential dimension of our *becoming members* of the Church through our struggle for *dialogical reciprocity* in Christ. Furthermore, it seems to suggest, consciously or perhaps unconsciously, an ecclesiological model of rigid canonical institutional transcendentalism of hyper-historical perfection (i.e., an *ecclesia perennis* with divinely given structures and perfect institutional unity). Thus, this, so to say, Trinitarian

approach to the problem of primacy tends to ignore the Christological specificity of ecclesiology, though, or precisely because its exponents think that they can directly descend from a Trinitarian account of the 'one and the many' relationship to the Christological, thus ignoring the big difference between the Trinitarian and the Christological consubstantiality (i.e., that the former is pre-eternally achieved, while the latter has to be laboriously achieved step-by-step in history, in the Spirit). In this way, we practically dissolve the most significant part of ecclesiology into a vague Trinitarian projection. Moreover, if we then project, directly again, God the Father's/his Divine Offspring's relationship upon Christ/his members relationship and then on that of the bishop and the faithful, we lose again not only the essential difference between divine and created consubstantiality, but also another most important part of the Christological specificity of ecclesiology, since we ignore that Christ is the head *also of the bishop,* who is not the head of his local Church, except only through analogically/synergetically participating in the uncreated energy/activity of Christ-as-bishop, or, in other words, in Christ as head of his Church. This is why the primate in the Orthodox Liturgy takes off his *homophorion* during the reading of the Gospel, according to St Symeon of Salonica, in order to show that it is Christ himself who is now present there. The same is shown through the bishop's descent from his throne in order to wear his vestments before the Liturgy. Thus, the reality of the primate's charism is a reality of constant reference and mimesis of/or participation in Christ as the only Head of his Church through the bishop, since Christ is the only initiator of the consubstantializing energies, which are the different members/charismata of his Body in the Spirit. In this way, it is only the Christological approach to ecclesiology that reveals the reality and the function of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and through this the good will (*εὐδοκία*) of the Father for the salvation of the world in his Son. The Trinity needs not be directly projected upon the Church, since it is existentially reached only through Christ, who is precisely the one who 'explains' (*ἐξηγήσατο,* according to the first chapter of the Gospel of John) to us, not of course God's essence, but his consubstantial mode of existence, which then becomes the very core of the ecclesial event.

3

We can thus summarize our concept of Christological or Analogical primacy as follows: 1. It is Christ who is the absolute primate of his Church, and any ecclesial primacy is but a synergetic analogical mimesis of/participation in Christ's unique primacy. 2. This is a primacy destined to teach and initiate consubstantiality; this consubstantiality, which can be precisely called on the canonical level *conciliarity,* thus belongs to the very essence of the primate's charisma. In this way, there is not Primacy *and* Conciliarity, since *the latter is the very essence, the only raison d'être of the former*; the opposite is not true!

However, some additional remarks are needed in order to better understand the nature of the ecclesial unity. In our preferred Trinitarian-through-Christology approach, Christ is hypostatically present in his Church not only through the bishop, but, as we said, also through all the other charismata/energies of which his body consists, since all the charismata are, as I claimed, Christological 'in the place and type of Christ' (and not only that of the bishop). According to the 'ecclesiology of consubstantiality' (as I have termed it in my book *Church in the Making* above), the unity of a local Church is then due not just to a superior charism of unity imposing this unity from above, but it takes place *within each charisma or order as this charisma functions, again through mimesis/participation in Christ's unifying activity, consubstantially (i.e., unifying within itself all the other charismata/ members of the Church in the Spirit)*. In this case, the primate is, internally, as we said, the initiator and the teacher of this sort of unity *within each charisma* and, externally, its manifestation. Now, in a similar manner, the unity between the local Churches, and, subsequently, the Patriarchal Churches is fundamentally taking place *within each one of them,* and it does not need someone to just externally *impose* this unity from above. The only thing that a primate, patriarchal or even universal, in this perspective, would be allowed to do would be precisely to protect, teach, and promote in a Christ-like analogical, eschatological, perichoretic and sacrificial manner an absolutely consubstantial unity-in-equality of all the Patriarchates—not by imposing any sort of impersonal jurisdictional/canonical unity upon them, but by just teaching and initiating the participatory unity of all the Churches in order for it to take place *within each one of them*, and then simply *expressing/manifesting* this unity *ad extra* (and the Canon Law, in this case, exists not in order to replace, but in order to defend this way of achieving unity). These are, if you like, the primate's Christological/analogical 'seniority rights of honour' (since the expression '*presveia timēs*' does not mean just 'primacy of honour' as it is paradoxically rendered today in English). The primate is given the honour to manifest, in a Christ-like *mimetic* (i.e., *participatory way the ecclesial consubstantiality/synodality*), that is, to protect and promote it in a constant mimesis of/participation in Christ's consubstantializing activity in the Spirit. Christ is the only One who personally exercises the primacy through those who really participate in his uncreated energy of unification of all as this is offered to the Church leaders through their ordination and manifested by them in a potential free dialogical/analogical participation through the Spirit. This is done in Christ's way of consubstantially gathering all through his love, which means that the primate acts in potential participation in Christ, and not as his *vicar*.

Furthermore, the Canons speak of 'equal seniority rights' between the primates of East and West and establishes only a difference of order between them. We need to operate with a concept of 'ecclesiology of participation' (i.e., of constant synergetic reference to Christ in the Spirit) as I have called it in my aforementioned book (*Church in the Making*) in order to understand these assertions. The fact that this sort

of understanding of the Church has been almost lost between not only the Roman Catholic but also many Orthodox theologians today has led them to a step-by-step adoption of a basically institutional ecclesiological model (where the Orthodox contribution confines itself to offering some 'pneumatological'/charismatic elements or dimensions in order to smoothen the hard edges of a strictly canonical structure). It is precisely for this reason that some modern Orthodox theologians, who employ an ecclesiological model built upon a strictly Trinitarian/monarchic pattern, claim that a reconsideration of the universal primacy is needed. Some of its exponents want this primacy to be either almost identical to the Roman Catholic jurisdictional primacy, or, at least 'above the primacy of honour'.

However, I think that the Patristic intuition on that point was precisely that if Canon 34 is valid on a universal level then *a universal primus could perhaps oppose or even deny to convoke a Council, cancel or postpone it, or turn over its ecumenical character,* by directly disagreeing with its purpose, or manipulating it, or withdrawing, etc. In that case, the entire Church, in spite of its conciliarity, can practically become a … captive of this universal *primus,* even if he was 'the President of all heads of Churches and the spokesman of the entire Church once the decisions announced are the result of consensus'.[8] Is this President allowed to disagree with this ecclesial consensus? If not, then he is no more than an external herald of the Church's decisions without any seniority right, even honorific; if yes, he becomes, practically, a jurisdictional primate and a total possessor of the truth. In other words, the first millennium Eastern Church had, in my view, well understood that any other application of the seniority rights *could possibly result practically in a form of jurisdictional primacy* repressing synodality, not necessarily in the form of a direct papal interference with the affairs of the local Churches (although, for centuries before the Great Schism, as E. Siecienski has so pertinently shown, the papacy pressed the East so hard, at times, in order to impose upon it such a totally jurisdictional authority), but certainly through the possibility of controlling synodical theological freedom and manipulating the participatory and mimetic communion in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, through which the ecclesial charisma of truth is given flesh. But we must re-consider now those 'seniority rights of honour' in light of the above ecclesiological line of thought which has been almost forgotten, though it lies much deeper than any 'Eucharistic' or 'therapeutic' ecclesiology, in the terms of the late Fr John Romanides.

[8] See John Zizioulas, *The One and the Many. Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World today* (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2010), 273.

4

Now, let us return briefly to what happened in the West concerning primacy. In St Irenaeus, Roman primacy is still strictly connected with Rome's faithfulness to tradition:[9]

> The tradition and the creed of the greatest, the most ancient church, the church known to all men, which was founded and set up at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul. For with this church, because of its position of leadership and authority, must needs agree every church, that is, the faithful everywhere; for in her the apostolic tradition has always been preserved by the faithful from all parts.

Cyprian, on the other hand, refers explicitly to Peter's primacy ('He builds his church upon him, one man'), though he still acknowledges that 'certainly the other Apostles were what Peter was, endued with an equal fellowship both of honour and power; but the beginning is made from unity, that the church of Christ may be shown to be one'.[10]

Soon the unity as an expression of the truth of the Church was gradually changed into the opposite (i.e., *the unity as truth*), starting with texts such as the Edict of Valentinian III, of 445:

> Therefore, inasmuch as the pre-eminence of the Apostolic See is assured by the merit of St Peter, the first of the bishops, by the leading position of the city of Rome and also by the authority of the holy Synod, let not presumption strive to attempt anything contrary to the authority of that See. For the peace of the churches will only then be everywhere preserved when the whole body acknowledge its ruler […] But whatsoever the authority of the Apostolic See has enacted, or shall enact, let that be held as law for all.[11]

Although 'the leading position of the city of Rome', along with 'the authority of the holy Synod' are still mentioned as parallel sources of the 'pre-eminence of the Holy See', along with 'the merit of Peter' (two elements that will disappear from the list of the sources of this pre-eminent authority in the coming centuries), the word 'ruler' here is quite indicative of an evolution that had no direct theoretical parallel in the East. Some years before (on January 417), Pope Innocent I had written to the African bishops, approving their appeal to him in order to condemn Pelagianism:

[9] *Adv. Haereses*, III.
[10] *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate*, IV.
[11] *Constitutio Valentiniani* III, Leo, Ep.xi, PL liv. 636ff.

> We approve your action in following the principle of the Fathers that nothing which was done even in the most remote and distant province should be taken as finally settled unless it came to the notice of this See, that any just pronouncement might be confirmed by all the authority of the See, and that the other churches might from thence gather what they should teach.[12]

The style of all these is not far away from what Nicholas I wrote to the Emperor Michael in 865: 'The judge shall be judged neither by Augustus, nor by any cleric, nor by the people… The first See shall not be judged by any'.[13] These positions culminated in the letter *In terra pax hominibus* from the Roman Church to Michael Cerularius in September 1053: '11…. In prejudging the case of the highest See, the See on which no judge may be passed by any man, you have received the anathema from all the Fathers of all the venerable Councils….32. As a hinge, remaining unmoved, opens and shuts a door, so Peter and his successors have an unfettered jurisdiction over the whole Church, since no one ought to interfere with their position, because the highest See is judged by none'.[14] Here is the first time the term *jurisdiction* is openly employed; it will be used over the centuries that follow. It is true, of course, that since the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Western Church gradually lost a great part of her external security as she lost imperial support; after the multiplication of reigns and enemies that followed, this led, especially after the Schism, to a tendency toward strengthening the canonical structure of the Church together with her institutional centralization, or even toward consolidating a caesaropapism in order somehow to not simply counter-balance but prevail against the civil authorities. But it seems true, on the other hand, that the Roman Catholic theologians soon exceeded their task. Thus, in the *Dictatus Papae* of Gregory VII (in 1075), the Pope becomes the supreme pontiff, above all bishops and emperors, above synods and local churches, an infallible jurisdictional monarch of the Church, and a supreme prince of the secular princes and kings.[15] In the Fourth Lateran Council (in 1215), the Pope is described as possessing 'the plenitude of power',[16] while in the Second Council of Lyons (in 1274) he is called 'the vicar of Jesus Christ, the successor of Peter, the ruler of the universal church, the guide of the Lord's flock'.[17] In the bull *Unam Sanctam* of Pope Boniface in 1302, we see that all of Christ's sheep are 'committed to the pope', and that in the power of the Church 'there are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal […] But the latter is to be used for the church, the former by her; the former by the

[12] Ep. xxix, (PL 20:582).
[13] *Mansi*, xv 196Dff.
[14] *Mansi*, xix 638B ff
[15] See J.C. Larchet, *L'église corps du Christ*, vol. 2 (Paris: Cerf, 2012), 49–50.
[16] See *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Norman P. Tanner, S.J., English Editor, Giuseppe Alberigo and others, Original Text Compilers [Washington DC: Sheed and Ward and Georgetown Univ. Press 1990], Vol. I, 264).
[17] op.cit., 317.

priest, the latter by kings and captains, but by will and by permission of the priest.' The papal authority 'although given to a man and exercised by a man, is not human, but rather divine, given at God's mouth to Peter and established on a rock for him and his successors' (*Corpus Iuris Canonici ii. 1245 Mirbt,372*). A couple of centuries later, in the decrees of the Ferrara-Florence Council (in 1441–1445) we read:

> *Item diffinimus sanctam apostolicam sedem et Romanum pontificem in universum orbem tenere primatum, et ipsum pontificem Romanum successorem esse beati Petri principis apostolorum et verum Christi vicarium totiusque ecclesie caput et omnium christianorum patrem ac doctorem existere, et ipsi in beato Petro pascendi, regendi ac gubernandi universalem ecclesiam a domino nostro Iesu Christo plenam potestatem traditam esse, quemadmodum etiam in gestis ycumenicorum conciliorum et in sacris canonibus continetur.*[18]

In this way, as the Fifth Lateran Council (in 1512–1517) declares, 'the person who abandons the teaching of the Roman pontiff cannot be within the church'.[19] All the above claims were further adopted by the First and appeased up to a point by the Second Vatican Council, and I will not, in this paper, discuss the re-considerations that occasionally took place there in detail. What is important, however, is that although the college of bishops is clearly given a canonical existence, mainly through the *Lumen Gentium,* this does not mean a clear synodical authority of this college, since there exists no synodical reciprocity between the primate and the bishops, and the latter exist only in a full final obedience to the former (i.e., without any genuine possibility of a real and free reciprocal interaction between them and the Pope).

It thus seems that instead of a primacy that makes Christ himself analogically manifest through participation/mimesis as-a-Synod, a strong tendency to understand primacy in a vicarious, institutional, and purely jurisdictional manner gradually emerged in the West. Of course, one needs not ignore the efforts made by many Roman Catholic theologians after the Second Vatican Council to somehow consider the serious objections made by theologians of different confessional provenance (or even Catholics) to the above points, some of the most important of whom, I think, include L. Bouyer,[20] P. Duprey,[21] Y. Congar, De Lubac, and J.M. Tillard. Tillard is one of those who tried to solve some of the difficulties deriving from the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, and his work is, in this sense,

[18] op.cit., 528.
[19] op.cit., 640.
[20] See his *L'église de Dieu. Corps du Christ et Temple de l'Esprit* (Paris: Cerf 1970), esp. 476–79.
[21] See a summary of his views in his 'Some reflections on infallibility' in *Επιστημονική Επετηρίδα Θεολογικής Σχολής του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Μνήμη Ιωάννου Ευ. Αναστασίου*, (Θεσσαλονίκη: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, 1992), 189–96 (in Greek).

invaluable. The primacy of the Pope as primacy of his local Church,[22] and not as a universal bishop,[23] the synodical synergism between him and the bishops,[24] the papal authority as an authority of service in and for the college of ministerium, and not of dominion over the college,[25] the effort to understand papal infallibility in synergy with the episcopal college,[26] and, of course, the claim that 'the Bishop of Rome possesses besides, by his function, the 'power' to speak in the name of his brother bishops and their Churches',[27] are some assertions toward that perspective, assertions which John Zizioulas, for example, faithfully repeats.[28] Tillard dedicates many pages[29] to an effort to show that the Bishop of Rome, though he is not the historical successor of Peter,[30] assumed in history Peter's task to watch over the orthodoxy of Christian faith, and take care of Christian unity throughout the world, in a way that his primacy belongs to the very being of the Church—so that without a direct communion with him, all the 'non-Catholics, cut off from communion with the Church of Rome, no longer appear, therefore, as strangers to the work of salvation, but at the very most on the doorstep of the Church'(!).[31] All these claims are a direct consequence of Tillard's fundamental ecclesiological presuppositions, shared by many Roman Catholic authors until today, according to which presuppositions, the very *esse* of the Church is this transcendental (i.e., *hyper-historical,* perfect and immutable) canonical structure, with its necessarily infallible centre of structural unity, a perfect organism of salvation made by Christ through the Spirit to work for human salvation before his second coming, though without any confusion between him and her, since, although she is his spouse, she is, at the very same moment, opposite to him, as 'an object of grace'.[32] The deep and absolute ontological identification-through-participation-in-uncreated-grace of the Church with Christ in the Spirit, made by the majority of Greek Fathers, still remains somehow non-convincing for a significant part of Roman Catholic ecclesiologists—although the emergence of so-called 'smart ecclesiology' within the contemporary Roman-Catholic ecclesiological thought today generates high hopes for a new and creative turn in it. I think that we must be patient enough in order to wait for a possibly truly ecumenical and unified Christian council in the future where these suggestions can

[22] J. -M.R Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980), 260.
[23] Ibid., 262.
[24] Ibid., 269.
[25] Ibid., 272.
[26] Ibid., 283.
[27] Ibid., 280.
[28] Zizioulas, op.cit., esp. 272–3.
[29] Tillard, op. cit. 256–318.
[30] Despite still being called 'the successor of Peter' by *Lumen gentium, 8.*
[31] Tillard, 313.
[32] Ibid., 196.

be discussed in a way that saves both the profound Patristic theology of the Church and the specific needs and issues of modern times.

Concluding formulations

It is as difficult to fathom the *analogical* depth of Christian primacy, as it is, on the contrary, much easier to understand its institutional, more or less jurisdictional applications over the centuries. Because in a purely institutional understanding of the Church, unity is imposed externally and solely by the primate, while in a participatory understanding of her, unity emerges from within. Perhaps the most fertile future problem that we shall have to solve in common will be how to find convincing ways not to combine the two, but to understand these forms of unity as one.[33] *By speaking of an analogical Christological primacy in this paper, we mean that the primate, the more he participates in Christ's primatial/unifying/consubstantializing divine energy in the Spirit, the more he makes transparent the clear presence of Christ, who manifests himself, through the primate, as the absolute servant of the unity of all, as pure loving consubstantiality, as absolute loving self- alienation for the sake of the emerging otherness of all, as pure synodality*. The only way Christ makes himself analogically present as the head of his Church—through a universal primate, struggling to participate in Christ's uncreated energy as unifier of all things—is as manifestation of this *consubstantializing synodality*. This is perhaps, as I think, the hidden theological secret behind the first millennium's official unanimity that the universal seniority rights are seniority rights 'of honour' (i.e., not of any sort of direct or indirect jurisdictional authority). That means that Christological primacy is totally identical with Christological synodality. It is false to claim that during the first millennium there was no theology of universal primacy: the truth is that this theology was still instinctively interwoven with the personal, analogical presence of Christ as the head of his Church in the person of a universal primate 'of honour', whose task and right was not to become the highest secular *primus,* but to manifest,

[33] Something that seems almost impossible when one faces Catholic views like those of J. Schumacher's, who in his article 'Ab Astris ad Castra: an Ignatian-MacIntyrean proposal for overcoming historical and political-theological difficulties in ecumenical dialogue' in this volume (note 26) accuses John Zizioulas for his denial of a universal jurisdictional primacy 'of power', despite the fact that the Metropolitan tries to correct the Orthodox 'myopia' of rejecting a real universal primacy, instead of, merely, one of honor. Schumacher, an ex-Protestant, seems to totally forget that it was precisely this rigid monarchical primacy that led his Protestant ancestors to cut themselves off the 'Roman Anti-Christ', to quote Luther. It is really a theological myopia for a modern Catholic theologian not to understand the inadequacy of such an understanding of primacy (for both Orthodox and Catholics): at the end of his note, the author does not hesitate to propose this dictatorial primacy as a solution to the actual problems between Moscow and Constantinople. The two Churches then need a little tin god (or perhaps a Field Marshal?) in order for him to inflict, in an overbearing way, their immediate conformity. In this case, one legitimately wonders, whether it is this forced and imposed unity that is taken as the Ecclesial truth *of the unity of all*, or it is the ecclesial truth that is expected to lead to unity. Truly, this is a question, as Schumacher claims, of epistemology, in MacIntyrean terms…

in a Christological *kenosis,* the freedom of this Christological *consubstantializing synodality*, Christ and Church as one. No Canon 34 is needed here, on the ecumenical level, for the reasons explained above. We desperately need a fresh theological understanding of the 'seniority rights of honour' today, in line with its use during the first millennium. This does not mean to underplay the canonical aspect of the Church; but it is nonetheless necessary *to stress the ontological source of this aspect*, the Christological (and, through Christ, Trinitarian) foundation of the Church—as expressed, for example, in the Gospel of John (chapters 15–17)—which precedes, illuminates, and theologically justifies the canonical aspect.[34]

By opposing primacy and synodality, and overstressing either the former or the latter, the theology of the Church, starting even before the Schism in the West, and followed by some recently also by the East, became more and more unable to understand the above position, which suggests that, on the contrary, primacy and synodality are one and the same Christological reality in the Spirit, and not two dialectically opposed poles of ecclesial being. Our recent discussion of a non-jurisdictional against a jurisdictional primacy, the 'one' and the 'many', conciliarity and primacy, etc., simply means that we all seem to admire the same more or less jurisdictional, institutional ('monarchical'!) ecclesiological model, and we are now trying to find its, say, less painful form. Moreover, let us not forget the analogous Eastern phenomenon of the ecclesiastical *ethnarchy* during the Ottoman rule, which left its permanent marks upon the vestments of our bishops, and created in the East further presuppositions of an over-exaltation, at times, of a sort of a concentrative primacy; the ecclesiastical fragmentation that followed the liberation proves the fact. On the other hand, the long manipulation and use of the Russian Church by the state created analogous tendencies. (I tried to suggest a solution of the problem of the *diaspora* in my *Church in the Making* above, this time also through Canon 34).

We must honestly admit that what for the Roman Catholics is a dogma is often a habit for the Orthodox. The difference is that, while the Roman Catholics do what they say, the Orthodox say what they do not do. The ecclesiological model which is most admired, perhaps unconsciously, by many Orthodox primates today is, as

[34] It is well-known that the supposed lack of obvious and rigid canonical dimensions was, according to the criticism of eminent Catholic theologians, such as De Lubac, the main inconvenience of Afanassiev's 'Eucharistic ecclesiology'—which ecclesiology is, nonetheless, so widely accepted by the Catholic theologians today. However, the Orthodox counter-criticism here is that this Roman-Catholic hyper-priority of the canonical dimension seems to be theologically and Eucharistically uncontrolled; again, it is an epistemological question: what comes first, what is the source of the other? To put it in De Lubacian terms: is the Church that makes the Eucharist and then she is made by her, or it is the Eucharist that makes the Church, and then it offers her its internal logic? The question is not a Scholastic one: is the deep structure of the Church a 'Eucharistic' structure, or the Eucharist is given by the Church her own pre-existing 'canonical' structure? Usually, for an Orthodox, I think, it is the former that seems truer. My personal view is that this tension can be solved only if one tries to overcome this tension, by speaking of an 'ecclesiology of consubstantiality', which can clearly include, as I have claimed (in my *Church in the Making* above, 271-287), both the 'icon' and the 'mimesis', that is both the ontological and the historical/canonical aspects of the Church at once—while the Eucharistic ecclesiology seems to refer only to the former.

I have already said, the Roman Catholic one (of the first Vatican Council!), and some Orthodox bishops seem to feel somehow marginalized when, for theological reasons, they are not allowed to follow it completely. The universal application of Canon 34, suggested by Roman Catholics and accepted by some Orthodox, in order to solve, on the universal level, a false problem created by a false ecclesiological dialectic, will rather create even bigger confusion. No doubt that many Roman Catholics will take this as a final, though indirect, confirmation of their eternal insistence upon the 'more than honorific' nature of the universal primacy, and John Zizioulas's 'anti-jurisdictional' suggestion that the universal primate must finally be 'the President of all heads of Churches' will be finally smoothly combined by many with some centuries of jurisdictional primacy tradition in the West.

Is there any other option? I believe, yes. The re-discovery of the Greek Patristic tradition in both East and West, over the last hundred years, has brought forth some invaluable pieces of ecclesiological thought of the past, and today we all talk about 'eucharistic ecclesiology', 'therapeutic ecclesiology', 'ecclesiology of communion', 'Pneumatological Christology', (and, in my case, about an 'ecclesiology of consubstantiality', which, in my view, forms the deepest ontological source of all the above ecclesiologies—along with the cure of their usual one-sidedness). As expected, theologians did not hesitate to put a significant part of the new wine into the old wineskins, each one trying to vindicate his own past, and we are still, up to a point, in this far from comfortable situation today.[35] On the other hand, a real ecclesiolog-

[35] The good thing is that it has been plainly realized by the Catholics that it is impossible to solve the problems concerning the relationship between primacy and synodality without the decisive contribution of the Orthodox theology, as the recent Study by the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group, entitled 'Serving Communion: Re-thinking the Relationship between Primacy and Synodality' (Los Angeles: Marymount institute Press, 2019) has clearly shown. This is also true concerning parallel modern or contemporary anthropological issues, which have foundered Roman-Catholic theology over the last centuries, and pushed it to the 'rediscovery' of the Greek Patristic tradition – and this is also true concerning a deeper understanding of the MacIntyrean principle of *the tradition-constituted reason*. Starting from George-Gennadios Scholarios, and through some great Greek thinkers who tried to assimilate the Enlightenment (minus its atheism), and culminating in the Russian thinkers of the 19th-20th century, along with some contemporary theologians, Orthodoxy moved essentially far beyond the fundamentalism attributed to her by some contemporary Orthodox theologians who are unaware of the above crucial thinkers and their texts; I have analyzed in some detail this unfortunate phenomenon in the seventh chapter (pp 158-210) of my last book in Greek, entitled (in translation) *The Open History and its Enemies: The Rise of the Velvet Totalitarianism* (Athens: Armos 2020) – there exists a deep cultural problem behind this attitude. Unfortunately, these Orthodox theologians give some Roman-Catholic theologians (with a considerably heavier ignorance of even the basics of Orthodox theology) a reason to create a caricature of Orthodox theology in general, fully identifying it with fundamentalism and naysaying (as if those two characteristics are not characteristic of a *religious psychopathology,* common in several denominations and religions). One of those Roman-Catholic theologians is again, I am afraid, Jared Schumacher, in his article in this volume, writing with the usual arrogance of the ex-Protestant Roman-Catholic convert (in the end of his note 34): 'I agree with Papanikolaou that incorporating a MacIntyrean critique is important for Orthodox theology today as to avoid the trap of fundamentalism; but the question is, what would remain of Orthodox tradition *qua* Orthodoxy if it did?'. In a time when Christianity has been almost overwhelmed by grave secular ideologies, such an *old-fashioned* triumphalism can hardly promote a unified Christian witness in our rapidly amalgamating common *Greek-Western Christian world.* For an effort toward the opposite direction see my *Analogical Identities: The Creation of the Christian Self. Beyond Spirituality and Mysticism in the Patristic*

ical dialogue has started, for the first time after the Great Schism, not only between Orthodox and Catholic, but also within our Churches, and we are deeply grateful to all those who started this, precisely for having paved the way for a real dialogue of truth. We must continue this dialogue in a fresh but decisively non confessional way.

On my part, I believe that an elaboration of an ecclesiology of consubstantiality, and of the Christological or analogical understanding of primacy that follows, is of immense importance if we want to avoid a slow approaching theological impasse not only in our inter-confessional, but even in our inter-Orthodox conversations.

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Ecumenism, Geopolitics, and Crisis

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Christians need to see Christian decline and current global crisis as equally linked to an older division of Christendom, itself connected to theological and ecclesial inadequacies. The way forwards needs to be an integral strategy: the promotion of mixed government with different emphases at once in Church, State and International Order. This must be linked to a recovery of a true sense of natural law as involving grace as well as nature and as mediated to civil and local law only via the international *ius gentium*. Thus, effective ecumenism is a key to global crisis, while recovery of the sacral 'kingly' role, at every level, including the international, is actually a crucial aspect of ecclesiology.

In this paper I want to argue for a connection of ecumenism to politics. On the one hand, I shall suggest that we need to be more fully aware that ecclesiology is in part a matter of politics in the real sense. On the other hand, I shall also argue that we need to be far more aware of the relevance of ecumenical matters to geopolitical ones.

In keeping with the English constitutional tradition, Richard Hooker, who lived from 1554 to 1600, and was in many ways the father of Anglican theology, always emphasised that Church government should be *mixed*: of archbishop in convocation and of king in parliament, backed up by popular assent.

At the international level, then, one would have thought that, in traditional terms, this mixture should apply to the authority of the Pope in ecclesial council, together with the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor in a conclave of nobles, with the former ideally enjoying eminent power, if circumstances permit, but the latter sustaining a Byzantine or Dantean reminder of the integrity of justice and the ultimate apocalyptic elevation of even corporeal concerns to the supernatural level. Could one not say that this would be the proper geopolitical translation of Hooker's radically Christological and apocalyptic integralism once shorn of his rather excessive, and indeed somewhat Byzantine sacral monarchianism?

To some degree Hooker himself indicated such a translation:

> For as one and the same law divine…is unto all Christian Churches a rule for the chiefest things, by means thereof they all in that respect make one

> Church, as having all but *One Lord, one faith and one baptism:* So the urgent necessity of mutual communion for preservation of our unity in these things, as also for order in some other things convenient to be everywhere uniformly kept, maketh it requisite that the Church of God here on earth have her laws of spiritual commerce between Christian nations, laws by virtue whereof all Churches may enjoy freely the use of those reverend religious and sacred consultations which are termed councils general.[1]

This advocacy of the crucial place of councils is good, so far as it goes, and was much extended in the writings of Hooker's friend and ally Richard Field.[2] Yet it is explicitly construed in terms of 'the law of the nations', the *ius gentium*—which in early modern terms was based upon the minimum need for a suspension of latent mutual hostility between strangers.[3] Clearly Hooker does not restrict international Christian harmony to that, yet he still thinks of global communion too much in terms of a secondary negotiation between national bodies, in a way that appears to grant local communities a sacramental priority. His lack of consideration of the need for an international Primacy and an international Monarchy or its equivalent (in contrast to Dante) is here symptomatic—since clearly he thinks of these institutions as crucial to good polity on the domestic front. The implication would therefore seem to be that he thinks of the global Church as but a deficient polity, not able to realise either natural or canonical law in their fullness.

This can be contrasted not just with a traditional Catholic and Orthodox insistence on the global universality of the Church, but also with earlier views of the *ius gentium* as found, for example in Thomas Aquinas, which assumed that a tacit but very real international law and order, perhaps linked to some node of international government or *imperium,* was a mediating link between the natural law and the positive laws of civic polity, necessary to spell out in contingent detail both natural and international law in general.[4]

Here we would appear to be confronted with the worst aspect of Anglican politicisation, when it is resigned to a certain secularising of the Church in its global dimension. The paradox of Anglicanism may be the contrast of a spiritually generous reach with a practically narrow confinement. Within the confines of

[1] Richard Hooker, *On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Oxford: OUP, 1845), The First Book, 10.14.

[2] Richard Field, *On the Church Five Bookes* (London: Simon Waterson, 1606). It was largely Field's influence which eventually secured Anglican adherence to the first Seven Ecumenical Councils—of course another decisive revisionist shift towards a recovered Catholic identity. See also Paul D.L. Avis's helpful book, *Beyond the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 2006).

[3] *Laws,* The First Book, 10.13–14: 'For as civil law being the act of the whole body politic doth therefore overrule each several part of the same body: so there is no reason that any one commonwealth of itself should to the prejudice of another annihilate that whereupon the whole world hath agreed. Now as there is great cause of communion, and consequently laws for the maintenance of communion, amongst nations: So amongst nations Christian the like in regard even of Christianity hath always been judged needful'.

[4] See Thomas Aquinas, 'Treatise on Law', *Summa Theologiae,* I–II, qq. 90–108.

a group of small islands and their imperial extensions it has been able at times, by transcending its Reformation origins, and fusing a Patristic-High Scholastic legacy with a Renaissance Humanist neoplatonic and Hermetic one, to exceed a merely spiritualising humanism in the direction of a Cyrilline Christological and cosmically apocalyptic embrace of matter, of nature and of the strange reality of the world of the imagination (as with the work of Thomas Traherne and many others). However, in an international context it has proved all too prey to a merely immanent and all too human logic of pragmatic survival.

Nevertheless, in terms of the Christian ecumenical quest, Anglicanism can have a peculiar contribution to make. This would be to do with Hooker's sense that theology is not so much an adventurous search for the unknown (or a statically methodical exposition of given foundations) as it is a *local quest* for what is already there and should be glowingly apparent, yet remains mysteriously hidden. F.D. Maurice in the nineteenth century later expressed this (not without problematic exaggeration) as the primacy of 'digging' over 'building'. But applied to the ecumenical question this, as it were, 'immanent Platonism' suggests that Christians should not be asking how they can 'construct' one Church out of three or more, but rather how they can come to discern the concealed unity of the one authentic spirit-led Church which, it must be assumed (given the testimony of the New Testament), is *still really there* and has never truly gone away.

Such a quest will be less a matter of drawing up formal agreements, as of the gradual *ad hoc* emergence of practices of intercommunion, plus the formation of Christian movements and even congregations across confessional boundaries. It will also be a matter of the mutual construction of less confessionally-based genealogies which trace how apparent division is often rooted in both theoretical and practical errors and inadequacies that have equally affected the various different Christian denominations.

That consideration applies, for example, to a shared possible recognition that dissent over the *filioque* concerns a common forgetting of an authentic Patristic legacy and both the meaning and the limits of the identification of the divine person with substantive relationality: in the East with the work of Photius and in the West not with Augustine, Anselm or Aquinas but with the later work of often Franciscan theologians.[5] Or again to the parallels that can be seen between a diminution of the divine simplicity in both Palamas in the East, and Bonaventure and Scotus in the West. Or else to the metaphysical confusions about mediation which led to a Western suspicion of theophany and icons in this world, but to Eastern denials of a final vision of the divine essence and yet ironically a tendency to see theophany in this life

[5] See A. Edward Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (Oxford: OUP, 2010); John Milbank, 'Manifestation and Procedure: Trinitarian Metaphysics after Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas', in *Tomismo Creativo: Letture Contemporanee del* Doctor Communis, ed. Marco Salvioli OP (Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2015), 41–117.

as the direct unmediated presence of God. In either case there is a certain loss of the sense of the absolute rupture between Creator and Creation and the way these two realities lie on incommensurable planes that can only be bridged by participatory paradox.[6] Or yet again one could mention the shared gradual yielding of sacral charismatic authority both imperial and papal to something more like a sacralisation of pure, self-derived power: under alien Tartar influence in the East, under both Arabic philosophical and more complexly internal influences in the West.[7]

If, to a degree, some of the more usual Orthodox criticisms of the West are based upon misapprehension, there are nonetheless other less well-attended to differences that may well be more fundamental. Western eschatology indeed lost the Patristic view of the final judgement as a collective occurrence at the eschaton itself and offered a too confident and literal picture of the realms of heaven, hell and purgatory.[8] The rather greater western emphasis on the eternity of punishment was intimately bound up with an eventual drift towards doctrines of double predestination, which effectively denies the central Christian truth that God is love. More controversially, we can now together wonder whether *apocatastasis* is not the older Christian orthodoxy, whose diminution and eventual loss may have something to do with eventual Christian failure.[9]

One would like to think that Anglicans could promote these sorts of debate. Yet in reality the more global dimensions of Anglican discussion and dissent in recent years have been around vexed questions of sexuality. Nonetheless, Anglicanism is scarcely unique in this respect. The argument between Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper concerning the relative priority of the universal or the local Church has likewise been largely occasioned by issues arising from the pastoral handling of sexual issues. In either case one could go so far as to say that there is a linkage between arguments about how human beings should *naturally* combine in the most intimate way possible, and arguments about how they should *supernaturally* combine, because questions of sexual combination are in continuity with questions of political combination, and even more so with questions of ritual and symbolic combination. In all three instances one is concerned with what is taken to be universally and so globally normative.

A Christian approach to 'combination' in each of these domains has to balance respect for the local and spontaneous arising of order with the need for hierarchical guidance, which we have seen to lie at the heart of Hooker's approach to

[6] See John Milbank, 'Christianity and Platonism in East and West', in *A Celebration of Living Theology: a Festchrift in Honour of Andrew Louth,* eds Justin A. Mihoc and Leonard Aldea (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 107–160.

[7] A. Edward Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate* (Oxford: OUP, 2017).

[8] John Milbank, 'Christianity and Platonism'.

[9] See Ilaria Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of* Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2013); David Bentley Hart, *That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell and Universal Salvation* (New Haven CN: Yale UP, 2019).

natural legality. Walter Kasper rightly insisted, like the Orthodox theologian Nicholas Afanasiev, that each local congregation, each mere gathering of two or three or more, reflects in itself the eternal, uncreated Jerusalem where Christ and his bride celebrate their eternal nuptials, just as every family is in itself a patriarchal and matriarchal polity, a *societas perfecta*.[10] Yet Ratzinger did not really deny such a truth, and was right to argue against Kasper that this reflection of eternal peaceful unity cannot occur unless it is mediated by a harmonious linkage of all localities on earth, coordinated by a charismatic centre that should nonetheless respect fully the principle of subsidiarity with respect to local authorities.[11] It cannot be satisfactory, as with Hooker, to hand 'foreign relations' over to a *ius gentium*, just as families cannot be entirely autonomous, given the proximate presence of other families also, with whom they have to deal.

It should be said here that we need to revive the more self-consistent and traditional view that the desirability of a 'mixed government' that blends democratic, aristocratic and monarchic elements applies to the ecclesial as well as to the secular sphere, in order to avoid the disparities in modern Catholic and Orthodox thinking between advocacy of democracy in secular affairs on the one hand and hierarchy in Church ones on the other.

But any such revision cannot possibly mean a Reformed favouring of limited democracy also in Church affairs, since this would compromise any commitment to transcendent truth. In the case of the Church as compared to the State the bias certainly goes more to the hierarchic, because here questions of truth are at a premium compared with questions of consensus. Nevertheless, truth for Christianity, since it involves a transcendent peaceful harmony, is initially transmitted through ritual and ethical practice and therefore *does* require also popular consensus for its discernment—just as, inversely, in the secular realm no consensus can possibly take firm hold unless there is a real debate, conducted under the guidance of the wise and virtuous, about objective truthfulness and justice.

For after the event of the Incarnation, as the twentieth century lay Anglican theologian Charles Williams emphasised, every human city is secretly Jerusalem, or else it remains Babylon.[12] It is true that the Byzantine settlement (despite the influential criticisms of John Damascene and others) sometimes lacked the fullness of the Augustinian-Gelasian insight that the State as still Babylon lies outside as well as inside the Church which is already Jerusalem. Yet ideally and for the sake

[10] Nicholas Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit,* trans. Vitaly Permakov (Notre Dame IN: Notre Dame UP, 2012).

[11] Walter Kasper, 'On the Church' in *America: the National Catholic Weekly,* 23rd April, 2001; Joseph Ratzinger, 'The Local Church and the Universal Church' in *America,* November 19th, 2001; 'Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion' in *L'Osservatore Romano,* 29th February, 2008; 'The Ecclesiology Of the Constitution On the Church, Vatican II, Lumen Gentium' in *L'Osservatore Romano,* 19th September, 2001.

[12] Charles Williams, *The Image of the City and Other Essays* (Berkeley CA: Apocryphile, 2007).

of the world's salvation it should come entirely within its scope. The question of the universal kingship as well as priesthood of all Christians is therefore of crucial relevance.

With the eschatological fulfilment of justice beyond the coercive law in the event of incarnation, all the baptised are now priests and are to fulfil this office even in their secular callings. As Nicholas Afanasiev taught, the ordained priest merely presents this universal priesthood in an intensified form, in order to preside at the sacrificial meal which all Christians offer.[13] But equally, after the Incarnation, all Christians are all *kings,* as St Paul frequently says. Like the ordained priest, the anointed ruler—or, we can say, in some degree, any secular ruler within Christendom—intensifies this kingship of all believers. This is at once the glory and the burden that accrues to her. It is, I think, for this reason that Shakespeare had the genius so often to render the king as everyman. For the present, indeed, anointed monarchs and secular rulers deal mainly with the affairs of things in time, yet their role, as understood both in the East and by some theorists in Medieval England, also anticipates the bodily and cosmic integrity of the resurrection at the *eschaton.* If priesthood stands for the priority of the spiritual, then kingship stands for the unity of grace and nature and the final elevation even of every aspect—including the mineral, vegetable and anima—of the natural.

This reflection suggests that Christianity cannot be sufficiently 'incarnated' in a fashion that is essential to the work of salvation unless it is in some fashion or other politically 'established'. Inversely, there can be no justice that is not ultimately and implicitly ordered to the beatific vision and the Peace of Jerusalem. True order is always integral.[14] And this must apply at the global level also. The internationalism of the *ecclesia* alone is not enough: if there is to be a concrete embodiment of supernatural peace, besides an international coercive securing of the peace of this world, then there needs to be an effective international secular power. And in order for this to be fully just, according to theological criteria, it needs in some sense to acknowledge the Church as the community orientated to final eschatological peace and the reign of charity.

This imperative roughly translates the consensus assented to in the Middle Ages, both East and West, concerning the role of the Emperor, who was taken to perpetuate Rome in either case. In those days it was assumed that peace ultimately derives from international authority and even international force, justified in terms of its imposition of natural justice, supervening upon endemic local squabbles. In the case of the West, the emperor in theory, and sometimes in practice, acted as a kind of

[13] Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit.*

[14] Ironically, *intégrisme* was not truly integralist because it usually assumed a neoscholastic pure nature. In consequence it was positivist with respect to the secular order, but theocratic with respect to granting an ultimate power (conceived in all too secular terms) of the Church thought of in equally positivistic terms as dealing with sheerly 'supernatural' matters.

reserved final guarantor of the order and unity of Christendom. Kings in general shared collectively in this role to a lesser degree and their authority was inseparable from their ultimate support for and mediation of the Pope and the ecclesial communion.

In modern times peace has usually been upheld in Hobbesian terms within states that have pursued merely their own power and self-interest. At the international level it has been fragilely upheld by the surrogate *agon* of trade which has yet often proved to be itself the occasion for an outbreak of now highly anarchic and unlimited technologised warfare. But in our own postmodern times of globalisation, international anarchy has started to interrupt the interior peace of nations, in the mode of terrorism inflicted both by private groups acting in the name of religions or ideologies and by 'civilisation states' upon each other, often through virtual electronic intrusion. Equally, the post-war and significantly Christian-influenced international structures of order designed to inhibit typically modern international anarchy have come increasingly unstuck: first through the increasingly disparate interests of poorer and richer nations and more recently because of the dangerous turn to buccaneering by large nations ('civilisation states') linked with increasingly anarchic capitalist forces.

In the face of this situation a much intensified and indeed desperate need for an international order and guarantee of peace arises. But the dream of international government on the current Hobbesian model of government is illusory: for this model, as Carl Schmitt realised, requires the presence of an enemy—nor would a permanent terrorist threat be a sufficiently threatening one, unless it truly constituted a rival power.[15] Nor again can we be confident that environmental depredation will serve this negative role.

Instead, international order must, first of all, be based upon a natural law that acknowledges an objective, transcendent good, and thereby refuses a self-founding of nations in terms of mere self-preservation and legislative positivity. Secondly, it must be enforced by an effective alliance of powers—given that it is always and everywhere genuinely transnational political structures of various kinds (for all their frequent horror) that have alone been able to establish some degree of international peace and justice. Such a transnational political structure need not be 'imperial' in the sense of direct sovereign subsumption by one power of others, but it does require some jurisdictional reality and therefore some real possibility of enforcement, which only leading powers acting in conjunction can provide.

In terms of these two requirements for the global future, it remains primarily the Roman Catholic Church, in alliance with other churches, that is best placed to re-instil a sense of natural equity (as opposed to merely formal 'human rights') into international order. Genuine natural law, in a Patristic lineage, as most supremely

[15] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political; Theory of the Partisan* trans. G.L. Ulmen (New York: Telos, 2007).

articulated by Thomas Aquinas, is about equitable distribution and a just mediation between people that involves a just partition of things. It is a rational and conscious mediation of the eternal law of the *ordo* of the Divine Trinity in which also animals share. As such, it inherently involved, as for the Church Fathers, a fulfilment of human nature only through the gift of grace and of the beatific vision. Thus Aquinas is at one with Gratian or with Robert Grosseteste in saying that the gospels alone contain the full realisation of the natural law. There is no possibility of human justice unless it points beyond secular order towards the ecclesial order of charity. This involves also a subservience of every law to the test of eternal justice, such that law is an entirely analogical matter, mediated to us through the law of peoples, the positive civil law, customary law, canon law and familial authority, all of which change through time in response to circumstance. In terrestrial terms this means that the eternal law in the mode of human reason is always first mediated by the *ius gentium,* the international common sense of humanity. International law and polity come first and international relations have priority over mere 'politics'.

The gradual loss of this vision in later medieval and early modern scholasticism is considerably responsible for many of our modern ills. This includes the later disdaining of animals and our treatment of nature as merely an object for rational appropriation. It also includes a reversed priority for internal politics and the laws of what were now termed 'states' over international order. All these things ensued because law was now understood univocally to mean any rational regularity imposed by an arbitrary force of will, whether divine or human. Such an outlook both allowed and was allowed by the new early modern scholastic view that humans pursue a twofold end: not just a supernatural one, but also a purely natural one subject to merely ontological and not theological considerations.[16]

In all these ways the extraordinary thing is that the conceptual space of secularity was invented by a perverse theology: the space of an international anarchic sea in which states swim like islands; the space in which justice is subordinate to law conceived as either positive imposition or the pursuit of utility; the space where the mark of natural law is no longer participation in the mind of God but merely rational deduction from supposed pure facts or principles. This mode of natural law is no longer concerned with the integrally just and charitable mediation of people through the dignity of things (the *res* of Roman and Byzantine jurisprudence) but with the assertion of endless isolated and self-derived rights which are inherently

[16] See Michel Bastit, *Naissance de la Loi Moderne* (Paris: PUF, 1990); Franco Todescan, *Lex, Natura, Beatitudo: Il problema della legge nella Scolastica Spagnola del sec. XVI* (Milan: CEDAM, 2014); Jean-François Courtine *Nature et Empire de la Loi: études suaréziennes* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999). Bastit's work, building on that of Michel Villey, is crucial. However, his neoscholasticism fails to see the importance of the neoplatonic dimension, the priority of (an authentic) analogy of attribution over the analogy of proportion and the absence of pure nature in Aquinas. All these things are corrected by Todescan and Courtine who are thereby able to fill out Bastit's analysis.

the supposed rights of mind over indifferent bodies, irrational animals, and the indifferent body of the earth itself.

If the secular space was bizarrely opened to view by theology itself, then it is impossible to say what the consequences of a much more widespread and deeply rooted recovery of a more genuine Patristically-based vision might be. And in reality the programme of *ressourcement* has barely begun and is now often thwarted. We cannot rule out the idea that a space opened out by a dubious theology can be foreclosed by a better one. And increasingly the incoherencies and irresolvable conflicts of the secular attempt at natural self-rule are becoming evermore apparent.

At the same time, we need to recall the older and the ecumenical dimension of eventual theological catastrophe. There is the question of the long-term impact of a dubious eschatology already mentioned, and of the consequent perversion, as Ivan Illich and Charles Taylor have argued, of the ecclesial economy somewhat into a regime of mere fear and ethical discipline, routinising personal rule instead of infusing the institutional with the personal.[17] Such doubtful practice helped falsely to encourage the sense of the normality of poor academic theory. And the division of East and West weakened a shared sense of the true depth of a shared inheritance. Eventually this weakening led to such terrible ecclesial divisions in the West that only the theologies and philosophies of pure nature seemed capable of securing a certain simulacrum of order.

If today relatively Christian principles can be recovered and made to prevail (and we now live in a crazy era where nothing may be impossible, as many often worryingly extreme theorists like Alexander Dugin and Steve Bannon realise),[18] then in political terms this will inevitably require substantive international alliances rooted in a West that we can hope will eventually also include Russia. For besides the rising conflict we see today between globalising and nationalist forces, with capitalism ambiguously on both sides at once, it is also the case that the world is dominated, as Christopher Coker has argued, by large 'civilisation states' like China, Russia and the USA. [19] This is why the survival of European civilisation probably requires the EU or something like it, quite apart from the theological dubiousness of notions of absolute state sovereignty for reasons which I have tried to indicate.

I have also tried to show why ecumenism is not just an internal issue for Christians but an essential dimension of our historical fate and our current dilemmas. The unity and self-understanding of the global West are to this day profoundly impaired by Christian divisions and the linked loss of an authentic Christian vision. The question of global order and the question of Christendom remain secretly connected.

[17] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge MS: Harvard UP, 2019).

[18] Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory* (London: Arktos, 2012)

[19] Christopher Coker, *The Rise of the Civilisation State* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019); Adrian Pabst, *Liberal World Order and its Critics: Civilisation States and Cultural Commonwealths* (London: Routledge, 2018)

For this reason, besides more directly theological ones, Orthodox, Catholic, and Anglican Christians need in future to work, in the name of both objective architectonic justice and of popular consent, towards a restored Church unity under the Pope in Council and towards its partnership with some sort of emergent international and effective secular authority, acknowledging at least implicitly the superior ordering of our supernatural destiny and the eternal law of God.

Concluding Reflections on Mapping the Una Sancta. An Orthodox-Catholic Ecclesiology Today

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The Orthodox-Catholic schism is an evident breakdown in the map of the *Una Sancta*. Understanding its causes, so that reconcile the separated churches unifying them in just one body, is a matter for mostly historical, theological, ecclesiological inquiries. What might the philosopher of language contribute to this topic? Almost nothing if he remains within standard academic boundaries; something more perhaps if he is willing to step outside of such limits and engage in some experimentation. This is what happens in the present paper. For instance, Lacan's optical scheme (the so-called 'mirror-stage') might be a good metaphor to start by. Schisms could be accordingly considered as a special class of events in a given form of life. My thesis is that both in the life of every man and in the life of a community of men, the birth of the rational Subject is achieved by means of schism-events. Through the Catholic-Orthodox schism, new forms of subjectivity emerged as the splitting point of the ecclesial Signifier. If this is the case, the emergence of a split might have something to do with some mirroring phenomena capable of perturbing the reciprocity of the gaze in the accounted ecclesial forms of life. In my analysis a special role—and a theoretical differentiation—is given to the mirrored content of this gaze, now taking the form of an *Image* and now of an *Icon*.

As a scholar of the philosophy of language, I got to the point where, after listening to each of your competent talks, I would be tempted to dismiss my concluding reflections and say 'goodbye'. The reason is that, as represented by the papers offered in this conference, the obstacles to ecclesial unity seem to involve contingent, historical, theological-philosophical, linguistic and ecclesiological, or political notions, rather than reasons *stricto sensu* amenable to the usual notions of a standard philosophy of language. Of course, philosophy of language is included in many of the topics treated here; and this occurs because most theological controversies are based on so-called *tacit knowledge*, whose nature is a matter for philosophical discussions about how language is used both by people in their everyday life and by philosophers in their speculations about the nature and essence of the Church. Moreover, your

papers offer in a very ad hoc way some intriguing arguments to the philosopher of language.

Unlike you, however, most of the analytical philosophers I have met in my life dismiss Christian themes, thinking of them as irrelevant for a properly philosophical recognition of a theory of meaning or a theory of truth.[1] In other words, I have yet to hear of a 'Fregean' ecclesiology, nor I have I met any 'linguistic turn'-oriented philosopher especially devoted to the Christian (ecclesiological, liturgical, ontological) ways of building theories of truth and predication.[2] The atheistic trend in philosophical discussions is of grave concern because it prevents scholars from seeing the connection between semantics and the ontology of language at work. It is when logico-semantical accountability is at its lowest that the question about ontological commitments is key. No matter whether one is a believer or not, the statements 'God is one substance in three persons' and 'The Church is a living body' are very difficult to address and should be taken seriously.[3] These few considerations should persuade me to renounce my task; however, on the contrary, the love and devotion I have for the Church helps me to overcome my fear of failure and propose my reflections as follows.

I will introduce a path seemingly far away from yours. Namely, I shall suggest that some conceptual difficulties raised through our present discussions point to the ways in which languages were/are tacitly oriented by some transcendental judgement or assumption. My question is: 'What semantical premises made the Orthodox/Catholic division possible and so long-lasting?' An exhaustive presentation of this topic would require an entire symposium. I will deal with just one point: the role of images and icons in the Orthodox/Catholic differentiation. Though presumed to be different from one another, images and icons will be taken here as *dispositives* — i.e., as configurations of practices allowing or inhibiting the *shifting* of the communicative actors.

[1] I argued against this view in M. La Matina, 'Does Homily work as a Theory of Truth?', (*Scrinium. Journal of Patrology and Critical Hagiography* 11 [2015]: 261–280) where an ancestor of the Tarsky-style theory of truth is recognized in the original structure of the Synagogue proclamation (Torah/Neviim plus Derasha) as well in the Christian stages of the Scripture proclamation (Written texts plus Homily);

[2] Of course, there are many important philosophers who work to reconcile the tenets of Christendom with the reasons of the philosophical language-oriented theories. In addition to the theologians and the philosophers currently attending the Syros Conference, I have read with great appreciation the works by Johannes Zachhuber, Mark Edwards, Giulio Maspero, Peter Th. Geach, Elisabeth Anscombe, Markus Vinzent, and especially the Greek theologian and philosopher Christos Yannaras, whose books have inspired my present work.

[3] Contrary to this trend is, among others, the movement called 'Radical Orthodoxy'. It was founded by John Milbank and other Christian theologians and philosophers in 1997. Among the theses promoted there is the following one: '[the movement of Radical Orthodoxy] denies that there is a sharp division between reason and faith or reason and revelation, and regards any such notion as a modern deviation from earlier views. It believes that human nature can only be fully understood with reference to our supernatural destiny, and human knowledge with reference to divine illumination'. For a largely argumented exposition of the main theses defended by the Radical Orthodoxy movement see J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

Schism and Divisions: how many churches?

A very frequent comment by the speakers of the present Conference was as follows: 'Yes, we agree there was a schism, but at present we neither are substantially divided nor formally united'. The emphasis was mostly placed on removing the oxymoron of *divided communion*. A shortcut response could consist in taking 'division' as a twofold term: one could say that there are absolute divisions (*divisions-between*) and relative divisions (*divisions-among*). *Divisions-between* usually result in the absence of any relationships: and this is not the case for us. Unlikely, *divisions among* stem from the acknowledgement of a common ground and only concern irreconcilable forms *of life*.

If the latter should be the case, then it would mean that schisms are sophisticated forms of unity. Apart the paradoxical *enthymema*, this very general premise can serve to introduce the expression that could offer the philosopher a theoretical hook: the notion of *form of life* (*εἶδος* or *μορφὴ τοῦ βίου*). On the one hand, this expression reminds one of some very crucial aspects of the modern philosophy of language. Think of the *Lebensformen* theorized by late Wittgenstein[4] or the similar expression ('forms-of-life') by the contemporary philosopher Giorgio Agamben,[5] who has nurtured interest in the forms-of-life (with the hyphens) in his project. On the other hand, it is to be stressed that the locution '*εἶδος* or *μορφὴ τοῦ βίου*' (usually translated as *Lebensform*) is a common one in the philosophies of the imperial and late antique ages.[6]

The schism as the stage of the mirror.

Divisions among Christians, we were saying, are *oxymoron-shaped* forms of life. But are they to be taken as troubles in a relation? Or, on the contrary, as segments of a relation? Are they pathologies? Or, so to say, physiological seasons where a body continues to exist, say, as a substance *ἐν δυνάμει*? Could such discontinuities happen as mere accidents in a structure? Or rather can we recognize in them the features of a *structural lag*—according to the expression by Ogburn[7]—belonging since its origins to the evolution of whatever relation among sensitive beings? In our case, could a schism be a meaningful event rather than a nonsensical accident? Sure, our schism asks to be heard. Perhaps it conceals a sense, a perspective for a new interpretation of

[4] See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchingen / Philosophical Investigations*, the German Text with English translation by G.E.M. Anscombe and P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte, 4th revised Edition (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009; ed. orig. 1953).

[5] See G. Agamben, *The Use of Bodies — Homo Sacer IV, 2*, trans. by Adam Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[6] See, for example, Epictetus. *Discourses, Books 3–4. Fragments. The Encheiridion.*Translated byW.A. Oldfather. *Loeb Classical Library* 218 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).

[7] W.F. Ogburn, 'Cultural Lag as Theory', *Sociology and Social Research*, January–February (1957): 167–174.

the dividing ways of life. By using Gregory of Nyssa's terminology, could we exclude that it is to be read rather as *τυπικῶς* than as *ἱστορικῶς*?[8]

Towards an archaeological investigation of the Una Sancta

If we accept provocations like these, then we should integrate the historical perspective by a new philosophical framework. We propose to term this approach an *archaeology of the ecclesial forms of life*. The locution 'archaeology' was used by Foucault[9] to indicate any retrospective search for *the conditions of possibility* of a given phenomenon. In this sense, searching for the *ἀρχή* of the schism, or regressing to the *ἀρχή*, must not be understood as finding the missing element of the puzzle. (The idea of a philosophical archaeology goes back to Kant's *Lose Blätter*).[10] On this basis, a philosophical archaeology of the schism can be better understood as the research for the *conditions of possibility* inscribed in the Church since its foundation. By an arduous oxymoron Foucault defined such conditions of possibility as a *historical a priori*. It is my opinion that the word *schism*—often used to indicate the breaking-point or the recursive *process of division*—is better understood if referred to some *historical a priori* manifesting itself from time to time as a structural character of a certain form of life. If this is the case, schism is not to be assumed as a single event, to say as a single beat in a musical work, but rather as the *insurgence-point*[11]

[8] Although the distinction between *τυπικῶς* and *ἱστορικῶς* is theorized by other Greek Church Fathers, it is only since the fourth century that it imposes some relevant semantical consequences in the interpretation of Bible's sentences. The best example of this is, in my opinion, offered by Gregory of Nyssa's writings. See especially the *Life of Moses* (pivotal statements in: I, 6, 5–26 and II, 33, 13–22) and the *Homilies on the Song of Songs* (see Prologus, 6, 1–9, 9 and I, 16,13–17, 12), or the *Homilies on the Beatitudes* (see esp. *IV hom*. 116). Some of my recent papers have been devoted to this: M. La Matina, 'The homiletic turn in Gregory of Nyssa's work. A brief study on "De Vita Moysis" and "In Canticum canticorum"', paper presented at the *XVII International Oxford Patristic Conference* (not yet submitted for publication), where I offered this thesis: 'My paper aims at suggesting that two apparently non-homiletic texts by Gregory (a *βίος* and a treatise written '*ἐν ὁμιλιῶν εἴδει*') are built up on the basis of a unique homiletic pattern. The pattern involves a mimetic use of sentences (the Pauline *typikòs* and its false friend *historikòs*), as well as the so-called *epéktasis* seen as the inexhaustible relationship between 'Ancestor' / 'Pretender' pairs. Homily is better seen as a logical device for updating the truth-conditions of the canonized Scriptural texts. In both *De Vita Moyses* and *In Canticum*, the original homiletic pattern might be envisaged (I will show just one example). Accordingly, if Gregory is fundamentally a homilist, then his message is to be searched not only among the words of his text, but also in the oral contexts of his 'speaker-to-auditory' relationship. The homiletic turn is, in its very sense, the re-turn to homiletics, as the spring of Christian way of life and of the care for our own Fathers'. See also M. La Matina, 'Does Homily work as a Theory of Truth? A Possible Bridge for Patristics and Philosophy of Language', *Scrinium* 11 (2015): 261–280.

[9] I refer here to the two seminal works by M. Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), and M. Foucault, *L' archeologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

[10] I quote from the critical edition of I. Kant, *Lose Blätter zu den Fortschritten der Metaphysik*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Akademie-Ausgabe, III, De Gruyter, 1942).

[11] The notion of 'Insurgence' (*Entstehung*) was elaborated by Friedrich Nietzsche in the field of his famous project focused on the *Genealogie der Moral* and was reelaborated in a historical perspective by the theologian Franz Overbeck (1837–1905) in his framework for the study of the Church Fathers; namely, Overbeck speaks of *Entstehungsgeschichte* in F. Overbeck, *Kirchenlexicon Materialen. Christentum and Kultur*, in *Werke und Nachlass*, VI, I, Hrgb. B. von Reibnitz, (Metzler: Stuttgart-Weimar, 1996). Overbeck's ac-

marking the emergence—form time to time—of the crucial differences at stake. Speaking of an insurgence-point means departing from any evaluative or moral stance which condemns one *μορφὴ τοῦ βίου* and absolves the other. I argue that the insurgence-point of the Church (*Entstehungspunkt*) might have to do with images, taken here in a very general but negative sense. If you agree, I would compare the divide between Orthodox and Catholic forms of life to the division that, according to Lacan, takes place in the life of children around the second year of their life. This division lies in the overlapping of the subject and its image, recognized for the first time in the mirror (see *Fig. 1*).[12]

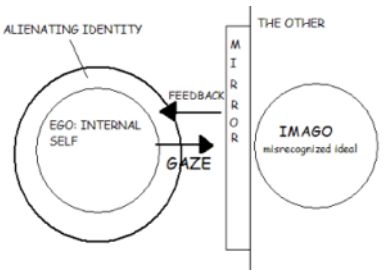

Figure 1: The Mirror-stage (ad hoc revision)

This recognition is a dividing act, for the child does recognize himself in a place where he is not. The mirror succeeds at once in the *creation* of the rational subject and in the *schism* of such a subject from its historical body. Mirroring is equal to somehow projecting such a division in an imaginary (or symbolic) space, where a fiction of unity, a representation of unity shows *the constitutive unaware otherness of any subject in itself*. The child is born *κατ'εἰκόνα*.[13]

This new mode of seeing does allow the child to vindicate its subjective identity, though this latter amounts to accounts for a deception: in other words, specular images are not icons. Let me adapt this model to the the ecclesial context. According to Lacan's theory, the child is faced to the mirror, as in Figure 1. Now, let me show another figure, revised by me in order to represent the West/East mirroring. In our adaptation, there are two opposite Christian priests and a *double-face mirror*

count of *Entstehung*, as well as his distinction between *Urgeschichte* and *Geschichte* have been closely studied by Giorgio Agamben in his essay on 'Philosophical Archaeology', in *Law Critique* 20 (2009): 211–31.

[12] See J. Lacan, 'Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je', in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 93–100. According to the traditional narrative, the theory of the mirror-stage was elaborated in 1936, namely at a Congress held at Marienbad, where Lacan submitted a talk by title 'The Looking-glass Phase'. The talk resulted in a fiasco and this text disappeared under unclear circumstances.

[13] The theological implications of this appearance of the Subject as a specular or image-laden relation (*κατ'εἰκόνα*) were analysed and originally elaborated by the philosopher Christos Yannaras, *Relational Ontology*, translated by N. Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011; or. ed. 2004). In this book, Yannaras focuses on Lacan *Séminaire XI*, and stresses Lacan's concept of mirroring '[t]he appearance of the first signifier in the place of the Other—that is, the progressive insertion of the referentiality of desire into the given linguistic code of the society in which the infant is born—has for the generation of the rational subject', meaning a transition to another mode of existence.

reflecting each one of them as dressing the image of the other (See *Fig. 2*). The *Entstehungpunkt* is the emergence of such a division in the subject space. The mirror works as a camera, showing the negative image (i.e., the fiction of an identity dispositive) instead of the positive face of a real person.

Figure 2: Mirroring as the building up of a schism image of the Self

The power of the mirror and the poverty of the gaze

Now, by applying this model to ecclesial subjectivity, we might recognize the Catholic-Orthodox *division* as (*a*) a necessary bur not sufficient condition for the subject to be born, and (*b*) an invitation and a call for the given subject to engage with an intimate transformation of its gaze. If the divided subject was born through the schismatic power of images, then it is now time for icons to recompose and redeem the gaze of the contenders, *transforming their mirror images into Icons of true communion*. Recognizing Icons means making it possible for us to feel of ourselves as both observing and being observed. Lacan's model, of course, appears as the lay *ἀντίτυπος* of the ecclesial *τύπος*.

'Now we see only a reflection as in a mirror', said St Paul. The deceptive power of mirror images is the very theatre of the schism. After so much time, the two sides of the one Christianity seem not to be aware of this simple semiotics as well as of its consequences. From the point of view of a philosophical archaeology, schism is but our living condition as subjects always taken in this *splitting of gaze*. Jean Paul Sartre, in a famous page,[14] did draw our attention to this gaze that, when it takes me by surprise, makes me feel as if I were under its power: like persons, *things too are looking at us, they are ἀντικείμενα*. It is noticeable that Lacan is not talking about the *real* gaze, but about the 'supposed' gaze that every Subject can imagine coming from some specular image. Schism means that the presence itself of the other is marked by division; by this acknowledgment the human subject arises in a *schismatic communion* of both the real and the imaginary dimensions.

[14] See J. P. Sartre, *Le séminaire : Livre 11, Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, text collected and edited by J. A. Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

Things being in such a way, the *Una Sancta* is a dramatic form for a religious subject because the Church dramatizes the permanent struggle against the schismatic communion in which every one of us was born. If this applies, then a possible task for escaping any interior and exterior schism in the Church lies in transforming the divisive logic of images into the communal semiotics of icons. For a long time, this was a job for painters. Now is the time to reveal this *historical a priori*. Iconic semiotics converts our struggling subjectivity into a free *kenosis* of the subject. Icons are a place where the intrinsically dividing images can be summoned by the ecclesial gaze and thus be heard.

Archaeology and gaze today

At the beginning of the third millennium, both the existential and the ontological consequences of this mirroring show a frightening scenario in which our perspectives for reconciling our gazes are inhibited by the pervasive influence of the internet. In particular, as some theorists argue, the digital man seems to be condemned to live in a 'poverty of gaze'.[15] People interacting through the Internet do not become more proximate to one another; nor they can make anything really distant or close.[16] This happens because of the nature of the network itself. Digital imagery risks neutralizing or nihilating the evangelical distinction between *proximal* and *distal*. How could I continue to live as a Christian if the possibility is denied to me of transforming the distal man I met on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho into *my own proximal*? Which perspectives for an ecumenical dialogue are offered by the pixeled high definition images?

I am moderately critical of the optimism of the Catholic bishops as to the possibility of using the network as a medium for ecumenical purposes. Digital images do not disclose the face of the *πλησίον*, but only replace the real presence by means of an imaginary proxy. The Catholic rehabilitation of the internet must be resisted. One of the most convinced proponents of the network was the philosopher Vílem Flusser,[17] who theorized about both a *future Pentecostal community* and a Messianic prospect as the very end of the present divisions and schisms. Up to now, however, *no Digital Messianism has come* to gather the Christian believers. Rather, the present form of life is, also within the Church, marked by egotism and narcissism.

Turning away from the images must involve rediscovering Icons as dispositives capable of casting a true gaze upon us. *An Icon is a person representing another person by the likeness of another person*. Icons presuppose the personal dimension

[15] I translate here an expression by Byung-Chul Han, *Im Schwarm. Ansichten des Digitalen* (Berlin: Matthes&Seitz, 2013).

[16] An interesting overview on this topic is offered by the philosopher E. Fadda in his book *Troppo lontani, troppo vicini. Elementi di prossemica virtuale* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2018).

[17] See V. Flusser, *Kommunikologie weiter denken: Die Bochumer Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2007), 251.

and, where this is lacking, icons institute it. This aspect is very far from being a significant topic in the debate among Orthodox and Catholic scholars. Sometimes, in our studies, the West has been opposed to the East as to the modes of knowledge each one developed. The West has developed a form of conceptuality resulting in hard rationalism, and the East elaborated an exclusively mystical path to knowledge. Both these judgments should be emended. One of the protagonists of the debate is the philosopher Christos Yannaras, from whom I quote these few expressions:

> The Greek East understood the image as a means for expressing the truth of persons and things, and spoke an iconic language that signified the disclosure of the person of God and the person of humankind. Image is the signifier of personal relation, the 'logical' disclosure of personal energy as invitation to communion and relation. […] It does not represent a static signified thing or substance, or substitute a reality or fact simply by an example, but discloses a personal energy invitatory to communion and relation, and preserves the character of knowledge as a fact of dynamic relation.[18]

Living under the gaze of Icons

During the early Christian times, icons had symbolic efficacy. They let the human gaze to be turned into a communitarian gaze. The ecclesial body avoided behaving like the Levite and the Priest, who did narcotize the face of the wayfarer they had before them. They did not look at what that man *was*, but at the image that *appeared* to their eyes. They proved to be incapable of converting the image into an icon. Finally, in the lines sketched here, the so-called *σχίσμα* could be better understood as a process of degradation from icons to images. The *σχίσις* of the gaze is the point of insurgence breaking the religious form of life. It fails in transforming images into icons. How could we reverse this condition? I do not know. Anyway, I may show you what a happy end looks like. We find it in the icon of the *κατάβασις*. There perhaps the eschatological recognition is sketched of the divided subject reaching a new stage of mirror (see *Fig. 3* at the end of the present text). I love asking myself: 'Who Adam did see before him?' 'Did he recognize the likeness of the new Adam with the old one?' I think the gaze of Adam discovered in Christ his own identity. There are no images, but just a face-to-face redeemed subjectivity. I think of the *Una Sancta* as the living body where the redemption of the subject, divided at its birth, will be completed thanks to the iconic way of redeeming the gaze. A philosophical archaeology could help to give the divisions a sense. This could be our present task, though we must be aware that only Jesus the Christ—according to the Pauline image—is the

[18] Christos Yannaras, *Person and Eros*, translated by Norman Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), 184.

true pacificator, the *μετάτοιχος* capable of reconciling any kind of division in His restored body.

Figure 3: Icon of the Resurrection
(Christ, the new Adam facing the old one)

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