

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY

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Laity Today

*Movements  
in the Church*

# Laity Today

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PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM PRO LAICIS

# Movements in the Church

Proceedings of the World Congress  
of the Ecclesial Movements  
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VATICAN CITY  
1999

Cover illustration:

Anna Formaggio (G&C srl, Milan), *Logo of the Holy Father's Meeting with the ecclesial movements and the new communities. Rome, 30 May 1998*

## FOREWORD

In May 1998 the Pontifical Council for the Laity convened the *World Congress of the Ecclesial Movements* (the proceedings of which are being published here), with the aim of promoting a better knowledge of these organizations that in various ways are enriching the life of the Church today. On the one hand, the Congress was intended to deepen theological reflection on the specific nature of these aggregations of the faithful. On the other, it was intended to foster an exchange of experiences between the representatives of the various movements and between them and some Bishops and other participants engaged in different forms of life and of Christian witness. This was a way of responding to the invitation of John Paul II, who had asked the movements to make a gesture of “joint witness” in the year dedicated to the Holy Spirit.

The Congress turned out, in practice, to be an event that surpassed the expectations even of those who had helped to prepare it. The days during which it was held were days full of surprises, culminating in the great surprise of the meeting of the Pope with the movements on the Vigil of Pentecost. There has been something very special about this week. Mother Teresa might have described it as “something beautiful for God”. Surprises are, in fact, a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has again shown himself to be infinite freedom and infinite love. We have experienced in a singular way the Spirit blows where he will, the Spirit of absolute love.

The days of the Congress revealed the various movements to each other, and to the whole Church, in a new way.

What is striking in the ecclesial movements is above all the perception they have of the cultural ambience at the end of this century and their capacity to operate in it. An American novelist and essayist,

Walker Percy, was musing about an old story concerning novelists. He says that people are always asking, why don't you write about pleasant things and normal people? Why all the neurosis and violence? There are many nice things in the world. The reader is offended, when one replies, "yes, it's time; in fact there seem to be more nice people around than ever before, but somehow as the world grows nicer it also grows more violent". That description, "as the world grows nicer it also grows more violent", is the ambience of our century. It captures the velvet violence which surrounds us. The triumphant secular world of the twentieth century seems to have the nicest people ever, but the world has never before seen anything like the terrible tragedies that have marked our century. So, we are closing a very violent 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Christian era and are about to open not only a new chapter, but a wholly new millennium. Can the ecclesial movements born in this century help to ensure that the new millennium takes the road towards what John Paul II has called the 'civilization of love'? I do not underestimate the challenge of secularity. I know that secularity is a quick and deadly corrosive of community, of personal event, of truth, of commitment to mission, of faith in God. But it is precisely where we have heard that the new lay communities have great strength. Where the parish and diocesan Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is weakest, in the period of the *mystagogia*, i.e. in followup through community, mission and apostolic spirit, the movements are strongest.

During the Congress it was repeatedly emphasised that the vocation of the movements is missionary. One of the speakers said: "When the charism is tied to mission, everything else is fine". The report of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, on the other hand, showed how closely the movements are tied with the universal mission of the Church. In this sense a deeper consciousness of the one common vocation that links them all is developing among the movements: the vocation of proclaiming the Gospel to all mankind. Communion and mission in the life of the movements are so closely linked as to be identified with each other, as

to form one thing, just as the being of Jesus is identified with his mission as to be inseparable from the trinitarian mission of being sent by the Father.

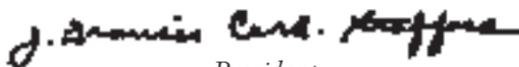
Perhaps we can develop this missionary identity further. If “the Church is able to be said to be in a certain sense ‘a movement’”, as Pope John Paul II indicated, the implications are that the new associative realities draw their “being a movement” from the Church. Consequently, these new realities are not simply movements *in* the Church, but above all *from* the Church. They are dynamic realities born from the dynamism of the Church, in a movement born from the Church as movement. This Congress has helped us to deepen the notion of “movements being from the Church”: the “from the Church” expresses not simply the reality of their nature and being, but their becoming. Thus the movements are “particular events” arising from the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church, the agent of the new evangelization, the inspirer of the actual forms of the missionary activity of the Church.

Reflecting on the phenomenon of the movements may help us to rediscover the reality itself of the Church—which could not be herself without the ever new initiative of the Spirit. John Paul II recalled this in his message to the Congress: “I have often had occasion to stress that there is no conflict or opposition between the *institutional dimension* and the *charismatic dimension*, of which movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they both help to make the mystery of Christ and his saving work present in the world”. These words of the Holy Father are a direct echo of the Vatican Council’s rediscovery of the charismatic dimension of the Church. In his address during the Meeting in St. Peter’s Square John Paul II explicitly recalled the conciliar teaching, showing that the movements are a concrete realization of it.

On that occasion the Pope also said that the time of “ecclesial maturity” has now come for the movements. In the life of man and in the life of the Church the time of maturity is the time of full and unconditional dedication to the task assigned to us. The Pope explicitly said

so: what he now expects from the movements are “the ‘ripe’ fruits of communion and commitment”. The appeal to “ecclesial maturity” became for each of those present a passionate (and inspiring) appeal to renew their own commitment to the mission that Christ assigns to his disciples.

This volume is naturally addressed in the first instance to the members of the movements. The contributions presented in these pages might also be read with interest by the Pastors of the Church who have the responsibility to accompany and guide the movements: they may find in them valuable guidance on the nature of the movements and on the place they have in the Church. The publication of the proceedings of the Congress that preceded the great meeting of the Pope with the movements is also intended to assist all those who still do not sufficiently know the movements and who—perhaps after the great rally of 30 May 1998—wish to gain a better knowledge of this phenomenon that has emerged in the life of the Church over the last few decades. John Paul II’s message to the Congress and his address in St. Peter’s Square offer the most authoritative teaching in this sense. In fact, the contributions presented to the Congress, and published below, now appear, in the light of these interventions by the Holy Father and after the Meeting of 30 May, almost as an anticipation of a reflection that needs to be further developed on the basis of these words and that event. It is hoped that the present volume may also represent a stimulus in this direction.



*President  
of the Pontifical Council for the Laity*

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The present volume gathers together the various contributions presented to the *World Congress of the Ecclesial Movements*, held in Rome from 27 to 29 May 1998.

The Congress derived its origin from an invitation that the Holy Father had addressed to the movements two years earlier. In his homily on the Vigil of Pentecost, on 25 May 1996, John Paul II had dwelt on the reality of the movements: “One of the gifts of the Spirit to our time—he said—is undoubtedly the flourishing of the ecclesial movements which right from the beginning of my pontificate I have continued to indicate as a source of hope for the Church and for man.” Going on to recall that in the itinerary of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the year 1998 was the year dedicated to the Holy Spirit, the Pope had said he was counting in a particular way “on the joint witness and on the collaboration of the movements” for this year. The Holy Father then added: “I trust that, in communion with the Pastors and in liaison with diocesan programmes, they will bring their spiritual, educational and missionary riches to the heart of the Church, as a precious experience and proposal of Christian life”.<sup>1</sup>

The Pontifical Council for the Laity—which is the office of the Roman Curia given the task of following the ecclesial movements—accepted the invitation of the Holy Father. Together with the movements themselves it reflected on what was the most suitable way of responding to this invitation. The “joint witness” hoped for by the Holy Father was finally materialised in two initiatives that were supposed to form, and in fact did form, two stages of the same event. The Congress, of which the proceedings are being published here, was in

<sup>1</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 19, 1 (1996): 1373.

fact intended to prepare the great *Meeting of the Holy Father with the Ecclesial Movements and the New Communities* scheduled for the Vigil of Pentecost 1998.

So, from 27 to 29 May 1998 the Pontifical Council for the Laity convened some 350 delegates from various countries at the “*Domus Pacis*” in Rome to discuss the theme: “*Ecclesial Movements: Communion and Mission on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*”. This was not in fact the first time that the ecclesial movements had met together for an exchange of reflections and experiences. A first occasion was the International Meeting held in Rome from 23 to 27 September 1981.<sup>2</sup> A second International Colloquium was held at Rocca di Papa from 28 February to 4 March 1987.<sup>3</sup> A third International Meeting was held at Bratislava in Slovakia from 1 to 4 April 1991. But, in contrast to these forerunners, the World Congress of the Ecclesial Movements of May 1998 was directly promoted by the Holy See through the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which organised it in close co-operation with the movements themselves. The choice of participants in the Congress was also wider than in the past and particularly significant. The majority of the some 350 delegates were delegates of some fifty different movements and communities. They included the founders and leaders at the international level of many of the movements represented. Also invited to attend were various representatives of the offices of the Roman Curia, numerous Bishops, ‘observers’ of various Catholic institutions and fraternal delegates of other Churches and Christian communities.

His Holiness John Paul II sent an autograph letter to the Congress which was read out to the delegates during the inaugural session. The programme of the Congress provided for a first day dedicated to theological reflection. It was opened by a report presented by the Prefect of

<sup>2</sup> See M. Camisasca and M. Vitali (eds.), *I movimenti nella Chiesa negli anni '80: Atti del 1° Convegno Internazionale. Roma, 23–27 settembre 1981*. (Milano: Jaca Book, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> See *I movimenti nella Chiesa: Atti del 2° Colloquio internazionale su “Vocazione e missione dei laici nella Chiesa oggi”*. Rocca di Papa, 28 febbraio–marzo 1987. (Milano: Nuovo Mondo, 1987).

the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. This report was followed up by interventions from David Schindler, Msgr. Piero Coda, Bishop Angelo Scola, Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda, S.J., and Bishop Albert-Marie de Monléon. On the following day, exponents of various movements described, in the course of a round table, the contribution they each make to the mission of the Church in the contemporary world. We publish the contributions prepared by the participants to initiate the debate, eschewing any attempt to document the interesting discussion that followed and that continued in the afternoon in the work groups in the various languages. On the last day of the Congress attention was concentrated on the testimony of some of the participants who told of their own experiences as Christians living in different and sometimes extremely difficult circumstances. The testimonies presented were very interesting and sometimes extremely moving, and not without regret we are obliged to omit them from the present publication. The Congress was otherwise characterised not only by the sessions of work, but also by the daily eucharistic celebration, by moments of prayer and festivity, by a shared life in which many opportunities were provided for dialogue and for getting to know each other better. We also publish the homilies given on the three days of the Congress respectively by Cardinal James Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, and Bishop Stanisław Ryłko, Secretary of the Council that promoted the Congress. The reflections conducted in the course of the Congress were summarised in the “Final Message of the Congress” the text of which can be found in the fifth section of the present volume.

On the afternoon of Saturday 30 May the participants at the Congress gathered in St. Peter’s Square with the tens of thousands of pilgrims who had flocked to Rome from all over the world to participate in the Meeting of the Pope with the ecclesial Movements and the new communities. In view of its importance, we believe it is appropriate to include in an appendix below the text of the Holy Father’s address on that occasion.

**I**

**Message of  
His Holiness John Paul II**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

“We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 *Thess* 1:2–3). These words of the Apostle Paul resound in my heart with grateful joy as I send you a warm greeting and assure you of my spiritual closeness in anticipation of our meeting in the Vatican.

I extend my affectionate greeting to the President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, Cardinal James Francis Stafford; to the Secretary, Bishop Stanisław Ryłko, and to the Council’s staff. My greeting also goes to the leaders and delegates of the various movements, to the Pastors who are accompanying them and to the distinguished speakers.

During your World Congress, you are addressing the theme: “Ecclesial Movements: Communion and Mission on the Threshold of the Third Millennium”. I thank the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which has assumed responsibility for promoting and organising this important meeting. I also wish to thank the movements that have promptly and willingly accepted the invitation I extended to them on the Vigil of Pentecost two years ago. On that occasion, I expressed the hope that on the way to the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, during the year dedicated to the Holy Spirit, they would offer a “joint witness” and that “in communion with the Pastors and in liaison with diocesan programmes, [they would bring] their spiritual, educational and missionary riches to the heart of the Church, as a precious experience and proposal of Christian life”.

I deeply hope that your Congress and the meeting in St. Peter's Square on 30 May 1998 will highlight the fruitful vitality of the movements among the People of God, who are preparing to cross the threshold of the third millennium of the Christian era.

2. I am thinking at this moment of the international conferences organised in Rome in 1981, in Rocca di Papa in 1987, and in Bratislava in 1991. I followed their work attentively, accompanying them with prayer and constant encouragement. From the beginning of my Pontificate I have given special importance to the progress of the ecclesial movements, and I have had the opportunity to appreciate the results of their widespread and growing presence during my pastoral visits to parishes and my apostolic journeys. I have noticed with pleasure their willingness to devote their energies to the service of the See of Peter and the local Churches.

I have been able to point to them as something new that is still waiting to be properly accepted and appreciated. Today I notice, with great joy, that they have a more mature self-knowledge. They represent one of the most significant fruits of that springtime in the Church which was foretold by the Second Vatican Council, but which unfortunately has often been hampered by the spread of secularization. Their presence is encouraging because it shows that this springtime is advancing and revealing the freshness of the Christian experience based on personal encounter with Christ. Even in the diversity of their forms, these movements are marked by a common awareness of the "newness" which baptismal grace brings to life, through a remarkable longing to reflect on the mystery of communion with Christ and with their brethren, through sound fidelity to the patrimony of the faith handed on by the living stream of Tradition. This gives rise to a renewed missionary zeal which reaches out to the men and women of our time in the concrete situations in which they find themselves, and turns its loving attention to the dignity, needs and destiny of each individual.

These are the reasons for the "joint witness" which, thanks to the service you have received from the Pontifical Council for the Laity

and in a spirit of friendship, dialogue and collaboration with all the movements, is now given concrete expression at this World Congress and, particularly, in a few days' time, at the eagerly awaited Meeting in St. Peter's Square. A "joint witness", moreover, which has already emerged and been tested in the arduous preparatory phase of these two events.

The significant presence among you of the superiors and representatives of other offices of the Roman Curia, of Bishops from the various continents and nations, of delegates from the International Unions of Superiors General, of the guests of various institutions and associations shows that the whole Church is involved in this endeavour, confirming that the dimension of communion is essential in the life of movements. The ecumenical dimension is also present, made tangible by the participation of fraternal delegates from other Churches and Christian Communions, to whom I address a special greeting.

3. The aim of this World Congress is, on the one hand, to examine the theological nature and missionary task of the movements and, on the other, to encourage mutual edification through the exchange of testimonies and experiences. Your programme thus involves crucial aspects of the life of the movements which the Spirit of Christ has stirred up to give new apostolic fervour to the structure of the Church. At the opening of your Congress, I would like to propose for your consideration several reflections which we will certainly have occasion to emphasise later during the celebration in St. Peter's Square on 30 May.

You represent more than 50 movements and new forms of community life, which are the expression of a multifaceted variety of charisms, educational methods and apostolic forms and goals. This multiplicity is lived in the unity of faith, hope and charity, in obedience to Christ and to the Pastors of the Church. Your very existence is a hymn to the unity in diversity desired by the Spirit and gives witness to it. Indeed, in the mystery of communion of the Body of Christ, unity is never dull homogeneity or a denial of diversity, just as plurality must never become par-

ticularism or dispersion. That is why each of your groups deserves to be appreciated for the particular contribution it makes to the life of the Church.

4. What is meant today by “movement”? The term is often used to refer to realities that differ among themselves, sometimes even by reason of their canonical structure. Though that term certainly cannot exhaust or capture the wealth of forms aroused by the life-giving creativity of the Spirit of Christ, it does indicate a concrete ecclesial reality with predominately lay membership, a journey of faith and a Christian witness which bases its own pedagogical method on a precise charism given to the person of the founder in specific circumstances and ways.

The originality of the particular charism that gives life to a movement neither claims, nor could claim, to add anything to the richness of the *depositum fidei*, safeguarded by the Church with passionate fidelity. Nonetheless, it represents a powerful support, a moving and convincing reminder to live the Christian experience to the full, with intelligence and creativity. Therein lies the basis for finding adequate responses to the challenges and needs of ever changing times and historical circumstances.

In this light, the charisms recognised by the Church are ways of deepening one’s knowledge of Christ and giving oneself more generously to him, while at the same time rooting oneself ever more deeply in communion with the entire Christian people. For this reason, these charisms deserve attention from every member of the ecclesial community, beginning with the Pastors to whom the care of the particular Churches is entrusted in communion with the Vicar of Christ. Movements can thus make a valuable contribution to the vital dynamics of the one Church founded on Peter, in the various local situations, especially in those regions where the *implantatio Ecclesiae* is still in its early stages or subject to many difficulties.

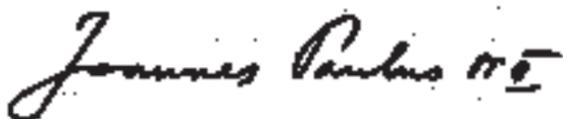
5. I have often had occasion to stress that there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional dimension and the

charismatic dimension, of which the Movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they both help to make the mystery of Christ and his saving grace present in the world. Together they aim to renew, each in its own way, the self-awareness of the Church, which in a certain sense may be called a “movement” herself, since she is the realization in time and space of the Father’s sending of his Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am convinced that my reflections will be given due consideration during the Congress, which I accompany with the prayer that it may bear abundant fruit for the benefit of the Church and of all humanity.

With these sentiments, as I look forward to meeting you in St Peter’s Square on the Vigil of Pentecost, I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and to those you represent.

From the Vatican, 27 May 1998

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joannes Paulus II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a distinct flourish at the end.

## **II**

# **The Nature of the Ecclesial Movements. Reports**

# The Ecclesial Movements: a Theological Reflection on their place in the Church

JOSEPH Card. RATZINGER

In his great encyclical on mission *Redemptoris Missio*, the Holy Father says: “Within the Church, there are various types of services, functions, ministries and ways of promoting the Christian life. I call to mind, as a new development occurring in many Churches in recent times, the rapid growth of ‘ecclesial movements’ filled with missionary dynamism. When these movements humbly seek to become part of the life of local Churches and are welcomed by Bishops and priests within diocesan and parish structures, they represent a true gift of God both for new evangelization and for missionary activity properly so-called. I therefore recommend that they be spread, and that they be used to give fresh energy, especially among young people, to the Christian life and to evangelization, within a pluralistic view of the ways in which Christians can associate and express themselves”.<sup>1</sup>

For me personally it was a wonderful experience when, in the early 1970s, I first came into closer contact with movements such as the *Neocatechumenal Way*, *Communion and Liberation* and the *Focolare Movement*, and so experienced the energy and enthusiasm with which they lived their

Born in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn in 1927, he was ordained in 1951. He taught theology in various German universities, and participated in Vatican Council II as a theologian. In 1977 Paul VI nominated him Archbishop of München and Freising and created him Cardinal. John Paul II called him to head the Holy See’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1981. Of his many publications the following are available in English translation: *Introduction to Christianity* (1969), *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (1985), *Church, ecumenism, and politics* (1988), *The Nature and Mission of Theology* (1995), *Called to Communion* (1996), *Salt of the Earth* (1997), *Milestones* (1998).

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 72.

faith and the joy of their faith which impelled them to share with others the gift they had received. That was the period in which Karl Rahner and others were speaking of a winter in the Church; and, indeed, it did seem that, after the great flowering of the Council, spring had been reclaimed by frost, and that the new dynamism had succumbed to exhaustion.

The dynamism now seemed to be somewhere else altogether—where people, relying on their own strength and without resorting to God, were trying to shape a better world for the future. That a world without God could not be good, let alone better, was obvious to anyone who had eyes to see. But where was God? After so many debates and so much effort expended on seeking new structures, had not the Church in fact become tired and dispirited? Rahner's remarks about a winter in the Church were perfectly understandable; they expressed an experience we all shared. But then something suddenly happened which no one had planned. The Holy Spirit had, so to say, once again made his voice heard. The faith was reawakened, especially in young people, who eagerly embraced it without any ifs and buts, without subterfuges and reservations, and experienced it in its totality as a precious, life-giving gift. To be sure, many people felt that this interfered with their intellectual discussions or their models for redesigning a completely different Church in their own image—how could it be otherwise? Every irruption of the Holy Spirit always upsets human plans. But there were, and are, far more serious difficulties. For these movements had their share of childhood diseases. The power of the Spirit could be felt in them, but the Spirit works through human beings and does not simply free them from their weaknesses. There were tendencies to exclusivity and one-sidedness, and hence the inability to involve themselves in the life of the local Church. Buoyed up by their youthful élan, they were convinced that the local Church had, as it were, to crank itself up to their level, to adapt itself to their form, and not vice versa; that it was not up to them to be dragged into a structure that was at times somewhat fuddy-duddy. Frictions arose, in which both sides were at fault in different ways. It became necessary to reflect on how the two realities could be related to each in the right way: on the one

hand, the spiritual revival conditioned by new situations, and, on the other, the permanent structure of the Church's life, i.e. the parish and the diocese. While the questions posed here were, to a large extent, very practical ones that should not be unduly inflated into the theoretical dimension, the phenomenon at issue was one that periodically recurs, in various forms, throughout the history of the Church. There is the enduring basic structure of the Church's life, which is expressed in the continuity of her institutional structure throughout history. And there are the ever new irruptions of the Holy Spirit, which continually revitalise and renew that structure. But this renewal hardly ever occurs entirely without pain and friction. So the fundamental question posed by these "movements" is one that cannot be ignored: namely, how can their theological place within the continuity of the Church's institutional structure be correctly identified?

## I. ATTEMPTS TO CLARIFY THE ISSUE THROUGH A DIALECTIC OF PRINCIPLES

### *Institution and Charism*

The duality of institution and event, or institution and charism, immediately suggests itself as a basic model for resolving the question. But if we try to elucidate the two concepts, in order to arrive at valid rules for defining their mutual relationship, something unexpected happens. The concept of "institution" falls to bits in our hands as soon as we try to give it a precise theological connotation. For what, after all, are the fundamental institutional factors that characterise the Church as the permanent organizational structure of her life? The answer is, of course, the sacramental ministry in its different degrees: bishop, priest, deacon. The sacrament, that, significantly, bears the name *Ordo*, is, in the last analysis, the sole permanent and binding structure that forms so to say the fixed order of the Church. It is the sacrament that constitutes the Church as an "institution". But it was not until this century that it became customary, presumably for reasons of ecumenical expe-

diency, to designate the sacrament of *Ordo* simply as “ministry”, with the result that it is viewed entirely in the framework of the institution and the institutional. But this “ministry” is a “sacrament”, and hence clearly transcends the usual sociological understanding of institutions. That this structural element of the Church, the only enduring one, is a sacrament, means at the same time that it must be perpetually created anew by God. It is not something that the Church can dispose of herself; it is simply not there. It is not something that can be determined by the Church on her own initiative. Only secondarily is the sacrament realised through a call on the part of the Church. But primarily it comes into being by God’s call, that is to say, only at the charismatic and pneumatological level. It can only be accepted and lived by virtue of the newness of the vocation and by the freedom of the *pneuma*. Since that is so, and since the Church cannot simply appoint “officials” by herself, but must await the call from God, it follows for the same reason—and for that reason alone—that there may be a shortage of priests in the Church. That is why it has been clear from the very beginning that this ministry cannot be produced by the institution, but can only be invoked in prayer from God. From the very beginning, what Jesus said has remained true: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to his harvest” (*Mt* 9:37–38). This also explains why the calling of the Twelve was the fruit of a whole night spent by Jesus in prayer (cf. *Lk* 6:12–16).

The Latin Church has expressly underscored this strictly charismatic character of the service of the priest by linking it—in conformity with ancient ecclesial tradition—with celibacy, which is clearly to be understood only as a personal charism, and not simply as a qualification of office.<sup>2</sup> The demand that the two—priesthood and celibacy—be

<sup>2</sup> That priestly celibacy is not a medieval invention, but can be traced back to the earliest period of the Church, is shown clearly and convincingly by Card. A. M. Stickler, *The Case for Clerical Celibacy: Its Historical Development and Theological Foundations* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995). See also C. Cochini, *Origines apostoliques du célibat sacerdotal* (Paris, 1981); S. Heid, *Zölibat in der frühen Kirche* (Paderborn, 1997).

decoupled ultimately rests on the notion that the priesthood should not be considered charismatically, but as an “office” that the institution itself can fill in order to guarantee its own security and the satisfaction of its own needs. If priesthood be understood as wholly subordinated to the Church’s own administrative machine and her own security as an institution, then the charismatic bond implied by the requirement of celibacy is a scandal that has to be removed as quickly as possible. But in that case the Church as a whole would be understood as a purely human organization, and the security that is supposed to be obtained by these means would fail to achieve precisely what it is meant to deliver. That the Church is not our institution, but the irruption of something else, that it is intrinsically *iuris divini*, has as its consequence that we can never create the Church ourselves. It means that we can never apply purely institutional criteria to her; and that the Church is entirely herself only where the criteria and methods of human institutions are transcended.

To be sure, alongside this fundamental principle on which the institutional structure of the Church rests—the sacrament—, there are also institutions of purely human right in the Church. These institutions serve various roles of administration, organization and co-ordination, and each can and must develop according to the needs of the times. But it must be said that, while the Church does indeed need such self-created institutions, if they become too numerous and too powerful, they jeopardise the order and vitality of her spiritual reality. The Church must continuously examine her own institutional structure to make sure that it does not become top-heavy—to prevent it from hardening into a suit of armour that stifles her real spiritual life. Of course, it is understandable that the Church, if priestly vocations are denied to her over a longer period of time, should succumb to the temptation to create for herself what one might call an *ersatz* clergy of purely human right.<sup>3</sup> The Church must also create emergency structures in cases of

<sup>3</sup> The *Instruction on Some Questions Concerning the Collaboration of Laity in the Ministry of Priests*, published in 1997, concerns in essence this problem.

need, and has successfully done so time and again in the missions or in mission-like situations. To all those who have served and continue to serve the Church as spiritual leaders and evangelists in such situations of emergency we can only be grateful. But if the prayer for vocations to the sacrament is neglected as a result, if the Church gradually begins here and there to be satisfied with what she herself can do, if she makes herself, as it were, independent of God's gift, she would be acting like Saul, who, hard pressed by the Philistines, waited long for Samuel, but when Samuel failed to appear and the people began to disperse, lost his patience and made the burnt offering himself. He, who had thought that, given the urgency of the situation, no other course of action lay open to him and that he had no other choice but to take in hand the cause of God, was then rebuked for doing just that; he had thereby thrown everything away: to God "obedience is better than sacrifice" (cf. *1 Sam* 13:8–14; 15:22).

Let us return to our question: How are we to characterise the relationship between the permanent structures of Church order and ever new charismatic irruptions? The dialectic between institution and charism is unable to provide any answer to this question, because the antithesis between the two terms gives no satisfactory description of the reality of the Church. Nonetheless we can deduce a few initial guidelines from what has been said so far:

a) It is important that the sacred ministry, the priesthood itself, be charismatically understood and lived. The priest himself should be a "pneumatic", a *homo spiritualis*, a man aroused and impelled by the Holy Spirit. It is the Church's task to make sure that this character of the sacrament be seen and accepted. Out of zeal for the survival of her institutions the Church should not place numbers in the foreground and lower her spiritual needs. She would travesty the meaning of the priesthood itself doing so; a poorly performed service does more harm than good. It stands in the way of the priesthood and the faith. The Church must keep faith and acknowledge the Lord as her creator and sustainer. And she must do everything she can to help those called to the priesthood to preserve their faith beyond the initial enthusiasm, and

not get slowly bogged down in routine. She must help them increasingly to become truly spiritual men.

b) Where the sacred ministry is lived pneumatically and charismatically in this way, no institutional hardening takes place: what exists, instead, is an inner responsiveness to the charism, a kind of instinct for the Holy Spirit and his action. And so the charism too can once again recognise its own origin in the holder of the ministry, and ways will be found for fruitful collaboration in the discernment of spirits.

c) The Church must create emergency structures in situations of hardship. But these structures must understand themselves as intrinsically open to the sacrament; they must strive towards it, not lead away from it. As a general rule, the number of administrative structures the Church herself has created must be kept as small as possible. The Church must not overinstitutionalise herself. She must always remain open to the calls of the Lord, which remain unpredictable and for which no plans can be laid in advance.

### *Christology and Pneumatology*

The question is now posed: If institution and charism can only partially be considered as a dialectical pair, and thus provide only partial answers to our question, are there perhaps other theological viewpoints that are better adapted to it? The dialectic between the christological and pneumatological view of the Church is increasingly being pushed to the forefront in contemporary theology. In the light of this dialectic, it is asserted that the sacrament belongs to the christological-incarnational aspect of the Church, which then has to be supplemented by the pneumatological-charismatic aspect. It is true, of course, that a distinction has to be drawn between Christ and the *Pneuma*. On the other hand, just as the three persons of the Trinity should be treated not as a *communio* of three gods, but as the one triune God, so the distinction between Christ and Spirit can be rightly understood only when their diversity helps us better to under-

stand their unity. The Spirit cannot be rightly understood without Christ, but the converse is equally true. “The Lord is the Spirit”, Paul tells us in the *Second Letter to the Corinthians* (3:17). That does not mean that the two are simply the same thing or the same Person. It means that Christ as the Lord can only be among us and for us because the incarnation was not the last word. The incarnation was fulfilled in Christ’s death on the cross and in his resurrection. That means that Christ can only come because he has preceded us in the order of life of the Holy Spirit and communicates himself through that Spirit and in it. The pneumatological christology of St. Paul and the farewell discourses of the *Gospel of John* have not yet sufficiently penetrated our view of christology and pneumatology. The ever new presence of Christ in the Spirit is the essential condition for the existence of sacrament and for the sacramental presence of the Lord.

This consideration, too, helps to throw light on the “spiritual” ministry in the Church and its place in theology, which tradition has defined with the term *successio apostolica*. “Apostolic succession” means precisely the opposite of what it might appear to mean: It does not mean that we become, as it were, independent of the Spirit through the continuous chain of succession. The bond with the line of succession means quite the reverse: it means that the sacramental ministry is never ours to dispose of, but must be given each time by the Spirit. For it is the spirit-sacrament we can neither create nor institute ourselves. Professional expertise, functional skill, is not in itself sufficient for this: the Lord’s gift is necessary. In the Sacrament, in the Church’s vicarious [*stellvertretenden*], symbolic action, the Lord has reserved for himself the permanent institution of the priestly ministry. The quite specific link between the “once” and the “always”, that holds good for the mystery of Christ as a whole, is here made visible in an exemplary way. The “always” of the sacrament, the presence in pneumatical form of the Church’s historical origin in every age, presupposes the link with the *ephapax*, with the unrepeatable event from which the Church derives her origin. This link with the origin, this stake planted in the ground of the once-only and unrepeatable event,

can never be repudiated. Never can we take refuge in a free-floating pneumatology; nor abandon the solid ground of the Incarnation, the historical action of God. But, conversely, this unrepeatabe event is communicated to us in the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Risen Lord. It does not vanish, like something dead and gone, into the forever irretrievable past, but bears in itself the power to make itself perpetually present, because Christ has passed through the “curtain, that is, through his flesh” (*Heb* 10:20) and hence made accessible to us what is eternally renewable in the unrepeatabe event. The incarnation does not stop with the historical Jesus, with his *sarx* (cf. *2 Cor* 5:16). The “historical Jesus” has eternal significance precisely because his “flesh” is transformed in the resurrection, so that he can make himself present in all places and at all times in the power of the Holy Spirit, as wonderfully shown by the farewell discourses of Jesus in *John* (cf. especially 14:28): “I go away, and I will come to you”. From this christological-pneumatological synthesis it may be inferred that a closer examination of the concept of “apostolic succession” will be of real help in resolving our problem.

### *Hierarchy and Prophecy*

Before we pursue this line of thought any further, we need to mention briefly a third interpretational model for explaining the relation between the permanent order of ecclesial life on the one hand and new irruptions of the Spirit on the other. Building on Luther’s interpretation of Scripture in terms of the dialectic of Law and Gospel, there are those who place particular stress on the dialectic between the cultic-sacerdotal aspect on the one hand and the prophetic aspect of salvation history on the other. On this reading, the movements would be ranged on the side of prophecy. This interpretation too, like the others we have considered so far, is not entirely erroneous. But it is extremely imprecise and hence unusable in this form. The problem thus raised is too complex to be dealt with in detail here. First of all, it would have to be pointed out that the Law itself has a character of

promise. Only because it has this character could it be fulfilled by Christ and, in its fulfilment, at the same time “abolished” [*aufgehoben*]. Second, the biblical prophets never meant to annul the *Torah*, but, on the contrary, to defend it against abuses by vindicating its true meaning. Third, it is important to stress that the prophetic mission was always entrusted to individuals, and never became fixed in a particular “class” [*Stand*]. Insofar as prophecy claimed to be a class (as was sometimes the case), it was criticised by the biblical prophets just as sharply as the “class” of priests of the Old Covenant.<sup>4</sup> Any attempt to divide the Church into two wings, into a “left” and “right”, into the prophetic class of the religious orders or the movements on the one hand, and the hierarchy on the other, can find no justification in Scripture. On the contrary: such a dualism is entirely alien to Scripture. The Church is built not dialectically, but organically. What only remains true is that there are various functions in the Church, and that God continually inspires prophetic men and women—whether they be laypeople or religious, bishops or priests—who would not derive the necessary strength in the normal course of the “institution” to make this charismatic appeal to the Church. It is quite clear, I think, that the nature and tasks of the movements cannot be interpreted from this perspective. They themselves certainly don’t understand themselves in this way.

The result of the foregoing reflections is thus unsatisfactory for the elucidation of our question, yet it is important. It suggests that no solution to our problem is to be found if we choose a dialectic of principles as our starting point. Instead of trying to resolve the question in terms of such a dialectic of principles, we should, in my view, opt for an historical approach, as befits the historical nature of the faith and of the Church.

<sup>4</sup> The classical antithesis between prophets sent by God and professional prophets is found in *Amos* 7:10–17. A similar situation is found in *1 Kings* 22 in the distinction drawn between the four hundred spurious prophets and Misaiah; and again in *Jeremiah*, e.g. 37:19. See also J. Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology: Its Role in the Light of Present Controversy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 118ff.

II. THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORY: APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION  
AND APOSTOLIC MOVEMENTS

*Universal and local ministries*

Let us therefore pose the question: What does the origin of the Church look like? Anyone who has even a modest knowledge of the discussions about the nascent Church, from the form of which all Christian churches and communities seek to derive their justification, will also know what a seemingly hopeless enterprise it is to expect any such historical enquiry to yield tangible results. If, in spite of that, I risk trying to find a solution from this viewpoint, I do so with the presupposition of the Catholic view of the Church and her origin. This view, while offering a solid framework, also leaves open areas for further reflection which are far from having been exhausted. There is no doubt that, from Pentecost on, the immediate bearers of Christ's mission were the Twelve, who would soon after appear under the name of "apostles". To them was entrusted the task of taking Christ's message "to the end of the earth" (*Acts* 1:8), to go out to all nations and to make disciples of all men (cf. *Mt* 28:19). The territory assigned to them for this mission was the whole world. Without being restricted to any one place, they served to build up the one body of Christ, the one people of God, the one Church of Christ. The apostles were not bishops of particular local churches: they were, in the full sense of the term, "apostles" and as such assigned to the whole world and to the whole Church which was to be built up in it: the universal Church thus preceded the local Churches, which arose as its concrete realisations.<sup>5</sup> To put it even more clearly and

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1992), no. 9; see also my short introduction to this document, in *Lettera "Communio notio" su alcuni aspetti della Chiesa intesa come comunione* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 8ff. I have presented the relations between universal Church and local Churches in greater detail in my little book: *Called to Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), esp. 43f. and 75–103. The fact that the one Church, the one Bride of Christ, by whom the legacy of the people of Israel, "daughter" and "bride" of Zion, is prolonged, takes precedence over the empirical concretization of the people of God in the

unequivocally, Paul was never, nor did he ever wish to be, the bishop of a particular place. The only division of labour that existed at the beginning was the one described by Paul in the *Letter to the Galatians* (cf. 2:9): We—Barnabas and I—for the gentiles, you—Peter, James and Cephas—for the Jews. And even this initial division of the mission field was soon superseded. Peter and John recognised that they too had been sent to the gentiles, and lost little time in crossing the frontiers of Israel. James, the Lord's brother, who became a kind of primate of the Jewish church after the year 42, was not an apostle.

Without going into further detail, we can say that the apostolic ministry is an universal ministry, assigned to the whole of humanity and thus to the one Church as a whole. It was the missionary activity of the apostles that gave rise to the local Churches, which now needed leaders to assume responsibility for them. It was the duty of these leaders to guarantee unity of faith with the whole Church, to develop the life within the local Churches and to keep their communities open, so that they might continue to grow and be able to bestow the gift of the Gospel on those of their fellow citizens who did not yet believe. This ministry at the level of the local Church, which at the beginning appeared under a variety of different names, slowly acquired a fixed and homogeneous form. Two orders thus quite clearly co-existed side by side in the nascent Church. There was of course a certain fluidity between them, but they can be quite clearly distinguished: on the one hand, the services of the local Church, which gradually assumed permanent forms; and on the other, the apostolic ministry, which very soon ceased to be restricted to the Twelve (cf. *Eph* 17: 4,10). Two concepts of "apostle" can be quite clearly distinguished in Paul. On the one hand, he stresses the uniqueness of his apostolate, which rested on his encounter with the risen Lord and so placed him on a level with the Twelve. On the other hand, he understood "apostle" as an office

local Churches is so evident in Scripture and in the Fathers that it is hard for me to understand the often-repeated objections to this affirmation. It is enough to re-read Lubac's *Catholicisme* (1938) or his *Méditation sur l'Église*, 3d ed. (1954), or the marvellous texts that H. RAHNER collected in his book *Mater Ecclesiae* (1944).

extending far beyond this elite, as in the *First Letter to the Corinthians* (cf. 12:28). This broader concept is also presupposed by his description of Andronicus and Junias as apostles in the *Letter to the Romans* (cf. 16:7). A similar terminology is found in the *Letter to the Ephesians* (cf. 2:20), where talk of the apostles and prophets as the foundations of the Church is clearly meant to include more than just the Twelve. The prophets, of whom the *Didache* speaks in the early years of the second century, are clearly understood as fulfilling just such a missionary, supralocal ministry. It is all the more interesting that the *Didache* says of them: “They are your high-priests”.<sup>6</sup>

We may therefore assume that the co-existence of the two types of ministry—the universal and the local—continued well into the second century, i.e. into a period when the question of the apostolic succession, and who was to represent it, was already being seriously posed. Various texts suggest that this co-existence of the two ministries was not entirely free of conflict. The *Third Letter of John* provides us with a very clear example of just such a situation of conflict. However, the more “earth’s remotest end”, or the part of it then accessible, was reached, the harder it became to continue to assign any meaningful role to the “itinerants”; it may be that abuses of their ministry concurred to their gradual disappearance. Now it was up to the local communities and their leaders, who had in the meantime acquired a very clear profile in the tripartite division of bishop, priest and deacon, to spread the faith in the territories of their respective local Churches. That at the time of the emperor Constantine Christians made up around 8% of the population of the Empire, and that even at the end of the fourth century they remained a minority, shows what an immense task this was. In this situation those who presided over the local Churches, the bishops, had to recognise that they were now the successors of the apostles and that the apostolic mission lay entirely on their shoulders. The insight that the bishops, the responsible leaders of the local Churches, were the successors of the

<sup>6</sup> *Didache* 13.3, ed. W. Rodorf and A. Tuilier, *Sources chrétiennes*, vol. 248 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 190.

apostles, was very clearly articulated by Irenaeus of Lyon in the second half of the second century. His definition of what it is that forms the essence of the episcopal ministry includes two fundamental elements:

a) Apostolic succession entails, first of all, an idea familiar to us: guaranteeing the continuity and the unity of the faith—in a continuity we call *sacramental*.

b) But apostolic succession also implies an even more concrete task, which goes beyond the administration of the local Churches: the bishops must now ensure the continuation of Jesus' mission to make all nations his disciples and to bring the Gospel to the earth's remotest end. They are, as Irenaeus forcefully underlines, responsible for ensuring that the Church does not become a kind of federation of competing local Churches, but retains her universality and unity. They must continue the universal dynamism of apostolicity.<sup>7</sup>

At the beginning of our reflections we pointed out the danger of the priestly ministry ending up by being understood in purely institutional and bureaucratic terms, and of its charismatic dimension being forgotten. But now a second danger appears: there is a danger that the ministry of the apostolic succession may wither away into a purely local ecclesial ministry, that the universality of Christ's mission may be lost from view or fade from the heart. The restlessness that impels us to bring the gift of Christ to others, may be extinguished in the stagnation of a firmly established Church. I would like to express the point in even more forcible terms: the concept of apostolic succession transcends the purely local ecclesial ministry. Apostolic succession can never be exhausted in the local Church. The universal element, the element that transcends the services to the local Churches, remains indispensable.

### *Apostolic Movements in the History of the Church*

This thesis, which anticipates my final conclusions, must now be examined in a little more depth and clothed in concrete historical flesh. It leads

<sup>7</sup> On this paragraph see Ratzinger, *Called to Communion* 83ff.

us directly to the place occupied by the movements in the Church. I said that for various reasons the ministries of the universal Church gradually disappeared in the course of the second century and were absorbed by the episcopal ministry. In many respects this was a development not only historically inevitable, but also theologically necessary; it brought to light the unity of the sacrament and the intrinsic unity of the apostolic service. But it was also—as already pointed out—a development that was not without its dangers. For this reason it was perfectly understandable that a new element should appear in the life of the Church as early as the third century. And we have no hesitation in calling this element a “movement”: monasticism. Now it might be objected that early monasticism had no apostolic and missionary character, that it was, on the contrary, a flight from the world, an escape into islands of holiness. The absence of a missionary tendency, directly aimed at the propagation of the faith throughout the world, can doubtless be ascertained in the initial stage of monasticism. The predominant impulse in Anthony, who in our eyes stands out as a clearly defined historical figure at the beginning of monasticism, was indeed the desire to live the *vita evangelica*—the desire to live the Gospel radically and in its totality.<sup>8</sup> The story of his conversion bears an astonishing resemblance to that of St. Francis of Assisi. We find in both the same impulse to take the Gospel quite literally, to follow Christ in total poverty, and to model one’s whole life on him. Anthony’s retreat into the desert was a deliberate abandonment of the firmly established structure of the local Church, a flight from a Christianity that was progressively adapting itself to the needs of secular life, in order to follow uncompromisingly in the footsteps of Christ. But this gave rise to a new spiritual fatherhood; and this spiritual fatherhood, while it had no directly missionary character, did nonetheless supplement the fatherhood of bishops and priests by the power of a wholly pneumatic life.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Athanasius of Alexandria, *Life of Anthony*, ed. J.M. Bartelink, Sources chrétiennes, vol. 400 (Paris: Cerf, 1994); in the introduction especially the section: “L’exemple de la vie évangélique et apostolique”, 52–53.

<sup>9</sup> On the theme of spiritual fatherhood I would like to refer to the perceptive little book of G. Bunge, *Geistliche Vaterschaft: Christliche Gnosis bei Evagrius Pontikos* (Regensburg, 1988).

In the works of Basil, who gave Eastern monasticism its permanent form, we see very clearly the same problems that many movements are having to face today. He had utterly no intention of creating a separate institution alongside that of the normal Church. The first and, in the strict sense, only rule he ever wrote was not conceived—as Balthasar puts it—as the rule of a religious order, but as an ecclesial rule: his “*Enchiridion* (or manual) of the committed Christian”.<sup>10</sup> Yet the same is true of the origin of almost all movements, not least those in our century: what they seek is not a community apart, but an integral form of Christianity, a Church that is obedient to the Gospel and that lives by it. Basil, who had first been a monk, accepted the episcopal office and thus powerfully underlined in his own life the charismatic character of the episcopal ministry, the inner unity of the Church lived by the bishop in his personal life. Basil, like today’s movements, was obliged to admit that the movement to follow Christ in an uncompromising fashion cannot be totally merged with the local Church. In a second draft of a rule, which Gribomont calls the small *Asketikon*, Basil conceives of movement as a “transitional form between a group of committed Christians open to the Church as a whole and a self-organising and self-institutionalising monastic order”.<sup>11</sup> The monastic community that Basil founded is likened by Gribomont to a kind of leaven: a “small group for the vitalisation of the whole”; he does not hesitate to call Basil “the founding father not only of the teaching and hospital orders, but also of the new communities without vows”.<sup>12</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that the monastic movement created a new centre of life that did not abolish the local ecclesial structure of the postapostolic Church, but that did not simply coincide with it either. It

<sup>10</sup> H. U. von Balthasar, (ed.), *Die großen Ordensregeln*, 7th ed. (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1994), 47.

<sup>11</sup> Balthasar, *Die großen Ordensregeln*, 48-49. Cf. J. Gribomont, “Les Réflexes Morales de S. Basile et le Nouveau Testament”, in *Studia patristica*, ed. K. Aland, vol. 2 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 416-426.

<sup>12</sup> Balthasar, *Die großen Ordensregeln*, 57. Cf. J. Gribomont, “Obéissance et Evangile selon S. Basile le Grand”, *La Vie Spirituelle: Supplément 5* (1952): 192-215, esp. 192.

was active in it as a life-giving force, a kind of reservoir from which the local Church could draw truly spiritual clergy in whom the fusion of institution and charism was constantly renewed. That the Eastern Church should select bishops from the ranks of the monks, thus defining the episcopal ministry in a charismatic way and perpetually renewing it from its apostolic source, is significant in this regard.

If we now look at the history of the Church as a whole, it seems clear that the local Church, necessarily determined by the episcopal ministry, is the supporting structure that permanently upholds the edifice of the Church through the ages. But the history of the Church is also traversed by the successive waves of movements that renew the universalistic aspect of her apostolic mission and thus serve to foster the spiritual vitality and truth of the local Churches. After the monasticism of the Early Church I would like briefly to mention five such waves, in which the spiritual essence of what we might call *movements* emerges ever more clearly and their ecclesiological place is progressively defined.

1. The first wave was the missionary monasticism that flourished especially in the period from the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590–604) to that of Gregory II (715–731) and Gregory III (731–741). Pope Gregory the Great recognised the missionary potential in monasticism and exploited it by sending Augustine—later to become Archbishop of Canterbury—and his companions to evangelise the pagan Angles in the British Isles. The Irish mission of St. Patrick had already taken place; it too was spiritually rooted in monasticism. So monasticism now became a great missionary movement. It led to the Germanic peoples being converted to the Catholic Church, and thus laid the foundations of the new Christian Europe. Linking together East and West in the ninth century, Cyril and Methodius, brothers in the flesh and in monastic life, brought the Christian faith to the Slav world. Two of the formative elements of what it means to be a *movement* clearly emerged from all this:

a) The papacy did not create the movements, but it did become their most important backer in the structure of the Church, their main source of ecclesial support. Perhaps the deepest meaning and true nature of the

petrine office as a whole was in this way brought into view: namely, that the Bishop of Rome is not merely the bishop of a local Church; his ministry is always referred to the universal Church. It thus has, in a specific sense, an apostolic character. It must keep alive the dynamism of the Church's mission *ad extra* and *ad intra*. In the Eastern Church, the Emperor had at first claimed for himself a kind of office as guarantor of unity and universality; it was no accident that Constantine was called "bishop" *ad extra* and "equal to the apostles". But that could at best be a temporary, *ersatz* role, the danger of which is all too clear. From the mid-second century on, with the end of the old universal ministries, the claim of the popes to assume particular responsibility for this aspect of apostolic mission thus made itself ever more clearly felt. Movements that transcended the scope and structure of the local Church, not by chance, went increasingly hand in hand with the papacy.

b) The motivation of the *vita evangelica*, which we encounter already at the beginning of the monastic movement with St. Anthony of Egypt, remains decisive. But it now becomes clear that the *vita evangelica* also includes evangelization. Its poverty and freedom are conditions for a service to the Gospel that goes beyond one's own homeland and its community. At the same time this service is the goal and *raison d'être* for the *vita evangelica*, as we shall soon see in greater detail.

2. If only briefly I would like to mention the reform movement of Cluny, which was of such decisive importance in the tenth century. Once again backed by the papacy, it accomplished the emancipation of the *vita religiosa* from the feudal system and from domination by episcopal feudatories. By a process of associating the individual monasteries into a single congregation, it became the great movement of the renewal of Christian life and devotion, in which the idea of Europe took shape.<sup>13</sup> Later, in the eleventh century, the impulse of the Cluniac

<sup>13</sup> B. Senger points out the connection between the Cluniac reform and the shaping of the idea of Europe. He also emphasises the "juridical independence and help of the popes". (*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2 ed., vol. 2, [1958], 1239).

reform gave rise to the Gregorian Reform,<sup>14</sup> which rescued the papacy from the perils of worldliness and the quagmire of strife among the Roman nobility. More generally, the Gregorian Reform took up the battle for the freedom of the Church, and for the safeguard of its distinctive spiritual nature, though later this often degenerated into a power struggle between pope and emperor.

3. The spiritual force of the evangelical movement that exploded with Francis of Assisi and Dominic in the thirteenth century continues to be felt to this day. In the case of Francis, it is quite clear that he had no intention of founding a new religious order, a separate community. He simply wanted to recall the Church to the whole Gospel, to gather together the “new people”, and to renew the Church on the basis of the Gospel. The two meanings of the term “evangelical life” are inextricably intertwined: whoever lives the Gospel in poverty, celibacy, and renunciation of worldly possessions, must at the same time preach the Gospel. There was then a need for the Gospel, and Francis saw it as his essential task to proclaim, with his brothers, the simple core of the Gospel of Christ. He and his followers wanted to be evangelists. And it followed from this that the frontiers of Christendom had to be crossed and the Gospel taken to the ends of the earth.<sup>15</sup>

When conflict later broke out at the University of Paris between the mendicant orders and the secular clergy, Thomas Aquinas summed up the novelty of these two movements (the Franciscans and Dominicans)

<sup>14</sup> Even though P. Engelbert may justifiably say that “it is impossible to ascertain a direct influence of the [Cluniac reform] on the Gregorian reform” (*Lexikon für theologie und kirche*, 3d ed., vol. 2 [1994], 1236), B. Senger’s observation that the Cluniac reform helped to prepare a favourable climate for the Gregorian reform retains its validity (*Lexikon für Theologie und kirche*, 2d. ed., vol. 2 [1958], 1240).

<sup>15</sup> The edition of the *Fonti Francescane* by the Movimento Francescano (Assisi, 1977), with helpful introductions and bibliographical apparatus, remains authoritative. Instructive for the way the mendicant orders understood themselves is the brief study by A. Jotischky, “Some Mendicant Views of the Origins of the Monastic Profession”, *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19 (1998): 31–49. The author shows that the apologists of the mendicant orders appealed to the primitive Church, and especially to the desert fathers, in order to explain their origin and significance in the Church.

and, at the same time, their fidelity to their origins and to the form of the religious life expressed in them. The secular clergy, as the representatives of a narrowly closed local Church structure, opposed the evangelising movement. They only wanted to accept the Cluniac type of monasticism in its later, rigidified form: monasteries separated from the local Church, dedicated to an ascetic cloistered life, and serving contemplation alone. Such monasteries, they held, could not disturb the order of the local Church, whereas conflicts inevitably broke out wherever the new preachers appeared. Thomas Aquinas opposed this view. He emphasised that Christ himself is the model, and hence defended the superiority of the apostolic life over a purely contemplative form of life. “The active life that brings to others the truths attained through preaching and contemplation is more perfect than the exclusively contemplative life...”<sup>16</sup> Thomas understood himself as the heir of the successive revivals of the monastic life, that had all appealed to the *vita apostolica*.<sup>17</sup> But in his interpretation of the *vita apostolica*—drawn from his experience of the mendicant orders—he took an important new step. He proposed something that had indeed been actively present in the previous monastic tradition, but that has as yet been little reflected on. Everyone had appealed to the primitive Church to justify the *vita apostolica*; Augustine, for example, had based his whole monastic rule ultimately on *Acts* 4:32: “The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul...”<sup>18</sup> But to this essential blueprint for the religious life Thomas Aquinas now added another component: Jesus’ missionary instruction to the apostles in *Matthew* 10:5-15. The genuine *vita apos-*

<sup>16</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 3.40.1.2. For a stimulating and clarifying discussion of the position of St. Thomas in the controversy surrounding the mendicant orders see also J. P. Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), esp. 75–90.

<sup>17</sup> Thus, Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 89–90.

<sup>18</sup> See A. Zumkeller, “Zum geistigen Gehalt der Augustinerregel”, in Balthasar, *Die großen Ordensregeln*, 150–170. On the place of the Rule in Augustine’s life and work, see G. Vignini, *Agostino d’Ippona: L’avventura della grazia e della carità* (Cinisello Balsamo, 1998), 91–109.

*tolica*, Thomas taught, is the life that observes the teachings both of *Acts* 4 and *Matthew* 10: “The apostolic life consisted in the fact that the apostles, after they had abandoned everything, went through the world, proclaiming and preaching the Gospel, as shown by *Matthew* 10, where they are given a rule”.<sup>19</sup> *Matthew* 10 now appeared as nothing less than a religious rule, or better: the rule of life and mission that the Lord gave to the apostles is itself the permanent rule of the apostolic life, of which the Church has a perpetual need. It was on the basis of this rule that the new movement of evangelization was justified.

The Parisian controversy between the secular clergy and the representatives of the new movements, in which these texts were written, is of permanent significance. The exponents of a restricted and impoverished idea of the Church, that absolutises the structure of the local Church, could not tolerate the intrusive new class of preachers. The latter, for their part, necessarily found their support in the holder of an universal ecclesial ministry, in the Pope as guarantor of the mission and the upbuilding of the one Church. It is no surprise, therefore, that all this gave a great boost to the development of the doctrine of primacy. Beyond any colouring lent by a certain historical period, primacy was now understood anew in the light of its apostolic root.<sup>20</sup>

4. Since the question that concerns us here has to do not with Church history, but with an insight into the forms of life in the Church, I will have to limit myself to only a brief mention of the new movements of

<sup>19</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* 4, cited in Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 90.

<sup>20</sup> I first presented the connection between the mendicant controversy and the doctrine of primacy in a study that appeared in the *festschrift* for M. Schmaus (*Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, [Munich: Zink, 1957]), which I then incorporated with minor additions in my book *Das neue Volk Gottes* (Düsseldorf, 1969), 49–71. Y. CONGAR then took up my work, which had essentially been restricted to Bonaventura and his interlocutors, and expanded the argument to cover the whole field of the relevant sources (cf. “Aspects ecclésiologiques de la querelle entre mendiants et séculiers dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle et le début du XIV<sup>e</sup>”, *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 28 [1961]: 35–151).

evangelization that arose in the sixteenth century. Prominent among them were the Jesuits, who now embarked on a world-wide mission in the newly discovered lands of America, Africa and Asia, though the Dominicans and Franciscans, thanks to their enduring missionary impulse, did not lag far behind.

5. Finally, we are all familiar with the new spate of movements that began in the nineteenth century. Strictly missionary congregations now emerged. From the very outset they were aimed less at the internal renewal of the Church than at evangelization in those continents that had hardly been touched by Christianity. Conflict with the local ecclesial structures was as a result largely avoided. Indeed, a fruitful collaboration was established between them. The historical local Churches derived new strength from it, animated as they were from within by the impulse to propagate the Gospel and serve charity. An element now came powerfully to the fore, an element that had in no way been lacking in the previous movements, but that can easily be overlooked: the apostolic movement of the nineteenth century was pre-eminently a women's movement. It was characterised by a strong emphasis on *caritas*, on care for the suffering and for the poor: we know what the new women's communities have meant, and continue to mean, for the hospital apostolate and for the care of the needy. But they also assumed a very important role in the fields of schooling and education. In this way, the whole range of service to the Gospel was made present in the combination of teaching, education and charity. If we look backwards from the nineteenth century we will see that women have always played an important role in the apostolic movements. It is enough to think of the courageous women of the sixteenth century such as Mary Ward or Teresa of Avila, or, yet earlier, of the women religious of the Middle Ages such as Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine of Siena, of the women in the circle of St. Boniface, of the sisters of the Church Fathers and, finally, of the women in the letters of Paul and in the circle around Jesus himself. Though women were never bishops and priests, they did assume co-responsibility for the apostolic life and for its universal mission.

*The Breadth of the Concept of Apostolic Succession*

After this survey of the great apostolic movements in the history of the Church, we return to the thesis I already anticipated after our brief analysis of the biblical data: namely, that the concept of apostolic succession must be broadened and deepened if we wish to do justice to everything it claims to be. What does that mean? First, it means that the sacramental structure of the Church must be retained as the core of this concept. It is in this structure that the Church receives, perpetually renewed, the legacy of the apostles, the legacy of Christ. It is through the sacrament, in which Christ acts through the Holy Spirit, that the Church is distinguished from all other institutions. The sacrament means that the Church lives and is continually recreated by the Lord as “creature of the Holy Spirit”. The two inseparable components of the sacrament we mentioned above must here be kept in mind: first, the incarnational-christological component, that is, the Church’s being bound to the “once only”, the unique and unrepeatable event of the Incarnation and of the Easter events, the link with God’s action in history; second, and simultaneously, the making present of this event in the power of the Holy Spirit, hence the christological-pneumatological component, which guarantees at once the newness and the continuity of the living Church.

What has always been taught in the Church about the essence of apostolic succession, the real core of the sacramental concept of the Church, is summed up in this way. But this core risks being impoverished, indeed withering away, if the concept is applied only the structure of the local Church. The ministry of the succession of Peter breaks asunder the purely local ecclesial structure. The successor of Peter is not just the local bishop of Rome: he is bishop for the whole Church and in the whole Church. He thus embodies an essential dimension of the apostolic mission, which must never be absent from the Church. But the petrine ministry itself would in turn be misunderstood, and distorted into a monstrous exception to the rule, if we burdened its bearer

alone with the realisation of the universal dimension of the apostolic succession.<sup>21</sup>

Ministries and missions that are not tied to the local Church alone, but serve universal mission and the spreading of the Gospel, must always exist in the Church. The pope has to rely on these ministries, they on him; and in the harmonious interaction between the two kinds of mission the symphony of ecclesial life is realised. The apostolic age, which has normative value for the Church, clearly emphasised these two components as indispensable for the Church's life. The sacrament of the *Ordo*, the sacrament of succession, necessarily forms an intrinsic part of this structural form, but it is—even more than in the local Churches—surrounded by a multiplicity of services, and here the contribution made by women to the Church's apostolate cannot be ignored. In sum, we could even say that the primacy of the successor of Peter exists precisely to guarantee these essential components of the Church's life and to connect them harmoniously with the structures of the local Churches.

At this point, to avoid misunderstandings, it should be said quite clearly that the apostolic movements appear in ever new forms in history—necessarily so, because they are the Holy Spirit's answer to the ever changing situations in which the Church lives. And just as vocations to the priesthood cannot be artificially produced, cannot be established by administrative diktat, still less can movements be established and systematically promoted by ecclesiastical authority. They need to be given as a gift, and they are given as a gift. We must only be attentive to them. Using the gift of discernment, we must only learn to accept what is good in them, and discard what is bad. A retrospective glance at the history of the Church will help us to acknowledge with

<sup>21</sup> Aversion to primacy and the disappearance of the sense of the universal Church are doubtless bound up with the assumption that the concept of the universal Church is embodied by the papacy alone. The papacy, thus isolated and without any living connection with the realities of the universal Church, then appears as a scandalous monolith that disturbs the image of a Church reduced to purely local ecclesial ministries and the coexistence of local communities. But the reality of the ancient Church is not however grasped in this way.

gratitude that, through all her trials and tribulations, the Church has always succeeded in finding room for all the great new awakenings of the spirit that emerge in her midst. Nor can we overlook the succession of movements that failed or that led to painful schisms: Montanists, Cathars, Waldensians, Hussites, the Reform movement of the sixteenth century. And no doubt blame must be apportioned to both sides for the fact that in the end schism has remained.

### III. DISCERNMENTS AND CRITERIA

The last task of this paper is therefore to pose the question about the criteria for discernment. To be able to answer this question well, we would first have to define a little more precisely the term “movement”, perhaps even attempt a classification of movements. Clearly, all this is beyond the scope of the present paper. We should also beware of too strict a definition, for the Holy Spirit always has surprises in store, and only in retrospect do we recognise that, despite their great diversity, the movements do have a common essence. However, as a preliminary contribution to the clarification of terminology, I would like very briefly to distinguish three different types of movement, that can be observed at least in more recent history. I would call them *movement*, *current* and *action*. The *Liturgical movement* of the first half of this century, or the *Marian movement* that has been gaining increasing prominence in the Church since the nineteenth century, I would not characterise as movements, but as currents. These currents may subsequently have taken on concrete form in specific movements such as the Marian Congregation or the various associations of Catholic youth, but they clearly extended beyond them. Petitions, or campaigns for the collection of signatures, pressing for a change in the teaching or practice of the Church, that are becoming the custom today, cannot be described as movements, but as actions. The Franciscan awakening in the thirteenth century probably provides the clearest instance of what a movement is: movements generally derive their origin from a charismatic leader and take shape in

concrete communities, inspired by the life of their founder; they attempt to live the Gospel anew, in its totality, and recognise the Church without hesitation as the ground of their life without which they could not exist.<sup>22</sup>

This attempt to find some kind of definition of what constitutes an ecclesial movement is no doubt very unsatisfactory. But it does help us to isolate a number of criteria that may, so to say, take the place of a definition. The essential criterion has already spontaneously emerged: it is the being rooted in the faith of the Church. Whoever does not share the apostolic faith, cannot lay claim to apostolic activity. Since there is only one faith for the whole Church, and since this faith is indeed the cause of her unity, it follows that the apostolic faith is inseparable from the wish for unity, the wish to be incorporated in the living community of the whole Church, the wish, quite concretely, to stand at the side of the successors of the apostles and the successor of Peter, who bears responsibility for the harmonious interaction between local Church and universal Church as the one people of God. If the “apostolic” dimension is that in which the movements find their place in the Church, it follows that the wish to lead the *vita apostolica* must be fundamental for them in every period. Renunciation of property, celibacy, the abandonment of any attempt to impose their own image of the Church, in short, obedience in the *sequela Christi*, have been regarded throughout the ages as the essential ingredients of the apostolic life. To be sure, these cannot be indiscriminately applied to all the participants of a movement, but they do form, though in different ways, points of orientation for each of their lives. The apostolic life, in turn, is not an end in itself, but creates freedom for service. Apostolic life calls for apostolic activity. Pride of place is given—again in different ways—to the proclamation of the Gospel as the missionary element *par excellence*. In the *sequela Christi* evangelization is always primarily *evangelizare pauperibus*—preaching of the Gospel to the poor. But this never happens by word

<sup>22</sup> Helpful for a definition of the essence of movements is A. Cattaneo, “I movimenti ecclesiali: aspetti ecclesologici”, *Annales Theologici* 2 (1997): 401–427, esp. 406–409.

alone; charity, which is its inner source, at once the mainspring of its truth and its action, has to be lived and so become proclamation itself. That is why social service, in whatever form, is always linked with evangelization. All this presupposes—mainly thanks to the power and inspiration of the original charism—a deep, personal encounter with Christ. The becoming a community, and the building up of the community, does not exclude the personal dimension, indeed it demands it. Only when the person is struck and penetrated by Christ to the depths of his or her being, can others too be touched in their innermost being; only then can there be reconciliation in the Holy Spirit; only then can true community grow. Within this basic christological-pneumatological and existential structure, a great variety of accentuations and emphases can exist, in which Christianity is perpetually renewed and the spirit of the Church continually rejuvenated like the youth of the eagle (cf. *Ps* 103:5).

The dangers, but also the ways of overcoming them, that exist in the movements may at this point be glimpsed. One-sidedness is threatened by the over-accentuation of the specific mission that emerges in one particular period or through one particular charism. That the spiritual awakening that gives rise to a movement is experienced not as *one* of the many forms of Christian life, but as a response to what is perceived as the Gospel in its entirety, can lead to the movement being absolutised. It comes to be identified with the Church herself. It comes to be understood as the *one* way for everyone, though this one way can take and communicate itself in a variety of forms. It is almost inevitable, therefore, that the vitality and totality of the original charismatic experience should time and again give rise to conflicts with the local community, a conflict in which both sides may be at fault, and both may be spiritually challenged. The local Churches may have entered into a kind of conformist *modus vivendi* with the world; the salt can lose its flavour, a situation that Kierkegaard described with mordant acuity in his critique of Christianity. Even if the departure from the radical demands of the Gospel has not reached the point that provoked Kierkegaard's denunciation, the irruption of the new is nonetheless experienced as a

disruption, especially when it is accompanied, as is not seldom the case, by infantile fads and misguided absolutizations of all kinds.

Both sides must let themselves be educated by the Holy Spirit and also by their ecclesiastical superiors. Both must learn selflessness, without which no inner assent to the multiplicity of forms in which the faith is lived is possible. Both sides must learn from each other, allow themselves to be purified by each other, put up with each other, and discover how to attain those spiritual gifts of which Paul speaks in his great Hymn to Love (cf. *1 Cor* 13:4–7). The movements thus need to be reminded that—even if they have found and transmitted the totality of the faith in their way—they are a gift to the Church as a whole, and must submit to the demands of this totality, in order to be true to their own essence.<sup>23</sup> But the local Churches, too, even the bishops, must be reminded that they must avoid any uniformity of pastoral organizations and programmes. They must not turn their own pastoral plans into the criterion of what the Holy Spirit is allowed to do: an obsession with planning could render the Churches impervious to the action of the Holy Spirit, to the power of God by which they live.<sup>24</sup> Not everything should be fitted into the straightjacket of a single uniform organization; what is needed is less organization and more spirit! Above all, a concept of *communio*, in which the highest pastoral value is attached to the avoidance of conflict, should be rejected. Faith remains a sword and may demand conflict for the sake of truth and love (cf. *Mt* 10:34). A concept of Church unity in which conflicts are dismissed *a priori* as polarization, and in which internal peace is bought at the price of the renunciation of the totality of witness, would quickly prove to be illusory. What, in the last analysis, needs to be established is not a blasé attitude of intellectual superiority that immediately brands the zeal of those seized by the Holy Spirit and their uninhibited faith with the anathema of fundamentalism, and only authorises a faith in which the

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Cattaneo, “I movimenti ecclesiali”, 423–425.

<sup>24</sup> The point is insistently made by Cattaneo, “I movimenti ecclesiali”, See, 413–414 and 417.

ifs and buts are more important than the substance of what is believed. In the last analysis everyone must let himself be measured by the unity of the one Church, which remains *one* in all the local Churches and as such appears again and again in the apostolic movements. Local Churches and apostolic movements must constantly recognise and accept the simultaneous truth of two propositions: *ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia—ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia*. Primacy and episcopacy, the local ecclesial system and the apostolic movements, need each other. Primacy can only live with and through a living episcopacy, episcopacy can only preserve its dynamic and apostolic unity in subservience to primacy. Where one of the two is weakened, the Church as a whole suffers.

After all these reflections and arguments, what should remain at the end is above all a feeling of gratitude and joy. Gratitude that the Holy Spirit is quite plainly at work in the Church and is lavishing new gifts on her in our time too, gifts through which she relives the joy of her youth (cf. *Ps* 42:4 Vulgate). Gratitude for the many people, young and old, who accept God's call and joyfully enter into the service of the Gospel without looking back. Gratitude for the bishops who open themselves up to the new movements, create room for them in their local Churches, struggle patiently with them in order to overcome their one-sidedness and guide them to the right form. Above all, in this place and at this time, let us thank Pope John Paul II. He surpasses us all in his capacity for enthusiasm, in his strength of interior rejuvenation won from faith, in his discernment of spirits, in his humble and courageous struggle for the fullness of services for the sake of the Gospel, and in his unity with the bishops of the whole world: a unity based on a willingness both to listen and teach. He leads us all to Christ. Christ lives, and he sends the Holy Spirit from the Father—that is the joyful and life-giving experience that is given to us by the meeting with the ecclesial movements in our time.

## Institution and Charism

DAVID L. SCHINDLER

The problem evoked by our theme is how to affirm a distinction between institution and charism that is without opposition and a unity between them that is without confusion. The risk on the one hand is that the institutional-hierarchical Church will be simply functionalized in favour of the freedom of the Spirit “who blows where he will” (Jn 3:8)—in which case we slide into what may be called *Joachimism*<sup>1</sup> or *spiritualism*; and on the other that the freedom of the Spirit will be absorbed by ecclesiastical structures which tend as a consequence to become (mechanical) structures of (worldly) power—hence what may be called clericalism or dogmatism or integralism.

Following *Lumen Gentium* we understand *charisms* as gifts of grace of all types aimed at fostering the growth of the Christian people.<sup>2</sup> *Lumen Gentium* emphasises the distinct role of the sacraments

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<sup>1</sup> Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202), a monk who eventually broke with the Cistercian order, proclaimed the beginning of an age of the Spirit, a time of the freedom of the Spirit which was to replace the time of the letter. In this age of the Spirit, the Church’s hierarchy and sacraments would continue, but in spiritualised form. For a discussion of the various aspects of the thought of Joachim, and of Joachimism, see Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 1, *The Holy Spirit in the “Economy”* (New York: Seabury Press; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), 126–137.

<sup>2</sup> “It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the People, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (cf. *1 Cor* 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and

and the ministries of the Church in sanctification and leadership on the one hand, and of the charismatic gifts for the renewal and building up of the Church, on the other. At the same time, this document clearly affirms that these sacramental-ministerial and charismatic functions remain intrinsically related in their origin and in their end.<sup>3</sup>

Our purpose is to try to indicate the ultimate theological grounds for this simultaneous unity and distinctness between institution and charismatic gift.

Above all, we hope to accomplish two things: first, to show how this unity and distinction has its beginnings already in the trinitarian life and love of God, and hence is already part of the original meaning of holiness; and, secondly, to show how a proper understanding of this relation of unity coincident with distinction is indispensable both for the Church as the earthly sacrament of trinitarian holiness,<sup>4</sup> and in turn for the entire order of creation itself which is called to participate in this holiness.

offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written, ‘the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit’ (1 Cor 12:7)... Those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts through their office, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (cf. *Thess* 5:12 and 19–21)” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 12).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. here Albert Vanhoye’s discussion of the traditional theological distinction between *gratia gratum faciens* (“grace making gracious”) and *gratiae gratis datae* (“freely given graces”): the former sanctifying the soul, making it favourable to God, the latter being supernatural gifts (i.e., charisms) that do not of themselves have this interior effect (Aquinas) (A. Vanhoye, “Charism”, in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, ed. R. Latourelle and R. Fisichella [New York: Crossroad, 1995]). Recognizing the importance of this distinction, Vanhoye points out the dangers in absolutising it: charisms that are useful for others—for building up the Church—can also, simultaneously, deepen the spiritual life of the one to whom they are given. Indeed, they should do so. The relevant point is that, unlike the grace proper to the sacraments, the charisms do not necessarily (as in the sacramental *ex opere operato*) have the effect of sanctifying. Our argument here supports both a distinction and an intrinsic unity between the two graces as indicated by Vanhoye, from the perspective of trinitarian pneumatology.

<sup>4</sup> On the Church as the sacrament of the trinitarian *communio*, see *Lumen Gentium*, no. 1; and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 774, 775, 738, 747.

Thus we will not attempt to treat all important aspects of the relation between institution and charismatic gifts, but will focus rather on the most fundamental meaning of that relation, from the perspective of trinitarian pneumatology. And indeed, even in terms of this perspective, we can do no more here than highlight a single line of reflection.

In any case, the matters to be touched upon involve profound mysteries of faith that permit no exhaustive rationalization or systematization. Our intention is to be guided above all by the trinitarian God's own self-revelation as carried in Scripture and articulated by the Church in her Creed and main theological tradition.

## I.

It is notoriously difficult to speak about the Holy Spirit. Although the three Persons of the Trinity are all enshrouded in mystery, we nonetheless have distinct names for the Father and the Son. But the Holy Spirit? *Holy* seems hardly to qualify the third Person uniquely, in contrast to the other two; and *spirit* suggests something that is of the other two persons (as in "spirit of God").<sup>5</sup> All three divine Persons, in short, are both *holy* and *spiritual*.

In his encyclical, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, John Paul II says that, "in his intimate life, God is... the essential love shared by the three divine Persons", while the Holy Spirit is nonetheless distinguished as personal love. The Holy Spirit is the mutual love between the Father and the Son; and at the same time "the personal expression" of God's own self-giving—and hence can be called "Person-Love" or "Person-Gift".<sup>6</sup>

Without categorising the Pope's words too neatly, we can see a dual emphasis regarding the Holy Spirit: namely, that the Spirit is at once of the Father and the Son—is their mutual love—, and at the same time,

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Claude Bruaire, "L'être de l'esprit et l'Esprit Saint", *Communio*, French edition, no. 11 (January–February 1996): 70.

<sup>6</sup> Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, no. 10.

as that mutual love, is a *Person*—is the fruit of this mutual self-giving, and hence can be aptly called “Person-Gift”.

A brief outline of two “classical” trinitarian theologies as taken up in the work of contemporary theologians will help us to understand why this duality is significant.

First of all, Joseph Ratzinger, drawing on Augustine in a 1974 article on the relation between pneumatology and spirituality, develops the idea of the Holy Spirit as the *communio* of the Father and the Son. “The particularity of the Holy Spirit is... that he is what the Father and the Son have in common. His particularity is unity”. “What the Holy Spirit is and what he causes is ultimately not knowledge but love” and the characteristic activity of love is that “it creates abiding” (*Bleiben*). In light of this, it becomes clear, says Ratzinger, that the Spirit “proves itself precisely in remembering (cf. *Jn* 14:26) and unifying”. Further, Ratzinger recalls Augustine’s statement that the Holy Spirit comes from God “not as one born but as given (*non quomodo natus, sed quomodo datus*)”: if the Son is best described in terms of “generation” (*zeugen*), the Spirit is best described in terms of “giving” (*schenken*). Ratzinger concludes that “the individual gifts of the Spirit, the charisms, converge in the idea of building”—the building of the “house” or “home” that is the Church. The activity of the Spirit is “homecoming”—because, again, the characteristic activity of the Spirit is unity or love.

It is important for our discussion to stress that Ratzinger speaks explicitly about the dangers, for an adequate pneumatology, of narrowing the Spirit’s activity simply to that of unifying or building, which “can lead to overlooking the manifold activities of the Spirit in favour of a loyalty to given rules, rules which eventually can themselves be identified with the Spirit”. In this sense, Augustinian theology, though it makes an essential contribution, does not of itself “offer a universally valid pneumatology or a completely balanced teaching on Christian spirituality”.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J. Ratzinger, “Der Heilige Geist als Communio: Zum Verhältnis von Pneumatologie und Spiritualität bei Augustinus”, in *Erfahrung und Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, ed. C. Heitmann and H. Mühlen (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1974), 223–238.

Richard of Saint-Victor, in the twelfth century, founded a trinitarian theology on the idea of interpersonal love between the Father and the Son noted by Augustine. In our own time, this “personalist” perspective has been taken up and advanced in significant ways by Heribert Mühlen.<sup>8</sup> Fundamental for Mühlen is the distinction, with respect to the Father-Son relation, between the “I-Thou” and the “we” modes. The “we” transcends in a decisive way the opposition “I-Thou”. What is meant by this transcendence can be exemplified—as it was already by Bonaventure<sup>9</sup>—in the union between man and woman that results in the child who is the fruit of their mutual donation. Mühlen holds that the relation between the Father and the Son is characterised by the reciprocal exchange, I-Thou; and that the third person can be characterised at once as the “we” of the Father and the Son and as a “Thou” for both of them.

The double trinitarian figure of the Holy Spirit indicated here, says Hans Urs von Balthasar in appreciation,<sup>10</sup> can be approached by means of apparently opposed propositions: on the one hand, the Holy Spirit is the supreme (“subjective”) unity of the Father and the Son; on the other hand, the Holy Spirit is the “detached” (“objective”) fruit of this unity. The risk in emphasising the former proposition alone is that we

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person in der Trinität, bei der Inkarnation und in Gnadenbund: Ich-Du-Wir*, 2d. ed. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966); idem, “The Person of the Holy Spirit”, in *The Holy Spirit and Power: The Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, ed. K. McDonnell, O.S.B., (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 1133. On Mühlen as focused here, see Hans Urs von Balthasar’s presentation in his “The Holy Spirit as Love”, in *Creator Spirit* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 117–134, at 124–128. See also Marc Ouellet, “L’Esprit Saint dans la vie trinitaire”, *Communio*, French edition, no. 23 (January–February 1998), 39–53. Balthasar notes that Mühlen’s categories had already been used in his own way by Sergei Bulgakov (*Le Paraclet* [Paris: Aubier, 1944], 62–63, and that Mühlen introduces his categories on the basis of the phenomenological analysis undertaken by Dietrich von Hildebrand, in the latter’s *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft* (Regensburg, 1955).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the discussion and references in H. U. von Balthasar, *Theologik*, vol. 2, *Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), 154.

<sup>10</sup> For what follows, cf. Balthasar, “The Holy Spirit as Love”, 126–128; and Ouellet, “L’Esprit Saint dans la vie trinitaire”, 46–51. Our discussion of trinitarian pneumatology here and in sections II and III is also indebted to Balthasar’s other articles in *Creator Spirit*: “The Unknown Lying Beyond the Word” (105–116); “Improvisation on Spirit and Future” (135–171); and “Spirit, Love, Contemplation” (173–183).

can lose the distinctly personal character of the Holy Spirit; and in emphasising the latter that we can slip into tritheism. Attempting to integrate the two emphases, Balthasar introduces the notion of the Holy Spirit as “the Excess of love”. Drawing likewise on the familial analogy (while recognizing its limits), Balthasar notes how, in the child, the ideas of reciprocal love and of a result surpassing that love (“the excess of love”) are brought together. That is, the union between man and woman results in the child who is the fruit of their mutual donation, the child thus *transcending* the man and the woman *in* and *as* the mutuality of their relationship.

Hence, in sum, Balthasar’s way of integrating the double emphases characteristic of trinitarian reflection: the Holy Spirit, precisely in his “anonymity”—that is, as the *mutuality* of the other two Persons, Father and Son—, is the *Person* who is simultaneously the fruit of this mutuality between Father and Son and who thereby, however paradoxically, “transcends” this mutuality. Or, as Balthasar puts it, following Adrienne von Speyr, the Holy Spirit is the “Excess of Love” who *personalises* the “ever-more” of the divine essence.

It is, says Balthasar, precisely this paradox of the Spirit—anonymity (the “we” character) and sovereign freedom—that becomes clear in the *Acts of the Apostles* and in Paul.

## II.

We wish now to try to show a convergence among the foregoing ideas, relative to the paradoxical tension between the Spirit’s “disappearance” into the mutuality of Father and Son on the one hand, and the Spirit’s reality as a distinct Person (always-already) “creatively” active (“communicative”) with respect to the Father and the Son, on the other.

To do so, we turn to the distinction between the Son and the Spirit affirmed in the Creed, and indeed already recorded above in connection with Ratzinger’s discussion of Augustine. The distinction is that between the Son who is “begotten” (*unigenitum*, γεννηθέντα) or “born”

(*natum*) and the Spirit who “proceeds” (*procedentem*, ἐκπορευόμενον) or is “given” (*datum*). This trinitarian distinction of “processions” within God extends to the distinction of missions in the economy of salvation. In the words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. In their joint mission, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable. To be sure, it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him.<sup>11</sup>

Thus holiness in its primitive content is the essential love shared by the divine Persons. Nevertheless, within this shared essence, the “generated” Son is the Word and indeed visible image of love; and the “proceeding” or “spirated” Spirit is the Breath of love and indeed the unity characteristic of love, the one who also actively “communicates” this love. The Church, as the sacrament of God’s holiness, must thereby be the sign and instrument of the Word and the Breath of love, at once in the unity and in the distinctness of their respective missions.

In light of this, we can say, initially, that the Church in her institutional dimension originates in the Son of God who, as Word, becomes the visible image of the invisible God, in the womb of Mary;<sup>12</sup> and that the Church in her charismatic dimension begins with the Holy Spirit who, as the Breath of the Father, remains unseen, while nonetheless revealing the Son and causing the Son’s conception in Mary.<sup>13</sup> The Son is the one who, as Word, becomes visible—becomes thereby the “objective” incarnated presence that is the beginning of institution; and the Spirit is the one who, as Breath, becomes as it were the invisible “subject” or animator of the Son’s visibility—becomes thereby the “subjective-charismatic” communicator

<sup>11</sup> No. 689.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Ratzinger, “Der Heilige Geist als Communio”, 235: “The Church is Christ as the one who descended, a continuation of the humanity of Jesus Christ”. Cf. also Balthasar’s tracing of “the institutional form of the Church back to the form of Christ”, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, *Seeing the form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 570–604.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 485, 724.

of the Son. In sum: the Son may be said to be “person-institution”, the Spirit “person-charism”.

We wish in what follows to defend this distinction between ecclesial institution as rooted in the “objectivity” of the Son and ecclesial charism as rooted in the “subjectivity” of the Spirit. But the burden of our argument is that such a distinction is properly understood only in light of the Tri-unity of God and of the circumincessive relations among the Three Persons. As indicated above, the Son and the Holy Spirit equally share the same essential divine love, while this shared essential love is “personalised” and “missioned” differently: the Son and Spirit each do what the other does, in accord with their respective personal differences. Thus, based on the Creed, we must say that the Son is (also) “subjective”, both as receiver of the Father’s generation and as (co-)active “spirator” of the Holy Spirit, even as the Holy Spirit is (also) “objective”, that is, as the gift who becomes *effective as Spirit*, precisely in his unifying procession-mission. There is, in short, a unity-within-distinctness of “subjectivity” and “objectivity” proper to *both* the Son *and* the Spirit: there is a Word of subjectivity and objectivity, and a Spirit of subjectivity and objectivity.<sup>14</sup>

Our proposal is simply that there is a revealed order within the trinitarian unity-within-distinctness of subjectivity and objectivity, an order indicated by the Creed’s distinction between “begetting” on the one hand and “proceeding” on the other, which in turn are correlated by the *Catechism* with visibility (visible form) on the one hand and invisibility—or better, “anonymity” (“a-onyma”: what is without a name)—on the other. The Son, as the begotten Word, is properly

<sup>14</sup> Cf. in this connection Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, 195-196: “The Holy Spirit is... *both* the Spirit of God’s objective revelation in Christ and of the objectification of the existential Christ-form in the form of the Church—her offices, charisma and sacraments—and the Spirit of Christian subjectivity as faith, hope and love...” On the Spirit as both “subjective” and “objective”, see the discussion in *Theologik*, vol. 3, *Der Geist der Wahrheit* (Basel: Johannes Verlag, 1987), 282-375. Failure to see that both the Son and the Spirit are both “subjective” and “objective” (albeit in a different order) will leave us in the end with a dualism—or relation of mere juxtaposition-between institution and charism in the Church, which is exactly the source of the problems of Joachimism and clericalism.

“objective” and hence “visible” as “form”; and the Spirit, as the Breath “proceeding from”, is properly the “subjective” unity between the Father and Son, and as such remains “anonymous” even in his character as the “objective” fruit of that unity—anonymous, that is, by way of a presence that is precisely “excessive”, lying “beyond” the visible Word.

Our proposal, then, is that this (circumincessive) order of subjectivity and objectivity in the life of the Trinity provides the ultimate ground for the distinction within unity between charism and institution in the Church. But, to see the full significance of this, we need now to describe more precisely the mission of the Spirit, relative to the mission of the Word.

### III.

In the sixteenth chapter of John, we find the following passage:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you (*Jn* 16:13–15; cf. also *Jn* 15: 26–27).

In the third chapter of John, we find a different emphasis:

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (*Jn* 3:8; cf. also *1 Cor* 12:11).

Thus the Spirit is in one sense pure relation, pure reference to another; and at the same time the Spirit is clearly a free subject who blows where he pleases. In more technical theological language, the I-Thou relation between the Father and the Son produces a “we” that is the mutuality—or *communio*—of the Father and Son even as the “we” is also a “thou” who transcends the Father and the Son—in the way explained above.

On the one hand, then, the Spirit does not speak on his own authority, but he will speak what he hears. He glorifies, not himself, but the Son and, via the Son, also the Father. The Spirit demonstrates, not himself, but the truth of the Son and the Father. Again, in more technical language, the “subjective” Spirit is intrinsically ordered to the “objective” Other—to the “objectification”, as it were, of the Word of the Father.

On the other hand, the Spirit’s very activity of witnessing to the Father and the Son—hence the “anonymity” of the Spirit—manifests the highest personal life, freedom, and creative movement. The Spirit is not a determined outcome, something that reduces back to the relation out of which he emerges. On the contrary, the Spirit, who is (objective) fruit as (subjective) unity or mutuality, is the absolute Subject who blows where he pleases: it is his nature, as the “excess of love”, to “exceed” the Word.

Once again, the trinitarian context of all this must be kept clearly in mind: it is not as though the Spirit’s “creative” activity comes (simply) from “outside” the Son (and the Father), and thus at the expense of the Spirit’s unity with the Son. On the contrary, as Scripture says, the Spirit “searches the depths of God”:<sup>15</sup> the Spirit’s “creativity” is of the Son (and the Father).<sup>16</sup> There is in God, therefore, if we may so speak, a doubly creative infinity: a creative infinity of word (visible form) coincident with a creative infinity of love (“anonymous” movement, at once vivifying and “dispersing”). The “newness” or “excess” effected by the Spirit, therefore, is not to be opposed to a (putative) lack of “newness” in the Son or Word himself. On the contrary, the Spirit “exceeds” the Son only in the way in which Love “exceeds” its own Word—that is, as an “excess” that expresses at once the *unity* of Love and Word.

Paul’s statement in *Corinthians* helps to summarise the paradox of our argument: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 *Cor* 3:17). That is, the Spirit is at once *of* the Lord, and is *free*: where the Spirit is unified with and refers to the Lord, there is personal freedom

<sup>15</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dominum et vivificantem*, no. 10; 1 *Cor* 2:10.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Balthasar, “The Unknown Lying Beyond the Word”, 113–114.

and creativity. There is no direct inverse relation between listening and unity, on the one hand, and creativity, on the other. Unity is the anterior condition for creativity even as the creativity emergent from unity is truly creative. The Spirit witnesses to the fact that, in God, receptivity-unity itself is creative; that, in God, subjectivity “objectifies” first, not the self but the Other—or better, objectifies the self only in and with, and in service to, the Other.

To be sure, all of our language here limps badly: we are speaking of a trinitarian life which remains essentially mysterious. Nevertheless, we do have God’s own self-revelation in Jesus Christ and the Gospel; and our purpose has been merely to suggest an ordering of the missions of the Spirit and the Son in light of this revelation, as interpreted in the Creed and the main theological tradition.

Assuming that the Church, as the earthly icon of trinitarian holiness—of the divine *communio personarum*—extends into space and time (sacramentally) these distinct but united missions of the Spirit and the Son, our question now is how the content and relation of these missions as just described determine the respectively charismatic and institutional meaning of the Church.

#### IV.

The *Catechism* states: “The mission of the Holy Spirit is always conjoined and ordered to that of the Son. The Holy Spirit, ‘the Lord, the giver of Life’, is sent to sanctify the womb of the Virgin Mary and divinely fecundate it, causing her to conceive the eternal Son of the Father in a humanity drawn from her own”.<sup>17</sup>

In light of this text, we can say that the distinct but united missions of the Spirit and the Word, and hence the original meaning of charism and institution, are disclosed in an archetypal way in terms of Mary’s relation to Christ.

<sup>17</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 485.

Thus Mary's "defining" act, by virtue of the "overshadowing" of the Holy Spirit, is a receptive (not passive) act which simultaneously unites her with God and enables God to become fruitful in her. Mary listens and, in the unity consequent upon (albeit coincident with) her listening, she becomes as it were "(co-)creative" of the divine Other, the Son of God himself: she becomes the *theotokos*. Mary thereby *magnifies* the Lord: first in the sense that, in her and by God's initiative, the Son of God himself is now ("newly") magnified to the world; but also in the sense that *Mary herself* is now magnified, albeit in and with—in reference to—the Son: for she has now become what she was not before, namely the Mother of God, whom all ages will call "blessed".

What we wish to suggest is that the *fiat*, *magnificat*, and *theotokos* follow in a creaturely-analogous way—hence at an infinite distance—an order proper to trinitarian life and love itself. That is, under the power of the Holy Spirit, there is in Mary a receptive listening that is simultaneously creative; she is creative in her union with and her testifying to the divine Other. Mary is a subject whose "subjectivity" consists "first" in its reference or obedience to the "objective" Other, whose "subjectivity" thereby consists in making a home for the Other, a "subjectivity", in short, that itself becomes "objective" only in and with the "objective" Word, even as Mary herself thereby becomes "objectively" creative in her own way.

Our suggestion, in other words, is that Mary's *fiat* and *magnificat*, under the power of the Holy Spirit, disclose the original meaning of the (subjective) charismatic Church: the Church is authentically charismatic-spiritual only insofar as her creative activity (*magnificat*) is anteriorly receptive and *communio*-building (*fiat*), and insofar as her subjectivity is ordered anteriorly toward, by, and from the (objective) Incarnate Word (cf. the *theotokos*)—although it is important to emphasise again that the charismatic Church is truly creative in her receptive-unifying activity, and really does realise a creative "objectivity" in and with the objectivity of the Incarnate Word.

Further, then, as the above already indicates, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word born of the original charismatic activity of Mary under

the power of the Holy Spirit, constitutes the original meaning of the institutional Church—which we may call the petrine Church. The Church is thus petrine in her nature as the objective sacrament, and in this sense “institutionalization”, of God’s Word. The sacramentality of the petrine Church means, not that the Church is identical to the Son, but that the Son is “infallibly” present in her by the power of the Holy Spirit; that the Church is therefore “infallibly” the sign and instrument of the Son’s presence in the Spirit, despite the fact that the Son of God present in the Church is also the Risen Son who transcends her, and despite the reality of sin in all members of the Church, including the representative of Peter—and here we must always remember that Peter himself denied Christ three times and that his fidelity was finally secured only in the precious blood of Christ, the lamb without spot or stain (cf. *1 Pet* 1:19). The hierarchical nature of the petrine Church derives from the Church’s sacramental nature, which signifies the Church’s origin and continuing existence in the Word of God always-already communicated by the Holy Spirit, hence always-already “from above”.

This objective sacramental presence of God in the Church which we are terming the petrine dimension, in sum, is expressed in hierarchical office and in the seven sacraments, including the ordained ministry.

The petrine and marian dimensions of the Church thus have their origin in the united but distinct missions of the Word and the Spirit, in the trinitarian way qualified earlier. The petrine dimension properly indicates the “objectivity” of holiness (person-institution); the marian dimension, the “subjectivity” of holiness (person-charism). But the crucial point is that these objective and subjective holinesses are (are intended to be) “circumincessive”, in the ordered way revealed in the Trinity itself: objective (sacramental) holiness always-already presupposes the “subject(ivity)” in which it is received and as it were is brought to fulfilment; and subjective holiness is always-already (meant to be) ordered from, toward, and by the “objective” (sacramental) Other. It is in this way that we have a unity without confusion, and a

distinction without separation, between the petrine-institutional and the marian-charismatic dimensions of the Church.<sup>18</sup>

The *Catechism*, in fact, says that the marian dimension of the Church, even if it intrinsically ordered to the petrine, precedes it in the order of holiness.<sup>19</sup> There is thus a mutual if asymmetrical priority of the marian and the petrine: obedient listening and abiding are “first” (*fiat*), but these themselves presuppose (in a different order) the primacy of the objective Word (sacramental-hierarchical office) to whom one is obedient and with whom one abides, even as, out of this obedience and unity—that is, *coincident with* this obedience and unity and *conditional upon* them—emerges the “excess” of an ever-new creative spirit (*magnificat*: an ever-new magnification of the Lord).

## V.

We can clarify further this all-too-brief and schematic presentation of the relation between the charismatic and the institutional nature of the Church by recalling now the errors identified at the outset as Joachimism, which emphasises one-sidedly the charismatic nature of the Church, and clericalism, which emphasises one-sidedly the institutional nature of the Church. Both errors, albeit from opposite directions, miss the paradoxical unity coincident with distinction between subjective and objective holiness, between the marian and the petrine dimensions of the Church, and, ultimately, between the missions of the Spirit and the Son. Hence it is not simply that Joachimism lacks a proper sense of the objective, the petrine, or the christological, on the one hand, and clericalism a proper sense of the subjective, the marian, and/or the pneumatological, on the other. Rather, both lack a proper sense of both, differently.

One might say, in a word, that both Joachimism and clericalism fail to understand sufficiently that the Church is an essentially tri-personal

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Balthasar, *Theologik*, vol. 3, 285–293.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 773.

event:<sup>20</sup> a tri-personal event, that is, which includes an ordered circum-incession of objectivity (Word-institution) and subjectivity (Spirit-charism). From opposite directions, they both fail to integrate the simultaneously objective and subjective meaning of the divine persons whose missions, disclosed archetypically through Peter and Mary, constitute the primitive reality of the Church.

### *Joachimism*

The problem with the Joachimite or “spiritualist” error in all of its stripes, therefore, is that it overlooks how the creativity of the Spirit presupposes the Spirit’s receptive-unifying activity in relation to the Word (and the Father), an activity which entails the Spirit’s always abiding with the Word. Joachimism misses the archetypically marian nature of charismatic activity: misses the inner ordination of ecclesial subjectivity to (and from) the objective sacramental-hierarchical Other (Word).

Thus, on the one hand, obedience and receptivity are confused with simple passivity, and the unity consequent upon these with “conformism”. To be sure, given current cultural tendencies, we need to say much more in terms of how the receptive-obedient is to be distinguished from what is merely passive or repressive. However, it suffices for the present context only to note that the disposition to understand receptive relation to and unity with the Other, and subordination of one’s subjectivity to the objective presence of the Other, as in principle defects rather than “perfections”, already betrays an insufficiently marian and trinitarian conception of spiritual activity.

On the other hand, the creativity of the Spirit is construed as a kind of “excess” coming somehow from *outside* the Spirit’s unity with the

<sup>20</sup> Cf. John Paul II’s description of the Church as “the realization in time and space of the Father’s sending of his Son in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Message for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, 27 May 1998).

sacramental-objective (infallible) Word, hence as a (simple) *addition* to this Word. Again, in saying this, we do not suppose that everything the petrine Church says shares equally in the objective holiness, hence infallibility, of the Word. Given an authentic sense of the Church as sacrament, we merely presuppose that what is deepest and most central in the Church's tradition—as expressed, for example, in the Creed and in magisterial teaching—shares in this infallibility. However “partial” (“finite”) or “scandalously particular” are the doctrinal formulations of the Creed and the Magisterium, these formulations participate in the Church's nature as the infallible sign and instrument of the “subsistent”<sup>21</sup> presence of the Word, by and in the Holy Spirit. It follows that any “excess” introduced by the charismatic-pneumatological Church with respect to the Creed and the Magisterium can emerge only from within anterior obedience to and unity with these. Creative developments of doctrine, given a truly sacramental sense of the Church, can be creative developments only of the objective christological form “institutionalized” in the Creed and the Magisterium. That there can be such developments of doctrine—developments, that is, which are faithful to prior magisterial statements even as they draw out genuinely new and surprising meanings from these statements<sup>22</sup>—has been shown time and again in the history of the Church.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Newman's appeal to the analogy of an organism is helpful here: as he makes clear with reference, for example, to the acorn which develops into an oak tree, a truly organic development (real continuity) is consistent with the emergence of what is surprisingly new (real discontinuity): cf. his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Newman's appeal to the organic, I believe, implies just the trinitarian-marian sense of development indicated in our argument: fidelity-unity giving rise to genuine, even radical, difference.

<sup>23</sup> To take but one example: note how the notion of “person” has been, and continues to be, so surprisingly and richly developed, precisely by virtue of fidelity to the Church's worship as articulated in the Creed and the Councils (e.g., Nicaea and Chalcedon and so on): in terms of disclosing a direct rather than inverse relation between other-relatedness and identity in the constitution of the human person. Pope John Paul II's development of the *communio personarum* as the heart of the Council's ecclesiology, and of the man-woman relationship as the privileged “instance” of the *communio personarum* in the order of creation, provide the occasion now for deepening further the other-relatedness and identity-in-differ-

A particularly acute form of Joachimism today, with its two tendencies as noted here, lies in the phenomenon of so-called “dissent” in the Church. But our concern here, in light of what has been written, is only to note how dissent presupposes a subjectivist—which is to say, here, precisely an “un-marian” and “un-trinitarian”—notion of experience. The “creativity” implied in dissent, in other words, presupposes at once an insufficiently trinitarian sense of the Spirit and an insufficiently marian sense of charism.

### *Clericalism*

Clericalism, as the obverse of Joachimism, is defined most properly in terms of its insufficiently trinitarian understanding of hierarchical office and ministry and of sacramental life. It consists in a failure to integrate objective holiness, the petrine Church, and christology on the one hand, into subjective holiness, the marian Church, and pneumatology, on the other.

Clericalism can thus be said to mechanise rather than personalise Church institutions, by virtue of its failure to form these institutions adequately in terms of the spirit of trinitarian-marian love.

The manifestations of clericalism in the Church are well-known: a static and lifeless conception of dogmatic truth, a reliance on power mechanisms, more or less subtle, in the exercise of authority, a depreciation of whatever in the Church lacks a petrine form—the most obvious example being depreciation of the laity relative to the clergy—and so on. These errors of clericalism especially in the modern life of the Church have been amply documented, and we need not rehearse them here. Instead we wish to call attention first to a prevalent confusion in the matter of clericalism, and then to what appears to be the most serious form of clericalism still alive today.

ence that make up the reality of the human person. It seems to me that the Pope’s judgement regarding the non-ordination of women needs to be seen in this light: that is, as a judgement implying new and surprising developments regarding the positive meaning of the identity-in-difference of persons made in the image of the trinitarian identity-in-difference.

First, the confusion. In the present climate, any objective sacramentality, and any objective teaching authority or truth, are often taken *ipso facto* to be oppressive—or clericalist. But such a tendency to confuse sacramentality, teaching office, and truth as such with clericalism already signifies a failure to grasp that the objectivity of these originates within the personal missions of the Triune God himself. Such a tendency, in other words, itself presupposes, albeit unconsciously and from the opposite direction, exactly the “un-trinitarian” disjunction between objectivity and subjectivity, the petrine and the marian, and Word and Spirit that gives rise in the first place to the very clericalism which would (otherwise) be opposed.

It should be pointed out here, therefore, that it does not suffice as a truly Catholic response, in countering such a confusion regarding teaching office and truth, merely to re-assert in turn the objectivity of these: merely to insist, in other words, on the infallibility of petrine dogma and the absolute character of truth. On the contrary, if the clericalist version of infallibility and absolute truth is to be overcome, care must be taken to show how the sacramental objectivity implied in these is a matter not of mechanical power but of personal—ultimately trinitarian and marian—relationship. That this is so is clear above all from the great text of *John* 8:31: “If you abide in my word, ... you will know the truth”. In other words, consistent with what we have repeatedly stated, there is no genuine objectivity that does not finally presuppose the contemplative “abiding in” characteristic of the Spirit and, in turn, of Mary.

Ecclesial responses to subjectivism and relativism, in short, remain inadequate—clericalist—insofar as they do not become personalist in this spiritual-marian sense.

Secondly, although the “old” clericalism of static truth and ready exercise of (worldly) power may have largely disappeared, at least in its more overt forms, there has emerged in its place what may be called a “new” clericalism. This new clericalism, however much it has been shorn of the “top-heaviness” of the old, continues to conflate the Church’s pastoral mission too readily with an exercise in political man-

agement. Thus we have the growing dependence of the local churches on corporate management, on governance by expertise. What I am referring to here is the management of parishes increasingly by committees of professionals; the quick and pervasive reliance on new informational technologies; the multiplication of projects and organised “ministries”; and so on.<sup>24</sup>

There is of course a legitimate and indeed necessary place for all of this in the Church. The point is that the removal of the “top-heaviness” of the old clericalism does not of itself suffice to go to clericalism’s root, which lies in the failure to integrate whatever has form or structure—that is, truth and institutions but also technologies and techniques and procedures—, into the Spirit of trinitarian life, or again into the marian subjectivity of ecclesial life. The error of clericalism stems, not from its claim of an objectivity that is “from above”, but from its defence of an objectivity which, lacking the genuine inferiority of Christian (spiritual-trinitarian and marian) love, becomes *ipso facto* a mechanical exercise in (worldly) power. Such power remains oppressive, in other words, even if it is now exercised democratically and non-hierarchically, as it were, by cadres of “techno-urban” elites.<sup>25</sup> Just as in the older clericalism, the pastoral mission of the Church becomes a matter of political management more than of genuinely trinitarian-marian transformation.

The point here can be summarised in the trenchant words of the French Catholic writer Georges Bernanos, who said that “intellectuals should be considered imbeciles until they prove the contrary”.<sup>26</sup> What he meant, to place this in our own context, was that we should not

<sup>24</sup> For further discussions of the “new clericalism” described here, see the writings especially of Charles Péguy and Georges Bernanos.

<sup>25</sup> See the sharp description by Eugene McCarragher, “Smile, When You Say Laity’: The Hidden Triumph of the Consumer Ethos”, *Commonweal*, 12 September 1997, 21–25; and the symposium in response to McCarragher, “Smile, When You Say Starbucks”, *Commonweal*, 21 November 1997, 12–19. McCarragher, however, does not describe the new phenomenon of what he calls the “Church Mellow” in terms of clericalism, as we have done.

<sup>26</sup> *La France contre les Robots* (Paris: Laffont, 1947), 205. See the discussion in H. U. von Balthasar, *Bernanos: An Ecclesial Existence* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 358–368.

entrust the mission of the Church to those in our contemporary culture—and their name is legion—who would reduce “ministry” to various forms of political-technical professional expertise, while at the same time confusing such expertise with the wisdom of the Gospel—with the wisdom, that is to say, that can come only through imaging the Word in the contemplative subjectivity of the Spirit.

*Joachimism and clericalism and the Church’s missionary task*

Needless to say, the errors we have identified here as Joachimism and clericalism have borne their fruit in certain erroneous notions of the Church’s missionary task in the decades since the Council.

Thus, for example, a “Joachimist” notion of mission appeals to a dialogue rooted in a kind of “formless” love or authentic human experience, to which the christological and ecclesiological form then becomes a later—hence more or less arbitrary—addition.<sup>27</sup> And a “clericalist” notion of mission tends to conflate social justice too simply with issues concerning the (external) form of economic and political institutions, and, accordingly, to grant the wrong sort of priority to economic and political activity in the securing of justice.

It is beyond our purposes to show how these “Joachimist” and “clericalist” notions of the Church’s “worldly” mission can each take both “liberationist” and “neo-liberal”—or again socialist and capitalist—forms. It suffices only to note how liberationist and neo-liberal conceptions of the Church’s missionary task, however opposed in other significant respects, share a lack of trinitarian-marian integration.

VI.

Our discussion of institution and charism leads in the end also to a distinctive conception of the world itself. If the distinct-but-united mis-

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion in John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 17.

sions of the personal Word and Spirit of the Father reveal the original meaning of holiness; if these missions indicate the (analogical) beginnings of the institutional and charismatic dimensions of the Church that is the sacrament of holiness; and if all creatures are called to participate in holiness;<sup>28</sup> then it follows that the world itself has its deepest meaning in terms of these distinct-but-united divine missions. In other words, the distinct-but-united (institutional) Word and (charismatic) Spirit of the Father, revealed sacramentally-archetypically through Peter and Mary, become the key to understanding the *form and spirit* of the world itself.<sup>29</sup>

Here, then, we see the fundamental import of the universal call to holiness affirmed at the Council: all of creation, through the Church and via human activity, is meant to be integrated in terms of the “circumcensive” missions of the Word and the Spirit-missions which themselves generate the analogical structure of being that respects the “legitimate autonomy” of the creature and every conceivable creaturely difference.<sup>30</sup> All (objective) form or structure of whatever kind—mean-

<sup>28</sup> On the cosmic dimension of holiness, see John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 50. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communio* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, [1992]), no. 9: “According to the Fathers, ontologically, the Church-mystery, the Church that is one and unique, precedes creation”.

<sup>29</sup> To preclude misunderstanding, it bears emphasising that the suggestion that the world needs somehow to be integrated through petrine institutions does not imply integration in a juridical-political sense. On the contrary, such an interpretation already conflates the hierarchical nature of petrine authority-hierarchical, that is, because such authority sacramentally presents Christ—with power in a political-worldly sense: which is precisely the mistake of clericalism. Furthermore, the truth defended by petrine authority, which is finally the truth of the Risen Christ, just so far itself “transcends” the earthly petrine Church: and in this sense even the Church, like the world, points beyond herself to what can be fully realised only in the next world. Our suggestion, in short, allows (indeed demands) an enduring distinction between petrine authority and worldly authority as political powers, even as it insists on the dynamic ordering of worldly authority toward integration in terms of the love sacramentally embodied in Peter (cf. here Vatican Council II, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 1 and 2; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2104 and 2105, on the moral duty of societies towards religious truth).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the “iusta” or “legitima autonomia” of *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 36 and 59.

ing, truth, institutions, technologies, techniques, physical-bodily anatomy, and so on—is meant to become a (creative-analogical) image of the Word, in the inferiority of the Spirit; all (subjective-charismatic) “spirit”—movement, life, freedom—is meant to receive and be at home with God, and thereby to generate ever-new images of his Word.

But if this accurately describes the world as it is meant to be, we have also the hermeneutical key for interpreting our current cultural situation. Joachimism and clericalism have worldly analogues, and these analogues point us toward the heart of the contemporary cultural crisis which Pope John Paul II has described in *Evangelium Vitae* as a struggle between the “culture of life” and the “culture of death”.<sup>31</sup> These analogues are aptly termed “subjectivism” (or “relativism”) on the one hand and “mechanism” (or “objectivism”) on the other. Consistent with what we said earlier, subjectivism and mechanism are both properly defined—albeit from opposite directions—in terms of an “un-trinitarian” dualism of subject(-ivity) and object(-ivity). Subjectivism is indicated in the wrongly subject-centred view of “rights” exemplified by the widespread phenomenon of legalised abortion, or again in the priority of self-interest in the exercise of political power and in the mechanisms of the free market. Objectivism is indicated in a certain dominant conception of “critical” methodologies in the academic disciplines, with their implied view of knowledge as a matter primarily of “power”; in the tendency to collapse public adjudication of moral issues into matters simply of political-judicial procedure (hence “proceduralism”); in the tendency of affluent countries to rely disproportionately on technology (e.g. techniques and chemicals) to solve social problems (cf. contraception and—eventually—the cloning of humans); in the prevalent confusion, intensified in a computer age, of knowledge with information.

Recognizing the complexity of all these issues, our concluding suggestion is simply that we can retrieve the goodness and the truth carried in the subjective spirit and the objective form of our age as these latter

<sup>31</sup> Cf. nos. 18 and 24.

have been focused here only by transforming this spirit and form in light of the divine trinitarian missions. In the phrasing of St. Irenaeus: in the beginning, the Father created the world through his “two hands”, the Son and the Spirit, forming creation—as *Genesis* (1:26) puts it—, “in our image, and according to *our* likeness” (emphasis added).<sup>32</sup>

Hence, in sum, it is only by imaging the (objective-“institutional”) Word of the Father in his (subjective-“charismatic”) Spirit that each and every entity of the cosmos can realise its true nature and destiny.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Adversus Haereses* 5.1.3, ed. A. Rousseau et al., Sources chrétiennes, vol. 153 (Paris: Cerf, 1969), 29–29.

# The Ecclesial Movements, Gift of the Spirit

## *A theological reflection*

Msgr. PIERO CODA

Tackling the theme of our Congress is not easy, for at least two reasons: first, the scale, diversity and mobility typical of the ecclesial movements today; second, the lack of the necessary “historical distancing” which would permit us properly to evaluate their characteristics and implications. In spite of that, it is not only possible, but necessary to attempt an analysis of this kind, to respond to the invitation of Jesus himself, who urges us to read “the signs of the time” in order to learn how we can best situate the Church in the *kairós* of God.

An echo of this invitation of Jesus is heard in the words of John Paul II, who recently affirmed, with reference to the preparation for the Great Jubilee of the year 2000: “One of the gifts of the Spirit to our time is undoubtedly the flourishing of the ecclesial movements, which ever since the beginning of my pontificate I have continued to point out as a source of hope for the Church and for man. They ‘are a sign of the freedom of forms, in which the one Church is realised, and represent an undoubted novelty, which has still to be properly understood in all its positive efficacy for the Kingdom of God at work in the historical present’”.<sup>1</sup>

Born in 1955, a priest in the diocese of Frascati and member of the Centre for the Priesthood of the Focolari Movement, he graduated in Philosophy at the University of Turin and took his doctorate in theology at the Pontifical Lateran University, where he began to teach in 1985. Since 1993 he has been permanent lecturer in Introduction to Theology. His publications include: *Dio Uno e Trino* (1993), *L'agape come grazia e libertà* (1994), *Teologia* (1997), *L'altro di Dio. Rivelazione e kenosi in S. Bulgakov* (1998).

<sup>1</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 19,1 (1996): 1373.

John Paul II, in this as in other cases, emphasises that the ecclesial movements are aroused by the Spirit, that they represent something new both from the ecclesial and socio-cultural viewpoint, and that, just for these two reasons, they are in tune with Vatican Council II, whose teaching “is essentially pneumatological” and “contains precisely all that ‘the Spirit is saying to the churches’ (cf. *Rev* 2:29) with regard to the present phase of the history of salvation”.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the ecclesial movements as “one of the gifts of the Spirit to our time” thus means, from the theological point of view, placing the movements, on the one hand, in the perspective of the mission of the Spirit in the genesis of the Church and in the history of the Church and of humanity; and, on the other, in that of the way that the Church understands and configures herself today, in the light and by the power of the Spirit and according to the lines drawn by the teaching of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

It thus seemed to me appropriate to divide these reflections into two sections: the first devoted to the ecclesial movements in the context of the history of salvation, the second to a more systematic ecclesiological perspective.

Moreover, given that the action of the Spirit in the history of salvation and in the Church finds its full and archetypal realisation in Mary, I will conclude with a reminder of the pneumatological relation between the ecclesial movements and the “Marian profile” which today seems to be losing particular significance in the Church, but which expresses an essential theological dimension.

## I. THE ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS, GIFT OF THE SPIRIT, IN THE HORIZON OF THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

In his Encyclical Letter *Dominum et Vivificantem*, John Paul II recurs to the conciliar view of the Church, according to which she “is in Christ

<sup>2</sup> *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 26; cf. TMA 23.

as a sacrament or sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race”.<sup>3</sup> E la illustra, in riferimento all’evento di Cristo e al dono dello Spirito, in questi termini: “as a sacrament, the Church is a development from the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s ‘departure’, living by his ever new ‘coming’ by the power of the Holy Spirit, within the same mission of the Paraclete, Spirit of truth. Precisely this is the essential mystery of the Church, as the Council professes”.<sup>4</sup>

In other words: the Church, born at the foot of the Cross and manifested at Pentecost,<sup>5</sup> is the event, worked by the Spirit, of the continuous and ever new ‘coming’ of the crucified and risen Jesus in the hearts of his disciples and in their midst, gathered together in his name (cf. *Mt* 18:20).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, no. 1.

<sup>4</sup> No. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 2: “*Sancta Ecclesia, quae iam ab origine mundi praefigurata, in historia populi Israël ac foedere antiquo mirabiliter praeparata, in novissimis temporibus constituta, effuso Spiritu est manifestata*”.

<sup>6</sup> This is clearly not the place to analyse what Y. Congar has called “les implications christologiques et pneumatologiques de l’ecclésiologie de Vatican II” (cf. G. Alberigo [ed.], *Les Eglises après Vatican II* [Paris, 1981]), 117–130; See also Y. Congar *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Seabury Press; London: Geoffrey Champan, 1983). It will suffice to say that these implications need to be correctly conceived in their profound organic interrelation, and in a properly balanced trinitarian perspective: so that, if it is true that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is poured out by the Crucified and Risen Christ, it is no less true that it is precisely this Spirit that actualises Christ’s presence in the Church: exemplary, in this regard, is M. Bordoni’s book, *La cristologia nell’orizzonte dello Spirito*, (Brescia: Queriniana, 1995). Among the more recent studies in an ecclesiological perspective it will suffice to refer to H. J. Pottmeyer, “Der Heilige Geist und die Kirche: Von einer christomonistischen zu einer trinitarischen Ekklesiologie”, *TuS*, 2 (1981), 45–55; idem, “Die eine Geist als Prinzip der Einheit in Vielheit”, *Ptbl*, 5 (1985), 253–284; M. Semeraro, “Per una ecclesiologia pneumatologica. Linee e orientamenti nel magistero della Chiesa Cattolica”, *Nicolaus*, 13 (1986), 243–64; idem, “Spiritus Christi inseruit. Storia ed edito di una analogia (LG 8)”, *Lateranum*, 52 (1986), 343–398; idem, “La Chiesa sacramento di Cristo e dello Spirito”, *Lateranum*, 57 (1991), 55–70; G. L. Müller, “La comprensione trinitaria fondamentale della Chiesa nella LG”, in P. Rodriguez (ed.), *L’ecclésiologia trent’anni dopo la LG*, Roma: Armando 1995, 17–34; A. M. Triacca, “Lo Spirito Santo e la Chiesa”, *ibid.*, 113–148; P. Rodriguez, “Verso una considerazione cristologica e pneumatologica del Popolo di Dio”, *ibid.*, 149–178;

So, “while it is an historical fact that the Church came forth from the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, in a certain sense one can say that she has never left it. Spiritually the event of Pentecost does not belong only to the past: the Church is always in the Upper Room that she bears in her heart”.<sup>7</sup>

In this sense, the Church is in a perennial, though ever new pentecostal situation, thanks to which the event itself by which she is constituted and configured as such, in Jesus by work of the Holy Spirit, is actualised and transmitted effectively in time. Only thus can one understand in all its significance, for example, what John XXIII said about Vatican Council II, likening it to a “new Pentecost”.<sup>8</sup>

### *The mission of the Spirit in the genesis and life of the Church*

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, describing the pentecostal mission of the Holy Spirit as completion of the mission of the Son in carrying out the universal design of the Father, emphasises that the essential gift that the Holy Spirit transmits to believers is that of sonship of God in Christ. “And because you are sons—as St. Paul teaches with passionate certainty God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”. (*Gal* 4:6). All the other gifts that the Spirit makes to the Church as Bride of Christ are subordinated to this gift.

In this perspective, *Lumen Gentium* continues by saying that the Holy Spirit “[guides] the Church in the way of all truth and unifying her in communion and in the works of ministry, he bestows upon her varied hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs her; and he adorns her with his fruits. By the power of the Gospel he permits the

A. Barruffo, “Lo Spirito Santo nella riflessione teologica sulle strutture della Chiesa”, in G. Colzani (ed.), *Verso una nuova età dello Spirito. Filosofia – Teologia – Movimenti*, Padova: EMP 1997, 241–275.

<sup>7</sup> *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 66.

<sup>8</sup> John XXIII, Discourse to mark the conclusion of the Council’s first period, 8 December 1962, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, vol. 1 (Bologna: EDB, 1963): no. 124<sup>a</sup>.

Church to keep the freshness of youth. Constantly he renews her and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse. For the Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord: 'Come!'. Hence the universal Church is seen to be 'a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'<sup>9</sup>.

This text is pregnant in significance.<sup>10</sup> First, at the ontological level, it underlines the pneumatological source of being and acting in the Church. Second, it recalls—with a linguistic use that has a clearly scriptural basis—the plurality and diversity of the hierarchical and charismatic gifts, emphasising that they have the same origin and the same end. Third, it suggests that ecclesial life and practice, founded and expressed by the various gifts of the Spirit presuppose the unity from which they spring (the grace of Jesus Christ manifesting the *agápe* of the Father and made perpetually present by the Spirit). Fourth, it implies that these gifts are called to bear fruit in unity through charity (cf. *Eph* 4:15), by building the one Body of Christ. All this in the historical and dynamic context of a continuous process of rejuvenation and renewal, in which the Church grows and matures in her desire for perfect union with her Spouse. Lastly, the quotation from St. Cyprian, with which the above-cited passage of *Lumen Gentium* ends, does not merely represent a retrospective glance that sums up the trinitarian design of salvation, but shows how—by the gift and action of the Holy Spirit—the trinitarian love is in some way materialised and assumes form in the relations of complementarity and reciprocity between the various gifts that build up the Church, in the image and likeness, indeed by participation in the unity itself, of the triune God.

This, *inter alia*, is the significance of the fine text of Irenaeus of Lyon to which reference is made in the accompanying note to the passage of *Lumen Gentium* quoted above: “[the faith transmitted by the

<sup>9</sup> No. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Among more recent contributions, see the fine study of V. Maraldi, *Lo Spirito e la Sposa: Il ruolo ecclesiale dello Spirito Santo dal Vaticano I alla Lumen Gentium del Vaticano II* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1992).

Church] by work of the Holy Spirit, like a precious deposit contained in a valuable vase, is ever rejuvenated and also rejuvenates the vase that contains it. To the Church, in fact, was entrusted the gift of God (cf. *Jn* 4:10) like the breath that is blown into the living being shaped from the soil of the ground (cf. *Gen* 2:7), so that all her members, by participating in it, are vivified by it; and in her has been deposited the communion with Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit ... In fact, 'God has appointed, in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers' (cf. *1 Cor* 12:28) and imbued her with all the remaining operation of the Spirit (cf. *1 Cor* 12:11). [...] For where the Church is, there too is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there too are the Church and every form of grace".<sup>11</sup>

In this perspective, it may thus be affirmed that the Holy Spirit is donated and "donates himself, as the effective power of renewal and unity: where the Spirit is present, there communion arises, there humanity is gathered in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and there the Church is present: *ubi Spiritus Dei, illic Ecclesia*. On the other hand, he is present in the Church as fruit. Where the ecclesial praxis is operated *en agápe*, there he becomes (in some sense) something that previously was not there: the source of ecclesial communion in the midst of the community, the space of the shared and hence unifying action. (...) Where believers live in communion, there he becomes shared Spirit, there He is transmitted by ecclesial *communio* itself: *ubi Ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei*".<sup>12</sup>

Focusing attention on the "charismatic gifts", *Lumen Gentium* further points out: "It is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the People, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts as he wills (cf. *1 Cor* 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and

<sup>11</sup> *Adversus Haereses* 3.24.1, ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, Sources chrétiennes, vol. 211 (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 472-475.

<sup>12</sup> V. Maraldi, *Lo Spirito e la Sposa*, 342.

offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written, 'to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good' (1 Cor 12:7). Whether these charisms be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church".<sup>13</sup>

On more than one occasion, John Paul II has referred the conciliar expressions of *Lumen Gentium*<sup>14</sup> precisely to the ecclesial movements. He has affirmed, for example: "If realised in a genuine way, the new

<sup>13</sup> No. 12; On the charisms in the perspective of Vatican Council II, see: H. U. von Balthasar, "Charis und Charisma", in *Sponsa Verbi: Skizzen zur Theologie*, vol. 2 (Einsiedeln, 1971), 319–331; N. Baumert, *Gaben des Geistes Jesu: Das Charismatische in der Kirche*, (Graz 1986); G. Chantraine, "Carismi e movimenti nella Chiesa," in *I movimenti nella Chiesa negli anni '80: Atti del I Convegno Internazionale, Roma 23–27 settembre 1981*, ed. M. Camisasca and M. Vitali (Milan: Jaca Books, 1982), 146–164; F. Ciardi, *I fondatori uomini dello Spirito: Per una teologia del carisma di fondatore* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1982) D. Iturrioz, "Los carismas en la Iglesia. La doctrina carismal en la Constitución 'Lumen gentium'", *Estudios eclesiásticos* 43 (1968): 181–223; G. Rambaldi, "Carismi e laicato nella Chiesa. Teologia dei carismi, comunione e corresponsabilità dei laici nella Chiesa," *Gregorianum* 68 (1987): 57–101; idem, "Uso e significati di 'charisma' nel Vaticano II. Analisi e confronto di due prassi conciliari sui carismi," *Gregorianum*: 56 (1975): 141–162; J. Ratzinger, "Bemerkungen zur Frage der Charismen in der Kirche," in *Die Zeit Jesu: Festschrift Heinrich Schlier*, ed. G. Bornkamm (Freiburg, 1970), 257–272; J. M. Rovira Belloso, "Los carismas segun el Concilio Vaticano II", *Estudios trinitarios*, 10 (1976): 77–94; L. Sartori, "Chiesa", in *Nuovo dizionario di teologia*, ed. G. Barbaglio and S. Dianich, 6th ed. (Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni Paoline 1991), 144–168; A. Vanhoye, "Il problema biblico dei 'Carismi' dopo il Vaticano II," in *Vaticano II: bilancio e prospettive, venticinque anni dopo (1962-1987)*, ed. E. Latonrelle (Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 1988), 389–413. Reflections in tune with those of Vatican II may be found, for example, in the document on the Holy Spirit and on the catholicity of the church drawn up by the 4th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Uppsala, in Sweden, in July 1968. Here we read, *inter alia*: "The Holy Spirit ... stirs the conscience of the Church by the voice of prophets to keep her in the mercy and judgement of God; maintains the Church in communion and continuity with the people of God in all ages and places; equips the Church to accept and make use of a great variety of God's gifts bestowed upon its members for the enrichment of human life; empowers the Church in her unity to be a ferment in society, for the renewal and unity of mankind; sends men into the world equipped to prepare the way for God's rule on earth by proclaiming freedom to the captives and sight to the blind" ("The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church", in *The Uppsala Report 1968: Official Report of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Uppsala, July 4–20, 1968*, ed. N. Goodall [Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968], 13–14).

<sup>14</sup> 4 and 12.

movements of spirituality are based on these 'charismatic gifts', which, together with the 'hierarchical gifts'—i.e. the ordained ministries—form part of those gifts of the Holy Spirit with which the Church, Spouse of Christ, is adorned. Charismatic gifts and hierarchical gifts are distinct but also mutually complementary [...]. In the Church, both the institutional aspect and the charismatic aspect, both the hierarchy and the associations and movements of the faithful, are co-essential and concur to the life, renewal and sanctification [of the Church], albeit in a different way and such as to ensure reciprocal exchange and communion".<sup>15</sup>

The affirmations of the Council and of the Holy Father closely recall the Pauline text in which the Church is presented as the house of God, whose members are built "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (*Eph* 2:20).<sup>16</sup> In other words, it is built upon the apostolic institution and the prophetic charism, or more precisely—as von Balthasar writes—, given that the ministry too is born from and nourished by a charism, upon objective and subjective charism, upon objective and subjective holiness".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, 10, 1 (1987), 477-478. For all this, see the testimonies and analyses contained in the recent book of P. J. Cordes, *Segni di speranza: Movimenti e nuove realtà nella vita della Chiesa alla vigilia del Giubileo* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> H. Schlier explains: "The *apostoloi kai profetai* recur together in 3:5 and, in a series of gifts lavished by Christ in glory, in 4:1. And it is clear that St. Paul is speaking here not of the apostles in the broad sense, as, e.g. in *Didache* 11:3ff., but of the recognised authorities, of the 'holy apostles' (3:5). The *profetai* are prophets not of the Old, but of the New Testament, as they mentioned also in *1 Cor* 12:28; 14; *Acts* 8:1ff.; 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10; *Rev* 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9; *Didache* 11, 3ff.; 13:1; 15:1" (Der Brief an die Epheser: Ein kommentar [Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1957], 142). See also R. Fisichella, "Prophecy," in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, ed. R. Lotourelle and R. Fisichella (New York: Gossroad, 1994), 795: "The prophets and the prophetic charism can't be relegated hostilely only to the period of the primitive Church; they are always a constitutive part of the Church and always possess a permanent and irreplaceable significance for the church."

<sup>17</sup> H. U. von Balthasar, *Theo-drama: Theological Dramatic Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), XX; see also "I movimenti della Chiesa oggi, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 131, no. 3155 (1981): 417-428.

So, if the ministerial and sacramental gifts transmit the objectivity of the mystery of Christ to the People of God, the charismatic and prophetic ones are aimed at revealing in ever new form the acceptance of the mystery of Christ in the subjectivity of individual believers and of the Church herself. This acceptance is fundamentally expressed in three attitudes that define the relation of the Church to her Lord: the virginal submission to the gift that comes from God in Christ, the spousal communion with the Lord, the maternal fruitfulness in giving birth to new disciples and in helping believers to grow to maturity with the fullness of Christ himself (cf. *Eph* 4:13).

*The historical and ecclesial significance of the novelty of the  
“charismatic gifts”*

Something very important still remains to be said regarding this first part of our reflection. The connotation of “newness” with reference to the charismatic gifts repeatedly recurs in the writings of John Paul II. The fact is that—as *Christifideles Laici* stresses—charisms “can take a great variety of forms, both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history”.<sup>18</sup> In fact, though unpredictable and utterly gratuitous, the action of the Spirit in history aims at the progressive realization of the mystery of salvation of God, in other words, as Paul puts it: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (cf. *Col* 1:27).

There is in fact a history of charisms that is indissolubly intertwined with the history itself of the Church: not as an alternative to the exercise of the government of the Church and the apostolic-petrine ministry, but in providential synergy with it in the original actualisation of the mystery and mission of the Church according to the will of Jesus Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit.

Each of these charisms—writes H. U. von Balthasar—is like a “a bolt of lightning from the blue”, destined to illuminate a single and orig-

<sup>18</sup> No. 24.

inal point of God's will for the Church in a given time. Each manifests "a new type of conformity to Christ inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore a new illustration of how the Gospel is to be lived [...] a new interpretation of Revelation".<sup>19</sup> Such were the charismatic gifts bestowed on Basil, Benedict, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Teresa of Lisieux and Charles de Foucauld.

It is just here, moreover, that the newness typical of the charismatic gifts has its roots. The newness in question is not an absolute one: because God the Father, in giving us his only begotten Son, told us and gave us everything in Him, or rather gave us all Himself. The newness consists in the fact that the Holy Spirit from time to time—and not without a precise design of the love of the Father—emphasises, throws light on, renders operative a particular aspect of the inexhaustible mystery of Christ: an aspect that, in the logic of divine providence that guides human history, represents a superabundant reply to the demand of a particular period. And that demand is one which, in the last analysis, the Holy Spirit himself arouses, directing the inadequacies, and even the sins, of man to a virtuous end. It is just in this way that a new *kairós* is inaugurated in the history of God's coming among men in Jesus Christ. All this is a confirmation of the promise of Jesus: "when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that the will take what is mine and declare it to you" (*Jn* 16:13-15).

Though it is dependent on the fullness of truth and of grace which has already been given in its entirety in Jesus Christ (cf. *Jn* 1:17), the newness of the gift and of the annunciation of Christ that is given to the

<sup>19</sup> H. U. von Balthasar, *Two Sisters in the Spirit: Thérèse of Lisieux and Elizabeth of the Trinity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 25.

Church by the Holy Spirit, precisely because it is dispensed progressively throughout the course of history, cannot but represent a new and original growth in the way that the Church understands herself and also the way she organises herself.<sup>20</sup>

With great lucidity, K. Rahner, tackling the question of the dynamic element in the Church, thus affirmed: But the charismatic is essentially new and always surprising. To be sure it also stands in inner though hidden continuity with what came earlier in the Church and fits in with her spirit and with her institutional framework. Yet it is new and incalculable, and it is not immediately evident at first sight that everything is as it was in the enduring totality of the Church. For often it is only through what is new that it s real-

<sup>20</sup> The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* emphasises that “There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts (cf. *Lk* 2:19). It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth. Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth (*ad plenitudinem divinae veritatis*), until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her” (no. 8). Here we should note the precise expression used by *Dei Verbum* with regard to the penetration of revealed truth: it does not speak merely of an understanding and ever fuller interpretation of revealed truth, but of a process of advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, in as much as truth itself is an event that is fulfilled. G. Phillips, discussing the significance of this text during the Council, affirmed that “we cannot admit full possession of a thing by the Church without full understanding of what that thing it” (as reported by U. Betti, *La rivelazione divina nella Chiesa* [Rome: Città Nuova, 1970], 166). With regard to the first two elements cited by *Dei Verbum* as those that favour the actualising interpretation of Christian truth (study and spiritual experience), the International Theological Commission emphasised that this interpretation “is encouraged, supported and guided by the working of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the hearts of individual Christians. It takes place in the light of faith; it is borne forward by the charism and the testimony of the saints, whom the Spirit of God gives to the church at a particular time. The prophetic witness of spiritual movements as well as the insight that comes from spiritual experience on the part of lay people, who are filled with God’s Spirit (see *Dei Verbum*, 8), also from part of this context. “On the Interpretation of Dogmas,” *Origins* 20, no. 1 [1990]: 12.

ized that the range of the Church was greater from the outset than had previously been supposed. And so the charismatic feature, when it is new, and one might almost say it is only charismatic if it is so, has something shocking about it. It can be mistaken for facile enthusiasm, a hankering after change, attempted subversion, lack of feeling for tradition and the well-trying experience of the past.<sup>21</sup>

It is precisely this fact that often gives rise, in the history of the Church, to the tension between the new in the process of being born and the consolidated spiritual, cultural and institutional framework in which it takes shape. The phenomenon is, one might say, a physiological one, in which the two partners—the institution and the prophetic newness—are both called to interact in the pneumatic reciprocity by which the Church herself is formed.<sup>22</sup> Analysing the relation ordained between the various “bearers of the tradition” of the event of Christ, Pottmeyer emphasises that “the bearer of tradition becomes competent in proportion as he is converted from egoism to altruism. Through this conversion he and his witness become the sign that actualises the love of God, a sign that arouses new life, because it urges the *sequela Christi*: By this conversion he places himself at the same time among the witnessing community of the whole people of God, from whom he received the word of God and to whom alone was promised the sure guide of the Holy Spirit and the certainty of the truth. In this way, the authentic tradition takes the form of *the unification of witness and the person who bears witness within the communion of witnesses* and becomes in this way the epiphany of the kingdom of God in the midst of history”:<sup>23</sup> since a charismatic gift

<sup>21</sup> K. Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (Freiburg: Herder; London; Burns and Oates, 1964), 83.

<sup>22</sup> See H. J. Pottmeyer, “Normen, kriterien und strukturen der Überlieferung,” in *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie*, ed. W. Kern, H.J. Pottmeyer, and M. Seckler, vol. 4, traktat theologische Erkenntnislehre: Schlußteil. Reflexion auf Fundamentaltheologie (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 124-152.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-152. For a similar analysis: B. Körner, “La gnoseologia teologica alla luce di un’ontologia trinitaria,” in *Abitando la Trinità. Per un rinnovamento dell’ontologia* (ed. P. Coda and L. Zak, (Rome: Città Nuova, 1998), 79-94.

demands by definition—in the person who is its bearer and in the person who is called to evaluate its authenticity and oversee its acceptance on behalf of the ecclesial community—an acceptance, a discernment and a practice informed by the Spirit.

## II. THE ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS, GIFT OF THE SPIRIT, IN THE HORIZON OF THE SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH TODAY

That brings us to the second part of our analysis: what is the synthetic “word”, what is the specific “gift”, that the Holy Spirit intends to say or to give to the Church today, also through the movements?

To try to give some kind of provisional answers to this question, it seems to me that account should be taken of three elements.

### *Newness of the time, originality of charisms and reception of Vatican II*

The first element that needs to be taken into account is the “quality” of our time, with its appeals, its questions, its problems, its weaknesses, its hopes. The second element—a self-evident one—is the originality of the charismatic gifts that lie at the origin of the movements and the forms and fruits of the evangelical life by which they are expressed: the form in which a charism is expressed—in spite of historic conditionings and human limitations—is not accidental nor extraneous to the content of the charism itself.

In relating the first element—the historical situation—to the second—the originality of the charismatic gifts—, we have to bear in mind that they illuminate each other reciprocally, albeit in different ways: for example, it may be that a charism bestowed by God may help the Church (and, by her intermediation, also humanity) to discern the deepest significance of the needs of that particular time, which would otherwise remain indecipherable and hence unsatisfied. It may also be the case that a charism given by God only gains awareness progressively

of its mission in its contact with the urgent appeals made to it by the situation of the time in which it is placed.

But there is a third and essential element which needs to be taken into consideration. It is represented by the way that the Church understands herself and that is authoritatively expressed by the authentic magisterium of the Church, with reference to the normative and permanent value of the event that led to the foundation of the Church in Jesus Christ. This magisterium manifests the apostolic continuity and the catholic unity of the mystery and of the ecclesial institution in their indissoluble identity.<sup>24</sup> It also expresses the discernment not only of the evangelical nature of the charism, but also of its contemporaneity to the needs of the Church and of the world at that particular time. At the same time, it is a guarantee of and guide to the ways in which this contemporaneity may be realised and become fruitful.

In our case, as John Paul II never tires of repeating, the teaching in question is that of Vatican Council II. There is in fact a providential relation, aroused and sustained by the Holy Spirit, between the ecclesial movements and Vatican II. It concerns the Council's correct and integral reception. The Council of Trent would not have passed into the life-stream of the Catholic Church, profoundly renewing it and enabling it to flourish again, without there having been, alongside exceptional pastors like St. Charles Borromeo, also particular charisms—such as that of St. Ignatius Loyola, to give just one example—able to assume in exemplary and propulsive manner the reformist impulses that emerged from the Council. Today too the whole people of God is called to the reception, at once faithful and creative, of the teaching of Vatican II. Nor are there lacking, alongside distinguished Pastors who will undoubtedly go down to history, initiatives of every kind that have permitted the Council's pervasive impact, in letter and spirit, on the life of the local churches over the last few decades. There is nothing, however, to stop the Holy Spirit, today too, from making his contribution not only through the more

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 8.

widespread charisms, but also through special charisms: the stakes are so high!<sup>25</sup>

As regards the discernment of the present time, I will limit myself to recalling two developments that seem to me of extreme importance.<sup>26</sup> The first—which particularly regards the Western world, but has a more universal repercussion—concerns what we might call *the end of modernity*, i.e., for better or worse, the end of an historical era in which a model of humanism centred on the affirmation of the subjectivity of man in a radical antithesis either to God or to other men: both at the individual and collective level. For the worse: because this project gave rise to the nihilistic implosion of man on himself and to the tragedies of ideological totalitarianism, combined with the phenomenon—in the one case as in the other—of the “death of God”. For the better: because—as the Council and John Paul II have recognised—a consciousness of the dignity, of the rights and of the freedom of the person has in spite of everything matured. In any case, this era is coming to an end: we find ourselves in a wide open space that is awaiting something new.

A second development concerns the irreversible process towards the acquisition of a planetary awareness of the human family. This requires that human differences (of culture, of tradition, of religion, etc.) be accepted, understood and managed in a context of openness to the other and reciprocal respect at all levels (political, economic, cultural and spiritual). In this case too, humanity is urged to cross a new threshold which poses both challenges and risks.

<sup>25</sup> This theme would require more detailed, and more considered discussion. Various analyses on the matter already exist. I may refer to the most recent of them, exemplary both for its balance and the exhaustiveness of its information (with a complete bibliographic update), and for the hermeneutic perspective within which the questions are tackled: C. HEGGE, *Rezeption und Charisma: Der theologische und rechtliche Beitrag Kirchlicher Bewegungen zur Rezeption des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* (Würzburg: Echter, 1999).

<sup>26</sup> Cf., in this connection, the rough sketch (in terms of methodology and content) I tried to outline in my study “Il tempo già dato è sempre nuovo in Cristo Gesù,” in *Prismi di verità: La sapienza cristiana di fronte alla sfida della complessità*, ed. M. Malaguti, (Roma: Città Nuova, 1997), 478–499.

Against this background, the ecclesiological understanding expressed by Vatican II, right from the first number of *Lumen Gentium*, which I already quoted at the beginning of these reflections, becomes surprisingly topical: “The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men”.<sup>27</sup> That means that God and man, the I and the other, are not dialectical antagonists according to the dualistic logic of the servant/master (Hegel), but in Christ are accepted, revealed and redeemed in the space of the trinitarian reciprocity: the reciprocity that subsists between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>28</sup> And this reciprocity is realised in “a sincere giving of himself” (cf. *Lk* 17:33) which Christ Jesus revealed and realised in fullness in the *kenosis* of abandonment and death on the cross.

Standing out even more sharply against this same background, in all its prophetic significance, is the new impulse given to the petrine ministry in its universal dimension by John Paul II: by his vigorous and constant reminder that the way of newness and unity “passes through Christ”; by his planetary pilgrimaging; and by gestures like that of the day of prayer at Assisi in 1986—to cite only one example—in which, to use his own words, a particularly eloquent icon of conciliar ecclesiology was made present.

The identity and mission of those gifts of the Spirit that lie at the origin of and that animate the ecclesial movements should be placed in this context. Their contemporaneity consists in this. Perhaps it was nec-

<sup>27</sup> No. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in Misericordia* no. 1: “The more the Church’s mission is centred upon man—the more it must be confirmed and actualised theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father. While the various currents of human thought both in the past and at the present have tended and still tend to separate theocentrism and anthropocentrism, and even to set them in opposition to each other, the Church, following Christ, seeks to link them up in human history, in a deep and organic way. And this is also one of the basic principles, perhaps the most important one, of the teaching of the last Council. Since, therefore, in the present phase of the Church’s history we put before ourselves as our primary task the implementation of the doctrine of the great Council, we must act upon this principle with faith, with an open mind and with all our heart”.

essary to await our century—notes von Balthasar—, the century of the “reawakening of the Church in souls”, “to witness, in the Church, such a flourishing and multiplicity of lay movements, of which (...) the majority have arisen from new impulses of the Holy Spirit”.<sup>29</sup>

To offer a pneumatological reading of the presence and action of the contemporary ecclesial movements in the Church, placing ourselves in the perspective outlined above, we may follow the ecclesiological reading of Vatican II which John Paul II offers to us, especially from *Christifideles Laici* on, through the analysis of the mystery of communion and mission.<sup>30</sup> I will limit myself to just a few remarks.

### *The movements and the mystery of the Church*

The rediscovery of the Church as mystery, which characterises our century and impregnates the conciliar teaching, is of extreme relevance in our time, both in relation to the end of modernity and in relation to the globalization of contemporary awareness.

Rediscovering (and living) the Church as mystery (in the original Pauline sense of the term) means first of all placing it in the light of the profound reality of the sacrament of Christ: the Church as the presence of Christ, indeed, “the Christ who is present” (as affirmed also by D. Bonhoeffer).<sup>31</sup> Not only in the sense that the Church is generated, nourished and guided by the Word, by the Sacraments and by the Ministry, but—consequently—in the sense that she is, as community of the disciples who live the “new” commandment both among each other and in their relations with everybody, the sign and the instrument of the

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from P. J. Cordes, *Dentro il nostro mondo: Le forze di rinnovamento spirituale*, (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1989), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. for an analysis also referred to the ecclesial movements, the contributions contained in D. Tettamanzi (ed.), *Laici verso il terzo millennio*, (Roma: Città Nuova, 1989); and my paper “I movimenti ecclesiali. Una lettura ecclesiologica,” *Lateranum* 57 (1991): 109–144.

<sup>31</sup> For an exhaustive comparison between the conciliar ecclesiology and the ecclesiological perspective of D. Bonhoeffer, see C. Henneke, *Die Wirklichkeit der Welt erbellen: Ein ökumenisches Gespräch with D. Bonhoeffer über die ekklesiologischen Perspektiven der Moralverkündigung* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1997).

meeting with the risen Christ for the men and women of our time. It is just this, it seems to me, that constitutes the peculiarity of the ecclesial movements: that of making the presence of Christ felt through the communion lived by his disciples.

A second aspect that characterises the rediscovery of the Church as mystery concerns her understanding of herself as Spouse of Christ. The Church is not only the body of Christ, but also his Spouse. She is not only (in the “already/but not yet” of the Christian eschatology) one thing alone with Him, but also his Bride, who is regenerated by the gift of self of the Bridegroom, and called to clothe herself in the nuptial vestment of holiness. Now, the ecclesial movements represent a proposal of holiness that is not reserved for an elite but open to the whole people of God. As noted by von Balthasar, it is just to these movements that Providence seems to have entrusted in concrete terms, albeit in no exclusive way, the animation and implementation of the conciliar programme of the universal call to holiness, and the new involvement of the laity in the Church and in her apostolate in the world.<sup>32</sup>

### *The movements and the Church as communion*

It is no accident that the charismatic phenomenon of the movements is contemporary with Vatican II’s teaching on the ecclesiology of the People of God and communion. In this ecclesiological perspective, not only is recognised scope *in fact* given to charisms as always happened in the history of the Church, but this scope is recognised in a *structural* way as a necessary condition for the self-expression of the Church as communion in the present phase of the history of salvation.<sup>33</sup> At the

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 4; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*; J. Castellano, *Movimenti ecclesiali contemporanei: Attualità, caratteristiche, discernimento* (Roma: Teresianum, 1997) 29, citing Balthasar’s judgement reported above.

<sup>33</sup> An authoritative confirmation of this conciliar teaching was given by the address given by John Paul II at the meeting of the ecclesial movements on the Vigil of Pentecost in

same time, the indivisibility of the charism by a group, however large or small, of Christians as essential condition for the building up of the body of the Church and her mission of evangelising witness is stressed—more so than in the past, and undoubtedly with greater ecclesiological awareness.<sup>34</sup>

These remarks lead us to focus our attention on a constituent feature of the movements: their ecclesiality. This was noted by G. Feliciani several years ago.<sup>35</sup> J. Beyer, ever attentive to the concrete evolution of the movements and the forms they take, has also recalled and analysed it on various occasions.<sup>36</sup> The new movements are constitutionally open (by virtue of their original charism) to all the vocations and to all the states of life present in the People of God. And this, in more than one case, has now been formally endorsed and received canonical approval by the competent authority. It therefore seems to me reductive, as has sometimes been done in the past and as perhaps may still be attempted in the future, perhaps by inertia of reflection, to classify the ecclesial quality of the movements solely in terms of lay aggregations and their apostolic end. The adjective “ecclesial”, by which the movements should rightly be described, forms an intrinsic part of their ecclesiological definition.

St. Peter's Square: “During the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, under the guidance of the Spirit, the Church has rediscovered the charismatic dimension as a constituent part of herself”. The Pope then referred, in particular to *Lumen gentium* (no. 12) and connected this “providential rediscovery” with the development of the ecclesial movements. As P. Rodriguez notes, “the postconciliar theology has begun to grasp the essential importance of the charism”, even though studies of wide horizon and solid theological foundation on the matter are still lacking (“Verso una considerazione cristologica e pneumatologica del Popolo di Dio,” 175).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 24, 29.

<sup>35</sup> G. Feliciani, “I diritti e i doveri dei fedeli in genere e dei laici in specie. Le associazioni,” in *Il nuovo codice di Diritto Canonico*, ed. J. Ferrari, (Bologna, 1983), 253–273; *Il popolo di Dio*, (Bologna: Il Mulino: Il Mulino, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Among his many studies: “I movimenti ecclesiali,” *Vita consacrata* 23 (1987): 143–156; “Il movimento ecclesiale: questioni attuali,” *Vita consacrata* 26 (1990): 483–494; and “I movimenti nuovi nella Chiesa,” *Vita consacrata* 27 (1991): 61–77.

The problems that arise when their ecclesiological significance is reduced to that of simple lay aggregations are clear: how are we to think, in this case, of the presence of priests and men or women religious within them? With the necessary prudence, it may be deduced from the ecclesial configuration of the movements, rooted in the indivisibility of their original charism by the various components of the People of God, that the charism that lies at the origin of the movements is not in conflict, for example, with the spirituality and ministerial obligations of the priesthood nor with the charism of the consecrated life aroused and shaped according to the various spiritualities. What still needs to be elucidated is the motivation, modalities and significance of this possible complementarity or reciprocity.

J. Beyer has emphasised in this regard that “the notion itself of communion, which is a distinctive feature of the Church, in the way Vatican II contemplates her mystery, remains incomprehensible if it is not made visible in the living Church herself. These new forms of communion [the movements] seem to have been created precisely to enable people to understand and experience this communion. [...] What the Spirit illuminated in the Council, was expressed by the Spirit with this new gift to the life of the Church”.<sup>37</sup> This observation confirms, among other things, the deeper significance of the ecclesiality of the movements: because communion is the need/experience of ecclesial life which needs to be lived by all the members of the people of God and experienced concretely in a reciprocal relation between them that permits the equal baptismal dignity and the complementarity of the various vocations, ministries and charisms to be verified in an organically and hierarchically structured communion. It is precisely this that is taught by the Council. In this way, the ecclesial movements, alongside other forms and experiences, may meet the need for “schools of ecclesiology of communion” (to use the apt expression of John Paul II in his address to the Roman Synod) which is so deeply felt in the Church today to ensure that the Council’s teachings be put into practice on the

<sup>37</sup> J. Beyer, “I movimenti ecclesiali,” 156.

basis of a profound conversion to the spirituality of communion which the Church as communion demands. The hope expressed by K. Rahner has something prophetic about it: "We older people have spiritually been individualists [...]. I think that in a spirituality of the future the element of brotherly spiritual communion, of a spirituality lived together, may play a more decisive role, and that slowly but surely we must continue our way along this road".<sup>38</sup>

This relation of reciprocity or complementarity between the various ecclesial vocations, required by the ecclesiology of communion and propitiated by the charisms and practice of the movements, must in turn find a correspondence in the relations between the movements and the Church (universal and particular) and between the movements themselves within the Church. I will limit myself to two basic criteria.

The first is the need to understand and accept the ecclesial movements, each according to its peculiar identity. It is not possible, in this case too, to mix the good with the bad indiscriminately. If the category of "ecclesial movements", in the explicit sense, is useful and even necessary to be able to interpret them, it is not sufficient to understand them in their distinct specificity and constructively accept the contribution they each make to the building up of the ecclesial community and to the task of the new evangelization. This for two reasons: first, where an original charism exists, a new and distinctive ecclesial reality takes shape; second, even if only a more general spiritual character or a particular formative pedagogy exists, each movement acquires its own quite specific profile. It may therefore be pastorally superficial, if not damaging, to treat the question of the movements *ad modum unius*. It is pastorally more effective, as well as ecclesialogically correct, to comprehend and evaluate each movement on the basis of its distinct physiognomy and its particular contribution to the life and growth of the Church.

<sup>38</sup> "Elementi di spiritualità nella Chiesa del futuro, *Problemi e prospettive di spiritualità*, ed. T. Goffi and B. Secondin (Brescia: Queriniana, 1983), 440–441.

A second criterion concerns the relation that the individual ecclesial movements are called to establish between each other. They too need to acquire globally greater awareness of the fact that they have a monopoly neither of the Christian experience nor of the modes of ecclesial and evangelising service. If in the past their youthfulness, combined with their considerable spiritual energy, has given rise to some excesses and some degree of ingenuousness, they are now capable of a more mature attitude, a sincere reciprocity able to grasp and accept with wonder, in others and not just in themselves, the inexhaustible newness of the Spirit's intervention.

St. Bernard of Chiaravalle, speaking of his order and its relation with others, wrote: "I admire them all. I belong to one of them by observance, but to all of them by charity. We all need one another: the spiritual good which I do not own and possess, I receive from others.... In this exile, the Church is still on pilgrimage and is, in a certain sense, plural: she is a single plurality and a plural unity. All our diversities, which make manifest the richness of God's gifts, will continue to exist in the one house of the Father, which has many rooms. Now there is a division of graces; then there will be distinctions of glory. Unity, both here and there, consists in one and the same charity".<sup>39</sup>

### *The movements and the Church as mission*

Similar considerations also hold good from the viewpoint of mission. One cannot help being struck not only by how closely the ecclesial movements are naturally in tune with John Paul II's appeal for "new evangelization", but also by the capacity they show in making themselves effective means of the conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, not least because they are able to testify, as a community, to the gospel appeal: "Come and see" (*Jn* 1:39). The decline in missionary tension which seems to characterise the postconciliar period, and which is stig-

<sup>39</sup> St. Bernard, *Apologia* to William of Saint Thierry 4. 8, cited in John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, no. 52.

matised by *Redemptoris Missio*,<sup>40</sup> is reversed in the movements, both in the regions of ancient Christianity and in relation to the peoples still to be evangelised.<sup>41</sup>

In response to the above-mentioned challenge of postmodernity and globalization, a return to the original experience of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ becomes all the more urgent. Only such an experience of the faith is able to make present the leaven of the

<sup>40</sup> Cf. no. 2.

<sup>41</sup> The well-known German Jesuit theologian Medard Kehl, in his recent book *Wohin geht die kirche? Eine Zeitdiagnose* (Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 153–157, writes that the new spiritual movements “represent an authentically Christian response to the challenge of the contemporary cultural situation in proportion as they try expressly to live ecclesial ‘*communio*’ in conditions of modern individualization”. He continues by stressing that their spiritual experience touches “the existential core of man in his relation of faith with God and love for his neighbour. The conscious decision to embrace the faith, the experience of its beauty and reciprocal support make such Christians capable of conforming their concrete mode of life to the spirit of the gospel and thus acting in a missionary sense within our society. It is surprising that, even among the ranks of those ‘far from the Church’, many feel attracted by these communities: here the Church is undoubtedly presented to them in a surprising humanity and immediacy”. And he concludes: “they [the movements] may be the most authentically and (from a practical point of view) effective Christian response to many religious and quasi-religious needs of people in our society; a response which the highly institutionalised churches are no longer thought capable of giving, and which is therefore being sought in large part among the most varied mystico-natural currents”. Also worth noting is the point recently emphasised, with particular reference to the specific pastoral context of the Church in Brazil, by J. Comblin this was rather critical in his attitude to the new ecclesial movements in the past “Os ‘movimentos’ e a pastorale latino-americana”, *Revista eclesiastica brasileira* 43 [1983], 227-262. Recently Comblin has affirmed: “The structures of the Catholic Church, and even the structures of the basic ecclesial communities, no longer succeed in transmitting or inspiring faith... they are not equipped to arouse it. Today, by contrast, it is often *the charismatic movements that succeed in inspiring faith and in transforming the life of their converts... in practice they are alone in converting the new generations*, whatever their secret is... twenty-five years ago the Church laid down a certain model of community life which formed the root of the basic ecclesial communities. Today we know that the possible form of community for the start of the third millennium still remains indefinite—but very different from the expectations that people had twenty-five years ago... The image of the new historical model will gradually appear... it will arise from the experiences made” (“Reino de Deus: utopia profetico de Jesus,” *Vida pastoral* 38, no. 197 (1997), 6-7).

Kingdom of God in the human and cultural contexts in which the future of the third millennium will be determined. But this is possible only where the form of evangelization is “new”; only where it is capable of intercepting the feelings of people in our time and showing the novelty of Jesus Christ in the kind of life that may be experienced among Christians and in the form of the way they relate to others, in a context that is in many respects unprecedented: “that they may all be one [...] so that the world may believe” (*Jn* 17:21).

In this perspective, the cultural aspect of evangelization and of commitment in the world also acquires its importance. The very fact that there is an ecclesial aggregation, that is also socially visible and socially incisive, is culturally significant. This is noted by *Christifideles Laici*: “a ‘cultural’ effect can be accomplished through work done not so much by an individual alone but by an individual as a ‘social being’, that is, as a member of a group, of a community, of an association, or of a movement. Such work is, then, the source and stimulus leading to the transformation of the surroundings and society as well as the fruit and sign of every other transformation in this regard. This is particularly true in the context of a pluralistic and fragmented society—the case in so many parts of the world today—and in light of the problems which have become greatly complex and difficult”.<sup>42</sup>

Nor should we underestimate the possibility, which only the future will be able to verify, that in the original charisms there are implications concerning the understanding/actualisation of the Revelation on the basis of a particular point of view. This responds to the need, so deeply felt in our time, for a “concentration of faith” with a view to its more incisive kerigmatic proclamation and its more fruitful existential assimilation. The history of the Church is familiar with this phenomenon. According to H. U. von Balthasar, “great charisms may receive, donated by the Spirit, insights into the core of the Revelation, insights that enrich the Church in a hitherto unsuspected but nonetheless

<sup>42</sup> No. 29.

perennial way”.<sup>43</sup> Such insights are extremely important in the process through which the faith expresses, from time to time, its fruitfulness also in cultural terms. This was forcefully recalled by John Paul II, by affirming that “there is no renewal, even social, that does not spring from contemplation”, and that “the mainspring of every authentic culture is its approach to the mystery of God [...]. It is on this basis that any new culture can and must be constructed”.<sup>44</sup>

Worth further examination, lastly, would be the significance of the ecclesial movements in terms of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Within the contemporary ecclesial experience such dialogue leads to the singular phenomenon of Christians of other churches and, sometimes, even of believers of other religions or persons of “good will” participating in the spirit and even in the organizational life of some of these movements. The phenomenon represents a great novelty and also has some ecclesiological significance, pointed out by *Christifideles Laici* (no. 33). In this regard, it should be pointed out that other churches, too, apart from the Catholic Church, are interested in the expansion of this phenomenon and recognise its positive effects. Moreover, the birth of the new ecclesial movements seems to reveal a close relationship, which I would define as pneumatological in nature, with the ecclesial renewal promoted by the Council, of which the ecumenical spirit and interreligious dialogue form key elements.

<sup>43</sup> H. U. von Balthasar, *Theologik*, vol. 3 (Basel: Johannes Verlag, 1987), XX In a later interview, Balthasar exemplified this reality: “There are things that the Holy Spirit suddenly throws into light, things already familiar, but on which people have never really reflected. The history of the Church testifies to this. Before St. Francis no one had really understood the poverty of God and of Christ. This is no secondary thing, it is an opening towards the centre. There are other saints, such as St. Augustine: no one had seen the love of God in such a way before him. No one before St. Ignatius had grasped the obedience of Christ to the Father” (“Viaggio nel post-concilio,” in H. U. von Balthasar, *La realtà e la gloria: Articoli e interviste 1978-1988*). J. Wicks extends these remarks to the present day, referring to the most significant spiritual experiences of our time (*Introduction to the theological Method* [Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1994], 129). Another example was offered by the present writer in his brief essay “Sulla teologia che scaturisce dal carisma dell’unità di Chiara Lubich,” *Nuova Umanità*, [Milan: EDIT, 1988], 129, 155–166.

From the ecumenical point of view, does not all this perhaps signify a spiritual and practical realization of the real, even if imperfect, communion in which all the baptised are incorporated into Christ<sup>45</sup> If this is true—wrote the Orthodox theologian S. Bulgakov prophetically in 1933—then “it is both the duty of ecclesial love and practical convenience to perceive and make manifest the spiritual foundation of Christian ‘ecumenism’, not only as idea, but also as existing fact, gift of grace. It is given to us to experience—he emphasises—as breath of the grace of the Holy Spirit, as manifestation of Pentecost, when men begin to understand each other in the diversity of their tongues”.<sup>46</sup>

As regards the interreligious dialogue, are we not witnessing here providential signs of the possibilities opened up by the Holy Spirit for the Church to enter “a new stage of history of her missionary dynamism”,<sup>47</sup> through which—in the light of the Truth “that enlightens every man” (*Jn* 1:9)<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Nostra Actate*, no. 2.—even the great non-Christian cultural and religious traditions, without renouncing their own authentic riches, may be transfigured by the meeting with the crucified and risen Christ?

### III. THE ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS, GIFT OF THE SPIRIT, IN THE HORIZON OF THE CHURCH’S MARIAN PROFILE

In conclusion, I would like to recapitulate my argument with a few summary remarks on the importance of Mary in the life of the movements—though a discussion of the ecclesial movements as gift of the

<sup>44</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 18, 2 (1995): 1205 and 1199.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 3. On the ecumenical aspect two of my own articles: “Ecumenismo e movimenti ecclesiali,” *Lettera di collegamento del Segretariato per l’ecumenismo e il dialogo della CEI*, no. 20 (1989): 25-30; and in particular on the experience of the movement of the Focolari: “Il carisma dell’unità di Chiara Lubich e la sua incidenza ecumenica. Alcune riflessioni teologiche,” *Studi ecumenici* 12, no. 1 (1994): 29-59.

<sup>46</sup> S. Bulgakov, “Al pozzo di Giacobbe”, in idem, *Alle mura di Chersoneso*, Roma: Lipa 1998, 287–288.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Ch.L.* 35.

Spirit in the horizon of the Church's Marian profile would require separate analysis.

In referring to the Church's Marian profile, I recall von Balthasar's brilliant intuition which epitomises the great lesson of tradition and which, in the light of the Marian dogmas of the last two centuries and of the conciliar teaching on Mary in the mystery of the Church<sup>49</sup> actualises it in the *kairós* of God of our time and relaunches it towards the future.<sup>50</sup>

If, in fact, the first and last significance of the Church as an event is the birth of Christ who is all, and in all (*Col* 3:11), we need to penetrate in depth the truth epigrammatically expressed by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort: two alone are capable of giving birth together, in synergy, to the Son of God in the flesh and, in Him, to us too as sons of the Father:—namely, the Holy Spirit and Mary.<sup>51</sup>

Since the ecclesial movements are an authentic gift of the Spirit, it follows that they inevitably have something to do with Mary.

Discussing them in the horizon of the history of salvation, we pointed out that the great charisms poured out by the Spirit through the centuries awaken, indeed revive three fundamental attitudes on the part of the Church: virginal submission, spousal love, maternal fruitfulness. On the other hand, in course of some brief reflections on the ecclesiology of Vatican II, we spoke of mystery, communion and mission.

But is this not just another way of referring to the same reality? In other words, do not these three fundamental attitudes refer to the presence and action of Mary, Virgin, Spouse and Mother in the mystery of Christ and of the Church?

John Paul II, in a memorable address to the Roman Curia, spoke of the Marian profile as just as—if not more—fundamental and characterising for the Church as the petrine one.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Nostra Actate*, no. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, chapter 8.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. the exhaustive and illuminating work of B. Leahy, *The Marian Principle in the Church according to H. U. von Balthasar* (Frankfurt: P. LANG, 1996).

<sup>51</sup> See P. Coda, "La SS.ma Trinità e Maria nel 'Trattato della vera devozione' di S. Luigi M. Grignon de Montfort," *Nuova Umanità* 15, no. 86 (1993): 13–45.

For his part, von Balthasar has indicated, as a need for the Church today, the rediscovery of the Marian principle: not merely in the sense of renewing devotion to Mary, but in the sense of reawakening in the whole People of God—laity, hierarchy and consecrated—the Marian form of their ecclesial identity. And he recognises in the movements a stimulus and a providential chance in this direction. Their charismatic origin and the primacy of spirituality that characterises them, their mainly lay profile and at the same time their indisputable ecclesiality, their heightened dimensions of communion and evangelization, and their authentically dialogic and convivial, but not compromising opening to the Christians of other churches and the followers of other religions, all tend to underline the Marian character of their identity and mission.

The life of Mary, shaped and guided by the Spirit, is a *fiat*, a “let it happen” (cf. *Lk* 1:38), in the history of humanity: the advent of the triune God among humankind and among the social forms through which they organise themselves.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, the invitation to the ecclesial movements and to the whole Church—writes von Balthasar, with whose words I would like to end—to look to Mary as “the mould on which we ought to be modelled. We: that is to say, each individual Christian; but perhaps even more so: the image itself we have of the Church. We are continuously engaged in reforming and adjusting this Church to the needs of the time, paying heed to the criticisms of our enemies and according to our own preconceptions. But do we not lose sight in this way of the one perfect instrument of measurement, more precisely the prototype? Should we not, in our reforms, keep our gaze permanently fixed on Mary [...] simply to learn to understand what the Church, authentic ecclesial behaviour are?”<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, 5, 3 (1982): 1671–1683.

<sup>53</sup> H. U. von Balthasar, “Maria und der Geist,” *Geist und Leben* 56 (1983): 173–177.

<sup>54</sup> Idem, “Maria in der Kirchlichen Levre und Frömmigkeit”, in J. Ratzinger and H. U. von Balthasar, *Maria Kirche in Ursprung*, 4th ed. (Freiburg: Johannes Einsiedeln, 1997),

# The Reality of the Movements in the Universal Church and in the Local Church

Bishop ANGELO SCOLA

## I. CHRISTIAN FACT AND MOVEMENT: A PREMISE ON METHOD

The movements are often treated as a reality parallel to the Church. Perhaps due to the many practical problems raised,<sup>1</sup> connected with the irruption of the new within a body of ancient institution, dioceses, parishes and traditional associations on the one hand, and movements on the other, are considered as two entities in some sense heterogeneous, at odds with each other, not to say at times opposed to each other. This has resulted in

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Beyer, "I movimenti nuovi nella chiesa," *Vita consacrata* 27 (1991): 61-77; idem, "Movimento ecclesiale," in *Nuovo dizionario di diritto canonico*, ed. C. Corral Salvador et al. (Cinisiello Balsamo, 1993), 707-712; A. Cattaneo, "I movimenti ecclesiali: aspetti ecclesiologici," *Annales Theologici* 11: (1997): 401-427; E. Corecco, "Profili istituzionali dei movimenti nella Chiesa," *Communio*, 60 (1980): 105-135; idem, "Sacerdoce commun, sacerdoce ministériel et charisms: Pour un statut juridique des mouvements," *Les mouvements dans l'Eglise* (Paris, 1983), 181-208; S. Dianich, "Le nuove comunità e la 'grande Chiesa': un problema ecclesiologico," *La Scuola Cattolica* 116 (1988): 512-529; G. Feliciani, "I movimenti ecclesiali," *L'Année Canonique* 36 (1993): 79-82; M. Gazzotti, "Mistagogia e movimenti ecclesiali. Alcune prassi in Italia," *Rivista Liturgica* 84 (1997): 881-896; L. Gerosa, "Carismi e movimenti nella Chiesa oggi," *Ius Canonicum* 28 (1988): 665-680; idem, "Le 'charisme' ordinaire. Pour une justification théologique du droit des associations dans l'Eglise," *Nowelle Revue Théologique* 112 (1990): 224-235; G. Ghirlanda, "Questioni irrisolte sulle associazione dei fedeli," *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici* 49 (1993): 73-102; C. I. Heredia, *Naturaleza de los movimientos eclesiales en el Derecho de la Iglesia*, (Roma, 1992); S. Recchi, "Per una configurazione canonica dei movimenti ecclesiali," *Quaderni di Diritto Ecclesiale* 11 (1998):

theological importance being given to questions that, if looked at more closely, do not possess it, because they are generated by this wholly uncritical dualistic presupposition.<sup>2</sup> The most macroscopic example is just that of the antithesis between movements and dioceses or movements and parishes. Sometimes such an antithesis is for-

57–66; A. Vanhoye, “The Participation of the Lay Faithful in Ecclesial Communion, with Special Reference to Ministries,” in *Christifideles Laici: Comments and Reflections*, The Laity Today, vol. 32–33 (Vatican City, 1989–1990), 77–83; B. Zadra, *I movimenti ecclesiali e i loro statuti* (Roma, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> The importance of some ecclesiological questions connected with the theme under discussion should not however be disguised. Let us list some of the main ones: 1) The constitution of the Church on the basis of her institutional and charismatic origin, a question which also comprises the relation between hierarchical and charismatic gifts: see E. Corecco and L. Gerosa, *Il diritto della Chiesa* (Milan, 1995), 205–220; L. Gerosa, *Carisma e diritto nella Chiesa: Riflessioni canonistiche sul carisma originario dei nuovi movimenti ecclesiali* (Milan, 1989); P. Mullins, “The Theology of Charisms: Vatican II and the New Catechism,” *Milltown Studies* 33 (1994): 123–162; G. Rambaldi, “Carismi e laicato nella Chiesa: Teologia dei carismi e corresponsabilità dei laici nella Chiesa,” *Gregorianum* 68 (1987): 57–101. 2) Baptism as source of the identity and mission of the faithful and the reconsideration of the theology of the laity: see *I laici e la missione nella Chiesa* (Milan, 1987), A. Anton, “Principios fundamentales para una teología del Laicado en la Eclesiología del Vaticano II,” *Gregorianum* 68 (1987): 104–155; J. Beyer, “Le laïcat et les laïcs dans l’Eglise,” *Gregorianum* 68 (1987): 157–185; V. Liberti (ed.), *I laici nel popolo di Dio: Esegese biblica* (Roma, 1990); M. De Merode, “Théologie du laïcat aujourd’hui”, *Lumen Vitae* 41 (1986): 379–392; still useful is the bibliography on the theme of the laity compiled on the occasion of the Synod in 1987: *Il laicato: Rassegna bibliografica* (Vatican City, 1987). 3) The relation between universal Church and particular Church, a problem which, in spite of the clarifications of the magisterium, is still far from having found a proper theological understanding, as shown, *inter alia*, by the persistence of the terminological discussion on *particular Church-local Church*: see G. Routhier, “‘Eglise locale’ ou ‘Eglise particulière’: querelle sémantique ou option théologique?” *Studia Canonica* 25 (1991): 277–334; E. Tejero, “La estructura sacramental de la Iglesia particular y su plenitud en le ‘ comunio catholica’”, *Ius Canonicum* 34 (1994): 24–53. For all these problems reference is obligatory to the *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Vatican City, [1992]). On the local Church, even if it proposes some dubious or controversial solutions, one cannot ignore J. M. R. Tillard, *L’Eglise locale: Ecclésiologie de communion et catholicité* (Paris, 1995), with extensive bibliography.

mulated with the accusation that the movements want to create a parallel church.<sup>3</sup> It arises from the hypothesis, often implicit, that movements and dioceses (or parishes) are, and have been since the origin, two separate and self-sufficient realities. If such an assumption is accepted, even the most sincere wish for unity and the most exhaustive theological dissertations will fail to overcome the initial separation.<sup>4</sup> Unity either exists at the origin or it does not.

How are we to avoid the risk of remaining imprisoned by this

<sup>3</sup> Cf. for example the following affirmation: “El peligro? Que se conviertan en una especie de ‘super-iglesias’ o de ‘iglesias paralelas’ al interior de cada iglesia particular escudándose en que responden a instancias superiores a la autoridad de las iglesias locales” (E. Barcelon, “Las asociaciones y movimientos laicales en la vida y misión de la Iglesias,” *Teología Espiritual* 36 [1992]: 193; see also A. Cattaneo, “I movimenti ecclesiali...,” 409.

<sup>4</sup> Such a view can be found in the following words of E. Zanetti, “Movimenti ecclesiali e Chiese locali,” *Quaderni di Diritto Ecclesiale* 11 (1998): 26–27 “It is beyond doubt that one of the most deeply felt questions with regard to the movements in the Church is their relations with the dioceses and parishes. This question especially arises for those modern movements that have a structure in some way similar to that of the particular or local Churches, since they comprise all the categories of faithful: laity—adults, youth and children—, families, consecrated persons, priests and bishops... In this way they seem to assume the physiognomy of ‘ecclesial families’ or ‘little Churches’. Moreover, the commitment of their members is generally all-embracing, in the sense that it involves the person in his or her entirety, both from the spiritual and from the material point of view. Within these movements, some structural organisation is often formed round the founder’s charism and leadership, comprising sections, offices, formative programmes, statutes, etc. Also powerfully developed is their apostolic and missionary activity, both in the field of essentially Christian and in that of social life (...) To resolve the problems of the relation between local Church and movement a simple exhortation not to interfere is not enough, nor is a compromise demarcation of their respective fields and competences, with a view not to unduly upset the serene life or fragile equilibria of the communities. If the local Church (diocese and parish) has its own ecclesial value, both from the dogmatic and pastoral viewpoint, it cannot simply be marginalised due to particular historical circumstances, in favour of new ecclesial configurations that are today more popular and effective, such as the ecclesial movements. On the other hand, if the modern ecclesial movements are a gift of the Spirit to the Church in our time, it would not be right to ignore their providential function and particular charism and seek to incorporate them in traditional and pre-established structures”.

presupposition, which does not permit an understanding of the ecclesiological significance—to limit ourselves to our theme—implied in the relation between movements, universal Church and local Church?<sup>5</sup>

We need to bear in mind, in the light of the Revelation, the Christian fact considered in its unity and in its entirety, just as it expressed in the experience of ecclesial life in the *here and now* of history.

What is the Christian fact, in simple and objective terms? To identify it completely we would need to examine the first steps of the Christian community as canonically attested by Holy Scripture. For our purposes, however, it will suffice to recall that by Christian fact we mean the event of Jesus Christ who died on the cross and who rose from the dead, i.e. the incarnate Son of the Father who, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, is made present, in the Church and through the Church, to the present moment of history, and who communicates himself, in a gratuitous and astonishing way, to socially situated men and women, with their unpredictable freedom and their inevitable belonging to different peoples, cultures and traditions.

In this perspective—which sees the infinite freedom of God compassionately submit to the finite freedom of man—any kind of abstraction is eliminated from the reality of the Church, in as much as it consists, above all, of a fact that happens to me: it comes to meet me (*ad-*

<sup>5</sup> Help in grasping the ecclesiological significance of the problem may be found in the literature already cited, and also in the following books and articles: *I movimenti della Chiesa: Atti del 2° Colloquio Internazionale* (Milan, 1987); K. Beyer, “L’avvenire dei movimenti ecclesiali,” *Quaderni di Diritto Ecclesiale* 11 (1998): 6–13; M. Camisasca and M. Vitali (eds.), *I movimenti nella Chiesa negli '80* (Milan, 1982); P. Coda, “I movimenti ecclesiali: Una lettura ecclesiologicala,” *Lateranum* 57 (1991): 109–144; A. Favale (ed.), *Movimenti ecclesiali contemporanei. Dimensioni storiche, teologico-spirituali ed apostoliche*, 4th ed. (Rome, 1991) M. Ferrera, “Le aggregazioni laicali nella Chiesa,” *Aggiornamenti Sociali* 46 (1995): 45–58; B. Secondin, *Segni di profezia nella Chiesa* (Milan, 1987); idem, *I nuovi protagonisti* (Cinisello Balsamo, 1991).

*venio*). The Christian fact, clearly identifiable in historical terms, thus lives in the event of the Church.<sup>6</sup>

This was expressed by John Paul II when on 27 September 1981—still visibly marked by the grave attempt on his life—he celebrated Mass for the participants in the First International Meeting of the Movements. He then affirmed: “the Church herself is a movement”.<sup>7</sup> In saying so did he not propose the Church as an event in the perspective of the Christian fact? If we insert this synthetic affirmation in the Holy Father’s rich and varied magisterium on the ecclesial movements—strongly rooted in the teaching of the Council—we should then have enough to make it the criterion and guide (method) of our ecclesiological reflection.

Taking its cue from the principle that “the Church herself is a movement”, our reflection is aimed at identifying the overall picture and the individual factors that make up the theme entrusted to us, and distinguishing the organic unity between them.

## II. “THE CHURCH HERSELF IS A MOVEMENT”

### *The category of movement in theological language: roots and perspectives*

I will introduce the question by suggesting a reflection which is only apparently terminological. Whence stems the importance of the word *movement* within the Church? Is it the mere transcription of a sociological phenomenon,<sup>8</sup> or does it have its own theologi-

<sup>6</sup> La parola *evento* conserva tutto lo spessore di sorprendente e gratuito accadere mantenendo, nello stesso tempo, attraverso la preposizione *e-[venio]* il riferimento al Mistero: è l'accadere da un oltre, da un altro (Cf. M. Kel, *Die Kirche: Eine katholische Ekklesiologie*, 3d ed. (Würzburg: Echter, 1994), XXX).

<sup>7</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 4, 2 (1981), 305.

<sup>8</sup> Many phenomena of very different nature have been subsumed under the category of *movement*. We may think, for instance, of the worker movement or the women’s liberation

cal significance and its rightful place in the reality of the Church?<sup>9</sup>

John Paul II, in the already cited homily, suggests that the category of movement be rooted in that of mission: “The Church herself is a movement and above all she is a mystery, the mystery of the eternal love of the Father, from whose paternal heart the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit derive their origin. The Church, born of this mission, is in ‘*statu missionis*’; she is a movement and penetrates hearts and minds”.

The main mysteries of the Christian faith are characterised by the category of mission. From the Trinity, which is communicated in the redemptive mission of the incarnate Son of God,<sup>10</sup> to which is linked the invisible but effective mission of the Spirit,<sup>11</sup> the plan of salvation leads through the mission of the Church<sup>12</sup> to the mission of the faithful who, by grace, through Baptism, are united with Christ.<sup>13</sup>

movement... Today we often speak of *new religious movements* in connection with the phenomenon of the sects. Obviously, in this case, no objective kinship can be found with the reality of the ecclesial movements. Indeed, it would be appropriate, at least in a Catholic perspective, to avoid the use of the term movement in speaking of the sects, so as to avoid misunderstandings.

<sup>9</sup> The word *movement*, in the history of theology, has been used to designate phenomena, generally characterised by a strong spirit of renewal, which have had an impact on the life of the Church and, hence, on theological reflection. We may cite in this regard the so-called *heretical movements*, whose impetus of renewal came into conflict with the Tradition. Such movements have, however, involved many faithful (in some cases huge masses) and have indirectly led to a deepening of the content of Revelation. In more recent times, on the other hand, the category *movement* has been used to identify phenomena of renewal in continuity with the Tradition. We may think, for example, of the Oxford Movement, whose principal protagonist was Newman, the liturgical movement and the ecumenical movement which, in some sense, anticipated the renewal of Vatican II: cf. H. Jedin (ed.), *History of the Church*, vol. 10 (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 300–336; 458–473. The term *movement* as such is not, however, used to describe elements of content or method of the Christian experience and so is normally ignored by dogmatic theology.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 257.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, nos. 689–690.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, nos. 767.

<sup>13</sup> In this regard it was acutely observed by von Balthasar that even our personality becomes, in some sense, realised in full only in our mission: cf. H. U. von Balthasar: *Theodrama: Theological Dramatic Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), XXX; A. Scola, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: uno stile theo-drama: eologico*, Milano 1991, 91–95.

The close link between the category of *mission*<sup>14</sup> and the affirmation of the Church as *movement*, can be elucidated by recurring to the New Testament terminology. The Latin *mitto*, from which our word mission derives, is the translation of the original Greek *apostéllo* (Cf. for example *Lk* 24:49). We may thus note immediately that, for the biblical vocabulary, *mission* and *apostolate* are synonyms.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, *mitto* (*apostéllo*) does not signify any kind of envoy, but an envoy in the service of God.<sup>16</sup> If we overcome the inevitable corruption or impoverishment that words suffer due to historical events, we may note that the term *mission*, through the medium of the categories of *apostle-apostolate*, is objectively connected with the expression *movement*:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On the category of mission cf. *Ad Gentes*, no. 9: "Missionary activity is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realization in the world and in history; that by which God, through mission, clearly brings to its conclusion the history of salvation".

<sup>15</sup> Cf. K. H. Rengstorf, "Apostéllo," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), 398–447. The other verb used by the New Testament to denote mission is *pempo*. For the slight differences in connotation between *apostéllo* and *pempein*, see *ibid.*, 404–405.

<sup>16</sup> Rengstorf notes: "In relation to the general use of ἀποστέλλειν in the NT we must say finally that the word does begin to become a theological term meaning "to send forth to service in the kingdom of God with full authority (grounded in God)." Yet this does not imply any real departure from its proper sense. What we see here is rather the influence of the NT use of ἀπόστολος." (*ibidem* 406).

<sup>17</sup> According to the New Testament accounts of the public ministry of the Lord, and also in a minimalist hypothesis, "It may thus be accepted not merely that the apostolate itself derives from Jesus but also that the name apostle is used by Him. If He did not use the Greek term, or speak in terms of an office, at least He applied the *Saliab* institution to the relationship between Him and His disciples at the time when, assigning them His full authority, He brought them into full participation in His work." (K. H. Rengstorf, "Apostéllo", 429). Moreover, if we consider the apostolate of the first Christianity as the gift of the risen Jesus, we find that, apart from the personal encounter with the risen Lord, "personal commissioning by Him seems to have been the only basis of the apostolate. That this commission was given primarily to the twelve is connected with their participation in the history of the earthly Jesus, who specifically prepared them to take up and continue His preaching, yet now as the proclamation of Jesus as the One who had come in fulfilment of OT prophecy. Materially, therefore, two elements are linked

the movements are a form of apostolate. The apostle is, precisely, the *missus*, the envoy; and the mission is the content of this mandate, of this *apostéllein*. The link between mission and apostolate represents, *inter alia*, one of the features that distinguish the Christian experience from Judaism.<sup>18</sup> The *Letter to the Hebrews* itself (3:1) defines Jesus, by an *apax legomenon*, as *o apóstolos*, i.e. the one who has been sent.<sup>19</sup>

A further point: mission (apostolate) introduces us to a consideration of apostolicity as an essential dimension of the Church.<sup>20</sup> Apostolicity is connoted by two aspects—apostolicity of doctrine and apostolicity of ministry (sacrament); and the conjunction between them always needs to be preserved.<sup>21</sup>

with the apostolate in the first community. By the commission of Jesus a number of men, especially those who were closest to Him during His life, became His representatives in the sense that they took His place and thus assumed an authoritative position in the little company of Christians. Yet the altered situation meant that they also became missionaries, and this form of their work was what really characterised their office” (*ibidem*, 431).

<sup>18</sup> “This missionary element is something which radically distinguishes the NT apostolate from the Jewish *Saliab* institution. The same is true even of the form which it had assumed in the intercourse of Jesus with His disciples and in their participation in preparation for the coming βασιλεία of God” (*ibidem*, 432).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Scola, *Questioni di Antropologia Teologica* (Roma 1997), 9–10. On the other hand, often John’s Gospel describes the relation that unites Jesus with the Father by using the verb *apostéllein*: “Certainly Jesus is sent by the Father. Nevertheless, this sending is designed simply to bring out the significance of His person and of the history enacted in Him, namely, that God Himself speaks by Him and acts in Him.” (K. H. RENGSTORF, “Apostéllo,” 444).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. L. Bouyer, *The Church of God* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 307–405.

<sup>21</sup> See Y. Congar, “Die apostolische Kirche,” in *Mysterium salutis*, vol. 4, bk. 1 (Einsiedeln: Benzinger Verlag, 1972), 535–594. See further: L. Bouyer, *Church of God*, 313–314: “The parallelism between the ‘mission’ (or sending) of the Son by the Father and the ‘mission’ (sending) of the apostles by the Son is constant throughout the New Testament. It is not only that in both cases this ‘mission’ is indeed a ‘sending’... We may say, then the ‘apostolate’ of the ‘apostles’ has its model and source in the ‘mission’ of the Son by the Father and that, in both cases, the one who sends is present in the one sent in such a way that his work

In extreme synthesis: mission, apostle, apostolicity are categories that help to elucidate the Pope's affirmation that the Church is a movement. The theological use of the term *movement* has thus been justified, even though it cannot be denied that its novelty requires a more exhaustive and systematic reflection, which still remains to be carried out.

Two important points should be made here: First, the link between movement and apostolate permits us to grasp how the present phase in the history of the ecclesial movements is incorporated with relative ease in the missionary forms of apostolate<sup>22</sup> (especially of lay apostolate) that have flourished since the second half of the nineteenth century and that have found their authoritative *magna charta* in the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People *apostolicam Actuositatem*.<sup>23</sup> As shown by the history itself of some movements, they originated within these forms of apostolate.

Second, the close link between the Church as movement and the apostolicity of the Church shows the objective impossibility of separating the reality of the movements from the apostolic ministry (Pope and bishops). In this way the risk of opposing the movements to the Church is removed at its root.

is accomplished by the one sender—or better, that the sender accomplishes it in the one sent. This is true in both cases: of Jesus with respect to the Father and of the apostles with respect to Jesus.”

<sup>22</sup> See J. Baumgartner, “The Expansion of Catholic Missions from the Time of Leo XIII until World War II,” in *History of the Church*, ed. H. Jedin, vol. 9 (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 525–575; E. Iserloh, “Movements within the Church and Their Spirituality,” in *History of the Church*, ed. H. Jedin, vol. 10 (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 299–336; F. Magri, *L’Azione Cattolica in Italia*, (Milano 1953).

<sup>23</sup> See *Il decreto sull’apostolato dei laici* (Torino 1966). On the more recent synodal reflection on the laity, see *Christifideles Laici: Comments, and Reflections*, The Laity Today, vol. 32–33 (Vatican City, 1989–1990).

*The ecclesial traditio: the Christian event is its encounter  
with freedom*

The affirmation that the Church is a movement now needs to be theologically examined.<sup>24</sup> To do so let us return to our point of departure,

<sup>24</sup> Speaking of the Church as a movement means situating her in the original plan of the Father, who sent his Son for the salvation of man (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 2–5: the Church is not something that comes, so to say, *after*, but has *always* belonged to God's original plan. "Christians of the first centuries said, 'The world was created for the sake of the Church'. God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the 'convocation' of men in Christ and this 'convocation' is the Church" (*Catechism the Catholic Church*, no. 760). In a passage from the *Pedagogus* cited by the *Catechism*, St. Clement of Alexandria efficaciously affirmed "that just as God's will is creation and is called 'the world', so his intention is the salvation of men, and is called 'the Church'". The Church's inseparable link with God's original plan is further implicit in the Pauline conception of *mysterion* (see *Rom* 11:25; *Col* 1:25–27; *Eph* 2:11–13; see also the classic study by D. Dedan, "Le mystère paulinien," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 13 (1936): 405–442; G. Bornkamm, "Mystérion," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, vol. 4, 802–828; R. Penna, "Mistero," in *Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia Biblica*, ed. P. Rossano et al. (Cinisello Balsamo 1988), 984–993. In this sense it has been affirmed that the Church is "presence of the Mystery" (M. J. Le Guillou, *Le témoignage de Dieu*, [Saint Maur 1996], 21). John Paul II, in the brief homily cited more than once above, linked the concepts of movement and mystery. We may therefore say that the category of movement enables us to reflect on the Church in her origin (genesis), in her being, as it were, the design of the Father at work. This consideration also has the advantage of inserting the question of the foundation of the Church (with its associated problems) in a wider context. In fact, the consideration of the genesis of the Church on the basis of the Pauline *mysterion*, conceived as synthetic key that permits a reading of Scripture as a whole, will prevent us from losing ourselves in the search for one or more New Testament passages that might *prove* the foundation of the Church by Jesus. Such research, which is not devoid of value, is facilitated if placed in this wider context. Bouyer affirms: "The teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in the constitution *Lumen Gentium* took as its basis the initial affirmation of the mystery of the Church. The perspectives in which this first part ... is developed are basically biblical, not only because it constitutes an inventory of all the biblical themes relating to the Church but especially because the notion of "mystery," which is implemented from the very first pages, is the same notion that contemporary exegesis has shown to be that of St. Paul, which has its roots in the most constant biblical tradition" (*Church of God*, 159).

i.e. to the Christian fact. We have seen that the Christian fact consists of the Church as event of Jesus Christ that is proposed to the freedom of men and women in the *here and now* of history.<sup>25</sup> This profoundly unitarian dynamism—event, freedom, history—which simultaneously identifies the genesis of the community around Jesus and its continuation in time, contains all the constituent elements of the Church's nature. To describe this unitarian dynamism the Church has always spoken of *traditio* (tradition). It should be affirmed straight away that the Church's *traditio* is a place of practice and experience.<sup>26</sup>

To grasp what the *traditio* consists of in its essence, let us consider the fact that we are gathered here today. This gesture is possible due to the fact that, without interruption, the friendship Christ has gathered around him is propagated, physically, in space and in time, so as to reach us today. Peoples of different nations and ethnic groups, of different cultures and civilization, at different times, have uninterruptedly, for two thousand years, accepted, by grace, the event of Christ and proposed it to others in turn. On this elementary datum, which has no equal in the history of humanity, rests the Catholic concept of *traditio*. Tradition, in this sense, is based on “an ever present experience [...]. It brings to light, in clarified form, elements hitherto confined to the depths of faith and of practice, rather than expressed, referred to and reflected on. So this force of conservation and preservation is at the same time educational and initiatory. Lovingly turned to the past where its treasure lies, it goes towards the future where its kingdom awaits. It has the humility of faithfully rediscovering even what it discovers. It has no need at all to innovate, since by possessing its God it possesses everything; but it must continue to teach us what is new, since it continuously allows something to pass from the implicitly lived to the explicitly known. All those who live and think in a Christian way work,

<sup>25</sup> God's plan is a plan that is being realised in the today of history: “It is the mystery of what God has accomplished on earth in history, and does not cease to accomplish in earthly history in which he has become the chief actor by entry into it in all truth (L. Bouyer, *Church of God*, 161).

<sup>26</sup> See the study by Maurice Blondel, *Historie et dogme*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 387–453, esp. 431–453.

in short, for the *traditio*: the saint, who perpetuates Jesus in our midst, the scholar who recurs to the pure sources of the Revelation, or the philosopher who strives to open ways to the future and prepare the continuous creation of the Spirit of newness. And all this endeavour, distributed between the various members, contributes to the health of the body, under the direction of the head who alone, in the unity of a divinely sustained conscience, organises and stimulates its progress”.<sup>27</sup>

The power of the *traditio* as experience is weakened, even among Christians, by the force of the recurrent Enlightenment objection.<sup>28</sup> Is it reasonable to suppose that a man who lived two thousand years ago can be claimed to be present today? The genius of Catholicism replies to this objection in the great event of Holy Thursday. On Holy Thursday Jesus, in the institution of the Eucharist and of the ministerial Order, anticipates the offer of himself (his passion, death and resurrection) to the freedom of men and women of every time. If our freedom does not yield to the concrete datum of the sacraments and to the logic implicit in them, it is impossible to recognise the contemporaneity of the event of Jesus Christ with the *here and now* of every man and woman in history. It then becomes beyond our power to grasp the Catholic concept of *traditio*, to which the category of event, i.e. a fact that happens in the present as sacramental memory of a fact that happened in the past, intrinsically belongs.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, 434.

<sup>28</sup> How is it possible that “accidental truths of history” – to use Lessing’s words – may “become the proof of necessary truths of reason”? Cf. G. E. Lessing, “On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power,” in *Lessing’s Theological Writings*, ed. H. Chadwick (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957), 53–55. I dealt with this problem at more length in *Questioni di Antropologia Teologica*, 107–111.

<sup>29</sup> It is important not to confuse the Catholic concept of tradition with so-called *traditionalism*. Speaking of traditionalist groups, von Balthasar affirms: “They are right and they alone. Why? Because the ‘tradition’ is in their favour. And what does tradition mean for them? What has been. What has hitherto always held good. A line is drawn through the present in a definitive way. Are they conscious that all the schisms in the history of the Church – in spite of a prudent judgement, which takes account also of the positive appeals of ‘defeats’ – have a traditionalist origin? What (in some way) held good for the pre-Nicenes must also hold good afterwards: that’s why the Arians abandoned the Church. What held

What is the physiognomy of the encounter of this event with the human freedom guaranteed by the *traditio*?

This physiognomy is traceable in the New Testament writings as a whole. They document a dynamic event that places the freedom of the person in movement. In some sense, we may intuit its unmistakable dynamism right from the first pages of the synoptic Gospels (“the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go to Bethlehem and see this [event] which the Lord has made known to us’. And they went with haste” (*Lk* 2:15–16; cf. also *Mt* 4:18–25, *Mk* 5:1–20) or by considering the meetings with Christ described by the *Gospel* of *John* (cf. 3:1–14; 4; 7–30; 8:1–11).

Nonetheless this physiognomy emerges completely when the freedom of those who abandoned everything to follow the Lord is subjected to the supreme test. Emblematic is the sorrow, the sense of loss, of the two apostles returning to Emmaus in the evening (cf. *Lk* 24:13–35). It seemed to them that it was the end of everything, that a wonderful adventure had ended in failure. Jesus—now that the enormous hopes he had raised seemed to have been dashed—seemed to them like the several who, in previous decades, had come forward with the claim that *they* were the Messiah, arousing a movement that had, in the end, to give way to sometimes violent death, taking with them, into the tomb, the aspirations of a disappointed people. But an utterly unexpected fact happened: the resurrection. The Risen Lord appeared (here the appearing is an intensified form of seeing: in Greek (*óf the*) to the (at first) dejected gaze of the holy women and the apostles.<sup>30</sup> This same experience was given, in a precise way, to the two on the road to Emmaus. In

good at the Council of Nicaea must also hold good at Ephesus: that’s why the Nestorians abandoned the Church ... Each time people say: tradition needs to be taken literally. They fail to see that the letter without the spirit is fatal, that tradition is above all something living, that it is a forwards impulse, a continuous immersion in the living Word in prayer and contemplation. The line of demarcation is (so to say) drawn where I happened to have learnt something as a young man: it is just that which has to be accepted as dogma. It is so comfortable to rest on that and no longer have to make any further effort!” (H. U. von Balthasar, “Integralismus heute,” *Diakonia* 19 [1988], 226f, cited in Kehl, *Die Kirche*, 193, n. 51).

<sup>30</sup> On the resurrection see. H. Schlier, *Über die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1968).

the breaking of the bread they recognised Him, and it is this recognition that moved them to become his apostles: hen he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him... And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem" (*Lk* 24:30–33).

The physiognomy of the encounter between the event and the freedom guaranteed by the *traditio*, can be grasped, in a certain sense, by the way that the women and apostles are as it were put back into movement again, following the apparition of the Risen Lord. It would then find its confirmation in the full conviction of the new community, fruit of the Holy Spirit which He had promised.

Two important observations need to be made at this point. In the first place it should be pointed out that this being put back into movement again, is based on an incontrovertible fact: the One who appeared to the holy women and apostles as risen from the dead is in fact the crucified Lord: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself" (*Lk* 24:39; cf. also *Jn* 20:19–29; *Acts* 2:22–24). By the gift of the Spirit this event—this is the second observation—generated a conscious experience of extraordinary unity among his disciples. They retraced all the facts, the circumstances, the relations of the life they had lived with Jesus before his death as an essential part of a story recapitulated and made actual by the appearance of the Lord who died and had been buried, but who now revealed himself to them as risen from the tomb. The resurrection thus takes place in history as a meeting that happens unexpectedly to the disciples and is able to reassume, as pure gift, all the words, the gestures, the calling, the teachings, the instructions that had been begun when they had followed him along the banks of the Jordan or under the portico of the temple. The power of this meeting could now, once again, be rekindled: the resurrection, of which they are the witnesses, regenerates them: it puts them back into movement again.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> To sum up, we may say, with Schlier: "If Christ had not risen, then even baptism and Eucharist are empty signs and events, and the charisms nothing but empty enthusiasm: even the faith itself would be an empty illusion and a futile endeavour. Then there would be no

A final remark now needs to be said on the freedom that the event calls into question in the *traditio*. In the theological discussion of the dynamic of the *traditio*, sufficient respect is often not shown for the essential role of freedom. Cardinal Ratzinger reminds us that “we cannot pocket the Revelation, as we can a book that we can carry about with us. It is a living reality, which demands a living man as the place of its presence”.<sup>32</sup>

On the one hand, freedom, in as much as it is finite and part of the creation,<sup>33</sup> must meet an objective point as guarantee if it is to venture into the proposal of the *traditio*. That point is in the last analysis identifiable with the sacramental-hierarchical structure that maintains the indefectibility of the Church.

On the other hand, the power of the *traditio*<sup>34</sup> could remain ineffective if freedom were to be prevented from putting itself into movement.<sup>35</sup> That is why the Spirit of the Risen Lord never ceases to move the freedom of some, in quite personal terms and according to precise links of affinities, also at the community level, inspiring them to aban-

difference between an apostle and a genius, and the Church that the Risen Lord founded on Peter – “on this rock I will build my Church” (*Mt* 16:18) – would be no more than an ancient *thiasos* or a community of Qumran, and the gates of hell would long have prevailed over him. Then the ‘cause of Jesus’ would be nothing but a fleeting moment in the history of earthly humanism, and all of us would be swindlers who have ourselves been deceived. ‘In fact, however, Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep’ (*1 Cor* 15:20), affirms the apostle Paul” (H. Schlier, *Über die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, 49–50).

<sup>32</sup> J. Ratzinger, “Ein Versuch zur Frage des Traditionsbegriffs,” in K. Rahner and J. Ratzinger, *Offenbarung und Überlieferung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965), 35.

<sup>33</sup> For a brief analysis of the structure of freedom *Questioni di Antropologia Teologica*, 85–102.

<sup>34</sup> See what is affirmed by *Dei Verbum* on “the obedience of faith” (no. 5) and on Tradition-Scripture-Magisterium in the life of the Church (nos. 7–10).

<sup>35</sup> We may find the most evident proof of this affirmation in sacramental theology which has succeeded in distinguishing the objectivity of the grace offered in the sacramental celebration from the fruit that the sacramental grace ripens in the person who receives it. This is the classic, and from various points of view undoubtedly insuperable, distinction between *ex opere operato* and *ex opere operantis*.

don themselves creatively and persuasively to this hierarchical-sacramental structure of the Church (charisms).

A last observation. The method of the *traditio* is witness.<sup>36</sup> In the *traditio* the event is communicated from witness to witness (see *Acts* 2:22–36; *Ga* 1:1–10; *1 Ti* 1:1–4). It is striking that St. Paul uses the same verbs (*paradídōmai*—transmit—and *paralambáno*—receive)<sup>37</sup> to speak of the institution of the Eucharist (cf. *1 Cor* 11:23) and to proclaim the resurrection of Christ as essential content of preaching (cf. *1 Cor* 15; 11:2; 23; 15:1–11; *2 Thess* 2:15; 3:6). In both cases he says: “I received (*paralambáno*) from the Lord what I [...] delivered (*paradídōmai*) to you”: that is the *traditio*!<sup>38</sup>

The theological content of the affirmation that the Church is a movement should emerge from the above observations, though in a wholly provisional form and in need of further reflection.

The Church is a movement, because in her the *traditio* (experience) guarantees, in the *qui et ora* of every age, the meeting between the event of Jesus Christ and the socially situated freedom of man.<sup>39</sup> And those

<sup>36</sup> The profound link between the apostle, the mission and the martyr (*martyria* – witness) should not be forgotten: cf. *Rev* 7:13–17; 17:6; 21:14.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. F. Büchsel, “Paradidomi,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, vol. 2, 169–172; G. Dellings, “Paralambáno,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, vol. 4, 11–14. It should be noted that the treatment that these two words receive from these authors is rather minimalist.

<sup>38</sup> It is important to stress that the reference to the original event forms an essential part of the Pauline concept of tradition: “The essential point for Paul is that [tradition] has been handed down (*1 Cor* 15:3), and that it derives from the Lord (11:23). A tradition initiated by himself or others is without validity” (F. Büchsel, “Parádosis,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, vol. 2, 172).

<sup>39</sup> The Church is present, in her sameness and totality, in every generation, but she is always the Church of the Apostles, the Church founded upon them by Christ himself.

This is affirmed by tradition. In the way the fathers understood the word, tradition is above all (if not exclusively) something objective: what is handed down. Therefore, tradition is first of all the rule of faith, the synthetic statement of what every Christian, and the whole Church, at all times must believe... . However, tradition is also the Scripture... . Again, it is the organized and organic life of the Church, in her organic life of the Church in her hierarchical structure, as well as in all her sacramental and, especially, eucharistic liturgy. And beyond and within all this, it is the incarnate life of charity, the life of the

responsible for this handing down of the tradition, this *tradere*, are the witnesses who move new witnesses.

### III. UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND LOCAL CHURCH, CHARISMS AND MOVEMENTS

Let us now return, in this third and final part of our reflection, to the title of our paper: *The movements in the universal Church and in the local Church*, to offer some concrete perspectives.

#### *Universal Church and particular Church*

An examination of the concept of the Church as movement may perhaps shed new light on the relation between universal Church and particular Church.

The Church in herself with all her constituent elements is transmitted in the dynamic of the *traditio*.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, “The Church of

Spirit, the Spirit of God, in this entire body, which is the Body of Christ. All this is tradition, because all of it has been received and handed down: received from the apostles, who received it from Christ, who received it from the Father. But all of this, which once and for all was received and transmitted initially in and by Christ, never ceases to be received and transmitted. And if it is true—according to the formula of Vincent of Lérins—that what is transmitted is always what has been transmitted from the beginning, it is no less true and hardly less important to add that this is also transmitted, at every stage, just as it has been from the beginning in Christ... In this sense, which is no longer objective but subjective, tradition is nothing more than the continuity of the life of the Church in all her members, as a life that is always living and lived in the present (L. Bouyer, *Church of God*, 10–11). It may be noted that even Bouyer defines as one of the limitations of *Lumen Gentium* the fact that “the problem of tradition, which is essential for the life of the Church and for understanding it, was not even mentioned in it. Yet it was treated very fruitfully and at length by the constitution on Revelation and its sources. Thus one of the major tasks of present-day ecclesiology is to integrate what was said in another context with the authentic understanding of the Church”: *ibidem*, 171.

<sup>40</sup> To use an expression dear to the Fathers, even if it now difficult to maintain in its full sense, the Christian who lets himself be sent to communicate Christ communicates the *catholica*: “Originally [the expression ‘the Catholic Church’] meant simply ‘the universal assembly’—the perfect community, through space and time, of all those who unite them-

Christ, which we profess in the Creed to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic, is the universal Church, that is, the worldwide community of the disciples of the Lord, which is present and the active amid the particular characteristics and the diversity of persons, groups, times and places”.<sup>41</sup>

On the one hand, precedence must be accorded to the universal dimension of the Church, because she is co-essential to the nature of the event of Christ and of the sacramental logic that he inaugurates.<sup>42</sup> The witness, as attested by Holy Scripture and by the history of the Church, is sent to proclaim the Church of Christ as such.

On the other hand, how could this one and entire Church of Christ be able to be encountered by historically situated men and women, other than by putting down roots in precise contexts of human exist-

selves to Christ as their Saviour and are united to God by Him. “Una fidelium universalis Ecclesia” is the way the Fourth Council of the Lateran was to put it in 1215; and St. Thomas explains: “Ecclesia catholica, id est universalis.” And the second-century author of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* calls Christ “the Shepherd of the universal Church throughout the earth.” (H. De Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church* [London: Sheed and Word, 1956], 29). According to the viewpoint of *Lumen Gentium* inaugurated by *Ecclesiam Suam* and resumed by *Redemptoris Missio*, speaking of *Catholica* implies a reference to the Orthodox Church and to the Protestant communities, as well as to an authentically dialogic opening to all other religions, especially the Abrahamite ones.

<sup>41</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, [1992]), no. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Here we are aware of the difficulties raised by the use of the term *universal Church*. In fact, this term is, in translation, a conflation of two different Latin expressions: *Ecclesial universa* and *Ecclesia universalis*. Even the Code of Canon Law, for instance, never uses the expression *Ecclesia universalis*. This perhaps facilitates the more correct use, in the Code, of the category of *Ecclesia particularis*, since the parallel between the two terms and hence the opposition between them is avoided. Perhaps we would need to explore more in depth the ecclesiological category of *Chiesa universalis* on the basis of catholicity. Cf. G. Routhier, “‘Eglise locale’ ou ‘Eglise particulière?’” ..., art. cit., 294–295, nn. 48–49. Cf. further Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church*, no. 9: “For this reason, ‘the universal Church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular Churches, or as a federation of particular Churches’. It is not the result of the communion of the Churches, but, in its essential mystery, it is a reality *ontologically and temporally* prior to every *individual* particular Church”.

tence, characterised by the daily interweaving of affections and work? That is why the ecclesial dynamism needs another dimension that expresses the grace-giving submission of the Trinity to the heart of each human person placed in the primary social context in which he or she lives: the one and entire Church of Christ thus becomes particularised.<sup>43</sup> This, it seems to me, is a suitable way of identifying, in non-formalistic terms, the particular Church as proposed by *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>44</sup>

Universal Church and particular Church are in this way seen within the dynamism of the self-realization of the Church in the *traditio*. As St. Peter Damian suggests: “Thanks to the bond of mutual charity, the Church of Christ possesses so strong a cohesion that she is one in the plurality of her members, and, at the same time, mysteriously everything in each individual. Hence this universal Church presents herself, not without justice, as the one Bride of Christ and simultaneously believes that each soul is in some sense, by the mystery of the sacrament, the Church in her fullness”.<sup>45</sup> Universal Church and particular Church lose their character as containers into which the experience of the individual Christian, of parishes, of groups, of associations, of movements, etc. needs to be packed, and so re-acquire all their theological and anthropological force.

The Church, in fact, as the extraordinary Assembly of the Synod in 1985 reminded us, has as her only *raison d’être* the letting transpire the glorious face of Christ to the dramatically outstretched freedom of man today.<sup>46</sup> The Council itself introduced the question

<sup>43</sup> Reflections on the theological significance of the category of *place* (cf. G. Routhier, “Eglise locale’ ou ‘Eglise particulière?’”..., art. cit., 313ff, or the works of Tillard), could, it seems to me, find an element of equilibrium in this consideration.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *LG* 13; 23; *CbD* 11.

<sup>45</sup> St. Peter Damian, *Liber qui appellatur dominus vobiscum*, c. 5, 6.

<sup>46</sup> “The primary mission of the Church, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, is to preach and to witness to the good and joyful news of the election, the mercy and the charity of God which manifest themselves in salvation history, which through Jesus Christ reach their culmination in the fullness of time, and which communicate and offer salvation to man by virtue of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the light of humanity! The Church, proclaiming the Gospel, must see to it that this light clearly shines out from her countenance (cf. *LG* 1). The Church makes herself more credible if she speaks less of herself and ever more preaches Christ Crucified (cf. *1 Cor* 2:2) and witnesses with her own life”: *Synodus Episcoporum*,

of the universal Church and the particular Church not in the abstract, but on the basis of the concrete task of the members of the college of bishops. The successors of the apostles, in fact, *cum Petri* and *sub Petro*, accept the ministry assigned to them and, at the same time, decide to invest their existence in bearing witness by the exercise of it.<sup>47</sup>

This seems to us the right way to give proper emphasis to *communio* as a key concept of the ecclesiology of Vatican Council II. To quote the late Bishop of Lugano Eugenio Corecco, we may say that “the profound structure of the mystery of the Church is therefore essentially a structure of reciprocal and total immanence of the universal Church in and from the particular Churches [...] The principle of reciprocal immanence, and hence of inseparability, [...] forms the very essence of the notion of *communio* [...] The main obstacle to a correct conception of the ecclesiological formula *in quibus et ex quibus* consists in conceiving the universal Church and the particular Church as two different material entities. Understood in this way, they, as a result of their historical concreteness, tend to relate to each other with a dynamic of potential opposition or competition. In fact, however, they are not two material entities, but only two dimensions of the one Church of Christ”.<sup>48</sup>

This twofold dimension is also expressed in the exercise of *com-*

*Relatio finalis Ecclesia sub verbo Dei mysteria Christi celebrans pro salute mundi* (7 December 1985), II, A, 2.

<sup>47</sup> *CbD* 11: “Bishops should devote themselves to their apostolic office as witnesses of Christ to all men. They should not limit themselves to those who already acknowledge the Prince of Pastors but should also devote their energies wholeheartedly to those who have strayed in any way from the path of truth or who have no knowledge of the gospel of Christ and of his saving mercy”. Cf. *LG* 23 and 25–27.

<sup>48</sup> E. CORECCO, *Ius et Communio. Scritti di Diritto Canonico*, vol. I, Casale Monferrato 1997, 552–554. Any question – even of a juridical character – posed outside this perspective, would inevitably receive partial and ultimately reductive answers: “Outside this dynamic of reciprocal immanence, all the other solutions of the relations between universal and particular Church, are ecclesologically ill-founded, because they wipe out the one element or the other: the *in quibus* or the *ex quibus*”: *ibid.*, 553.

*munio* by the apostolic ministry peculiar to the college of bishops whose head is the Pope. From this point of view a sound ecclesiology must reconcile two important affirmations: by virtue of the nature of the episcopal college (which does not exist without Peter<sup>49</sup>), the petrine charism is immanent to each particular Church;<sup>50</sup> and the bishops also have a responsibility to the universal Church.<sup>51</sup>

In view of my previous remarks, I see no reason to seek to place such singular charismatic realities as the movements in the local rather than in the universal Church. They are inexorably, and simultaneously, referable to the Church as such, both in her universal and particular dimension. In fact, the ecclesial life of the individual member of the Church and of the Christian communities belongs *per se* to the Church as such in her twofold universal and particular dimension.<sup>52</sup> The most

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium* no. 22: "The college or body of bishops has for all that no authority unless united with the Roman pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head...".

<sup>50</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, no. 13: "Consequently 'we must see the ministry of the successor of Peter not only as a "global" service, reaching each particular Church from "outside," as it were, but as belonging already to the essence of each particular Church from "within." Indeed, the ministry of the primacy involves, in essence, a truly episcopal power, which is not only supreme, full and universal, but also *immediate*, over all, whether pastors or other faithful. The ministry of the successor of Peter as something *interior* to each particular Church is a necessary expression of that fundamental *mutual interiority* between universal Church and particular Church". See also *Lumen Gentium*, no. 22 and *Christus Dominus*, no. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *ChD* 6: "Bishops, as legitimate successors of the apostles and members of the episcopal college, should appreciate that they are closely united to each other and should be solicitous for all the churches. By divine institution and by virtue of their apostolic office, all of them jointly are responsible for the Church".

<sup>52</sup> In the same way, "every member of the faithful, through faith and Baptism, is inserted into the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. He does not belong to the universal Church in a *mediate* way, *through* belonging to a particular Church, but in an *immediate* way, even though entry into and life within the universal Church are necessarily brought about in a particular Church. From the point of view of the Church understood as communion, the *universal communion of the faithful* and the *communion of the Churches* are not consequences of one another but constitute the same reality seen from different viewpoints" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, no. 10). This affirmation by the Congregation helps to elu-

striking example of this fact is saintliness. The saint may have spent the whole of his or her life in a single place—sometimes in some out-of-the-way spot—but if the Church, following a precise series of authoritative interventions, proclaims that person a saint, she then proposes him or her, according to the logic of the *communio sanctorum*, to the attention of all the faithful of all the Churches.

### *Charisms and movements*

Let us now tackle the other term used in the title of our report. Where can we situate the charisms and the movements in theological terms?

Let us begin with a preliminary remark. We use the expression “charisms and movements”, even if the title of our report and of the Congress itself speaks merely of ecclesial movements, because these movements must be considered, in general, as the historical and providential development, worked by the Spirit, of the foundation charism granted to a person. Important questions arise at this point. How does one participate in this charism? How can the movement (through the approval of the ecclesiastical authority) be considered, from a certain point of view, the realization of the charism? How is the purpose for which the Spirit aroused the personal charism, as *gratia gratis data*, fulfilled for the benefit of all?<sup>53</sup> These and other questions, regarding the relation between charism and movements, are, however, subject, in turn, to other relations.

The Christian fact, as we have seen, encounters the freedom of man in all its variegated diversity of situations, temperaments and sensibilities. It invites it to make a decision. Now in making this deci-

cidate our reflection: that a person receives baptism in a particular Church does not mean that baptism is a reality to be assigned to the particular Church. Through faith and baptism the member of the faithful is inserted into the Church of Christ, which is at the same time universal and particular. The same may be said of the charisms, which, when they are authentic, are referable to the Church of Christ, which is at the same time universal and particular.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. G. Rambaldi, “Carismi e laicato nella Chiesa”, art. cit., 65ff.

sion freedom is not abandoned to itself. In fact, the Spirit supports the path of those who accept Jesus Christ also through the so-called *charisms*.<sup>54</sup> These, by virtue of their persuasiveness, encourage the acceptance of the content of the *traditio* which is the event itself of Christ.<sup>55</sup>

The unique support that the Spirit offers to freedom through the charisms enables us to understand why, in the life of the Church, the charismatic dimension is co-essential to the institutional one:<sup>56</sup> they cannot therefore be understood dialectically, but only within an organic unity. For this reason it has been possible to affirm that “the power of Christ present in the world within the Church reaches the person through a charism, a particular gift (grace) with which the Spirit invests the expressive, active, productive energy of a temperament, a person, a history. What use would be served by everything that exists in the Church as permanent, institutional reality, if it did not reach you with an illuminating and inspiring energy capable of investing your life and that of others?”<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Cf. A. Vanhoye, “Carisma”, in: P. Rossano – G. Ravasi – A. Girlanda, *Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia Biblica*, op. cit., 245–250. In particular, Vanhoye affirms that “no text (of the New Testament) expresses any opposition between charism and institution. Far from placing charisms on one side and official positions on the other, Paul declares in the same sentence that God has established a hierarchy of positions in the Church and other non hierarchical gifts (1Cor 12:28). The link expressed in the pastoral letters between a rite of imposition of hands and the conferral of a ministerial charism cannot cause surprise, since it is situated in the same line as the link between baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit” (247).

<sup>55</sup> CCC 799: “Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordained as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world”.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Address to the participants in the Second International Meeting of the Ecclesial Movements, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 10, 1 (1987): 478: “In the Church, both the institutional aspect, and the charismatic one, both the Hierarchy and the Associations and Movements of the faithful, are co-essential and concur to her life, renewal and sanctification, albeit in different ways and in such a way that there is an exchange, a reciprocal communion between them”.

<sup>57</sup> L. Giussani, “Commento. Appunti di una conversazione”, in: *L'idea di movimento*, Quaderni 10, supplement of *Litterae communionis*, no. 3, 1987, 25.

In this way, the Church does not live in pure abstraction, because she does not live outside the socially situated person. As Guardini taught us, a “reawakening of the Church in souls” is urgently needed.<sup>58</sup> The Church is thus made present in the person through charisms that are given to a few for the benefit of the whole Body. The common benefit of the charisms and the movements is shown by the fact that they make persuasive the re-proposition of the *traditio* in history. Charisms and movements, therefore, are factors by which the Church realises herself, in the sense that they are constituent elements of the historical self-realization of the Church as movement.

For these reasons, the need for charisms to be objectively guaranteed through discernment by the Church’s authorities belongs to the Catholic concept of charism. This fact is clearly affirmed by *Lumen Gentium* (“Those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts, through their office, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (cf. *1 Thess* 5:12 and 19–21”).<sup>59</sup>

The Church’s authorities, as the conciliar Constitution on the Church says, are thus called to express a judgement on their genuineness (the recognition, by the apostolic authority, of the charism as fruit of the Spirit for the good of the whole Church) and on their proper use (an essentially practical question). A judgement that is incumbent on both the Pope and the bishops in the exercise of collegial communion.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Guardini, *Vom Sinn der Kirche*, 5th ed. (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1990), 19.

<sup>59</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, no. 12.

<sup>60</sup> R. Blazquez, “Iglesia particular y ‘nuevos movimientos’,” *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 18 (1993) 266: “Presidiendo cada obispo su diócesis, en cuanto miembro del Colegio episcopal y establecido en la sucesión apostólica, tiene el deber de preocuparse de toda la iglesia (...) En el ámbito natural de la comunión se comprende que acoger dones ofrecidos por otras iglesias no es alteración de la identidad, ofrecer los propios no es presunción y orientarse por el discernimiento del Papa sobre la autenticidad de un carisma para abrirle espacio en la propia diócesis es connatural”.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Church as movement guarantees the constant offer of the event of Christ to the freedom of man today. The *traditio* is the objective experience of the indefectible being of Jesus with us until the end of time. If the *traditio* is stripped of the power of the event, it no longer speaks to man's freedom and is downgraded into mere traditions incapable of convincing; it can, at best, pursue an efficiency of business type as the way of an illusory modernization. If, on the contrary, man's freedom abandons the *traditio* and betrays the event without obeying it (sacrament-authority), it then loses itself on the violent and hallucinatory paths of utopia.

No child of the Holy Church of God, whatever his or her vocation, is guaranteed *a priori* against these risks. We find the principal means of avoiding them in obedience. Not by chance the *First Letter of Peter* calls Christians those who have been "chosen, and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:1–2).

# Charism and Juridical Status of the Ecclesial Movements

GIANFRANCO GHIRLANDA, S.J.

## I. DESCRIPTION AND GENERAL JURIDICAL STATUS

A phenomenon that had grown since the Council, notes *Christifideles Laici*, is the growth and spread of the so-called ecclesial movements, alongside other more traditional forms of lay association.<sup>1</sup>

By ecclesial movements we mean those forms of association that have their root and origin in a specific gift of the Spirit. This gift or charism brings together, in association, various orders or categories of faithful: priests; deacons; seminarians; lay men and women, married or celibate men and women, widows and widowers; consecrated men and women of various forms, contemplative, apostolic or secular; sometimes men and women religious. Ecclesial movements comprise those of all ages: children, adolescents, adults, the elderly. Even bishops are present in some. The variety of vocations within them is characterised both by diversity of age and by different socio-cultural backgrounds. Moreover, there is an involvement in them of the person in his totality, in as much as what is required of them is a life-style that conforms to the original charism; this often, though not always, leads to the pooling of property, shared brotherly life, submission to one authority, and dedication to the movement's apostolate, which in many move-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. no. 2.

ments is characterised by a missionary impetus and a marked ecumenical spirit. The denomination “ecclesial” derives precisely from the fact that their intention is that of presenting the communion between various vocations within the Church herself.<sup>2</sup>

To understand the charismatic nature of the movements and their insertion in the concrete life of the Church, we need to take as our point of departure a consideration of the action of the Spirit in the Church, in which, analogously to the mystery of the incarnate Word,<sup>3</sup> the invisible element of grace, the charism, assumes a body which is equivalent to the movement’s external juridical form. A collective charism is expressed in juridical form in the statute that regulates the life of those who share in the same charism, both within the body that this charism has given rise to and outside it; in our case, an ecclesial movement.

A collective charism is always given for the good of the whole Church,<sup>4</sup> and hence must be exercised as a service within her. For this reason, each charism, with particular regard to its genuineness and its proper use, must be submitted to the judgement of the ecclesiastical authority, which has the job of approving the statutes that express it.<sup>5</sup> The charism, once it is officially recognised in this way as beneficial for the Church, and its exercise regulated, to ensure it preserves its genuineness and utility, then becomes institutionalised, i.e. the group to which the collective charism has given rise becomes a canonical institute.

This helps to place ourselves in the perspective of the Church as communion, which is regarded by John Paul II as the central content of the mystery of salvation, hence of the mystery itself of the Church,<sup>6</sup> as the work of all three Divine Persons.<sup>7</sup>

So the Church is characterised, as *Christifide les Laici* says, by the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. Zadra, *I movimenti ecclesiali e i loro statuti* (Tesi gregoriana – Serie Diritto Canonico, 16), Roma 1997, 81-83.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 7c.

<sup>5</sup> LG 12b; *CbL* 24; cc. 299, §1; 314; 322, §2.

<sup>6</sup> *CbL* 18; 19; *PDV* 12; *VC* 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 4b.

diversity and complementarity of vocations and states of life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities, whose source of perfection and unity is the Spirit.<sup>8</sup> In this way the Church forms an organic communion, founded on the equality of all the faithful in dignity and in conduct, by virtue of the baptism conferred on them all, though differentiated by the variety of services and ministries they each perform in the realization of the Church's mission (cc. 204, §1; 208).

The Church is thus composed of various orders of persons, and each of these orders comprises all those who have received the same gift of the Spirit, perform the same service or ministry in the Church, are bound by the same obligations and enjoy the same rights.<sup>9</sup>

The various orders in the Church are hierarchically related to each other, round the ministry of those in holy orders, which is given the task of maintaining the unity of the whole communion: at the universal level, the Roman Pontiff and the Episcopal College;<sup>10</sup> at the particular level, the clergy.<sup>11</sup> The Church, in fact, is a hierarchical organic communion.<sup>12</sup>

If it is specific to the nature of the ecclesial movements to represent, within the Church herself, the communion between the various vocations, this nature can only be expressed in their acting in agreement with all the other ecclesial components.

Fidelity to the charism, as prescribed in the statutes, by those who have received it, respect for it by everyone—since it is a gift of the Spirit to the whole Church—and charity, must be the principles that determine the incorporation of the movements in the organic life of the Church.

At this point the question is posed of the juridical form assumed by the movements once they receive ecclesiastical approval. These ecclesial movements present such an originality in the life of the Church that it would be acting contrary to the Spirit to try to force them, at the time of their approval, into the straightjacket of already existing juridical forms.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. no. 20; see also Dogmatic Institution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 7 and 12.

<sup>9</sup> *LG* 13c.

<sup>10</sup> *LG* 13c; 18b; 22b; *NEP* 3; *UR* 2c; *AG* 22b; 38a; c. 331; 336.

<sup>11</sup> *LG* 28b,d; *PO* 6a; cc. 515, §1; 519.

<sup>12</sup> *MR* 4.

At the present time the ecclesial movements are approved as associations of faithful, in that they represent in practice the right of association recognised by canon 215 and endorsed in its ecclesial meaning and value by *Christifideles Laici*,<sup>13</sup> on the basis of the doctrine enunciated in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.<sup>14</sup> The discipline that canons 298-329 of the *Code of Canon Law* give to the associations of faithful is sufficiently flexible to permit the ecclesial movements to remain within this general category, but insufficient to regulate what is specific about them.

Given that the associations of faithful currently do not have the right of incardination, some ecclesial movements, to obtain this right, are forced to seek the approval of the group of clerics within it as society of apostolic life, and other lay members as lay association. Others, to obtain both the right to incardinate clerics and recognition of the assumption of the evangelical counsels by part of them as a real form of consecration, are tempted to seek the separate approval of various branches: male, female, clerical, lay, contemplative, apostolic, under forms of consecrated life and not; and then to form a federation among them. Others, again, and once again due to the incardination of clerics, wonder whether they could be raised into a personal prelature, without taking into account the fact that personal prelatures are expressly defined as exclusively clerical structures in canon 294 and that the laity, according to canon 296, can only co-operate with the work of the prelatures from outside.

All these solutions run the risk of jeopardising the unity that is the peculiar characteristic of the movements. History teaches us that institutes that derive their origin from the same founder and from a single charism, and that were each approved in an autonomous and separate manner, ended up, very soon after the founder's death, by each following its own separate road. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that in some movements the members practice the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience by means of vows or other binding obligations, with the real aim of a consecration of life, in the consciousness of

<sup>13</sup> Cf. 29 and 30.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 18a.

responding to a specific divine vocation, but with the deliberate intention not to fall into the category either of religious institutes or secular institutes.

The competent authority for the ecclesial movements is the Pontifical Council for the Laity. In liaison with other offices of the Roman Curia, on matters that involve joint responsibility,<sup>15</sup> the Council for the Laity promotes meetings to discuss the various points of view.

A comprehensive regulation of the question of the ecclesial movements by the Holy See, in the form of a single directory, might perhaps be desirable. But it would have to be sufficiently flexible to enable the movements, within its terms, to draft their statutes in such a way as to express their charism according to a specific life-style and the specific apostolic activities they each perform.

## II. THE PRACTICE OF THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS IN THE ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS

### *Difference between consecration of life in the movements and consecrated life*

There are many movements in which the members strive towards perfection of charity through the observation of the evangelical counsels assumed with the obligations laid down by the statutes, sometimes in a perpetual way. This is in conformity with canon 298, §1, which makes provision for associations that tend, through joint action, to the growth of a more perfect life.

This is based not only on the historical experience of the Church, but on no. 39 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. Opening its Chapter V on “The Universal Call to Holiness”, this number concludes by affirming that the holiness of the Church is expressed in various forms among the faithful, “who, each in his own state of life, tend to the per-

<sup>15</sup> PB art. 21, § 1.

fection of love, thus sanctifying others; it appears in a certain way of its own in the practice of the counsels which have been usually called 'evangelical'. This practice of the counsels prompted by the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians whether privately or in a form or state sanctioned by the Church, gives and should give a striking witness and example of that holiness".

So the practice of the evangelical counsels does not take place only in that particular state of life sanctioned by the Church, namely that of the consecrated life, but also in a private manner, in other words in the lay state.

The question is then posed how the practice of the evangelical counsels in ecclesial associations or movements differs from their profession by those who are in the state of consecrated life. Let us limit the problem to the ecclesial movements, without touching on the practice of the evangelical counsels by the laity in individual form.

Undoubtedly, both in the ecclesial movements and in consecrated life, the practice of the evangelical counsels is a response to a vocation. The human act is consequent on a divine act. The inward moral obligation to abide by the evangelical counsels is in essence the same in the movements and in the various forms of consecrated life. Even more so if they are professed in the ecclesial movements, as they are in consecrated life, by means of vows or other binding obligations.

The difference between them lies at the level of the intervention of the Church and hence of the form given by her to an act of consecration in the proper sense.

As regards the consecrated life, the Church, animated by the Spirit, in the liturgical act of the profession of the evangelical counsels—which assumes particular solemnity and significance in the religious profession, in the consecration of virgins and the blessing of widows—accepts the consecration that the person called by God wants to make of himself/herself, as minister of the present action of the risen Christ, by invoking the gift of the Holy Spirit upon him/her.<sup>16</sup> Divine consecra-

<sup>16</sup> VC 30.

tion—as call by the Father, present action of Christ and gift of the Holy Spirit—and personal consecration, as self-oblation, converge in a ministerial act of the Church, which effectively ensures that the person thus consecrated enters into and forms part of a state of life consecrated to God, which forms an integral part of the Church's life.<sup>17</sup> What was initially only on the level of the subjective relation of the person with God, assumes, in the profession, which is a sacramental, an ecclesial character in such a way as to objectively constitute a permanent form of life in the Church (c. 573). That is why the Church regulates the profession of the evangelical counsels in the consecrated life with laws and not only by the approval of the constitutions or Rules of the Institutes.<sup>18</sup>

The intervention of the Church is aimed at giving a form to consecration which we may call “ministerial”, which should clearly not be confused with the ministerial consecration that follows the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The services performed by the members of the religious Institutes, in accordance with what is expressly prescribed in *Perfectae Caritatis*,<sup>19</sup> are regarded as real ministries, in that: *a*) they are permanent services sanctioned in the Constitutions of the Institute, hence approved by the ecclesiastical authority and incorporated in the canonical regulation; *b*) they are professed in a permanent and public manner by those permanently incorporated in the Institute; *c*) the Church accepts the profession through the Father/Mother Superior of the Institute and thus confers on the person the ministry or ministries that, according to the specific mission that person receives from the Institute, he or she will exercise in the name of the Church (c. 675, §3).

In all forms of consecrated life, therefore, we find three dimensions of consecration by the profession of the evangelical counsels: divine, personal, objective or ecclesial; in the religious Institutes another is added: the “ministerial” dimension.

<sup>17</sup> VC 3; 4; 16; 29; 31; 32; 63; 105; cf. LG 13c; 43; 44b,d; 45 c; PC 1a,d.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. c. 576; LG 43.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. 8 and 10.

The practice of the evangelical counsels in the ecclesial movements is a reply to a divine vocation by the person. Often it takes a definitive form, which corresponds to that we have called divine consecration and personal consecration. This is not of course devoid of an ecclesial dimension and significance, in as much as each act of the Christian is performed in the Church and stands in relation to her mission of salvation. From this point of view, we may also speak of a “consecration by the evangelical counsels”, but not in a full and strict sense, since it lacks the consecratory ministerial intervention of the Church, which assumes the role of mediating the divine act of Christ and the human act and of officially entrusting a mission. This means that the members of the ecclesial movements, even of those approved as public associations,<sup>20</sup> though they practice the evangelical counsels, remain fully and entirely in the lay state or in the diocesan clerical state, assuming their own prophetic function within these states.

This is also what differentiates them from the members of the secular Institutes, who find themselves in a twofold state: they remain in the lay state in the midst of the people of God, with all the duties and rights of the laity (canons 711; 224-231), or in the clerical state, with all the duties and rights of diocesan clergy (canons 715; 273-289), but they also acquire the state of consecrated life constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, with other specific duties and rights (canons 573; 574, §1; 588, §1; 710-730).<sup>21</sup>

The services that the members of ecclesial movements perform, in as much as they are services recognised by the Church with the approval of the statutes, do undoubtedly have an ecclesial dimension, but are not distinguished as ministries. First, because in general such movements are approved as private associations, consequently the commitments assumed by their members are not recognised by moderators on behalf of the Church; second, because their members act not in the name of the

<sup>20</sup> For an analysis of the difference between public and private associations, see my article, “Questioni irrisolte sulle associazioni di fedeli”, in *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici* 49 (1993), 73–102.

<sup>21</sup> VC 10; VC 32.

Church, but of the movement. In the movements, as private associations, therefore, the obligations with which the evangelical counsels are assumed are purely private (canon 299).

Those movements established as public associations, on the other hand, do act in the name of the Church (canon 313; 116, §1), so their members perform services in her name; and these services are assimilable to ministries, not by virtue of a consecration received from the Church, but due to their belonging to a movement, which very often does not involve the assumption of the evangelical counsels for all its members. Also in the movements established as public associations, therefore, one cannot speak of “consecration by the evangelical counsels” in the strict and full sense. Therefore it is right that, in such movements too, the assumption of the evangelical counsels should remain at the private level and hence not be recognised by the moderator, to avoid it being interpreted as a public profession of the evangelical counsels (cf. canon 1102, §1).

Procedures for the annulment of the commitments assumed by the public profession of the evangelical counsels, in the event of abandonment of the movement or dismissal from it, depend on the nature of those commitments. This is a point that generally remains rather vague in the statutes of associations.<sup>22</sup> If the associations are public, the annulment ought to be regulated in the same way as for the Institutes of consecrated life (cf. canons 686-704; 726-730; 742-746). If they are private, on the other hand, dispensation is regulated by canon 1196, but, given that this would also involve the separation from the association or movement, provision could be made in the statutes for the dispensation to be invalid unless approved by the moderator of the association or movement in question.<sup>23</sup>

In conclusion, to avoid ambiguities, with regard to the practice of the evangelical counsels in the movements, as in any other lay association, it would be better to speak of “consecration of life”, “oblation of life”, “commitment”.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. B. Zadra, *I movimenti ecclesiali...*, cit., 132-134.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. J. Beyer, “Vita associativa e corresponsabilità ecclesiale”, *Vita Consecrata* 26 (1990), 935.

*The nature of the commitments assumed by the practice of the evangelical counsels*

In general, it should be said that the nature of the commitments involved by the evangelical counsels must be clearly enunciated in the movement's statutes, approved by the ecclesiastical authority, and not merely in its internal regulations. The reason for this is to ensure a greater guarantee of the obligations assumed, especially if the counsels are professed with a vow.

A particular problem is posed by the assumption of the evangelical counsels by married couples. In *Vita Consecrata* 62 a "necessary clarification" is made on this point: the Pope expressly declares, namely, that: "Worthy of praise are those forms of commitment which some Christian married couples assume in certain associations and movements. They confirm by means of a vow the obligation of chastity proper to the married state and, without neglecting their duties toward their children, profess poverty and obedience [...] However, [...] these forms of commitment cannot be included in the specific category of the consecrated life". The reason for this is that at least one element is lacking, which is considered essential by *Vita Consecrata* 32: "The Church has always taught the pre-eminence of perfect chastity for the sake of the Kingdom, and rightly considers it the 'door' of the whole consecrated life".<sup>24</sup> However, as *VC* explains, such exclusion "in no way intends to underestimate this particular path of holiness,"—i.e. the confirmation by vow of the obligation of conjugal chastity—"from which the action of the Holy Spirit, infinitely rich in gifts and inspirations, is certainly not absent".<sup>25</sup>

The context here is that of the discernment regarding the new forms of consecrated life, but the clarification also holds good for the "consecration of life" of the laity that the assumption of the three classic evangelical counsels involves and that may be considered in some sense analogous to the consecrated life as state of consecrated life in the Church.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Cf. no. 32.

<sup>25</sup> No. 62.

<sup>26</sup> *LG* 43b.

Conjugal chastity is a duty and a right arising from the sacrament of matrimony itself, so its confirmation also by means of a vow or other sacred bond, although it may manifest and support a spiritual dynamism that is undoubtedly the work of the Spirit, does not form a new consecration other than that of Baptism or the “virtual consecration” received in the sacrament of matrimony itself.<sup>27</sup>

The periodic abstinence required by natural methods of birth control forms part of the obligation of conjugal chastity. The periodic abstinence in order to devote oneself to prayer, as St. Paul says (cf. *1 Cor 7:5*), especially in connection with particular liturgical periods, is on the other hand a counsel. Nonetheless, such a counsel is different from that of chastity in celibacy, which involves perfect and lasting continence (cf. canon 599). Even in the case of a married couple who, after years of marriage, by inspiration of the Spirit, assume, by means of a vow or other binding obligation, the commitment to live a celibate life, this would not, in my view, truly constitute the “consecration of life” we have identified, since even this condition, while it may in some way approximate to chastity in celibacy, is not the same as it.

With further regard to married couples, another valuable clarification is contained in no. 62 of *Vita Consecrata*: namely that in professing poverty and obedience, parents must not neglect their duties towards their children. In fact parents have the obligation to respect the freedom of their children in the fundamental choices of their life. It would be prudent not to permit married couples to make a vow of poverty and obedience until their children are no longer minors. For a vow of poverty, sometimes taken to the point of the renunciation of all property, would violate the rights of children to a certain economic stability to secure their future and thus condition them in their choices of life; and a vow of obedience involving missionary mobility would seem to violate the right of children to enjoy the stability in their family life and social relations that is an essential condition for their harmonious human development.

<sup>27</sup> GS 48b; c. 1134.

Married couples must seek and attain their holiness in the loving fulfilment of all their conjugal and parental duties for which they are already “fortified and, as it were, consecrated” by the sacrament of Matrimony itself. They must express in their lives those values of conjugal chastity, poverty and obedience to each other and to the Church that arise from their Christian life.

### III. ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS

Some movements profess themselves ecumenical. To avoid misunderstandings about the meaning of this term, the clarification contained in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* should be borne in mind: “The Pontifical Council for the Laity has the task of [...] drawing up, together with the Pontifical Council for the Union of Christians, the basic conditions on which this approval might be given to ecumenical associations in which there is a majority of Catholics, and determining those cases in which such an approval is not possible”.<sup>28</sup>

The name “ecumenical association”, and hence also “ecumenical movement”, is ambiguous, because it may be applied to various kinds of association.

1) An interconfessional movement, formed of members of various religious confessions, with the same rights and obligations, may be denominated an ecumenical movement. A movement of this type is not subject to the Catholic ecclesiastical authority, because it is not an association in the Catholic Church. But Catholics, by virtue of the exercise of the right of free association, are eligible to become members of these movements. The Catholic group within them may express its own communion with the Catholic Church with an institutional link with the local ecclesiastical authority.

2) If an ecclesial movement, approved as private or public association, forms part of an interconfessional ecumenical movement, it is subject to the ecclesiastical authority. Given that it is a lay association, it is

<sup>28</sup> No. 31.

under the supervision of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The Council for the Laity has general responsibility in terms of matter; however, according to the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*,<sup>29</sup> it must act in liaison with the Pontifical Council for the Union of Christians, which enjoys competence in terms of objective.

3) According to *Christifideles Laici*<sup>30</sup> we may consider as ecumenical ecclesial movements only those that, in conformity with their statutes, admit non-Catholic baptised and request approval in the Catholic Church. In fact, we may infer from this document, first of all, that such movements are not those in which non-baptised are admitted as members, since these, not being members of the Church of Christ, cannot be members of an ecclesial association. Further, if non-Catholic baptised were to become the majority, the ecumenical movement would change its own nature and be transformed into an interconfessional movement with its related juridical consequences.

The *Code of Canon Law* says nothing about the admission of non-Catholic baptised as members of an association, either private or public.

As may be inferred from the process of drafting the relevant canons both of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* and the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, the two Commissions of reform aimed to prohibit the membership with full rights of non-Catholics in an association, whether it be private or public. However, the silence of the two Codes and the reasons adopted by the study groups, according to the mind of the legislator, may be interpreted in the sense that, in conformity with the statutes approved by the ecclesiastical authority, non-Catholics may be accepted as members though not with full rights, i.e. without them enjoying the same rights or being bound to the same obligations as Catholic members. This interpretation of what is implicit in the canon seems to be confirmed by *Christifideles Laici*,<sup>31</sup> where it is recognised that associations in which non-Catholics are considered members, but in which they do not constitute the majority, are eligible for official approval.

<sup>29</sup> Art. 21, § 1.

<sup>30</sup> No. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

The non-Catholic members of such movements will be regulated by a special statute, approved in conformity with the movement's general statutes. But they will never be able to assume control of the movement.

In my judgement, non-Catholics may participate in assemblies only with a consultative vote. In fact, the fear was expressed in the Commission for the Reform of the Code of Canon Law that if non-Catholic members were to become very numerous they could influence substantial changes to the statutes, thus jeopardising the nature of the movement itself.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, if they form a particular group within the movement, they may be nominated as moderators of this group. It is also very appropriate that the spiritual counsellor (c. 324, § 2) or chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant (c. 317, § 1) of the group of non-Catholics be a non-Catholic minister.

In the ecclesial movements in which there are members who practice the evangelical counsels by means of a vow, in my view non-Catholics can only make a promise or vow of chastity, poverty and obedience in private; its contents should be determined by a particular statute. The promise or vow should be made on condition that if the non-Catholic leaves the association or the movement, the obligations that flow from the promise or vow would then cease. In this way the Catholic authority or minister would not be involved in the annulment of the obligations assumed. Obedience, moreover, would refer only to the observance of the general statutes of the association, in so far as it does not conflict with the non-Catholic faith, and the observance of the particular statutes.

#### IV. RIGHT TO TRAIN CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS AND INCARDINATE CLERICS IN THE ASSOCIATION

There are various ecclesial movements or other types of association that include a sizeable number of candidates for holy orders. But these can-

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Communicationes*, 16 (1986), 290; 15 (1983), 84–85; *Nuntia*, 13 (1981), 91; 21 (1985), 32–33.

didates often have difficulties of integration in a diocesan or interdiocesan seminary.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* tackles the problem and affirms: “Youth associations and movements, sign and confirmation of the vitality that the Spirit assures to the Church, can and should contribute to the formation of candidates to the priesthood, in particular those who emerge from the Christian, spiritual and apostolic experience of these associative communities. Young people who received their basic formation in such associations and who refer to them for their experience of the Church, ought not to feel themselves obliged to uproot themselves from their past and interrupt their relations with the environment that contributed to determine their vocation, nor should they wipe out the characteristic features of the spirituality they learned and experienced there, in everything good, edifying and enriching that they contain”.<sup>33</sup>

Everything affirmed here should be connected with canon 246, §4, which gives the student the freedom to choose a “moderator suae vitae spiritualis” who need not coincide with the “spiritus director” or “spiritus directores”, or other priests appointed by the Bishop in the seminary, in conformity with c. 239, §2. On the basis of this canon, with the specific aim of giving concrete form to what is affirmed in the above-cited passage of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the rector of the seminary ought not to oppose a seminarian having as his “moderator suae vitae spiritualis” a member of the movement from which he comes and to which he remains spiritually linked, unless the rector has well-founded reservations about the person of the “moderator” chosen and not about the fact that he forms part of the movement in question. For, if the Church has approved the movement, she has also approved its pastoral method and spirituality.

However, adds *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “It is therefore necessary that, in the new community of the seminary in which they are gathered by the bishop, the youth coming from ecclesial associations and movements

<sup>33</sup> No. 68.

learn “respect for other forms of spirituality and the spirit of dialogue and co-operation”, and that they submit with coherence and cordiality to the formative instructions of the bishop and the teaching staff of the seminary, entrusting themselves to their guidance and appraisals. This attitude, in fact, prepares and in some sense anticipates the genuine priestly vocation at the service of the whole people of God, in the fraternal communion of the priesthood and in obedience to the Bishop”.<sup>34</sup>

It should be borne in mind, in fact, that to keep alive the spirituality that gave rise to the vocation in the first place and that still remains a fruitful source of spiritual nutriment, the seminarians coming from a movement that has a strong charismatic connotation spontaneously tend to form a separate group in the seminary, thus hampering community of life with the other seminarians.

It is just to maintain alive the charism they have been called to share, and at the same time avoid the tensions within the diocesan or inter-diocesan seminary, that in some cases the solution has been adopted of granting the right to the movement to train its own members for holy orders in its own seminary. But with the proviso that this seminary be placed under the responsibility and vigilance of the local ordinary, on whom is incumbent the task of establishing, in the light of clear criteria, the suitability of the candidates and admitting them to holy orders.<sup>35</sup>

But the dangers implicit in this solution should also be borne in mind. For a formation that is distinct from that of the other candidates to the priesthood could simply defer the problem of their integration to the time of their insertion in the brotherhood of priests and their full involvement in the pastoral activities of the diocese.

In my view, the solution of permitting a movement to run its own seminary should be considered in a wider perspective, in relation, namely, to the nature and objective of the movement in question and the problem of incardination. If the movement has pontifical approval as a public association and has an objective that is essentially missionary, and

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, no. 62.

not strictly diocesan, it could obtain not only the right to have its own seminaries, but also the right to incardinate.

The Code of Canon Law does not permit incardination in the associations;<sup>36</sup> so the clerical members of a movement are incardinated by a well-disposed bishop in his own diocese, though with a convention with the movement's moderators in conformity with its approved statutes, for service to the movement itself. Difficulties arise if there should be a change in the diocesan bishop and the new bishop, not well-disposed to the movement, should fail to take account of the convention stipulated between his predecessor and the movement. The new bishop might thus wish to dispose freely of the clergy incardinated in his diocese, with damage both to the personal life of the priests in question and to the service itself of the ecclesial movement in the diocese; this service can only be authentic and effective if it corresponds to the movement's particular charism.

The *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* in canons 579 and 357 §1 gives permission for a cleric to be appointed to an association by special permit given by the Apostolic See or, in the case of a patriarchal or metropolitan association, in conformity with canon 575 § 1, 2°, by authorization of the Patriarch, with the consent of the permanent Synod.

The affirmation of an association's right to incardination is introduced in the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* without discussion and without dispute.

Those who oppose incardination in a movement or other type of association argue that the granting of this right is contrary to the constitution of the Church, and contrary to the authority of the Bishop and his freedom and responsibility for the administration of the sacraments, the preaching of the word of God and pastoral action.

These motivations, however, are very weak, because according to the same argument religious institutes, too, ought not to enjoy the right of incardination, and, if that were the case, pastoral and apostolic damage would be caused to the whole Church.

<sup>36</sup> For an examination of this point, see my article "Questioni irrisolte..." 91-96.

One consideration of general character ought to be stressed here. A narrow ecclesiological view conceives pastoral, apostolic and missionary action only in relation to the diocesan priests incardinated in the territory. The nature itself of the Church ensures that her life is expressed not merely by the particular Church, but also by the universal Church. The particular Church can only in fact be understood in relation to the universal Church, in the image of which it is formed.<sup>37</sup>

Many ecclesial movements in which the evangelical counsels are professed, though taking due account of their different nature, do have characteristics similar to those of the institutes of consecrated life, such as universality and a collective charism which needs to be faithfully respected by everyone.

If the charism of an ecclesial movement is essentially diocesan in character, the incardination in the particular Church better expresses the bond with and dependence on the local ordinary, especially in pastoral activity. Conversely, an ecclesial movement, whose charism has an essentially universal and missionary character, recognised and approved by its establishment as a public association by the Holy See, ought to obtain the right to incardinate its own priests, with a view to a more effective apostolic and missionary service to the whole Church of Christ, both universal and particular. This possibility, admitted by the rapporteur during the Plenary Assembly held by the Commission for the Reform of the Code in 1981,<sup>38</sup> is now supported by the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, promulgated by the Supreme Authority in 1990.

The approval as public associations in conformity with canon 301, § 1 may be justified by canon 782, which declares that the supreme direction and co-ordination of missionary initiatives and activities is incumbent on the Roman Pontiff and the College of Bishops.

Lastly, other priests, assigned to a diocese, may be collaborators of the ecclesial movement.

<sup>37</sup> LG 23a.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Communicationes*, 15 (1983), 86.

## The Movements as Places of a Transfigured Humanity

Bishop ALBERT-MARIE DE MONLÉON, O.P.

The title proposed to me for this address is at once an affirmation and a hope. The ecclesial movements, which you represent at this world Congress, do in fact witness to the reality of a transfigured humanity, a new humanity. Yet this still awaits a greater irradiation, a more perfect fulfilment. Pope John Paul II, with regard to the ecclesial movements, speaks of a blossoming in the Church. I quote his words: "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our time is undoubtedly the blossoming of the ecclesial movements which, ever since the start of my pontificate, I have continued to indicate as a source of hope for the Church and for man. They [...] represent an undoubted newness".<sup>1</sup> Now, blossoming implies a transfiguration of plants and of nature. Moreover, blossoms, in their fragile beauty, also bring with them the hope for abundant fruits to come. Blossoming, even if awaited, prepared for, hoped for, always has a character of newness.

The movements, in their very great variety of expressions and forms of spiritual life, have given rise to new Christian life-styles and forms of Christian engagement. They began to make their presence felt in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, 19, 1 (1996): 1373; see also "Address to the Neochatecumenal Way," *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly ed., 5 February 1997, 9.

Church after the Second World War and especially since the Second Vatican Council. Many, in the Church and in the world, have been astonished by their newness, which no one really expected, and have asked themselves what it might mean.

This was emphasised by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his interview with Vittorio Messori, in the following words: “What is woeful at the level of the universal Church—and that is happening right in the heart of the cuisis of the Church in the Western world—is the rise of new movements which nobody had planned and which nobody has called into being, but which have sprung spontaneously from the inner vitality of the faith itself. What is manifested in them—albeit subdued—is something like a pentecostal season in the Church. I am thinking, say, of the charismatic movement, of the Cursillos, of the movement of the Focolare, of the neo-catechumenal communities, of Communion and Liberation, etc”.<sup>2</sup>

It is in the light of this character of newness of Christian life, of interior vitality, that I would like to tackle the ecclesial movements, as a blossoming that is at the same time a promise of new fruits to come.

In all their considerable diversity, the movements have common denominators, similar aspects, shared dimensions in which they appear as places of a transfigured humanity. I have identified six of these dimensions which seem to me essential and active in their promotion of a new humanity, while awaiting a fulfilment which still needs to be developed: newness and transfiguration are only possible in Christ and in the meeting with him; the new transfigured life has its source in Baptism; it is expressed in the search for the roots of the Gospel; the new life is deepened in sharing with brothers; it is irradiated in witness and concurs to the renewal of society; there is no transfigured life but that inspired by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Card. J. Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 43.

It is clear that each of these dimensions is vitally correlated with all the others. There is no meeting with Christ without the Holy Spirit, no witness without being rooted in the Gospel, etc.

## I. THE MEETING WITH CHRIST

At the origin, at the beginning of every new life, of every renewal of the person there is a meeting with Christ, a personal relation, in the faith, with the Son of the Living God. A transfigured humanity can only come about in contact with the One whose Transfiguration was at the origin of a new way of life. Jesus is the true and inexhaustible source of all newness. According to the ever admirable words of St. Irenaeus: "Know that he brought all newness by bringing his own person announced in advance: for what was announced in advance was precisely that the Newness would come to renew and revivify man".<sup>3</sup>

For many, the meeting—new or revived, unexpected or expected—with Christ as the Lord takes place either within the movements, during their gatherings or on the occasion of more personal exchanges, or it took place outside any movement, but led the way to them. For this possession by Christ often has as its consequence the desire to meet others and join a community of one's brothers. Experienced in very different ways, the personal meeting with Christ, by which one feels oneself united with Him, recognised by Him, has, as at the Transfiguration, a trinitarian dimension. It is the rediscovery of the Father in the experience of his loving-kindness, in the manifestation of his love. It is communion with his beloved Son.

And, lastly, it is, in the Holy Spirit, a luminous presentiment of another world, the opening of our eyes to the providential plan of God. The discovery of Christ the Lord is also accompanied, in those who make it, by a consciousness of their own limitations, their shortcomings, their sinfulness and the need for succour and forgiveness. In other

<sup>3</sup> *Adversus Haereses*, 4.34.1, ed. A. Rousseau et al., Sources chrétiennes, vol. 100 (Paris: Cerf, 1965), 846.

words, it is a conversion, which changes not only the way they look at life, but also transforms their outward appearance. As the Psalm says: “Look to him, and be radiant” (34:5).

The gaze turned towards the Lord in conversion is, in the first place, the gaze of the Lord who turns towards the person he calls. The Evangelist St. John tells us that Jesus, turning round, saw the two disciples who were following him: and “said, ‘What do you seek?’ And they said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher) where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see’” (*Jn* 1:38–39). On turning his face towards the disciples Jesus illuminated them; they were transformed, transfigured.

Similarly, when Andrew went to find his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (*Jn* 1:41), he must have had something luminous, something filled with wonder in his glance and in his face which must have touched his brother. That’s why the expression “the Movements, places of a transfigured humanity” is not just a pious metaphor. Very often, in fact, one may notice that the members of the ecclesial movements do have something radiant about them. Perhaps we no longer perceive it because we are used to it, but people outside are quick to see it, and it intrigues them, it attracts them. That the meeting with the Lord leaves its mark on the face and on the outward conduct of those who have experienced it, should be no cause for surprise. The communion with the living Christ is not only a purely interior spiritual reality: it is reflected in the whole person; it is something that can be remarked from outside, that others can see.

I would like to give you two examples of this, drawn from the world of the media. First, while examining the photos selected by reviews and magazines, Christian or not, when they wanted to give a positive image of the Church—this sometimes happens!—I remarked, at least in France, that, in the majority of cases, these photos were taken during meetings or gatherings of the ecclesial movements. These photos were chosen, because the faces in them reflect a serene, luminous, joyful mood, because they represent celebrations, activities, groups that have something happy, splendid, radiant about them.

A second example: I was recently told an anecdote about a television cameraman, who was sent by his TV channel to cover a Mass. After his coverage of the event, he spoke to a young woman, member of a new community, who had conducted the choir during the celebration: “I film many variety shows, where one trains the camera, by preference, on beautiful starlets, but they only smile if they see that the red recording light of the camera is lit up. But you, you had an amiable and smiling face throughout, even when you weren’t in the camera frame!” Without exaggerating the significance of these signs, it is good to recall them since we are speaking of transfigured humanity.

Let us say so again, the newness of life and apostolate encountered in the movements fundamentally has its source and *raison d’être* in the new meeting with Christ, with the newness of Christ. If the ecclesial movements “represent an undoubted newness”, as the Holy Father said, that newness is founded on this meeting, on the conversion to and union with Christ.

## II. BAPTISMAL GRACE

### *The newness of Baptism*

The newness of life, source of transfiguration, is based on the rediscovery of the sacraments of Christian initiation and, in particular, on Baptism and baptismal grace. “There is no new humanity—says Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*—if there are not first of all persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel”.<sup>4</sup> For his part John Paul II has affirmed: “It is no exaggeration to say that the entire existence of the lay faithful has as its purpose to lead a person to a knowledge of the radical newness of the Christian life that comes from Baptism, the sacrament of faith, so that this knowledge can help that person live the responsibilities which arise from that vocation received from God”.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> No. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, no. 10.

By uniting us with Christ, who died and rose from the dead, Baptism turns us into a new creation. “So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation” (2 Cor 5:17). The liturgy of the Easter week reminds us of this newness that Christ brings to those who believe in him by delivering them from the oldness of sin. This newness given by Baptism takes various forms.

First, normally, the baptised person is led to a renewed recourse to the sacraments in general and to the Eucharist in particular. “For—as the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* reminds us—it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings”.<sup>6</sup>

The conversion to Christ and the sacramental life generally bring to the faithful a new trust in the content of the Christian mystery and faith, in the Church, a strengthened assurance of being loved by God, of being children of the Father, a new, more compassionate, more trustful attitude to themselves and to others. By the grace of charity, a new freedom is given or rediscovered: a freedom that comes from trust, but also from humility, from an experience of fellow-feeling for others and for the world. One no longer lets oneself be imprisoned by stereotypes, fashions, ideologies.

### *The Cross*

The new life in Christ has its origin in his Cross. The Transfiguration of the Lord on Tabor heralds and prepares the “exodus” of the Cross. That’s why the movements as places of a transfigured humanity are also the place of the mystery of the Cross.

The joy of having met the Lord, and the new life which begins from that meeting, is always accompanied by a communion with the crucified Christ. The evangelical newness is not possible without renunciations, without purification, without the mystery of the Cross, otherwise it would be scarcely Christian and illusory. Not only because the Cross, with its checks, its sufferings, its incomprehensions is at the heart of the

<sup>6</sup> No. 23.

Christian mystery, but also because the baptismal life brings, it seems to me, a greater sensibility to the mystery of evil and its destructive consequences for humanity. It brings a new compassion in the face of suffering; and Baptism and the sacraments, the Christian life in general, if they are lived in union with Jesus, unite us with his Passion, of which one of the consequences is to imbue those who have suffered with a particular sensibility to the destructive effects of sin and evil. Suffering, which is so present at the heart of the modern world, may give rise to two kinds of contrary effect: either withdrawal, aggressiveness and a sense of bitterness, or, if it is united to the Passion of Christ, an ever greater sensibility and vulnerability towards God, one's fellow men, the mystery of Salvation. The trial of suffering engenders a kind of attentive thoughtfulness, almost a tenderness, that one finds in the risen Christ's attitude to the troubled and downcast Apostles.

So the meeting with the living Christ, the baptismal grace and the mystery of the Cross give the Christian a compassionate heart. Experiencing divine mercy, and bearing witness to it, an urgent appeal for the ecclesial movements, is one of the essential sources for a renewal and transfiguration of humanity.

### *The Word of God*

The rediscovery of the baptismal grace and its newness of life is matched with a rediscovery of the Word of God. Meeting Christ, abandoning oneself to him, being immersed with him in his death and resurrection, also means abandoning oneself to the Word of God as "pure and lasting fount of spiritual life".<sup>7</sup> At the Transfiguration the Word of the Father made itself heard, and the vision of the transfigured Christ gives to this Word an inexhaustible depth and makes the Apostles participants in this Transfiguration through the action of the Spirit.

The assiduous listening to the Word of God is one of the general characteristics of the ecclesial movements. Scripture is read and stud-

<sup>7</sup> *Dei Verbum*, no. 21.

ied. In this regard, one could transpose what the Holy Father said in an address to the *Comunione e Liberazione* movement in 1984: “It is significant, and it is good to note and to see how the Holy Spirit, in order to continue with man today the dialogue begun by God in Christ and pursued throughout the course of Christian history, has aroused numerous ecclesial movements in the contemporary Church”.<sup>8</sup> This passage, which immediately preceded the sentence quoted by the Holy Father in his homily on the Vigil of Pentecost on the blossoming of the ecclesial movements in their variety of forms, may be applied in a particular way to this dialogue that God in his Word continues to maintain with humanity, by his Church, through the movements and each of their members.

By abandoning themselves to the truth of Scripture, the faithful receive a new energy to grow in the faith, to be illuminated in the multiple aspects of their daily life and their activities, and to draw on the divine source of charity: “Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?” (*Lk* 24:32). There is a way of listening to the Scriptures with one’s heart that transfigures the person who meditates on them.

### III. REDISCOVERING THE ROOTS OF THE GOSPEL

Another common denominator that is revealed in the movements as place of a new humanity, is the desire to rediscover the roots of the Gospel and to commit oneself fully to them, especially by a life lived in greater poverty and brotherhood, a life of sharing, of self-giving, of freedom, of joy and enthusiasm. The need for communion and the real experience of brotherly communion does not mean that disagreements, and sometimes even discord, don’t exist, but it is precisely the sincere effort to rediscover the roots of the Gospel that helps the members of the movements to surmount them.

<sup>8</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, 7, 2 (1984): 696.

This desire to recapture the essence of the Gospel, i.e. to go back to the roots of the new life, is naturally founded in the conversion to Christ, in the desire to follow him more completely. Of course, it could be said that rediscovering the roots of the Gospel is no new thing in the Church, but one is bound to recognise that as soon as one rediscovers them and puts them into effect, they then become a fresh source of a real newness. The Gospel lived is always new—an ancient newness and yet ever new—to paraphrase St. Augustine. It is one of the reasons for the appeal exerted by the Communities and the new movements, many of which are eager to embrace the ideal that the Gospel proposes.

#### IV. NEED FOR BROTHERHOOD

The brotherly communion characteristic of the movements, in the desire for the Gospel experience of “See how they love each other”, is also an important dimension of a transfigured humanity. Transfigured does not mean an ideal humanity nor an altered humanity. Those transfigured are the same men and women with their individual temperaments and their weaknesses. But the brotherly life enables another humanity, more open, more considerate, more friendly, to appear. A community that lives a life of brotherly communion exerts a natural attraction especially on the young, because it irradiates something of the presence of Christ.

Of course, this need to rediscover a sense of brotherhood is based on man’s social nature, constantly in the quest for his brothers, even if they are hostile towards him, as in the case of Joseph in the book of *Genesis*, who went in search of his brothers: “A man found him wandering in the fields; and the man asked him, ‘What are you seeking?’ ‘I am seeking for my brothers’, he said ‘tell me, I pray you, where they are pasturing the flock’” (*Gen 37:15–16*).

But the new life in Christ demands more; it needs spiritual and brotherly support. It is easy to see how difficult it is, in a secularised world, in a fragmented and mobile society, to live the Christian life

by oneself alone. The faithful feel a greater need for mutual support, for places where they can meet together, exchange experiences, discuss problems, share the same ideal of life founded on Christ. That is why the Pope is fond of saying: “We can speak of a new era of group endeavours of the lay faithful. In fact, ‘alongside the traditional forming of associations, and at times coming from their very roots, movements and new sodalities have sprouted, with a specific feature and purpose, so great is the richness and the versatility of resources that the Holy Spirit nourishes in the ecclesial community, and so great is the capacity of initiative and the generosity of our lay people’”.<sup>9</sup>

This brotherly communion, discovered or rediscovered, transforms Christians, it liberates them, gives them a new trust, assuages them, and also purifies them, since brotherly life is not without disagreements and even opposition. That’s why it presupposes mutual forgiveness, over and over again: “How often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me. As often as seven times?” asks Peter. Jesus answered, “Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times!” (*Mt* 18:21–22). The meeting with our brothers also presupposes mutual endeavour. Brotherly life, whatever form it takes, involves community endeavour. So, at the basis of all the movements, whatever the diversity of their forms of life, one finds a commitment, without which the association would speedily dissolve or be no more than an occasional get-together. This commitment is lived in a variety of forms, in the search for deeper and more frequent bonds between the baptised. There is no community life without commitment, without a certain pact of alliance. The movements and the communities are characterised, in their diversity, by some fundamental needs to which those who want to become members of the group must commit themselves.

Another dimension of the rediscovered sense of brotherhood characteristic of the ecclesial movements as place of a new humanity is the appearance of a large number of vocations to the priesthood or to the

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 29.

consecrated life, all with the common denominator of being associated with the laity. These vocations are a particularly significant fruit of the Holy Spirit, in the aftermath and light of the Council. In his audience of 5 October 1994, during the Synod on the consecrated life, the Pope emphasised the newness of the type of consecrated life in the ecclesial movements or associations: “These ‘movements’ or ‘associations’, although they are formed among the laity, often direct their members—or part of their members—to the practice of the evangelical counsels [...] It is important to recognise in them a sign of the charisms granted by the Holy Spirit to the Church in ever new, and sometimes even unpredictable forms [...]. A great importance and a great interest are also aroused by the ecclesial vision of the movements in which is manifested the determination to live the life of the whole Church, as community of disciples of Christ, and to reproduce it by the deep union and collaboration between laity religious and priests in personal choices and in the apostolate”.<sup>10</sup>

The newness of life is expressed in the movements by the richness, variety and complementarity of vocations. And this diversity essentially comes from the variety of God’s calls, the varied graces (*poikiles*) mentioned in *1 P* 4:10, and forms the coat of many colours (cf. *Gn* 37:3; *Ps* 45:14) of the Church. It also responds to the extremely different and often complex apostolic needs of the modern world.

Yes, the meeting with brothers responds to the needs of mission, of evangelisation. As the Holy Father emphasised in *Christifideles Laici*: “In reality, a ‘cultural’ effect can be accomplished through work done not so much by an individual alone but by an individual as ‘a social being’, that is, as a member of group, of a community, of an association, or of a movement. Such work is, then, the source and stimulus leading to the transformation of the surroundings and society as well as the fruit and sign of every other transformation in this regard. This is particularly true in the context of a pluralistic and fragmented society—the case in so many parts

<sup>10</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 17, 2 (1994): 441–442; see also John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, nos. 3–4.

of the world today—and in light of the problems which have become greatly complex and difficult”.<sup>11</sup> *Christifideles Laici* also emphasises that the various motives that encourage the faithful to form associations—mutual support for a fervent Christian life in a secularised world, apostolic needs, etc.—have their roots in a deeper reason of an ecclesiological nature: namely, that “the fraternal life, understood as a life shared in love, is an eloquent sign of ecclesial communion”.<sup>12</sup>

I would like to cite *Christifideles Laici* again, and its recall of the fundamental role of the Council: “as the Second Vatican Council clearly acknowledged in referring to the group apostolate as a ‘sign of communion and of unity of the Church of Christ’,<sup>13</sup> the communion with Christ involves the communion with the Church and vice versa; and this communion is embodied and expressed in the life of the movements and associations of faithful when they respond to the criteria of ecclesiality recalled by *Christifideles Laici*.<sup>14</sup> The ecclesial communion, already present and operating in the action of each person, finds its specific expression in the action in common of the lay faithful, that is to say, a joint action aimed at a responsible participation in the life and mission of the Church. For “only from inside the Church’s mystery of communion is the ‘identity’ of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed”.<sup>15</sup> It is precisely this fundamental dignity, inscribed in the heart of ecclesial communion, that may give birth to a new, transfigured humanity, and a source of transformation for society.

## V. THE CALL TO EVANGELIZATION

I would now like to mention, if only briefly because widely recognised, the evangelising dimension of the ecclesial movements. Evan-

<sup>11</sup> No. 29.

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, no. 42.

<sup>13</sup> *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 18, cited in John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. no. 30.

<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifidels Laici*, no. 8.

gelisation, said the Pope to a Congress of the “New Humanity” Movement, of the Focolare Movement, has as its aim to spread the life-giving love that comes from the heavenly Father manifested in Christ. “The universal dimension to lead the whole of humanity into a new creation”.<sup>16</sup>

The movements, almost all of them, have a desire to get involved in and to transform the world, evangelising, as Paul VI says, “not in a purely decorative way as it were by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots, in the wide and rich sense which these terms have in *Gaudium et Spes*, always taking the person as one’s starting-point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God”.<sup>17</sup> In a slightly earlier passage of the same Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Paul VI defined evangelisation as follows: “For the Church, evangelising means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity from within and making it new: ‘Behold, I make all things new’ (*Rev 21:5*)”.<sup>18</sup> It is precisely this that is the vocation of the movements. They try, through prayer, to evangelise the family, young people, culture, professional life, political life, with a more particular emphasis on compassion, on care for the more disadvantaged. This dimension, in step with the desire to go back to the roots of the Gospel, does not remain locked inside us. It is an appeal to the universality of which Cardinal J. Ratzinger spoke this morning. This evangelisation is one of the lines of profound convergence of all these movements, beyond their very great variety of forms. Let me once again quote from *Christifideles Laici*: “Oftentimes these lay groups show themselves to be very diverse from one another in various aspects, in their external structures, in their procedures and training methods, and in the fields in which they work. However, they all come together in an all-inclusive and profound convergence when viewed from the perspective of their common purpose, that is, the responsible participation

<sup>16</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 6, 1 (1983): 775.

<sup>17</sup> Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 20.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 18.

of all of them in the Church's mission of carrying forth the Gospel of Christ, the source of hope for humanity and the renewal of society".<sup>19</sup> Or as the Holy Father said on another occasion: "At the heart of the most secularised societies, a *new generation of believers* is arising, [they] speak in a credible way to the secularised man of our day about a light other than that of the glitter of visible things, of a joy other than of earthly bliss".<sup>20</sup>

## 6. THE NEWNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Last but not least of the reasons why the movements appear as a place of transfigured humanity is because they are, as the Holy Father has said, "undoubtedly one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to our age".

There is no true newness, no transformed life, no transfiguration, without the Spirit of Christ. If Jesus, by coming into the world, brings all newness, it is because he brings with him the Spirit of Love, the Holy Spirit which is itself all newness and which can and wishes to renew everything. Now, the first effect of the action of the Holy Spirit, in drawing the faithful to Christ, is to arouse in them the desire for holiness, that is to say, the total, complete belonging to God. A transfigured existence is the call to holiness; a transfigured humanity is a sanctified humanity, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The vocation of the movements in the Church and the world today cannot be better summed up than as a vocation to holiness, in response to the universal call for holiness of Vatican II.

Why is that what most attracts people to the new communities is the primacy they attach to the Gospel roots and their needs? It is because they are the way of holiness, and holiness irradiates, it attracts. Holiness is not in the first place a moral perfection or the result of a planned life of asceticism. It is, above all, the complete and loving

<sup>19</sup> No. 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 11, 1 (1988): 564-565.

belonging to God. He welcomes the sinners that we are in order to turn us into his beloved children: “The vocation to holiness must be recognised and lived by the lay faithful, first of all as an undeniable and demanding obligation and as a shining example of the infinite love of the Father that has regenerated them in his own life of holiness. Such a vocation, then, ought to be called an *essential and inseparable element of the new life of Baptism*, and therefore an element which determined their dignity”.<sup>21</sup> This vocation to holiness is at the same time “intimately connected to mission”.<sup>22</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I would like to cite the great words of St. Irenaeus, which remain ever topical, ever new. “The Spirit descended on the Son of God who became Son of man: in this way, with him, the Spirit became accustomed to dwelling in humankind, to resting on men and women, to residing in the work shaped by God; he has realised in them the will of the Father and renewed them by enabling them to pass from their oldness to the newness of Christ”.<sup>23</sup> The newness of the Spirit, which is bestowed by the Spirit that comes from God, is the man transformed into the image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18) and, through him and in him, the first fruits of the transformation of humanity and even, one day, of the cosmos itself.

<sup>21</sup> John Paull II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 17.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Adversus Haereses*, 3.17.1, ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, Sources Chrétiennes, vol. 211 (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 330.

### **III**

## **The Mission of the Ecclesial Movements. Round Table**

110–111.

## A New Missionary Zeal

BRIAN SMITH

When we consider the movements of the Church today and reflect on a new missionary zeal, we may wish to recall the extraordinary account of the great Saul who would become Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul carried out the most extraordinary apostolic mission within the early Christian communities.

Born at Townsville (Queensland, Australia) in 1931, he is President of the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, and is member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

St. Paul's encounter with Christ not only changed the way he thought about and understood God, but changed his whole life. As a result of this new-found relationship with Christ, an incredible mission of apostolic work opened before him. He was called not only into the relationship with Christ, but also into the mission of Christ. Paul is now considered one of the best theologians the Church has ever known.

His journey began with life as a devout Pharisee (cf. *Gal* 1:11-14) and reached its amazing culmination in his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (*Acts* 9:5). This revelation was to give Paul a unique insight into the union between Christ and his members. It was an insight that would shape all of his future teaching, but there was yet more that Paul needed to experience and learn. The encounter with Christ resulted in blindness until Ananias, a disciple, would come and administer the Sacrament of Healing and Baptism (cf. *Acts* 9:17-18) and offer him a word of wisdom regarding his call and future mission. In Jerusalem, Barnabas introduced Paul to the Apostles and he became a witness with them in the city (cf. *Acts* 9:27).

This has also been the experience within Catholic Charismatic

Renewal and Charismatic Communities. The experience of the so-called “Baptism in the Spirit” or “Release in the Holy Spirit”, however wonderful it is in itself, needs the apostles to bring the vital life of the Sacraments themselves to the new disciple, to enable him to learn wisdom from the Church’s own journey of faith, to walk in Christian fellowship with others of the same heart and mind (cf. *Acts* 2:42–47), and to work in harmony with the local Apostle (Bishop) and the Universal Pastor.

In the Charismatic Renewal and Covenant Communities we find these same parallel elements of St. Paul’s journey to faith, which can be summarised as follows.

*Encounter with Christ*: a personal encounter and relationship; a search for God continuing in everyday life; a sense of call and mission that flows from Baptism.

*Renewal in the Holy Spirit* and the release of the charisms, not to be seen as trophies or rewards, but as means of encouragement, consolation and building up the Body of Christ.

The *Sacraments*, especially those of Healing, Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

*Fellowship and Communion*: the sense of belonging; community as a gift of the Spirit in which single, family life, the consecrated state and the call to the priesthood can be nurtured in a supportive way.

The *sense of Mission*: the need to tell others what God is doing in our lives in inviting them to experience the same; it is in a community context that Christian formation can be given and the new convert to the Lord can be formed in the mind of the faith of the Church.

This new missionary zeal, if it is to remain effective, must arise out of such an encounter with God through Jesus Christ. It needs as a basis a community from which ministry can be sustained over a long period and in difficult circumstances. It needs to work in harmony and community with the local Bishop and the Universal Pastor.

The call to mission must remain in union with Jesus and remain open to his Spirit in an ongoing way if we are to fulfil our baptismal responsibility, and so fulfil our destiny in Jesus. These graces of

Renewal are given not only for the renewal of the Church, but so that the Church herself may become the authentic witness before the world. The world today hears many voices calling, sees many messiahs, knows of many broken promises. If we as Christians want to be the proclaimers of the Good News of Jesus Christ, we must prove to be his authentic witnesses by the quality of life we lead. It is the authenticity of a life lived for God that causes the world to reflect again and to ask how this is possible without the powerful presence of God.

Jesus reminds us: “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By thus my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples”. (Jn 15:7,8).

The world longs to encounter its Saviour Jesus Christ. At the same time, we remember that Christ has entrusted his mission to the Church. This is a time when we must take seriously our responsibility to be the hands and feet of Jesus so that the world may experience his love, compassion and healing.

# The Task of Education

GIANCARLO CESENA

In addressing this theme, I feel I must cite three points in which Msgr. Giussani summarises the problems raised by the task of education in his book *Il rischio educativo* [The Educational Risk], especially in its introduction.<sup>1</sup> However, I would first like to make a preliminary remark: some time ago, in my role as a physician specialised in industrial medicine and engaged in research on work-related stress, I was invited to speak about the task of educators to a group of students and graduates of the Catholic University in Milan. During our discussions, it occurred to me to ask a question: “What in your view is the difference between educational work and psychological work; what is the difference between psychologists and educators?”. I got no reply. And it was then that I began to have confirmation of why educational failures end up with the psychologist and why educators so easily end up being coordinated by psychologists; and to understand how disastrous it is for modern society to understand education as a minor form of psychology and to believe that it is words and analyses that convince.

In another book *Porta la speranza* [Bring Hope], Msgr. Giussani makes an observation that seems to me fundamental. He says (this is the gist of it): “How many of you have had the experience, in your relations with young people, of saying to them ‘Do you understand what I’m saying?’ and they reply, ‘Yes’. ‘Do you have any objections to what

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<sup>1</sup> L. Giussani, *Il rischio educativo: Come creazione di personalità e di storia* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1995), XIII–XXV.

I'm saying?'. And they reply, 'No'. 'So do what I tell you'. And they reply, 'No'. This happens very frequently, especially in children's relations with their parents".<sup>2</sup> Why is this so? Because, says Msgr. Giussani, education must address itself to something more fundamental in existential experience than just the young person's intellectual gifts, his or her intellectual ability. Education must address an essential, almost biological dimension of the person: his freedom. The person is a unity, a whole; and the person acts by keeping together everything, biology, psyche and anything else. But it is within this unity of the person that the soul, i.e. freedom, emerges. Education addresses itself to freedom. To evoke freedom, it is necessary to propose the truth. And from this point of view we understand how important education is. It is important precisely because it does not substitute freedom, but helps it to develop; it awakens and deepens our awareness; it places the person face to face with the need to belong, to participate, to be with others. In the second place, education is important, because education is the future. The educational task concerns the future, it concerns the young, it concerns what will become of us.

It is at this point that I wish to tackle the three points made by Msgr. Giussani.

Point One: If it is truth that gives rise to freedom, and if education is the search for truth, then it is impossible *not* to start out from the tradition. For if in educating I communicate the truth, that implies that I communicate something that is greater than I, not something I invented myself, but something that was handed down to me, something given to me, something I myself obey. In fact, the fundamental factor of education is to invite young people to follow something that I myself follow, because the person being educated must be able to check out what the educator is proposing to them. Otherwise it is not education: it is mind control, an attempt to enslave, to gain possession of the young person. Moreover, the fact that education must start out from the tradition is very important in practical terms. I remember the first time I

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ibidem*, *Porta la speranza* (Genoa: Marietti, 1997), 56.

heard Msgr. Giussani, and that was from a tape recorder, and the gist of his remarks was roughly this: “Many abandon the Church, the Christian faith simply because they don’t know it. However, many continue to have the problem of truth. But how can they, how can you, search for the truth? Do you sit down and study all cultural hypothesis, all religious hypothesis? One lifetime wouldn’t be enough for that. To seek the truth, you begin from the tradition of which you form part, you begin with what has been given to you, with what you have before you as a reality that is close to you: it is from that you set out to tackle all the rest. Your heart and your mind will tell you whether what you’re doing is right or wrong”. I had never heard tradition being proposed in these terms. In fact (and this is the second point, which seems to me extremely significant), tradition, if it is to be encountered, recognised, if it is to be lived, needs to be incorporated in, form an integral part of a living experience: it needs to be made present. Tradition, in other words, is not merely a past, something that has happened in the past, that has now been given to me, but that is no longer alive. As Msgr. Scola said yesterday, tradition is something that is living *now*, that is present *now*. If someone is to get interested in the past, he has to encounter it in the present, in something that exists today, in something that arouses his interest; that is, it arises only from an event, from something that affects personal freedom, from being provoked. And in fact education is, in my view, above all a form of provocation of freedom, a way of provoking it to accept what is true. The truth of this proposition was brought home to me very forcibly by my own experience. I was educated as a Christian, in a fairly systematic and strict way, in the Fifties. I grew up in an area to the north of Milan, the Brianza (known as the Vandée of Italy), where there was a system of Catholic education with preachers, nuns, etc. I left the Catholic faith at the age of 14. I left it because it consisted of a series of principles which I did not understand, of dogmas, of an ethical code which I failed to live up to in my life—until, that is, I encountered the movement. What did it mean to encounter the movement? It meant that the same faith that had been given to me by my parents, the same faith in which I had been brought

up but that I had lost because I had not understood it, I now re-acquired in a renewed form, I re-encountered in a form more suitable to me. What, after all, is charisma? (I don't say theologically, but according to my own experience)? It is someone who explains to you things in the best way for you to be able to understand them. For me the meeting with the movement was the meeting with Christianity, in a way that exactly corresponded to what I was seeking. And what was I seeking? I was seeking for my personality to be developed in its totality, i.e. as a capacity to enter into relation with reality, as a capacity for reason red-soning, and for affection. Above all, reason: in other words, the fact that to be Christian doesn't mean sacrificing one's mind; on the contrary it needs to be used. I think it was Paul VI who asked himself whether a mind had been given to Catholics for them to use or for them to offer up in sacrifice. Being Christians means having a more adequate relation with reality, as we heard in the last intervention yesterday evening; it means a truer humanity, corresponding more closely to what people wish to be. For the truth is what we are made for; it is what makes us correspond more closely to how we are made.

Third and final point: Education must be an education in criticism, in a critical capacity. Here a clarification needs to be made about the meaning of words, for the word *criticism* has now assumed a connotation of eminently negative type, of destructive type, just as the word *problem* has been made to coincide with the word *doubt*. Criticism, however, is like peeling a prickly fruit: it means stripping away the things that are no good in order to allow the positive side to emerge. That is what criticism means, because its function is not at all to identify the things that are no good, the negative side. We live for what exists, for what exists in a positive way, not for what is not there. Similarly the fact that life is problematic means that life poses continuous problems, not that the approach to life is determined by doubts. Doubt moves nothing, doubt paralyses. So, education, if it is a provocation to criticism, is a provocation not just to experience, but to *judge* what is experienced, in other words to evaluate the positive or negative side of what is experienced. Within each human person there exists a princi-

ple of the good, the beautiful, the true, which inevitably leads that person to evaluate, to judge, to verify everything he encounters. It is characteristic of the human person to say: "That is right, that is wrong". And it is characteristic of man to seek the sense, the meaning in everything he encounters. What is the meaning of things? The relation that things have to each other. The relation that things have with the totality, with Being. And a human glance is a glance that suggests a meaning, suggests a relation. My dog's glance is not like that. Because if I look at myself (and this is also a great ecumenical principle, for what is ecumenism but the valorisation of this common earth in which all humankind have been placed, and a recognition of the one striving that draws them all to God?), I have to recognise that through something present, a present experience which I have come across, I have received a message that comes from far back in time: I have been invited to consider it, to compare it with my own heart, with how I am made, to evaluate its reasonableness, its correspondence with reality, and to recognise its truth, i.e. to recognise that this is how things are and hence to accept it, with the help of companionship, communion, friendship, without which I would be at the mercy of the tossing and turning of my soul, my fragility. We need friends to fulfil our physiognomy as human beings, as personal conscience and as a position we have before everyone. I would like to conclude with a sentence of Msgr. Giussani, which seems to be particularly significant of the fact that education is about opening up people's minds, it is about appealing to their sense of reason; it is a provocation of freedom. Msgr. Giussani says: "From my first very hour of teaching I've always said that I'm not there so that you should consider as your own the ideas I give you, but to teach you a true method for judging the things I tell you. And the things I tell you are an experience that is the result of a past two thousand years old. In other words, education is not a substitute for freedom, but is a proposal to freedom to verify a working hypothesis about truth".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Il rischio educativo*, XV.

# The Building of a more Human World: Culture and Work

LUIS FERNANDO FIGARI

Ever since the congresses of the ecclesial movements held in the course of the last decade, I have considered how important it is for those of us who have been blessed by the gift of the Holy Spirit by having been called to form part of this richness of the Church in our time—i.e. the ecclesial movements—to join together, each according to the charism we have received, to examine, in a spirit of prayer and brotherly communion, the responsibility to the service of evangelisation that God presents to each movement in his divine Plan, in communion with the service of the mission of the Church. Charisms have a fruitful dimension in the building up of the whole Church. I firmly believe that every gift—for which we must rejoice and be thankful—brings with it an ecclesial responsibility that, with God’s grace, and in all humility, we must make an effort to face up to and put into practice. Reading the signs of the times, we can discern that God in his Plan counts on the free response of us all to the gift of love he gives to the different members of the movements in ecclesial communion. This is how the Holy Father has expressed it, and the great Meeting with His Holiness with which this Congress will conclude, will manifest it very clearly.

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## THE “ANTI-CULTURE”

As Pope John Paul II has said more than once, we are living today in an “anti-culture” or a “culture of death”. This situation certainly does

not respond to God's providential scheme for the human being, nor for his life in society. Paul VI, contemplating the world situation, asked himself: "Where doesn't the ocean of incredulity, indifference and hostility reach today?"<sup>1</sup> Some twenty-one years later Pope John Paul II referred to what he called the "cultural diaspora of Catholics";<sup>2</sup> he described it as a "conviction that every idea or view of the world is compatible with the faith", and also as the faith's too facile acceptance of political and social forces that oppose or do not pay heed to the principles of the person and respect for human life, the family, freedom, solidarity, and the promotion of justice and peace.<sup>3</sup> Functional agnosticism, galloping relativism, the grave crisis of truth, a weak or dissenting attitude, and the acceptance of theories or ideologies that lead to the development of an "anti-culture", of a world that by turning its back to God becomes a threat to the fulfilment of the human being, all this is not something from which we can escape in the false illusion of being able to protect ourselves by marginalising ourselves from society in a kind of ghetto or bunker, in the belief that in this way the serious challenge of this "world" and this "cultural diaspora" will vanish. On the contrary, this tragic reality speaks loudly and clearly of the need to renew Christian life. It represents an urgent appeal that rejects any facile optimism, any form of triumphalism by which we may hope to ignore what is happening. Rather, this situation brings to mind some words pronounced by Pope Paul VI, taking his inspiration from the Apostle of the Gentiles: "Evangelising is not for us an optional invitation, but an urgent duty".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI* 12 (1974): 985.

<sup>2</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* 18,2 (1995): 1204–1205.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI* 12 (1974): 984.

### *God's plan*

God, who is Life, Freedom and Love, is also the God of life, freedom and love. He gives us these dimensions of being. He gives us the gift of faith that illuminates the human journey, and invites us to share the joyful experience of meeting the Lord Jesus in the Church. Man was therefore created to share in the love of the Trinity<sup>5</sup> and to reflect this love in his intimate life, in his relations with others, and in his being and acting in the world.

God's great Plan, rooted in the dynamics of communion, reconciliation and participation, to which the fundamental impulses of those he has created in his image respond, ordained for human beings a culture of life, freedom and love that will lead to their own realisation as persons. A sound theology of creation expresses a positive dynamic in which man is transformed into the fundamental co-operator of God.

God creates everything, gratuitously, from a supreme abundance of love, and everything he creates is good, as may be read at the beginning of Holy Scripture. There we are told, through images, that peace, harmony and joy were connate with humankind, who co-operated with God in fostering the creation. In the garden of Eden work itself has this meaning of co-operation. But by making bad use of his freedom, the human being sinned; he distanced himself from God, repudiating the divine Plan and thus introducing the dynamics of sin, of destruction, in himself and in all the creation, in his own cultural expression and in the search for meaning for which, from the depths of his being,<sup>6</sup> he yearns as a response to infinity. The horizon of the marvellous gifts of God thus became darkened by the dynamics of sin, by the obscurity of death, by the abuse of freedom, by slavery, hatred, injustice, irreconciliation, by anti-love. But it did not disappear; indeed, deep down, in the depths of our being, it remains a vital force. From the beginning of history the mystery of wickedness (2 *Thess* 2:7–12) has operated on man.

<sup>5</sup> Fourth General Assembly of Latin-American Bishops, Santo Domingo, 12–18 October 1992, no. 121.

<sup>6</sup> *Mismidad* in the original Spanish text.

It has sought to distort human freedom—which ought to direct us to truth, goodness, beauty, in short to God—in order to alienate the life of each man, of societies and cultures, from the way ordained by the Lord of History. We are witnessing with sadness, points out the Holy Father, “the distressing perplexity of a man who often no longer knows who he is, whence he comes and where he is going”.<sup>7</sup>

The annunciation and incarnation of God’s Eternal Word in the immaculate womb of the forever Virgin Mary and their consequences, the mysteries of Christ’s Life, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, remove us from a perspective that could be tinged with pessimism, and place us instead in the paschal horizon, full of hope. In that horizon, by means of the power of grace, which calls us to co-operation, we enter into a living relationship with the Lord Jesus in an ascensional dynamism that transforms the meaning of human activity and leads us to a full life.

### *Man, creator of culture*

Right from the second narration of *Genesis*, and even before the original sin, the human being appears as an authentic creator of culture. The Creator presents an unnamed universe to man so that, by designating the names of all the creatures in it, (*Gen 2:19*), he may humanise the natural world by which he is surrounded and thus transform it into his cultural home.

We see that the human being is invited to express himself through mental codes and thus to integrate himself into the dynamics of the creation.

God himself appears as He who invites man to fashion the human world, by his action and co-operation with the Creator, thus impregnating the earth and the whole universe of culture with the interior features he received by having been created in the “image and likeness” of God. In this manifestation of himself, to which he is invited by God,

<sup>7</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 84.

the human being enters a horizon in which the revelation of the intrinsic reality of the person is projected and at the same time fostered, invested with an ineradicable theological dimension.<sup>8</sup> Human action generates the sphere of culture, in which man appears above all as “he who is” the human being. From this obvious primacy, it is then irradiated both towards man’s inner self and to the world of the objects he produces and places at his personal service and at the service of others, through work which, as the Pope says, “is a fundamental dimension of man’s existence on earth”.<sup>9</sup> Thus the culture that man creates by his own action is at the same time the expression and sphere of the human being. In this process, through the self-manifestation of the depths of his being, man also realises himself. And if his human action is properly guided, he also co-operates with God in the dynamics of the creation. The consciousness of this reality in his daily life, in harmony with the fulfilment of God’s plan, offers an occasion for the realization of man’s own plans, and of his own nature. And in the projection of himself man humanises the cosmos. He learns to discover that all his great achievements “are the sign of God’s greatness and the fulfilment of his mysterious design”.<sup>10</sup>

Just over a year before his elevation to the see of St. Peter, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła affirmed that the human being, as creator of culture, expresses himself by acting, by producing effects or results; to some extent he thus achieves self-realization and even “in a certain sense ‘creates’ himself”: he realises himself and achieves in some sense his inherent potential.<sup>11</sup>

Man’s vocation as “creator of culture” is a constant warning to us of the dangers of conceiving the human being as a person reduced to

<sup>8</sup> I have taken some ideas for this discussion of man as the creator of culture from Karol Wojtyła’s *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), especially from the essay “The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis,” 263–275.

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, no. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. K. Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Constitution of Culture through Human Praxis,” 266.

the various actions of the work process or what his work, be it intellectual or material, produces. In the self-realization of man, we must never ignore the ontological and praxiological primacy of the person as such, a person created by God in his image and likeness. In his daily life, therefore, the ultimate horizon will be the meaning beyond which there can be no greater. So, in proportion as his self-manifestation day after day responds to his primary ontological goal and his striving towards the religious horizon—in which the relationship with God represents the nucleus—, the humanising process of the self-manifestation of the human being and of his work both personalises him and contributes to the humanisation of society and its imprint on the universe.

Just this dimension as bearer of meanings and values, through which the human being freely and dynamically assumes his own God-given being and incorporates himself in the world, is charged with certain realities by which his world is designated in terms of values and anti-values. Hence, the enormous importance of taking sin into consideration. The presence of sin is an obstacle for the proper humanising self-manifestation of the person in work and in the construction of culture. It reduces the space man should have on earth to live in love and communion, a space of fulfilment and not a battleground on which destruction reigns.<sup>12</sup> That's why Pope John Paul II points out that the effects of work, and the results of what he produces, can indirectly turn against man himself.<sup>13</sup> From this also derives the fundamental importance of adhering to the faith of the Church, whose light guides us along the right path. By following that path we are led to the configuring encounter with the Lord Jesus, who reveals his identity to man at the same time as he redeems, reconciles and transforms him,<sup>14</sup> and also directs him in such a way that his action and his self-creation in culture be really fruitful and humanising.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Third General Assembly of Latin-American Bishops, Puebla 27 January–13 February 1979, nos. 184 and 281; Fourth General Assembly of Latin-American Bishops, Santo Domingo, 12–18 October 1992, nos. 9 and 243.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22.

The action and the presence of the human being, his ontological self-manifestation, establish a dynamic relational situation, in which he becomes responsible for the hierarchy of the values assumed in the contact between man and the world. There exists a cultural universe structured according to fundamental values that in the last analysis either respond to, or oppose, the nature of man as created by God. This universe, in its proper hierarchy of values, cannot be altered, and thus corrupted, without serious negative effects being produced on man's own self-realization. If self-manifestation is pursued in the right way, meaning is conferred on man's work and it is imbued with the extraordinary dimension of humanisation. But if it is pursued in the wrong way, it leads to the world of the "culture of death", in which the influence of this negative dimension exacts a heavy price in terms of violation of the dignity and rights of the human being, of the possession of a superfluity of material goods to the detriment of others, of the expression of the quest for illicit pleasures that debase the person and those close to him to a dimension that injures his dignity, of the lust for power, of violence—in sum, of a process of degradation of everything human.

Pope Pius XII, in his Exhortation *For a better World*, declared: "It is a whole world that we have to build from its foundations, that we need to transform from the savage to the human, and from the human to the divine, that is, according to the heart of God".<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Pope Paul VI, in his extraordinary Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, exhorts human beings—today over thirty years later, with all the sweetness and richness of wine that improves with age—to find themselves and to embrace the higher values sown by God in their innermost being.<sup>16</sup> Only this will permit them to open themselves up in human brotherhood to the service of their fellowmen, to pass from less human to progressively more human conditions, and, by their action in the creation of culture, so reach the dimension with which

<sup>15</sup> *Discorsi e radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, vol. 13, 471.

<sup>16</sup> *Mismidad* in the original Spanish text.

the unforgettable Pope ends his inspiring list of more human conditions: “Conditions that, finally and above all, are more human are faith, a gift from God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ, who calls us to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men”.<sup>17</sup> All this constitutes the construction of a more human world, living day by day according to the truth about the person and social communion revealed to us by the Lord Jesus.

On the eve of the third millennium of the faith, we can affirm that it is time to live in hope. It is time to show ourselves united with the Lord Jesus and with the truth that he reveals to us in the Church, so that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and in the contemplation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the New Evangelisation, we may work together as tireless builders of the yearned-for civilization of love.

<sup>17</sup> No. 21; see also no. 20.

## Charity and Justice: Challenges for the Movements

ANDREA RICCARDI

**H**ow can the movements perform the mission of the Church on the threshold of the third millennium? How can they do so in the world of the next century, which promises to be globalised, but at the same time characterised by the rebirth of a sense of identity, by fractures, and by conflicts between different cultural and religious areas? How can the movements perform the mission of the Church in the face of the terrible poverty that persists and indeed is spreading in a world that is otherwise experiencing the highest levels of development and the greatest accumulation of technology and affluence ever achieved in the history of mankind?

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These are questions that the Church has constantly posed about her mission throughout her two-thousand-year-old history. But today they are acquiring a new dimension in response to unprecedented scenarios. Besides—and this too is something new—information now brings us into direct and personal contact, in real time, with many forms of major deprivation and contradictions in our world. It is the global village. The mass media are active everywhere. Millions of TV viewers can see for themselves the poverty and injustices of so many parts of the world. The viewing of such scenes often becomes a daily rite of impotence. Seeing images of war and violence, we ask ourselves: what can we do? Seeing such scenes provokes less and less indignation, arouses less and less sense of responsibility. We become inured to them; and this process is translated into a general lowering of social and moral responsibility. A new sense of responsibility, therefore, needs to be instilled among

millions of people: how is it possible *not* to love the fellowman whom I see suffering, albeit at a distance? How is it possible to remain passive and impotent when faced by his image?

*A Christian brotherhood without frontiers*

The movements—in my view—have a great responsibility in educating people not to nourish themselves from the doses of impotence and disinterest that are daily dished out to us by the media. The movements are characterised, as Cardinal Ratzinger said in his intervention, by their universal horizons. They look to the whole world, even if they are not present everywhere. The problems of the world and of the Church are, if only superficially, reflected in their life. No one and nothing can be considered extraneous to their life. Indeed, it is often what is most distant that becomes a question, if not a challenge, for the movements.

The movements represent a network of universal Christian brotherhood through the participation of people of different national origins. This network transcends ethnic and cultural frontiers. It also transcends the closed local horizons, within which the Christian is tempted to live. The experience of the movements, like others in the history of the Church, shows quite clearly that the faith and the ecclesial life turn the Christian into a citizen of the world—our great and contradictory world—and a brother of countless of his fellowmen. The anonymous author of the *Epistola ad Diognetum* epigrammatically summed up this condition of Christians that is the fruit of a life conceived as mission: “each foreign country is their homeland and each homeland is a foreign country”.<sup>1</sup>

That is why the movements have the experience of sharing the same destiny as various peoples. This is due to the mission that characterises them, and hence their outreach to everyone, *ad gentes*. But it is also because they represent, within themselves, a community of per-

<sup>1</sup> *Epistola ad Diognetum* 5 33 (Paris; Cerf, 1151), 62.

sons of different origins, bound together in a common sense of belonging and a shared missionary dynamic. In the life of the movements, in different degrees and perspectives, we may perceive that what is distant, is not alien; indeed it represents a deep challenge. Poverty and suffering in far-off places are an appeal to the Christian that he cannot evade.

The man and woman of the third millennium will be increasingly forced to live in the midst of different people from the ethnic, cultural and religious point of view. This condition of cohabitation, as may be already seen in some parts of the world, will increasingly challenge them to mutual understanding, or incite them to conflict. The Christian of the third millennium will be called to live amid a mix of different peoples, in a cultural context characterised by ease of contacts and exposure to information of all kinds. His life is always a mission: it is so in bearing witness to the Gospel, in service to the poor, in dialogue in charity with all the peoples with whom he lives.

### *From adolescence to maturity*

The movements are familiar with the universal frontier of the man of the third millennium and experience it in their frontierless reality. This is a spiritual and historical experience on which we need to reflect, because it belongs to the whole Church. When I speak of movements, I am really conscious of how different they each are, but I am also conscious that basically they are all incorporated in a great missionary design, of which we must better grasp the features of the next century. It is what John Paul II has grasped right from the start of his pontificate: the missionary character of the movements and their relations with Vatican Council II.

For many years, often in a phase of construction, the movements have insisted on their specific identity. Basically, the ecclesial communities, just like human beings, go through a period of adolescence in which their charisms and their own personality are brought to light. The adolescence of the movements, of variable duration, is an

inevitable stage of their life: who was not at one time an adolescent? Everyone, I hope. Adolescence, sometimes, is characterised by a certain kind of group messianism, but then the discovery is made that there is only one Messiah and that all Christians are the humble servants of the messianic promises. So the age of maturity arrives: an age in which the movements do not renounce their own ecclesial personality, but better understand the gift of other charisms and other personalities. They discover the profound unity in the communion of the Church. They are also penetrated more deeply with the missionary, apostolic and universal character by which the life of a movement is determined. Maturity is accompanied by esteem for the other movements and the other expressions of the life of the Church. Esteem is an important attitude for the apostle Paul, who taught the Romans: “love one another with brotherly affection; out do one another in showing honor” (*Rom* 12:10).

This Congress of the ecclesial movements, promoted by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, offers everyone the occasion for learning to esteem the efforts of others as servants of the one Messiah, transcending any group messianism. Often, in fact, a movement, as is only right, seeks recognition, but in an adolescent way does not realise that it too must recognise the other ecclesial personalities. This brotherly recognition is expressed in esteem, in friendship, but above all in understanding the mission of the Church. The time has now come to leave adolescence behind, and achieve maturity and greater responsibility towards the great needs of mission—even if the stage of adolescence was a blessed and fruitful period.

### *The “weak strength” of charity*

The movements live on the complex and diversified frontiers of the world. They know what it means to experience the challenges of a large and frontierless world. It is not only a question of conscience, but above all a question of charity. Without charity it is impossible to confront the

great frontiers of the contemporary world, with all its poverty, injustice, and absence of peace. Charity breaks through the systems of closed values, those that relate to others in a narrow way, full of prejudices, those of a life reduced to the pursuit of individual or group interests.

In the history of the last few decades we have gained a better understanding of the “weak strength” of charity. The Charismatic Renewal, Renewal of the Spirit, after Vatican II, has had the great merit of recalling us—as Card. Congar has written—to something we knew but few of us experienced in our lives: the presence of the Spirit. Charity is poured out in our hearts through the Spirit given to us, as the apostle taught. The charity of an adult Christian and of a mature Christian movement can be gauged first of all by the poor. The wise expression of John XXIII (“the Church of everyone and especially of the poor”) has its practical verification, the verification of charity: if she does not belong first and foremost to the poor, if she does not put charity into practice in her life with the poor, if the poor are not our friends, the Church fails to be the Church of everyone, i.e. universal. We end up by being enclosed within a group, a sector, a specialised service, an ethnic group. Charity does not end with the world of the poor: how great a need there is for charity everywhere! But the poor are the test-bed of our charity.

When I speak of the poor and of poverty, I do not mean a sociological category. It is here that the great role of charity as a source of wisdom lies: a life without charity is lacking in wisdom. Charity stimulates us to understand, to recognise the poor, in other words, to read the parable of the Good Samaritan or that of the rich man and Lazarus in the concrete history of life. We then discover that charity to the poor in the contemporary world must constantly accept the challenge of alleviating not only the poor in our midst, but also those that the global village brings close to us even if they live far away.

### *Make peace, not war*

One great source of poverty of this world of ours that, after 1989, failed to accept the challenge of a reconstruction on a new basis, is war,

mother of all poverty. This war is almost always far-removed from our affluent world, and yet it touches it and involves us. Our twentieth century is closing with the flames of war still being fanned. Our century has claimed a higher number of victims of war than perhaps all previous centuries put together. That is why the Spirit has led the Church increasingly to consider the message of peace that springs from the Gospel. The growth of the magisterium of the popes on war and peace in the twentieth century is impressive. It represents a legacy for all Christians of the third millennium.

War is the mother of all poverty and all injustice. In spite of that, in the present period, with the dissemination of ever more terrible weapons, and with growing incomprehension between different peoples, ethnic groups and cultures, people so easily have recourse to war. Many have it in their power to make war and destabilise the situation of a country: ethnic groups, tribes, nations, mafias... all of them so easily have recourse to violence and take up arms. But our Christian experience tells us that Christians have a strength of peace. If everyone may make war, many may work for peace. Our experience as the Community of Sant'Egidio, developed over the last thirty years in listening to the Word of God and in service to the poor, is that of having discovered that Christians do have a strength of peace. I think of our experience of brokering the peace between the Mozambique government and the guerrillas, signed at Sant'Egidio in October 1992, at the end of a war that had caused one million deaths. I cite this experience with humility, to illustrate how Christians may discover a strength of peace.

Charity to the poor means above all practising in our lives the beatitude that concerns the peacemakers. It is not by chance that a movement like that of the *Focolari* was born during the second world war and in the midst of terrible destruction, when so many hopes had been dashed. That is how it is told by my friend Chiara Lubich, who pursued her intuition in times both of active combat and of cold war, when Europe was divided into two. The movement she founded has as its principal vocation the search for unity as a way of fostering peace. We see, once again, how the experience of a movement recalls to the whole

Church the value of an aspect of the Christian life that had been forgotten, consigned to the sidelines, reduced to theory. For these experiences, however partial they may be, become a gift of witness and memory to the whole Church.

*Charity and justice*

War, as I said, is the mother of all poverty... I ought to speak to many other forms of poverty, but time does not permit me. I would only like to say that in times of globalisation there is no unity. Indeed the divisions inevitably become wider: between rich and poor in the same society, between rich and poor countries, between different cultural worlds and civilizations, between religious universes... The Christian movements are called to live charity as communion and alliance with the poor. I am fond of saying: the alliance between the humble and the poor paraphrasing the prophet Zephaniah who says: "I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly" (*Zeph* 3:12). The movements are called to live charity as a bridge of dialogue between universes in conflict or simply so far apart as to ignore each other. Dialogue too, in all its multifarious expressions (from the more informal to the more theoretic), is, for Christians, rooted not in political or ecclesiastical convenience, not in the politically correct, but in charity. It seems to me that the culture of charity may be the answer to the logics of exclusion, ignorance and conflict that dominate the contemporary world. A culture without charity is like "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" gong booming or a cymbal clashing" (*1 Cor* 13:1). And the charity I mean is the charity that is rooted in the recall to the Lord Jesus, who chose a life of poverty, became a friend of the poor, a friend of strangers and those who are different.

But this charity—I think of the many members of the movements—must also be a recall to the exercise of justice throughout our life, in all our minor and major civil and professional responsibilities. Arbitrariness reigns in a large part of the world: there is no justice. Life is precarious. There is no certainty that even elementary rights will be

respected. This is the life in a large part of our planet: the South of the world. Often the State is absent. We need to recall people to this practice of justice in their lives, from the lowest level to that of the institutions, because justice is the basis for any decency of life. And it is charity that inspires a life capable of courageously asking for justice and faithfully performing it. I believe that the laity, especially in the southern hemisphere, must work to construct a form of social cohesion and civil society based on justice.

But John Paul II posed the question: Is justice enough? In the light of history it has not been enough in so many situations. In his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* John Paul II writes: "The experience of the past and of our own time demonstrates that justice alone is not enough, that it can even lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if that deeper power, which is love, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions".<sup>2</sup>

An ancient Byzantine icon, especially venerated in Constantinople, shows the Virgin over a fountain, indeed as a fountain, to which poor people, rulers, soldiers and common people flock to refresh themselves with the mercy that heals the sick, consoles the suffering and recalls us to justice. The approaching third millennium appeals to the movements to be a fountain of charity, so that love for everyone, and especially for the poor, mutual understanding and justice may be irradiated from them. In this sense it seems to me that the right attitude, that of the maturity of the movements, is precisely that of Pentecost: the gathering together to pray together in the same place in unity, with mutual esteem and a great willingness to serve. For we all have a great deal still to learn about how best to serve the Lord with our poor forces. We are sure that the Spirit will illuminate us in an even more abundant way.

<sup>2</sup> No. 12.

## Ecumenism: Dialogue and Encounter

GABRIELLA FALLACARA

I got to know the Focolare Movement in 1950. The Movement had then developed only among Catholics.

It was in 1961 that Chiara Lubich met a group of Lutherans in Germany.

I was then in Rome and was very struck by what had happened.

The God who is Love, his will and our response to it especially with the “new commandment”, the Word of the New Testament and the exchange of experiences of how it was lived, had fascinated those Lutheran pastors. They then wanted to get to know more about us. They spoke about our movement to their own communities.

They came on several occasions to Rome.

We loved them all. We saw Jesus in them. We were the first to love them: we took the first step. We united ourselves with them. In one of their visits to Rome we offered them hospitality in our own house, moving to makeshift quarters during their stay: the whole house was placed at their disposal.

We accompanied them to see the holy places of Rome—for them this was a new adventure—and in sites that form our common heritage such as the Colosseum and the Catacombs we said: “These monuments are also yours”: there was a spontaneous, immediate sharing of spiritual and material goods with these persons who until a short time previously had been unknown to us. We truly felt ourselves to be brothers and sisters.

We discovered that it was possible to join together and so merit the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus: “Where two or three are gathered in

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my name, there am I in the midst of them” (*Mt 18:20*). We were united in his love.

We already existed before Vatican II. The consequences of common baptism still had not been grasped, but a Bishop confirmed to us that we could live together this and other teachings of the Gospel.

That was a revolutionary discovery.

Ecumenism meant living together the whole Gospel and, in particular, the main lines of a spirituality of unity. We could share its central points: not only love as the central precept of Christianity, the Word of God, the presence of Jesus among his disciples, but also another central feature of spirituality; namely, the crucified and forsaken Jesus.

He was the key to restore brotherhood whenever there was some misunderstanding, some incomprehension between us, to build up day after day all possible communion between us, and to overcome the sorrow we felt when we separated to go to receive the Eucharist, each in his or her own Church.

Even Mary, seen as the perfect Christian, model of how to practice the Word in our lives, above all as Mother of God, was accepted.

I remember a visit to Assisi, where we discovered how deeply we all loved Francis and Clare of Assisi.

We passed from discovery to discovery: also of their life. We marvelled at the depth of their spontaneous prayer, their passionate love for the Word, their sincerity.

Contacts between us became more frequent: journeys to Rome and journeys to Germany. A mixed community of Lutherans and Catholics was being formed between us. So much so that it was then decided to construct an ecumenical centre in Germany (close to Augsburg): a “mini cities” where we could live together the reciprocal love of the Gospel.

Cardinal Bea, who always took a close personal interest in these meetings, wrote in his message for its inauguration in 1968: “The more we understand and live the Gospel, the closer we draw to each other, because we become more similar to Christ”.

It was just this experience we were making in a vital manner—and one that we are still making today.

Knowing each other as persons has removed—on both sides—prejudices we have inherited for centuries. We have come to evaluate many situations with greater objectivity.

Personal and community life has changed.

Young people and adults are returning to their Church.

Vocations to God are being born.

A renewal in the Churches is being felt.

In everyone there is an ever stronger desire and commitment to attain the unity wished by Jesus, as a leaven that ferments.

And gradually, following at close hand the steps taken by the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement, what surprises were held out to us, what a sense of harmony we felt, in comparing this experience with the wonderful pilgrimage that the Church was proposing to us!

Today 47,000 Christians in more than 300 churches and ecclesial communities live the spirituality of unity in various ways, in their communities and parishes. Nineteen Mini cities live according to “an ecumenical life-style”.

This spirituality of unity was presented by Chiara Lubich to the 2nd Ecumenical Assembly of Graz, as ecumenical spirituality, as spirituality of reconciliation between the Churches.

It has always been considered important in our movement that everyone be well inserted in his or her own Church. Equally, the contacts with the Catholic authority and with the respective authorities of other Churches have always been considered indispensable.

We have also seen how great a witness is given by the fact that each receives the Eucharist and the sacraments in his or her own church, and how important it is that Catholics follow the Catholic norms.

This living the Gospel together has enabled us to grasp that to love each other better we had not only to pray fervently together, but also to get to know each other better. Schools of ecumenism have thus been established: schools in which mutual love is always the necessary

premise for the study of the history and liturgy of each Church and the understanding each has of itself today.

There is a heightened sense of awareness among Catholics, an “ecumenical formation”. And growing reciprocal esteem, as well as a serious commitment against proselytism.

By living together, getting to know each other, and reinforcing our reciprocal love, we have discovered how great are the riches of our common heritage of faith: our common baptism; the New and the Old Testament; the dogmas of the first Councils; the Creed itself (Nicene-Constantinopolitan); the Greek and Latin Fathers; the martyrs and saints; and other shared aspects such as the life of grace, the interior gifts of the Spirit, etc.

All this has consolidated and led to the emergence of an astonishing reality, which has gathered momentum over the last two years: it is “the dialogue of life”.

Other forms of dialogue, such as that of charity, or that of theology, or that of praying together (in sum the visible unity is a gift of God), can in this way be strengthened.

The “dialogue of life”, about which our authorities are also kept informed, has led to a “people’s dialogue”. We are already a family, we are already—it may be said—a Christian people that has its culture of unity. The “people’s dialogue” sprang from the spirituality of unity, because the community-based spirituality makes us live together. And so we discover that it is not even a spirituality, it is the living Christ—the Risen Lord—who unites us. It is Jesus who binds us together: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (*Rom 8:35*).

In this experience we may understand what role may be played by Christians formed in unity for the third millennium, “so that we can celebrate the Great Jubilee, if not completely united, at least much *closer to overcoming the divisions of the second millennium*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, no. 34.

In conclusion, I would now like to offer the various ecclesial movements some ideas useful for the reflection in the work groups on ecumenism.

It seems to me that the ecclesial experience described here has underlined the importance of the following key points:

- the rediscovery of the Bible and living the Word together, which gives a formidable credibility for evangelisation;
- the strength of reciprocal love in practice (cf. *Jn* 15:12);
- the prayer together “*si consenserint...*” (*Mt* 18:19);
- in difficulties, the love of the Crucifix, our model and source of unity;
- closer adhesion to the counsels of the Catholic Church in the places where we meet together, and to the Pope;
- receiving the Eucharist in our own Churches;
- gaining a deeper knowledge of our Churches through suitable courses of formation;
- working in partnership together in social work, charitable activities and mutual aid;
- supporting the theological work between the Churches;
- being an ecumenical people.

## **IV**

# **Eucharistic Celebrations**

## Meditation of H. Em. Card. James Francis Stafford

Wednesday, 27 May 1998

We begin our meeting with the celebration of the Eucharistic Pasch of Christ. We are in the midst of the Great Pentecost Novena and approach that Solemnity in intense prayer. At the direction of Pope John XXIII we have begged God over the decades for a new Pentecost in the Church. The maturing lay movements and communities within the Church are one of the signs of the renewing activity of the Creator Spirit.

Today is also the feast-day of the great evangelizer of England, St. Augustine of Canterbury. Sent to England by Pope St. Gregory the Great in 596 from his monastery of St. Andrew on the Coelian Hill in Rome, Augustine became a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit during his ten years as Archbishop of Canterbury. On the solemnity of Pentecost in 597 he baptised the King of Kent, known to us today as St. Ethelbert. One might ascribe to Ethelbert, as a lay and saintly leader, the same title which tradition has attributed to another holy layman, a King of England, St. Edward “the Confessor”.

Following his example in full liberty, thousands of Ethelbert’s people confessed their desire for Christian faith and were initiated into the event of Christ’s Pasch through the Sacraments of Initiation. The witness of his Christian wife, Bertha, the only child of Charibert, the King of Paris, made a great impression upon Ethelbert. It is of particular note that his baptism took place on Pentecost 1401 years ago almost to the day. We are privileged to behold again the glory of God through the proclamation of the Church.

The Gospel reading today is taken from the great farewell prayer of Jesus handed on by St. John the Evangelist. I will speak of three elements in this Gospel passage.

First, in his prayer Jesus reveals the profoundest mystery about

Christian love. He sets the love of his brethren within an astonishingly new exemplar. The “I and Thou” communion among the three divine Persons serves as the definitive archetype and bond for human relations. In and through Christ men are united to the Holy Trinity and to each other. “Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (*Jn* 17:11). The extent of their mutual, self-sacrificing love serves as a measure for the discernment of the genuineness of the disciples’ experience of God.

Second, Jesus asked the heavenly Father earlier in this farewell prayer for his own consecration in the truth. In today’s Gospel he prays that his disciples might be consecrated too. In clear-cut lines the Gospel reveals the way in which Jesus is made holy by his consecration in truth. The blunt and plain fact is that his consecration means his voluntary suffering and death on the Cross in free obedience to his Father’s will. The figure of the crucified Christ is the transparency of the fullness of God. It is an incredible fact, but the glory of God, his divine beauty, is revealed in the unprecedented mystery of the self-emptying love of the only begotten Son of the Father (cf. *Phil* 2).

Jesus also prayed that his disciples might be consecrated in truth. The prayer for the gift of wisdom in the rite of Confirmation speaks of one and the same reality. The wisdom of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to grasp the lightning-like insight of St. John. On Calvary John solemnly declared that he saw the glory of God revealed in the death of his only Son.

Similarly, grace opens the spiritual senses to the glory of God revealed in the pierced, open heart of the eternal Son of God. Only then can they be grasped by the mystery of the self-emptying of God (cf. *Phil* 2) as the ultimate wisdom. Through the experience of Christian faith the disciples know that descent is wisdom, that fruitfulness is wisdom, that the weakness and powerfulness of the child are divine wisdom. “And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth” (*Jn* 17:19).

Jesus’s consecration is the archetype and model. A striking confirmation of this is St. Paul’s reply to the sceptical Corinthians who

demanded proof of his apostolic authority: “you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you. For he was crucified in weakness, but the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God. Examine yourselves to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test. I hope you will find out that we have not failed” (2 *Cor* 13: 3–6). His reply identifies the key for Christian discernment in oneself and in others: Do you recognise that the living seal of the crucified One is imprinted and alive within your own heart and in the hearts of others?

Third, Pentecost is spirit and fire, rushing wind and purifying flames. The spirit is fire, and fire is the spirit. These are elemental signs. They accompany the first creation. They usher in the new creation. The new creation is the house of God built with living stones where mutual tolerance is linked to love and the hope of unity to the bond of peace (cf. *Eph* 4:2–3). As a Father within his own household, God loves to dwell in such a community. It is in such a living temple that the Spirit teaches through his purifying fire the wisdom of sacrificial love.

Awaiting the mighty wind and the tongues of fire, we begin our meeting during the Great Novena before Pentecost. In communion with Mary and the other disciples in the Upper Room, we humble entreat the Holy Spirit to pour out his graces, his fruit, and his seven-fold gifts, especially the spirit of wisdom, upon the face of the troubled earth. We entrust our work to Mary’s intercession.

## Meditation of H. Em. Card. Camillo Ruini

Thursday, 28 may 1998

I am delighted to be able to celebrate Mass for you, at this World Congress of the Ecclesial Movements, organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, in this year that the Holy Father has dedicated to the Holy Spirit, as part of the programme for the more immediate preparation of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000. We are all eagerly awaiting the Third Millennium, which by now we can call “imminent” and which animates and comforts us all.

The Gospel we have just heard is particularly pregnant and significant in this regard. It is, as you all know, the last part of the prayer—the great prayer—that Jesus addressed to the Father immediately before his Passion. And in this prayer, of truly fundamental importance, we find the appeal, the supplication of Jesus for unity: “*That they may all be one*” (Jn 17–21). This “being one” is referred to all those who believe and will believe in him, and has a transcendent point of reference. The Lord Jesus prays: “that they may all be one”, i.e. in him, “even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee”. So that everyone may remain in me, remain in my love.

Here we find a word typical of the *Gospel of John*, the word *remain*, the *remaining* of the Father in the Son and of the Son in the Father. The *remaining* of all believers in the communion, in the unity of the Father and of the Son and hence in reciprocal unity. Jesus adds: “that they may become perfectly one”; perfectly one, that is, in the unity that is manifested in us, in the mysterious and decisive unity of the Father and of the Son in the bond of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus further adds: “that the world may believe that thou hast”; in this way a close link is established between communion and mission. And he further adds: “... that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (v. 23). This, I would say, is the core not only of this

Gospel passage, but of the whole Gospel of Christ: it is the power, the fundamental content of the mission of Jesus Christ, in as much as it is revelatory of God the Father, revelatory of the attitude of the Father to us, revelatory of the love of the Father. And here we also have an implicit openness to the Holy Spirit, although in this chapter 17 of John's Gospel Jesus does not speak explicitly of the Spirit. He says in fact: "the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them" (v. 26), but we know very well that this love, with which the Father loved the Son, is the Holy Spirit. And there is another very clear opening in this prayer of Jesus: the opening that from our moment in time, from our historical reality, transports us into Eternity: "I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me", says Jesus to the Father, "may be with me where I am, to behold my glory" (v. 24), in other words, he wants them to be in the bosom of the Father, in the glory of the Father. It is what all of us ask today with suppliant prayer, as we celebrate this great sign of communion, this great sign of concrete unity in the Church represented by this Congress of the Ecclesial Movements.

It is not only a sign of communion, but also a sign of mission. A mission that embraces the whole of the Church and, in particular, the laity of the Church. It is not for nothing that the Mass we are celebrating is the Mass for the lay faithful. All are joined together as participants in the one mission that God the Father entrusted to Christ and that, through Christ, impels the whole Church; it gives the sense of the existence of the whole Church. We thus have here the full dimensions of Communion, which is always the communion with God, before it is communion among ourselves. And we have the missionary force of communion, and consequently we also have the imperative of communion: communion, in other words, not only as a gift of God but as a task entrusted to us, under the grace of the Spirit. And this task we must perform and fulfil, day after day, with indefatigable generosity and patience. And the concreteness of communion too: John in his Gospel is always extremely concrete. He is the great theologian of the love of God, but of a love that tells him that it must be manifested and realised in the concrete circumstances of life, in the concrete circumstances of

the observation of God's will. And from this great prayer of Christ, we know well, I would say we know only too well, in view of our limitations and sins, that God's will is full communion, it is the being perfected, the being consummated in unity. This concerns us all, from the highest to the lowest, from the greatest to the least in the Church. We are all members of this one Church, which is the Church of Christ, which is the one people of the one God, which is the one body of this one Head which is Christ, which is the one temple of the one Spirit of God. And the Church, I would like to add, is the one Bride, given to the faithful Bridegroom who is Jesus Christ.

This must be the radical goal of our life. Our life must be aimed at this unity, aimed at it in communion as persons, as ecclesial movements, like any other reality that is part of the living Church. And here we also have an essential criterion for the discernment of charisms and spirits. All charisms and spirits, if they are truly spirits of Christ, charisms that come from the Father through the gift of the Spirit, tend towards this unity. This unity by virtue of which we do not regard ourselves as the centre. None of us, no person, no group, no ecclesial reality, no diocese has its centre in itself: we all have our centre in God and in Jesus Christ and hence in the one Church of Christ.

And, in her turn, this one Church of Christ does not have her centre in herself: she has her centre in God and in humanity. She is the Church as sacrament, as Vatican Council II taught us. She is the Church who is missionary by her nature and essence, and hence the Church addressed at God and addressed at humanity, in concrete. The Church has her centre in God, since it is God, in Christ, who is the one salvation for the whole of humankind and also of the world, of the universe, in which the human being lives. Let us recall this, humble and trustful, in this Eucharist. We implore it for all of us. We implore it for all the ecclesial Movements. We implore it for all the laypeople who work in the Church, as for any other state or condition in the Church. We implore it for the Church herself and for her mission in the world.

## Meditation of Bishop Stanisław Ryłko

Friday, 29 May 1998

Dear friends, in this brief meditation I want to share with you some thoughts on the moving experience we have lived together.

At the end of this Congress one of the strongest feelings by which we are filled is the feeling of wonder and awe before the “*magnalia Dei*” of which we have been participants—before the great works that the Holy Spirit is arousing in the Church of our time through the ecclesial movements. A great contemporary Polish poet, Father Jan Twardowski, gave one of his poems the title: *Learn to be astonished in the Church...* Yes, it is extremely important to learn to be astonished in the Church. I believe this Congress has been for all of us a lesson by nourishing our sense of astonishment for the other, and for the richness of his charisms, which enable us to better grasp the identity of our movement and our community.

The Church, in her communion and in the diversity of her charisms, is like a garden luxuriantly planted with flowers, cultivated by the Holy Spirit. Each flower, even the smallest, is important, because it contributes to enriching the polychromy of this wonderful mosaic.

Wonder... The wonder that springs from the faith is no vague and superficial emotion. It is a powerful experience that upsets and radically changes people’s lives, the lives of so many people! It is an experience that is spontaneously communicated to others... We have heard witnesses to this... In this Eucharist we pray that this sense of wonder may remain in each of us and give an ever new freshness to our Christian life, to the life of our communities.

What was so impressive during this Congress was undoubtedly the almost palpable presence of Christ in our midst. In the first reading from the *Acts of the Apostles* Paul’s accusers spoke in court of the question—a crazy one, they thought—“about one Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive” (25:19). That is the heart of the event

that changed the course of history: Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, is alive, is present—and by means of his Spirit he continues to work wonders! That, in sum, is the common denominator of all the witnesses we have heard.

During these days we have felt at close hand the active presence of Christ in his Church. He has been our Guide, our Master. This Congress was not a “self-celebration” of the movements, but a celebration of the presence of Jesus Christ, who regenerates the life of those who really want to meet Him, and who renews the life of the Church and of the world.

In this Congress we have felt an extraordinary, personal appeal to respond to the love of God. In the passage from the Gospel of St. John we have just heard, Christ three times interrogates Peter: “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”. And Peter three times gives the same reply: “Yes, Lord, you know I love you” (*Jn* 21:15–17).

In this profound dialogue between the Master and Peter the essence of the Christian life is expressed. The key question is always the same, love. The first commandment, the greatest of all. The ultimate and most reliable test of our being Christians—whether as persons, or as communities and movements—is always the same: that of love.

At the end of our Congress the question: “Do you love me?” is one that Christ addresses to each of us. The simplicity and the candour of this question have something provoking and challenging about them. The complexity of so many questions which we have tackled during the days of this Congress dissolves in the essentiality of that: “Do you love me?”. For what truly counts is the love that becomes life.

This Congress, which is now coming to its end, has already spelt out our reply: “Lord, you know I love you”. Over the last few days we have said so in different ways, in different languages. For saying “I love you” means that I commit myself, I assume my responsibilities for the Church and for her mission. We will say so with an even stronger voice tomorrow, during our meeting with the Holy Father in St. Peter’s Square, where the culminating moment of this “joint witness” of the ecclesial movements and the new communities called for by the Pope awaits us. Tomorrow, we must be ready, like the prophet: “Here am I, [Lord], send me!” (*Is* 6:8).

# V

## **Final Message of the Congress**

What have these last few days represented? What have they meant for us and for our communities?

First of all, a sense of wonder at the transformation which membership to ecclesial movements has made to the existence of so many men and women, whose life has been led to a consciousness, a freedom, a capacity for action that hitherto they would not have been able to imagine. Second, we have been made more aware of what is meant by the term “movement”: the dynamism itself of the life of the Christian in his or her *sequela Christi* and his or her relation with reality.

We have experienced a true sense of communion, conscious of our differences, but above all of the great missionary horizon opening up before us. A sign of this was the presence among us of Cardinal Ratzinger and other bishops. A motive of particular hope was also the participation of fraternal delegates representing other Christian confessions.

2. But above all we regard these three days we have spent together in the light of the meeting that is to take place in St. Peter’s Square.

Just as this Congress of ours has been held in the context of the year of preparation for the Great Jubilee, a year dedicated in particular to the Holy Spirit, so the meeting planned for tomorrow is taking place on the Vigil of the feast of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit, *in fact*, gift of the son of God made man, sent by the Father in His name (cf. *Jn* 14:26), represents the definitive gift that Jesus makes of himself to the men and women of every time and every latitude. He is the foundation of the Church in her objective, sacramental reality, and at the same time arouses in those who accept him a willingness to receive this gift.

As was repeatedly recalled during the days of the Congress, there is a reciprocity between the petrine principle and the marian principle: the one recalls the other. Together they enable us to live the experience of the Church as an event that transcends and precedes us, and at the same time as an event that comes to meet us: it proposes itself to our freedom, and spurs it into action.

3. We have been called by the Pope not only for the meeting in St. Peter's Square, but also for these days of joint work. This is not the first meeting between the Movements; other congresses have preceded it. We especially had an opportunity to get to know each other, to pray, sing and live together on the World Youth Days and on many occasions in our own dioceses. But this special convocation by John Paul II, which takes place in the twentieth year of his pontificate, signifies a particular bond between his person, especially his missionary zeal, and the reality of our persons and communities. This gives rise to the quite particular gratitude that the various Movements feel for the Holy Father. He has encouraged and supported the individual ecclesial Movements. He has wished to meet them and get to know them at first hand. And he has never failed to comfort them with his words and with his blessing.

With our eyes fixed on him, all of us have learned, in these twenty years, what is meant by passion for the glory of Christ and for the fellowmen with whom we live. In the Holy Father we find uniquely manifested a synthesis between institutional task and its charismatic expression which has enabled us to understand our vocation better.

4. It is just in the Holy Father's Magisterium during these years that we find the fundamental lines of a synthesis also of what we have heard during this Congress.

In the autograph message that the Pope addressed to us at the beginning of our Congress, he himself quoted two expressions used in previous texts, which epitomise in some sense what we have said to each other and heard during the Congress. But today, at the end of this Congress, these expressions reach us with a new profundity, revealing

all their prophetic richness. Let us recall them together. The first is the statement: “The Church may in a certain sense be called a ‘movement’ herself”. The second is: “The institutional dimension and the charismatic dimension of the Church... are co-essential”.

Reflecting on what we have heard, we now understand better that the character of our movements is strictly defined, indeed generated, by a single word, by a single reality, the mission of Jesus, missionary of the Father in the midst of mankind. “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Is this not the reason for the fascination that Jesus has exerted, and continues to exert, on the founders of our communities and at the same time the reason for the fascination these founders have represented for us? The word *mission* does not have primarily for us the meaning of a duty to be performed, nor of an action to be organized: mission is above all the experience of Christ present here and now, who reaches us through the gift of men and women whom the Holy Spirit has chosen, making their life significant and fascinating, a reflection of that inexhaustible fascination that Christ has for those who recognise and accept him.

5. It is in the light of the mission of the Church that we understand our present and our past. We understand that the Word, the Sacrament and Apostolicity have been rendered subjectively persuasive through charismatic gifts that have renewed the life of so many Churches and of the Church herself, according to the apt expression we have heard: “they have made the presence of Christ an event” in the experience of communion in our lives.

So there is no dialectic in the Church between the objective and subjective dimension. There is, rather, an organic relation, a pluriform unity that constitutes the face of the Church in history.

The event of Christ is proposed to our freedom as event in the present day of our life: “the friendship He has formed round him has been propagated physically in time and in space, reaching right down to us”. This is the tradition of the Church (*traditio*) as a river of life in the history of the world that has reached us and, through us, can reach other men and women in turn.

6. In the spirit of the new Pentecost, which has been given to us in this time, we feel more strongly the unity that is born among the disciples in being one heart and one mind alone. This concord is a strength for the movements which the Spirit calls to be witnesses in a world that is so divided and torn apart by violence.

7. Each of us, in the diversity of our charisms and hence in the variety of their expressions, feels a total responsibility that prevents our existence being reduced to one specialised task or commitment to one particular field.

We feel that our primary responsibility is for education, i.e. for drawing close to other men and women so that, from their inner existence, from their deepest needs, they may be introduced to the meeting with the reality of Christ and its Meaning, and be able to experience it as they go about their daily tasks.

This also gives rise to an education in work as the field in which man primarily expresses himself, fulfils his responsibilities to his fellowmen and participates in the work of the Creator.

8. Our life has been widened to the farthest horizons of the world: "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 *Cor* 5:14–15).

In this way we feel our life defined by the first Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (*Mt* 5:3), blessed are those who pose no resistance to the work of God in their life. "Blessed are the peacemakers [...] and those who are persecuted for righteousness" (*Mt* 5:9–10), the true righteousness born from charity. It is the Spirit of charity that urges us to open our hearts to all men and to journey together along the road to truth and unity, so that the Gospel of the Risen Lord be proclaimed and witnessed with force and conviction in the new millennium.

*Appendix*

**Address of His Holiness John Paul II  
on the occasion of the Meeting  
with the Ecclesial Movements  
and the New Communities**

*Rome, 30 May 1998*

Suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:2-3*)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With these words the Acts of the Apostles bring us into the heart of the Pentecost event; they show us the disciples, who, gathered with Mary in the Upper Room, receive the gift of the Spirit. Thus Jesus' promise is fulfilled and the time of the Church begins. From that time the wind of the Spirit would carry Christ's disciples to the very ends of the earth. It would take them even to martyrdom for their fearless witness to the Gospel.

It is as though what happened in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago were being repeated this evening in this square, the heart of the Christian world. Like the Apostles then, we too find ourselves gathered in a great upper room of Pentecost, longing for the outpouring of the Spirit. Here we would like to profess with the whole Church "the same Spirit [...] the same Lord [...] the same God who inspires them all in everyone" (*1 Cor 12:4-6*). This is the atmosphere we wish to relive, imploring the gifts of the Holy Spirit for each of us and for all the baptized people.

2. I greet and thank Cardinal James Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, for the words he has wished to address to me, also in your name, at the beginning of this meeting. With him I greet the Cardinals and Bishops present. I extend an especially grateful greeting to Chiara Lubich, Kiko Arguello, Jean Vanier and Mons. Luigi Giussani for their moving testimonies. With them, I greet the founders and leaders of the new communities and movements represented here. Lastly, I wish to address each of you, brothers and sisters who belong to the individual ecclesial movements. You promptly and enthusiastically

cally accepted the invitation I addressed to you on Pentecost 1996, and have carefully prepared yourselves, under the guidance of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, for this extraordinary meeting which launches us towards the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

Today's event is truly unprecedented: for the first time the movements and new ecclesial communities have all gathered together with the Pope. It is the great "common witness" I wished for the year which, in the Church's journey to the Great Jubilee, is dedicated to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is here with us! It is he who is the soul of this marvellous event of ecclesial communion. Truly, "this is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (*Ps* 117:24).

3. In Jerusalem, almost 2,000 years ago, on the day of Pentecost, before an astonished and mocking crowd, due to the unexplainable change observed in the Apostles, Peter courageously proclaims: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God [...] you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up" (*Acts* 2:22-24). Peter's words express the Church's self-awareness, based on the certainty that Jesus Christ is alive, is working in the present and changes life.

The Holy Spirit, already at work in the creation of the world and in the Old Covenant, reveals himself in the Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery of the Son of God, and in a way "bursts out" at Pentecost to extend the mission of Christ the Lord in time and space. The Spirit thus makes the Church a stream of new life that flows through the history of mankind.

4. With the Second Vatican Council, the Comforter recently gave the Church, which according to the Fathers is the place "where the Spirit flourishes",<sup>1</sup> a renewed Pentecost, instilling a new and unforeseen dynamism.

<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* no. 749.

Whenever the Spirit intervenes, he leaves people astonished. He brings about events of amazing newness; he radically changes persons and history. This was the unforgettable experience of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council during which, under the guidance of the same Spirit, the Church rediscovered the charismatic dimension as one of her constitutive elements: “It is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the people, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (cf. *1 Cor* 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank [...] he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church”.<sup>2</sup>

The institutional and charismatic aspects are co-essential as it were to the Church’s constitution. They contribute, although differently, to the life, renewal and sanctification of God’s People. It is from this providential rediscovery of the Church’s charismatic dimension that, before and after the Council, a remarkable pattern of growth has been established for ecclesial movements and new communities.

5. Today the Church rejoices at the renewed confirmation of the prophet Joel’s words which we have just heard: “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (*Acts* 2:17). You, present here, are the tangible proof of this “outpouring” of the Spirit. Each movement is different from the others, but they are all united in the same communion and for the same mission. Some charisms given by the Spirit burst in like an impetuous wind, which seizes people and carries them to new ways of missionary commitment to the radical service of the Gospel, by ceaselessly proclaiming the truths of faith, accepting the living stream of tradition as a gift and instilling in each person an ardent desire for holiness.

Today, I would like to cry out to all of you gathered here in St Peter’s Square and to all Christians: Open yourselves docilely to the

<sup>2</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, no. 2.

gifts of the Spirit! Accept gratefully and obediently the charisms which the Spirit never ceases to bestow on us! Do not forget that every charism is given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church.

6. By their nature, charisms are communicative and give rise to that “spiritual affinity between persons”<sup>3</sup> and that friendship in Christ which is the origin of “movements”. The passage from the original charism to the movement happens through the mysterious attraction that the founder holds for all those who become involved in his spiritual experience. In this way movements officially recognized by ecclesiastical authority offer themselves as forms of self-fulfilment and as reflections of the one Church.

Their birth and spread has brought to the Church’s life an unexpected newness which is sometimes even disruptive. This has given rise to questions, uneasiness and tensions; at times it has led to presumptions and excesses on the one hand, and on the other, to numerous prejudices and reservations. It was a testing period for their fidelity, an important occasion for verifying the authenticity of their charisms.

Today a new stage is unfolding before you: that of ecclesial maturity. This does not mean that all problems have been solved. Rather, it is a challenge. A road to take. The Church expects from you the “mature” fruits of communion and commitment.

7. In our world, often dominated by a secularized culture which encourages and promotes models of life without God, the faith of many is sorely tested, and is frequently stifled and dies. Thus we see an urgent need for powerful proclamation and solid, in-depth Christian formation. There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world! There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial com-

<sup>3</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 24.

munities: they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium. You are this providential response.

True charisms cannot but aim at the encounter with Christ in the sacraments. The ecclesial realities to which you belong have helped you to rediscover your baptismal vocation, to appreciate the gifts of the Spirit received at Confirmation, to entrust yourselves to God's forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation and to recognize the Eucharist as the source and summit of all Christian life. Thanks to this powerful ecclesial experience, wonderful Christian families have come into being which are open to life, true "domestic churches", and many vocations to the ministerial priesthood and the religious life have blossomed, as well as new forms of lay life inspired by the evangelical counsels. You have learned in the movements and new communities that faith is not abstract talk, nor vague religious sentiment, but new life in Christ instilled by the Holy Spirit.

8. How is it possible to safeguard and guarantee a charism's authenticity? It is essential in this regard that every movement submit to the discernment of the competent ecclesiastical authority. For this reason no charism can dispense with reference and submission to the Pastors of the Church. The Council wrote in clear words: "Those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of these gifts, through their office not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (cf. *1 Thess* 5:12; 19–21).<sup>4</sup> This is the necessary guarantee that you are taking the right road!

In the confusion that reigns in the world today, it is so easy to err, to give in to illusions. May this element of trusting obedience to the Bishops, the successors of the Apostles, in communion with the Successor of Peter never be lacking in the Christian formation provided by your movements! You know the criteria for the ecclesiality of lay asso-

<sup>4</sup> Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 12.

ciations found in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*.<sup>5</sup> I ask you always to adhere to them with generosity and humility, bringing your experiences to the local Churches and parishes, while always remaining in communion with the Pastors and attentive to their direction.

9. Jesus said: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!" (*Lk* 12:49). As the Church prepares to cross the threshold of the third millennium, let us accept the Lord's invitation, so that his fire may spread in our hearts and in those of our brothers and sisters.

Today, from this upper room in St Peter's Square, a great prayer rises: Come, Holy Spirit, come and renew the face of the earth!

Come with your seven gifts! Come, Spirit of Life, Spirit of Communion and Love! The Church and the world need you.

Come, Holy Spirit, and make ever more fruitful the charisms you have bestowed on us. Give new strength and missionary zeal to these sons and of daughters of yours who have gathered here.

Open their hearts; renew their Christian commitment in the world. Make them courageous messengers of the Gospel, witnesses to the risen Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of man. Strengthen their love and their fidelity to the Church.

Let us turn our gaze to Mary, Christ's first disciple, Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of the Church, who was with the Apostles at the first Pentecost, so that she will help us to learn from her fiat docility to the voice of the Spirit.

Today, from this square, Christ says to each of you: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (*Mk* 16:15). He is counting on every one of you, and so is the Church. "Lo", the Lord promises, "I am with you always to the close of the age" (*Mt* 28:20).

I am with you.

Amen!

<sup>5</sup> Cf. no. 30.

*Address of His Holiness John Paul II*