

UPTURN

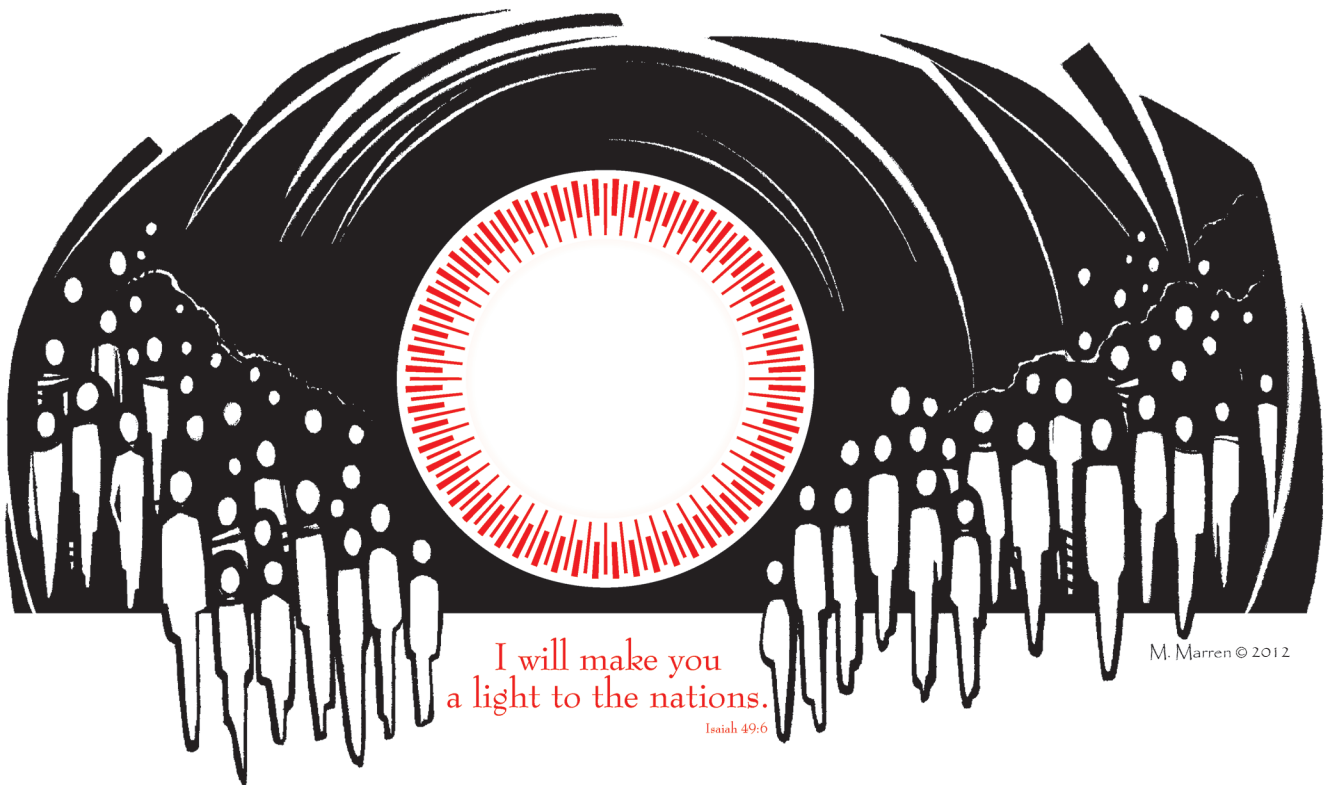
Fall, 2012

The Journal of the
ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO PRIESTS

Lumen Gentium:

Reflections from Brother Priests on the Ongoing Impact of Vatican II

First in a series of reflections on the documents of the Second Vatican Council



I will make you
a light to the nations.

Isaiah 49:6

M. Marren © 2012

The Holy Spirit Still Alive—Are We Listening?

Bob Wilhelm

Toledo, Ohio, Class of '59

Homer said it first: “*Virtus stat in medio*” and I believe that St. Thomas Aquinas added the all-important “*et in altus.*” Thomas was arguing for balance and never mediocrity. Now with that profound-sounding and rather obvious observation, allow me to quote from (in my not-so-humble opinion) today’s leading ecclesiologist, Richard Gaillardetz, in his work “The Church in the Making.” Commenting on Chapter 1 of *Lumen Gentium*, he says:

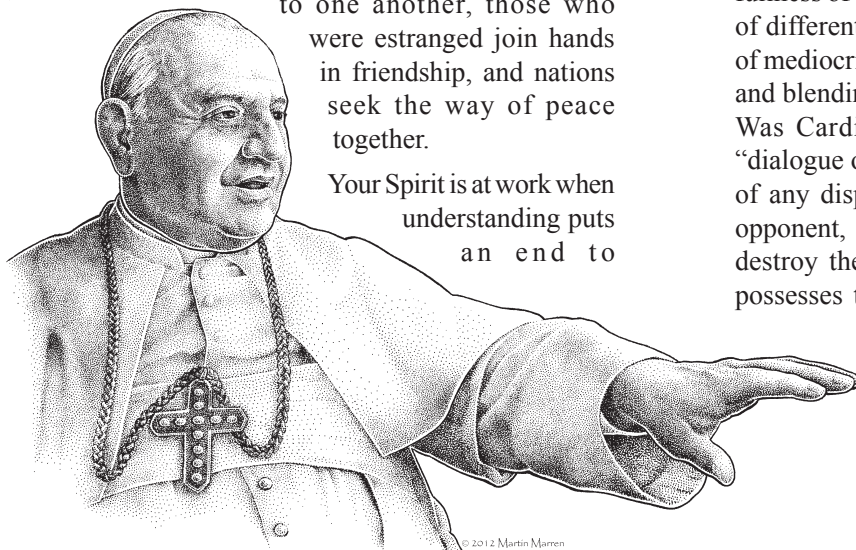
It was the council’s renewed attention to pneumatology that saved it from the temptation of what might be called ecclesiastical Gnosticism, that is, the tendency to think that saving knowledge is given to us only through ecclesiastical structures such as the magisterium. The council’s affirmation of the role of the Spirit in bringing each believer to a recognition of the saving truth of Christ does not deny the distinctive role of the apostolic office of the bishops to testify to the apostolic faith. It does remind us that the apostolic faith abides, by the power of the Spirit, in the whole church.

In this text, “hierarchical gifts” refers to stable church office and “charismatic gifts” refers to those many charisms that the Spirit distributes among the faithful. Charism, and office cannot be opposed to one another, since both have the Spirit as their origin, (pp.50-51)

Finally, for those of you who suffer from short term memory loss, (as I often do, I am 80) please allow me to quote from the poignant second preface of Reconciliation before it too was mangled by the non-English speaking translators:

Your Spirit changes our hearts; enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the way of peace together.

Your Spirit is at work when understanding puts an end to



strife, when hatred is quenched by mercy, and vengeance gives way to forgiveness.

Would it be too much to stretch the analogy by suggesting that the Spirit was at work when Sr. Theresa Kane spoke passionately and directly to the Pope about the possibility of ordaining women to the priesthood? Was not the Spirit at work when Fr. Donald Cozzens dared to tell the Bishops and all of us a truth we did not wish to hear? Was not the Spirit at work when Oscar Romero pricked the consciences of all affluent peoples when he gave his life in defense of the liberation of the poor? Is not the Spirit at work as the LC WR tries to respond positively and with integrity to the criticisms of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.

Or, do I suggest that the Spirit is at work in these areas, simply because I agree with them? Is the Spirit at work when the American Bishops insist that ‘enforced contraception provision’ is a violation of Religious Liberty? Is the Spirit at work when advocates against abortion see it as such a foundational issue as to relativize all other life issues? Is the Spirit at work when my Ordinary states that there can be no dialogue on matters of doctrine? Is the Spirit at work when employers give jobs to illegal immigrants because the latter need jobs to maintain human dignity and life itself?

I cite these and other examples as the precious gift the Council fathers gave us when they articulated “The Spirit guides the Church into the fullness of truth. . . He furnishes and directs her with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic, and adorns her with the fruits of his grace.” (LG 1)


Are they not saying to us that if we are to come near the fullness of truth, what is needed is a balance between those of different insights on any issue, not with a compromise of mediocrity, but extracting the good seen in each extreme and blending them into the fullness of shared perception? Was Cardinal Levada, when he lamented a potential “dialogue of the deaf not articulating a need for each side of any dispute to listen openly to the position of one’s opponent, rather than simply seeking a way to rebut or destroy the other’s position? Or thinking/believing one possesses the absolute truth so that one need not listen to any other view. The gift of this simple paragraph of this conciliar document seems to me to be a reminder that no one person or group in the Church, possesses the totality of truth and what is needed is respectful and open listening to an insight of truth which I might not wish to hear or concede.

What this might say to the elder members of the Church, who have lived through the halcyon days since the Council, is, don't become all gloomy and negative. The sky is not falling and the Church is not going to end. Be open to new insights and articulate clearly what you believe and why. Don't give up. Speak and listen respectfully.

To younger members I would say this teaching should give you hope: hope for the future of the Church which you, in virtue of your Baptism, have

The Spirit guides the Church into the fullness of truth. . . and adorns her with the fruits of his grace. (LG 1)

both the privilege and responsibility to shape. Speak knowledgeably and listen openly.

To all I would say 'Don't jump ship' Reject the attitude of those bumper stickers which screech "America, love it or leave it." I pray that you share such an intense love for this great Church of ours that you will fight with every ounce of your strength, but honorably, to make it truly the best and most noble sacramental presence of Christ. *An Ecclesia semper reformanda*, by the working of the Holy Spirit. 



Predestined Through the Power of God

Rev. Dennis J. Stafford

Director of Spiritual Formation for the Institute for Diaconal Studies, Archdiocese of Chicago

Now that is a title that can immediately draw readers in or away. But several of its words, and, especially one phrase, are the gist of Article 3 of *Lumen Gentium*. "Predestined" (not contextually predestination) and "power of God" are at the root of these very short paragraphs in the seminal document. A Trinitarian horizon underlies this initial Christology and, hopefully, does not overextend the power of intellect within the eschatological reality of Father and Risen Son.

This is truly a Christological flashpoint very early within the Dogmatic Constitution that carries the significant weight of establishing a contemporary relationship (within a precise moment of history, i.e., now) between the 'kingdom', the Fatherhood and the Son. The Kingdom of God portrayed throughout Scripture is dominated thematically by individuals, communities, even nations -- though first created by the Father -- returning to the Father with a revitalized (new) spirit and eventually being sent so that the fruits of redemption may be continually realized. The human soul, our very essence, comes to a realization of its creator (knowledge of power and generativity) by experiencing the Son sacramentally. *Lumen Gentium* then refers to the "Kingdom of Christ now present in mystery" and this kingdom "grows visibly through the power of God." This terminology of 'kingdom' as Christ present in mystery can appear to be in conflict with *Lumen Gentium*'s primary emphasis of kingdom as the 'people of God.' Yet, deeper reflection can bring us to understand that the nuance of 'people of God' necessitates human presence within the mystery of Christ. The one act of Christ affords access to redemption for all who believe. Mystery, growth, and kingdom are conduits to providing a continuum of redemptive understanding. Father, Predestined Son and faithful are placed within this continuum. It is the 'us' (as being faithful and predestined) factor that sometimes gets lost or manipulated out of the timeline.

"By His obedience He brought about redemption." Another significant word that puts this new relationship in motion is 'obedience.' I use the word motion because the inference for us is faith, and though belief may be a passive mental activity, faith is an active, visible human activity that contains intellect, emotion and physical action.

I believe that succinct introduction captures these few paragraphs. But understanding a primary Christological concept historically, contemporarily, even metaphorically, takes considerable reflection.

The Second Vatican Council confronted various themes of the day. They were numerous and complex and many, if not all, are relevant today. The debate, it may be said, was animated by faith in search of elusive truth. And elusive truth can attract, like a magnet, both serene and hostile opinion and reaction. The community's organization and participation with a renewed biblical understanding was now placed as a dominant force and a juridical model was being displaced. Animosity is understandable, yet, not germane to portraying Christ's redemptive action as one of reciprocal obedience to the power of God. Reciprocal in that the faithful share in the consequence of the action through a personal obedience to the power of God. In this context, a faith response allows for cooperation with the mystery and power of God.

Rhetoric and the power of persuasion inherent in words is a dilemma faced by the Second Vatican Council and the Church moving forward today. Rhetoric optimistically may help people prepare to understand complex truth but it also may present unrealistic expectations.

Relevant to substantial vitality in the Church is an embracing of respect for the foundations that brought us to the Second Vatican Council while also deliberately respecting its innovative theological renewal.

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The Challenge of Being a Body in Christ

John Dearhammer

Church of the Holy Spirit, Schaumburg, IL

Together as one body
we look to Christ... who
calls us to conversion
with the Spirit.

This past spring, Fr. George Kane, Pastor Emeritus of Church of the Holy Spirit, offered a six week class on Vatican II, in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Council. It was well attended which made me quite happy. George asked the folks to purchase Fr. John O'Malley's recent book, *What Happened at Vatican II*, as the text for the class. Even though I was never good at "that fancy book larnin'" I read the book as well and had my eyes opened to the inner workings of the Council.

I found the book fascinating and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to know about the Council's impact. I was born one month after the Second Vatican Council ended so I have no personal knowledge of a pre-Vatican II church. Church teachings and practices that I have taken for granted in my lifetime such as ecumenism, Mass in the vernacular and many other issues were strongly debated. That really amazes me because those issues are just "givens" now. Vatican 2 resulted in great changes that left people a little flustered. I remember a lady asking me how I was dealing with the changes in the church. I asked her, "What changes? Mass has always been in English for me." She was dumbfounded. She also told me, "In my day, priests wore hassocks (*sic*). I thought priests would look odd with small footstools on their head. I am sure she meant cassocks, not hassocks.

One of the insights I had from O'Malley's book was that the Council Fathers had fundamental differences about the future direction of the church. Many bishops felt that Rome should be given special recognition at all times and many other bishops felt that the Curia had to undergo a serious reform for the survival of the Church. One faction, led by Ottaviani and Lefebvre, squared off many times against the faction led by Bea and Suenens during the Council. It is amazing that they got anything done, considering the huge number of bishops and their personalities present at the Council. Even more remarkable is that many of the documents are nearly unanimous in the vote of acceptance.

I have been asked by the editors of UPTURN to write about the 7th paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* – the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Permit me to recap the 7th paragraph (but I hope you would read it yourself.) The Seventh chapter of *Lumen Gentium* presents the ancient image of the Body as an image of the Church as we confront a modern world. The Council Fathers challenge us to remember that we are united to Christ in his "passion and glorification." Especially in the celebration of Eucharist, we are in communion with Jesus and one another. The Spirit

then inspires us to love God and to love our brothers and sisters who are members of this Body. Together as one body we look to Christ as our head, who calls us to conversion with the Spirit as our help in the task of conversion.

So, as the Council Fathers are negotiating and debating, as they are arguing and disagreeing, as they are getting frustrated with those who do not see things their way, they talk about the importance of the Body of Christ, a body with many members with many gifts, but united in one spirit. Did they see any irony there?

I bring this point up now because I think we are in the same position of the Council Fathers 50 years ago. We debate, argue, get frustrated about any number of parroquial, diocesan, or world-church concerns, and we can forget the call to be a Body of many members with the same spirit. The church should be an example of a healthy Body of Christ but we have to acknowledge that we haven't always lived up to that ideal. The seventh paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* challenges us to be one body and that challenge will be with us until the end of our days. That challenge to be a body, however, is not meant only for the church but for society at large.

This election year has been tense and divisive with a lot of accusations and criticisms made by both candidates. The partisan news channels then take apart the candidate's comments and rip the candidate they don't like and beatify the candidate they do like. The state and city government has this same type of partisanship. It seems to me that this image of the body could be a good one for society that professes "E Pluribus Unum." Rarely nowadays do we talk about societal issues in a reasonable volume. Rarely do we respect the person with whom we differ. I hope that our society at large, especially the political realm, could think of our country and world as a Body in which all are of the same spirit with different gifts (and opinions.)

It is easy to point fingers at other entities but I should look hard at myself because my attempt to be a solid member of the Body of Christ falls short many times. I know you are thinking, "Dearhammer? I thought he had it all together." Sorry to disappoint you. I can be negative, cynical, and critical of people and institutions around me, forgetting charity. I am tempted many times to think that if this group or that were out of the church or the parish or the world, everything would be so much better. I can lose hope and start to doubt the Body's ability to recover and endure. I would imagine that all of us have felt that way sometimes. I have to look deeply within myself and work on that "likeness to Christ" that the 7th chapter talks about.

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Embracing the Fullness of an Incarnational Church

Gerry Kleba

St. Cronan's, Archdiocese of St. Louis

I contend that a majority of Catholics might find that the mystery of the Incarnation, God with us in the person of Jesus, is more unbelievable than the mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The third section of this major document on the Church highlights the Church as the mystery of the presence of Christ in the world through the community of the baptized who are brothers and sisters in faith. This is the focus of the document rather than thinking of church as a canonical institution. We are the church in so far as we embrace and embody who we are as adopted daughters and sons, one with Christ Jesus through Baptism. Christ is the image of the invisible God and we who are baptized into Christ Jesus put on Christ and show God to the world.

Teilhard de Chardin said, "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God." So it is a contradiction to think that the church, the community of Christ, could be dull and dour. We must, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything." (Phil 4:4-6)

While this, 'Community of Christ' view must be the view of the overall church, it must begin in the local community. It is true that the local church is conditioned by place, time and circumstances. Certainly, this mystery of Christ that is the church manifests its joy differently in different places. Africans celebrate with chants, rhythmic dancing and pulsating drums, a much different display than the pipe organ, bag pipes and processions in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York on its major Irish feast. Likewise the underground church celebrates Christ differently in the face of persecution than the church of Poland after Solidarity and the dismantling of the wall. And of course, the holy community of Christ must display itself outside the liturgical arena moving from the sanctuary to the street. The servant church witnesses to Christ in soup kitchens, homeless shelters, Habitat for Humanity houses, schools and hospitals and any place where Christ's work is being done for the underserved and undervalued least of our brothers and sisters.

The document highlights the gospel passage, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all things to myself." (Jn12:32) This Johannine passage refers to being lifted up in a suffering that is made glorious through the total self-donation of the victim. How is it that we who are taking up our crosses daily do that? We do it with utter self-giving and with a consciousness that we must willingly burden ourselves so that we can unburden others. Do we do this aware from our past experiences of the Paschal Mystery

that there will be our joy, a joy that is so contagious that others will be drawn to participate in the experience? Jesus, who was lifted up, drew all to himself and we risk by doing the same.

Isabelle is a ten year old dark-eyed Guatemalan girl with a coffee complexion who was adopted at birth by a single woman in our community. Her mother has tried to sensitize this energetic tyke about the plight of other children in her native country and in so doing made her aware that many grow up with no access to clean water and die in childhood from water-borne diseases. Isabelle asked me if she could sell ice water in front of our un-air-conditioned church in this brutal St. Louis summer. Her intention was to raise \$300 to purchase three in-home water filters for poor families. In six weeks the excited support of our sweltering, thirsty community helped Isabelle raise enough money to give clean water to thirteen families. In the process she formed an excited, proud community at St. Cronan's and a healthy, happy community in Guatemala. Did Isabelle taste success when she first suggested this project to her mother and me? Did she suspect when she and her mother were lugging the cases of ice water into church that this would become such an exciting project and easy fund-raiser? Who knows? But we do know that one visionary little girl charmed St. Cronan's into becoming a prouder, more caring community instead of a community complaining of the summer heat. In the process we were all brought to a better awareness of our many blessings, like clean water to drink, and more conscious of our closeness to our brothers and sisters thousands of miles away thirsting for the water of life. Did Isabelle ever suspect the joy that she would experience and the joy she would bring close to home and in a distant place where the Creator gave her birth? "The glory of God is God's people fully alive," Irenaeus reminds us and Isabelle reminds us that generous self-giving is contagious and brings folks together.

I intentionally mention daughters and sons and tell the story of a little girl because one of the glaring flaws of this fifty year old document is the constant references to the church made up of men and to God's self as masculine.

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While it is clear that the Vatican II documents were written in their own time, it is almost impossible for me to read them today without being constantly distracted and angered by the masculine verbiage and all the arrogant exclusivity that implies. I write this as the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) is having its annual meeting in St. Louis and considering how to respond to the hierarchical battering by the male-dominated Vatican. They propose to appoint a triumvirate of bishops to lord it over 58,000 women disobedient to their dictates and accused of being feminists. I feel their pain and realize that the sexist wording of documents such as this bring it into clearer focus and continue and promote it in the church.

This is the type of thing that undermines the community of the church and destroys the mission of the Son. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:18) Karl Rahner said, “Vatican II is the most earth shaking event in the church since Paul took the gospel to the gentiles.” Paul, who took the gospel to the gentiles, told us how we are to be blind to differences, and even celebrate the diversity of God’s creation, all bonded together and groaning to give birth to the Risen Lord.

Finally, I find another challenge that is bothersome and broadening in this section. “At the same time, in the sacrament of the Eucharistic bread the unity of all believers who form one body in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 10:17) is both expressed and brought about.” That being said I am forced to ask, “What about an open table and shared Holy Communion at every celebration of the Eucharist but especially at specifically interfaith gatherings? Must we as Catholics be so protective of Christ in the bread (and wine) of the altar that we fail to believe that all who are baptized into Christ are really one Body? It is not our practice to re-baptize people of other Christian denominations so we do believe in the validity of their baptism. If indeed we are one Body, why should we not be nourished at the one table? Is this because we are not perfectly unified in mind, heart and Spirit? As long as we are pilgrims in this passing city with all the pitfalls of frail humanity, is it ever possible to be fully united? I doubt it. If that is the level of perfection that is demanded, will we ever be able to honestly join around the table with others even in our own parish communities who are either more pre-Vatican II or more yearning for Vatican III than we are? We are certainly not fully united.


I submit that the real question is this. In the Eucharistic bread (and wine) do we really believe that the unity of the one body of Christ is *expressed and brought about*? The italics are mine but the statement is from the Council Fathers. I would argue that we must believe more fully in the efficacy of the Eucharistic bread (and wine) to unify and hence risk sharing it more generously at an open table. Let us see what Jesus will do in our broken communities and fractured self-righteous world. 

Predestined Through the Power of God

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From a personal standpoint, let me attempt to bring clarity of being predestined. I have been blessed to have many positive secular and ministerial experiences. I have been a married man, a corporate executive, a humbled seminarian, pastor, teacher and university administrator. With a faith response, God entered the various moments of change and growth. God’s power brought innovative fulfillment. My participation was to fulfill role and function through acceptance and the obedience of being sent into various settings. There was purpose, meaning and a participation in continuing mystery. Without a faith response, it is inconceivable to me where I might be today. In its most basic form, I believe I was predestined through grace to be where I am today. Through grace, and an understanding heart, I hope to fulfill the next level of being sent with an obedient posture.

Each of us experiences a predestined journey—an elusive truth with high expectations that words sometimes cannot convey but human action makes visible. The joy and hope of the Second Vatican Council maintains that as Christ was obedient to the power of God and sent we, too, are foundational to the realization of Christ present in mystery in every generation.

The power of God is in our world and includes human intentionality. A faith response not only satisfies the hungry heart but allows contact with the mystery of Christ. 


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The Challenge of Being a Body in Christ

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I pray that the Spirit can change my heart and all of our hearts to be worthy members of the Body of Christ.

The Body is an ancient metaphor for the church which acknowledges both the Glory of Jesus’ presence and the sinfulness of that Body’s members. I pray that we can let that image of the Body enlighten us so that we can see every member of the Body as a beloved brother or sister in Christ. That is the challenge of being a Body. 

A Church 'Walking the Walk'

John Hoffman

St. Francis Xavier, LaGrange, IL

Looking at this text from the Council gets me excited again about the insights of those attending, about the deeper, spiritually richer truths they shared with the world. My own sense then and now again is the difference between trying to push a rock up the hill in order to earn a position on the top (pre Vatican II) and moving through the ebb and flow of life already empowered by the Spirit to a fuller relationship with Christ and the Body of Christ.

“Christ ceaselessly sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible structure. Through her he communicates truth and grace to all.”

There is also the massive shift of the church's structure and societies' caste system that came from the beautiful insight that it is the Sacrament of Baptism (especially in Karl Rahner's *Anonymous Christian*) that unites us as God's people, no one greater or more important, no one less.

“But the society furnished with hierarchical agencies and the Mystical body of Christ are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly church and the Church enriched with heavenly things. Rather they form one interlocked reality which is comprised of a divine and a human element.”

And how are we to live as God's children, those redeemed? Like Jesus as much as we can. It is quite easy to get lost in what is socially or religiously acceptable and loose track of our mission and purpose. I might look at those who “walk the walk”—was it Dan Cantwell who used to move from one assignment to another with two brown paper bags on the “L”?—and tell myself “I can't do that,” rather than “I can't do all of that.” I believe that the core message here from the Gospel, from Christ, is living for others rather than for myself.

“Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and under oppression, so the church is called to follow the same path in communicating to men the fruits of salvation. Christ Jesus,” though he was by nature God. . . . emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave” (Phil. 2:6) and “being rich, he became poor” (Cor. 8-9) for our sakes. Thus although the church needs human resources to carry out her mission, she is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim humility and self-sacrifice, even by her own example.”

It has been said that the church is being persecuted today, that is it under siege, specifically the doctrine and teachings of the church. While those are certainly being challenged,

Would that the whole church could stand as a beacon in the dark even with a dim light, as the champion of justice for the majority of our religious women do.

I wonder if it is the spirituality and the community of the church that is being eaten away by greed and fear, setting us against one another within and outside the church. Would that the whole church could stand as a beacon in the dark even with a dim light, as the champion of justice for the poor and the oppressed as it's primary mission, like the majority of our religious women do.

“The Church “like a pilgrim in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God”. . . By the power of the risen Lord, she is given strength to overcome patiently and lovingly the afflictions and hardships which assail her from within and without, and to show forth in the world the mystery of the Lord in a faithful though shadowed way, until at last it will be revealed in total splendor.”

I especially appreciated the commentaries provided. From Mary Jo Tully:

“The Church is God's Word and light in a tunnel of darkness, keeping the people of God ever pressing forward and “becoming.” There is excitement in becoming. Hope lies in possibility. Our human experience gives testimony to the wonder of “what can be” amidst the seeming futility of “what is.” The hope of the oak is contained in the acorn. The joy of a man is in the unborn baby. All life is becoming. . . . What unites or divides the people of God is not what they think about birth control celibacy, or authority. The bond that makes us one is our belief in the risen Lord.”

Cardinal George has spoken of this often, our belief in the Risen Lord. And I will always remember John Paul II on the night of his election, standing in the window overlooking St. Peter's square, gesturing up and saying, “It is Jesus Christ we seek!” But I think we have lost our way. The message has gotten distorted.

Yet the hope that Tully writes of is imbedded in the core of our being, all of us.

Jeni De Carlo writes:

“The divine is not annexed to the human; the divine is present in the human. Thus, the Church which claims to be the continuation of Christ's spirit MUST be a Church that can be seen, felt and heard. Certainly this visibility is essential to the integrity of the Church member. It is even more essential to the world for which the church exists.”

“This article (#8) calls on the church to persist in the endless process of purifying itself. The face the

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A Proud History, a Faithful, Hopeful Future

Fr. Ron Kalas, '59

The opportunity to reflect on the 2nd Vatican Council seems fitting for those ordained in the years leading up to the Council and first experiencing ministry during the years 1962-1964. My ordination class, 1959, was on the cutting edge of a new time in the Church. Pope John XXIII was elected during our diaconate year. While we were not privy to newspapers or T.V., the news got around rapidly from the faculty and, yes, from the Jesuit magazine *America* which we were allowed to read!

The new pope's friendly smile and more famous quips along with pictures from his time as a nuncio to Bulgaria and France made him seem very much a people's person. So when the announcement of the Council was made in January of 1959, it just seemed to be so much a part of his vision for the Church he loved. It was not to be a dogmatic council but one that would help to make the message of Catholicism available to all in a new age and a new time. The words about "opening the windows" of the Church was exciting for the newly ordained.

It took some time for the constitutions and decrees to be formulated and made available, but the news of the Council was available by certain commentators such as Xavier Rhyn, which made reading of the sessions somewhat exciting.

The changes that began to happen in the liturgy made the promise of the Council's theme a reality to so many of us. At the same time various movements were beginning. I think of how the Christian Family Movement got us out of our rectories and into the homes of our parishioners. This revealed family life to us in a new and dynamic way but also put us into dialogue with God's people about issues of concern: Christ was coming to the nations in our discussion of personal and devotional spirituality, the changing of Liturgy into the vernacular, the renewal of the Sacraments, a new way to preach focusing on the themes of God's closeness to us in Christ; Sacraments with a large "S" and a small "s", were helping us to understand how God could be present to our world and to us in a heart to heart experience.

While the study of Scripture began to open in the 1940s, the actual availability of Bible Study Groups was engrossing. Our seminary experience was, in contrast, buried in old Latin manuals, and dull presentations. Fortunately, the Jerome Commentary on Scripture became available in the late 1950ties, which many of us tugged to class, read on our own, and discussed in small groups. The connection of Old and New Testaments now made clearer, revealed God's plan to gather all who believed in Christ

These half-century texts can once again excite those who read them to find new hope in Christ's message and move the Church forward in this particular time of trial.

and all who sought goodness together.

How beautifully that connection was made on the 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time this year (Aug. 5) when the feeding of God's people on their trek through the Sinai desert was connected to Jesus' feeding of the people in Chapter 6 of John's Gospel. The ability to explain that connection and share it with the assembly resulted in many comments of appreciation from those who were present. Even more, practical examples of how each of us could break bread with others as we reached out in our daily lives to bring others to the Lord's Table and revivify our relationships with family, friends and the world around us brought the meaning of the Gospel and made the work of the Holy Spirit present in dynamic ways. The preaching and teaching of the Truths of Faith have been elevated in words and examples that can excite the faithful and present a loving God who is so intimately present without losing a sense of the transcendent.

That same sense has been revealed in the work of the RCIA programs over the years since the Council. Perhaps that was the best kept secret of the Council, along with the restoration of the Diaconate.


The first article of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church called for revealing Christ to all, seeing the Church as (s) sacrament, and a unity or bonding between believers. "Christ Renews His Parish" and "Cursillo" programs were formed in the 1970s and brought men and women into a closer relationship with Christ, each other, and the world around them. They have held a revival most recently and I have been privileged to watch and even be a part of the CHRP ministry at St. Joseph's Parish in Libertyville. It has revolutionized that parish in so many ways, called forth people into ministry, brought clergy and participants into new relationships that eventually made a difference in the dynamic of parish structures, the parish pastoral and finance councils, the school board, social work and ecumenical outreach, not to mention a practical spirituality for families and individuals.

Today in the Archdiocese of Chicago our Strategic Pastoral Plan is re-echoing the themes of Vatican II, the Decisions Document of Cardinal Bernardin's time, and newly inaugurated Parish Transformation Project. For me to observe and participate in one parish's participation in PTP could not have happened without the insight and thrust of *Lumen Gentium*. To have 30 people commit to 16 sessions of discussion on the parish's mission, its financial commitment, its outreach to religious education of children and adults was amazing. The folks examined what they had done and what they needed to do to touch their parish community and even to

reach beyond it. The completed plan with time lines and commitments should help to build the parish community into the future. For a new pastor, in this case, to be engaged with his leadership and other interest groups ought to be a model for many parishes to follow.

In re-reading the text of this constitution I was pleased to note all the scriptural quotes that were offered in testimony to the text. It reminded me of a time when scripture and Council quotes from the past were used to refute the “adversaries” in our systematic theology courses. Now they threw open not only a window but a door as well, they were living texts.

In an age of new technology where information can

go viral in moments, what a great opportunity we have to fulfill the thoughts, hopes and desires of this Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Despite the global, national, and local problems in the Church and in secular life, these half-century texts can once again excite those who read them to find new hope in Christ’s message and move the Church forward in this particular time of trial. There is fear in the Church today about “reforming the reform” as it is called. For so many of us, might it not be good to return to these documents and try to understand their meaning for us now, and not be afraid to dialogue with all our brothers and sisters in the Lord to bring Christ to the Nations? What a noble cause that would be! 



The Time Has Come to Respect the Entire Mystical Body

Monsignor Nicholas Schneider

Retired, St. Louis Archdiocese

At Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis in the 1950s the ecclesiology we were taught was based upon Hervé. He presented the Church as a divinely-instituted organization with two elements: the hierarchy and the faithful. Our Vincentian faculty required us to learn the propositions Hervé presented. No one urged us to look beyond the textbook for other descriptions; sadly, the field of inquiry was sparsely sown and the offered harvest was not great. We were living at the end of the ‘Modernist’ period; theological research and writing were just beginning to rise from the ashes and our professors, formed in the cautious climate created by ‘Pascendi’, were resistant to promoting any independent thinking or questioning.

Pope Pius XII had opened the windows slightly with his encyclical *Divini Afflante Spiritu* in 1942 which gave biblical scholars permission to incorporate ‘form criticism’ and other methods of analyzing Scripture into research. In 1947 he issued *Mediator Dei* which offered a blessing to the liturgical movement that had been developing subtly but persistently first in Europe, especially in Belgium and Germany and Austria, and later in the United States.

Earlier, in 1943, the Pope had published *Mystici Corporis* in which he moved ecclesiology into a new thought-world by basing it upon Pauline principles rather than gospel images: Shepherd and flock, Vine and branches, Bridegroom and bride were superseded by Head and body, a concept that expressed the relationship of Christ and his followers as one mystical Entity. Initially the encyclical was received with trepidation in some quarters. I entered the seminary in 1944 by enrolling as a freshman at the Cathedral Latin School, a high school for that purpose in the St. Louis Archdiocese. In our sophomore year one of the students asked in our religion class about the Pope’s

letter on the mystical body; our professor discouraged us from making any reference to it, claiming that the concept was still too recent to comment upon.

But happily the teaching was taken up by theologians and spirituality authors and became the base ecclesiology for the Church of the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in its being included as section 7 of chapter 1 “The Mystery of the Church” of *Lumen Gentium*. We are grateful to the Fathers of the Council who, after much debate, elected to describe the Church in this fashion first of all, only then taking up the People of God, the Hierarchical Structure with Special Reference to the Episcopate, the Laity, the Call to Holiness, the Religious, the Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church, and the Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, all contingent elements which together form the mystery.

Vatican II having canonized, as it were, the concept of ‘Mystical Body’, opened the gates for further reflection on its implications. One of those has been to revive Blessed John Henry Newman’s teaching as a “conspiracy” of the Holy Spirit in which the Spirit “inspires” the three elements of Christological reality present in the Church: the Kingly role—the bishops, the Prophetic role—the theologians, and the Priestly role—the laity. Newman believed that the Church was most fully alive when these three were functioning in concert with each other under the influence of the Holy Spirit. His view was that each had its important role to play in building up the Church and that the Body was most fully alive when each was actively contributing to the whole.

Adopting his thought raises questions about the current situation of the Catholic Church in the United States, particularly as it has to do with recent activities involving the hierarchy, theologians and lay religious. Our bishops


objected rightly to the HHS policy regarding health insurance issues after deliberating the position they should assume, but might there have been more consultation with other church entities in health ministry before a public statement was issued? Was there sufficient in-Church discussion to allow a joint communiqué reflecting a broader agreement on the subject and the manner of addressing it?

In the case of Sister Elizabeth Johnson, has the time come to dialogue about the role of theologians in the Church and to encourage their engagement with the world in all of its aspects in an exploratory manner, searching for the interconnectedness with God of everything from the millions of planets to the Higg's boson to the child left abandoned on the road in Sudan? Certainly mistakes will occur and not every theory will survive scrutiny but how else can human knowledge advance regarding things divine and human and material and ethereal unless by trial and error and necessary correction? Lay theologians bring an entirely new viewpoint to theological speculation and research which carries us beyond the perimeters formerly determined by seminary walls. They are more in touch with the larger world and bring that perspective to the theological discourse and enrich their discipline by doing so. Should not that development be promoted at every level of Church life even at the risk of the errors which will inevitably occur? Would that inevitability have distressed Cardinal Newman?

The Leadership Conference of Religious Women raises another question. Has the time come for the Catholic Church in the United States to consider broadening its consultative process to include the laity—religious and others—in a significant way? As an American church community we now have the most educated citizens in the country, due to the marvelous educational system our predecessors created in the 19th and 20th centuries from grade school, through high school, through college to university education. Is this the moment when we should devise a way for us to tap into the knowledge and experience of such a rich gold mine of resources? The Sisters in the United States have already demonstrated that this can be done through meetings and conferences which transcend the limitations of individual dioceses. Is there a place in our church for the creation of a similar process whereby theologians and clergy and laity can have their hopes and dreams, their grief and sorrows articulated so that their voice can resonate with that of their bishops? How to bring this about is the challenge but in this technological age a method of doing so is not beyond possibility. Within the community of the laity we have people of superior ability to produce a plan which would raise input and decision making to another level. Would doing so frighten Cardinal Newman or would he see this an evidence of true “conspiracy” = the active engagement in dialogue of all three Church entities: Kingly-bishops,

Prophetic-theologians and Priestly-laity, all functioning together under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

Such developments would enhance the reality of the Church as ‘Communion,’ a description which carries us a step beyond the ‘Mystical Body’ teaching by emphasizing that “In that body, the life of Christ is poured into the believers who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real ways to Christ who suffered and was glorified.” (op.cit., para.2). As the document goes on to say: “Also, in the building up of Christ’s body there is a flourishing variety of members and functions. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness, and the needs of the ministries, distributes his different gifts for the welfare of the Church.” This being true, should we not explore its meaning to discover in what ways the “conspiracy” of the Holy Spirit can be broadened to include the three elements in a deeper manner?


Obviously there are many challenges and possible pitfalls in pursuing the course of action proposed above. But doing so is not beyond our capabilities as the Catholic Church in the United States. Articulating in an ordered way the concerns and desires we carry in our minds and hearts can serve to energize us to address the needs of our members and the citizens of our country as well as to devise solutions for the problems we face. We can undertake such a project in the full confidence that “He has shared with us his Spirit who, existing as one and the same being in the head and the members, vivifies, unifies, and moves the whole body.” (op. cit.) 



A Church ‘Walking the Walk’

Continued from page 7.

Church turns to the world that it serves must be a compassionate, open, and welcoming face. It must be an honest face that is not afraid to show the suffering that it is experiencing within itself. The world, after all, is no stranger to fear and anxiety; nor is it a stranger to hope. It is good for the Church to re-affirm its solidarity with a searching world. Now, as never before, the Church has the opportunity of admitting to the world that they are partners, that together they are on the way. In such a spirit of mutuality the gift of hope in the risen Jesus that the Church offers no longer appears as an inducement to come over to the side that has all the truth, but as a buttress to the truth that human dignity and human growth can and must develop everywhere.”

All of this could have been written this week. It is still relevant after 4 decades. Pretty idealistic? Probably. But nothing else seems to be working. 

The True Pastor of Our Churches

Richard Grek, C.R.

My first assignment as a pastor was in 1975. I was appointed to be the pastor of a relatively small parish {c. 1,000 families) in Southern California. “How shall I introduce myself to these people?” I asked. “How can I honestly lay out my ‘agenda,’ so that they would both understand what I thought was my role as their leader and how they could and should hold me accountable for what I would promise them I would do?”

So on that first Sunday of my assignment, I preached to the people of St. Joseph Parish. I declared that I believed that Jesus, not I, was the real pastor of the parish. I further said that it was my conviction that in Catholic tradition Christ is always the head: He is head not only of the Universal Church, but also its head at every level of the Church’s structure.

I certainly did not think that my perspective and my understanding of my role was unique. I had heard other pastors say the same and it was following their example that I hoped to carry out my assignment.

I knew, of course, that there were consequences to what I was saying. Because I had been enthusiastic about the Scriptural foundation of ministry-articulated and promulgated in Vatican II—quoting St. Paul, I also said that I wished my motto to be: “Here at St. Joseph we preach Christ.” For me that meant not simply repeating Scriptural verses and/or catechism formulae, but realizing that preaching Christ Jesus meant the challenge of conversion. Conversion, I had come to believe, was internalizing Gospel values and inviting all the parishioners to do the same.

The first consequence, therefore, was to strive for my own conversion. Because I do not buy into the once-and-for-all conversion experience, I see conversion as a process, a life-long “metanoia” (slowly making that 180 degree turn). I knew that what I did and what I said must come out of my prayer-life.

Conversion, as I understood it then, and understand it now, means “putting on the mind and heart of Christ.” I need to pray the Scriptures regularly, to be challenged to honestly look at my values—lived values and merely spoken values—and measure my words and deeds under the criteria of doing God’s will. In other words when I pray, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,” I believe I am saying the same thing in two different ways.

The Hebrew word I learned in seminary to describe God’s love is “hesed.” “Faithful love” I was taught was the way that word might be translated into English. “Count on me, I’ll be there for you,” became for me the challenge of faith. For just as I needed to believe and trust that God’s love would never fail, I needed to respond to that love with my

own “hesed.” Consistent, struggling love was my agenda as a disciple. And so would I challenge the parishioners of St. Joseph.

The second consequence was that I knew that Liturgy, particularly the Sunday Mass, needed to have the lion’s share of my time and energy.

The two-fold division of the ritual into the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist appeared to have the essential elements of conversion.

Sacred Scripture has that privileged place in articulating God’s will, and the rich resources of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments), are proclaimed as “the word of God.” Outstanding lectors are needed for this sacred function. My own proclamation and homily, too, required the best I could give. There would be no short-changing preparation time, and no reading of prepared sermons from some homily-aid. ***I believed that unless the homily was rooted in and came from my own struggling faith, it would be inauthentic.*** Enthusiasm, I knew, needed to be coupled with solid theology given at an adult level. The Liturgy of the Word has no equal in Catholic spiritual living for effecting conversion, i.e., putting on the mind and heart of Christ.

Gradually I came also to recognize Augustine’s insight that we—the church—are the Body of Christ at the Eucharistic celebration. During the second Eucharistic Prayer, I prayed that God send the Spirit to change “these gifts” into the Body and Blood of Christ, referring to the bread and wine certainly, and also to the assembled people. Transformed into Christ—both the bread and wine as also the people—could only be accomplished by God’s creating and recreating Divine Spirit. And while private prayer for this transformation is non-negotiable, the Church’s official, sacramental prayer has the unique power to certainly accomplish this transformation.

And so the insight from Bishop Ken Untener that the communicant’s “amen” at the reception of the Body of Christ was saying “yes” to the Real Presence and also “yes” to the identification of the Eucharistic Bread with the very person taking and eating, became a repeated theme in my homilies and talks.

Finally, a third consequence of proclaiming Jesus as pastor of the parish is captured in the very title of the Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium*. Christ is for all! Today every believer is Christ here and now. We are the “light” given by God to transform a broken, sinful humanity by becoming conduits of God’s grace and as an *alter Christus*, being the light that leads out of darkness.

Unless the homily was rooted in and came from my own struggling faith, it would be inauthentic.

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Ministry Emanating from the Light of the Incarnation

Rev. James Denn, CSC

Notre Dame University

As a first year theologian at the Gregorian university, I was privileged to hear Pope John XXIII announce Vatican Council II to the Cardinals assembled in the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Wall on January 25, 1949. With me at the time were two Chicagoans, Tom and Don McNeil whose father was the host of the Breakfast Club radio show. Don is now a Holy Cross priest here at Notre Dame and was president of our 1958 graduating class. When I returned to our Holy Cross residence in Rome I had a difficult time convincing our American Superior General of the Pope's momentous decision. For this reason I am honored to reflect on the opening sections of *Lumen Gentium* as I followed its development and that of other council decrees for the following six years.

What strikes me most in this section is the bold proclamation of the Father's plan for all of creation to come back to him in Christ Jesus. Today there are many convinced that all religions are equally true and effective in promoting human development. However, in *Lumen Gentium* the uniqueness of God's plan in Christ is unequivocally proclaimed. Today Pope Benedict XVI consistently condemns the heresy of relativism, which suggests that every belief is good and right and must be respected. While affirming the doctrine of the primacy of conscience in religious belief so eloquently championed by the American Jesuit, John Courtney Murray (I had to interrupt his talk at our college to tell the gathering that President Kennedy had been shot), Vatican II asserts the centrality of the Incarnation and God's plan to bring all of creation to the fullness of life in Christ. This truth permeates all of the decrees of Vatican II, which in some instances suggests how this plan includes all humans before and after Christ, adherents of other religions, agnostics and atheists alike.

The Incarnation is the cornerstone of the Father's plan and not a game-change occasioned by Adam's sin. Almost fifty years ago the English theologian, Charles Davis, wrote a one page article in *America* magazine that most effectively summarizes this theology, I have kept a copy in my desk all these years.

He wrote: "The Incarnation therefore is rightly seen as revealing God to us. Through Christ, we know God with an intimacy and depth far beyond what would have been attainable by the human mind alone. The contrast between the God of Christians and the God of philosophers is the measure of the self-disclosure made by God in Christ. . . . But people less readily notice that the Incarnation revealed the nature of man. What is Man? Should not the answer be given by pointing to the perfect man, by taking the highest

realization of manhood as the norm? That the Son of God could become a man, that the thought of God could be expressed in manhood, has made known what it means to be man. We can now assess the kind of being God conceived when he willed to create man."

These words encapsulate the Christian anthropology that moved me so profoundly upon my first reading of Davis' article. To become more perfectly human is to grow in Christ, the perfect human. The claim of the universality of God's plan in Christ must be part of any serious discussion of religious pluralism. Yet, how many of the self-help books flooding the market to promote human growth and development point to Christ Jesus?

The truth of the Incarnation destroys the traditional distinction between the natural and supernatural virtues that was so prominent in our Christian formation. According to Davis, and

hinted at in Paul's letter to the Ephesians and Colossians, there was never a natural end for man. From all eternity the Father's plan is to create man for life in Christ. How often were we told that so-called natural virtue was not sufficient, and so our *intentions* had to be supernaturalized? Christian life was living in a two-story house. Life on the first floor wasn't really important, whereas life on the second floor (*supernatural*) was what really mattered. Christian anthropology maintains that humankind is at the center of creation, being made for union with the Second Person of the Trinity. Therefore, one who grows in Christ grows in his/her humanity, and those who mature in their humanity grow in Christ the perfect human.

Davis continues to develop this theme: "Everything in creation was designed by God in view of the Incarnation. Christ was not an after-thought. He was the center of God's plan from the outset. Therefore God

designed man with the Incarnation in mind. . . . Human nature was chosen for creation as being a nature so open to God that it could be taken up into the divine existence in a unity of person with the Son. . . . God created man because he willed to become incarnate. What then is man? Human nature may be defined as the nature God designed as the external expression of his thought, the created image of his being. We know what man is only when we recognize the possibility and the fact of man being God. . . . Christ is the model of manhood, the most perfect expression of what it means to be a man, the norm according to which we must

It is okay to be human, to develop and enjoy all the human talents and gifts that are ours and use them for the good of fellow humans in a spirit of joy and peace.

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Images of the Kingdom

Bartley MacPhaidin, CSC, Th.D. (Gregorianum)

President Emeritus, Stonehill College, MA

The images for the Kingdom in Section 6 are all drawn from the New Testament and they are, indeed, a *mélange* as Bruce Vawter describes them. We will look for some commonalities.

Before that, I would like to draw attention to one event—image—which historically has had important consequences for the Church, *per forza* does not belong here. I refer to the image known as *the Navicella* (Mt 14:22; Mk 6:45; Jn 6:15) a mosaic composed by Giotto at the entrance of the old Constantinian St. Peter's and of which only two angels remain due to efforts to preserve it.

It was before this image of the storm-tossed Church that St. Catherine of Siena used to pray for hours when she was engaged in trying to get the Pope to return from Avignon. I also recall theologian and Jungian psychologist Josef Goldbrunner say during Vatican II that it was the single best pericope for catechesis in all of the Gospels. It is rarely mentioned, as *imago Ecclesiae*, but this may be for ecumenical reasons because of its prominent Petrine content.

As for the rest of the images in Section 6, one may observe that they partake of a *quotidian transcendence*: simple things like fields, vines, sheep and pasturing, buildings, home and hearth. This is what makes them valuable for pastoral theology, and for proposing them to minds that are simple or sophisticated or to those that are somewhere in between. Their character as analogues needs to be always stressed, and as someone once observed, in matters of the spirit, the simpler the analogue the better, because people will then not confound it with the spiritual reality being pointed out.

Another observation worth making: if you scratch any Catholic about salvation, you will find out that salvation for most is likely to be some kind of *personal side-deal* they have with God. Thus has individualism so invaded the American *psyche*, of both believer and non-believer, Catholic or Evangelical. It is important, to allay the concern of thinkers like Martin Buber who felt that Christianity emphasized *personal holiness* over against the idea of a *holy people*. For Eugene Maly, the fault is theology's, not scripture's. But when did this occur? Post Reformation? The *devotio nova*?

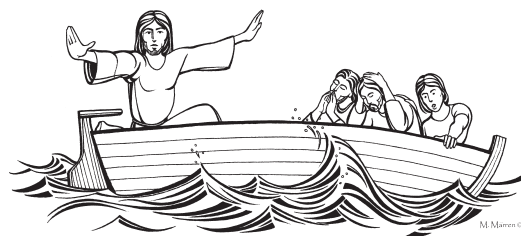
The parables express what Eric Felten, writing on postmodern art, calls "*the extraordinary banality of the ordinary*", derived probably from Hannah Arendt's famous phrase about the "banality of evil". These kinds of phrases are helpful in the very introduction of a homiletic or catechetical (adult) introduction to the parables of the kingdom.

The New Testament unfolds the inner nature of what was prefigured by the prophets. It is worth pointing out, as Fr. Guillet, SJ does, that "no definition says exactly what the Church is... It is a mystery as incomprehensible as the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed". It seems to me that this nexus cannot be copper-fastened enough, at times when the image of the Church in the popular imagination comes closer to Luther's definition: "*commune naufragium—a common shipwreck*." One needs above all an image that can elicit love and... prayer.

There is no point in rehearsing the divisions of the "images" that are in the Document itself. That is exhaustively and thoroughly done, and we have Eugene

You will find out that salvation for most is likely to be some kind of *personal side-deal* they have with God.

Maly's confirmation that the *mélange*, as he earlier put it, is told by the Council as "the biblical word the way it is." Thus, we have the Sheep–Gatefold–Shepherd theme; the Field–Vineyard–Vinedresser theme; the Stone–House–Temple theme; and, finally, the theme which can simply be called Eschatological. All of these images deserve to be deepened by study.



Ministry Emanating...

Continued from page 12.

measure whatever claims to be human."

What are the pastoral implications? First, I want to affirm for myself and others that it is okay to be human, to develop and enjoy all the human talents and gifts that are ours and use them for the good of fellow humans in a spirit of joy and peace.

Yes, we humans want to love and be loved. "*Love one another as I have loved you*" are the words of Jesus, the perfect human. The scene of the Last Judgment depicted in Matthew 25 reminds us of the ultimate criterion for admission to the kingdom, the fullness of life in Christ: "*What you have done for the least of my brothers (and sisters), you have done for me.*" Perhaps all that I have written can be summarized in the words of St. Irenaeus of Lyons who wrote in the second century, "The glory of God is man fully alive."

The Kingdom: A People Bonded Together in Christ

Robert Nogosek, CSC,

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Already from the beginning of Chapter One of *Lumen Gentium* we learn that the Church is more a person than an institution, since the Church is a mystery and no institution can be a mystery. This does not mean the Church is invisible, but rather that in its very visibility it is a sign and instrument of the Risen Christ, who triumphs over human death, sin and misery. Better said, the Church is a sacrament, an outward sign instituted by Christ to bestow grace. This grace is to bring about a conversion of mind, heart, and manner of living to all in our world today.

Chapter One, “The Mystery of the Church,” indicates that this sacramentality of the Church is best described by biblical images found in the New Testament, and often presented as describing the Kingdom of God, even though later, *Lumen Gentium* will carefully distinguish the Church from the Kingdom of God. As Jesus told Pilate, the Kingdom of God he represented is not of this world. As a sacrament, however, the Church can be of this world as a sign of the world to come, indicating that here and now heavenly gifts are made present. Once we are in heaven there will be no more sacraments, for we shall no longer need signs to find our way there. Meanwhile in this life of the Church on earth, these heavenly gifts are to be more and more appropriated by human mortals. This is what we call personal and spiritual growth.

Virtually all the images of the Kingdom cited in chapter one are social in nature rather than individual, for as chapter two of *Lumen Gentium* states, it has pleased God to save us as a people bonded together rather than autonomously as individuals. These images or symbols of the Church boil down to four: a flock of sheep, a bountiful crop in a field, a dwelling place for God on earth, and a bride being prepared for the promised arrival of her lover, who will take her to his home as his life partner.

This has a direct bearing on the purpose of all pastoral ministry, which by its very name denotes a shepherd caring for the common life of the baptized. The faithful are to be induced individually to bond in love with Christ as their Good Shepherd, who loves them as belonging to him and protects them in the darkness of night from marauding wolves; they are to produce a bountiful harvest of good works serving the needs of others; they are to be fitted together closely in mutual relationships to form as loving stones a dwelling on earth for the Risen Christ; and they are to be cleansed by God’s Word and adorned by God’s grace to be a fitting eternal partner with him in his eternal glory.

Consequently, those chosen and endowed for pastoral ministry cannot live detached from the faithful and be content to rule over them by a book of liturgical rites or canon laws. Nor is it sufficient to provide them with the nourishment of the joint tables of God’s Word and Christ’s Eucharist. Pastoral ministry is meant to draw each into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord of our life, draw out of each a dedication to good works according to that person’s special gifts of service, lead them to offer their whole lives as a priestly offering by sacrificing worldly comfort and an abundance of material possessions as each of us carries our own cross following the footsteps of Jesus—and for all of this, to challenge them to make the gospel practical by taking on the attitudes of Jesus.

Responsible pastoral practice tries to build up a congregation of the faithful to be a sacrament attracting the world to union with God and a kind of family unity with all peoples of whatever culture or ethnicity. As sacrament the Church can never become identified with the Kingdom of God; at best it can be only a budding forth of the Kingdom within the common life of its members here and now. Even then this is not achieved merely as God’s work. Paraphrasing St. Augustine’s words, God could create us without us but he cannot sanctify us without our cooperation. Christ alone cannot make the Church a sacrament; that has to be a work in progress, hopefully carried out diligently by those chosen and endowed for pastoral ministry pruning and harvesting in the Vineyard. Those ordained for ministry are to be spiritual leaders dedicated to build up the life of the Kingdom of God in the common life of the faithful, thereby making this expression of the Church a sacrament.

Responsible pastoral practice tries to build up a congregation of the faithful to be a sacrament attracting the world to union with God and a kind of family unity.

Surprisingly, the very prominent New Testament image of the Church as *Body of Christ* is not mentioned in this section on the Images of the Kingdom. St. Augustine saw this image as applied adequately to the Church only in glory, perhaps by merging it with the image of Christ’s bride. Certainly the image of *Body of Christ* cannot mean that the Pilgrim Church in history is a monarchy and that Christ as King rules the faithful primarily by the Church’s laws. Nor did Jesus mean the Church was being established when he said “the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

We know now that originally the term “*Mystical Body of Christ*” designated not the Church but the Eucharist, while “*Body of Christ*” meant the Church. In our present

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Wanted: A Church Transparent, Accountable and Collegial

Len Dubi

Retired

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and the documents which the Holy Spirit produced through the affirmative vote of the vast majority of the 2500 bishops gathered together in St. Peter's Basilica and approved by Pope Paul VI have been defining formational influences and events for me. They shaped my pastoral practice as a priest and as a pastor. Entering the seminary as the council's preparation period was ending, and the actual council was beginning, projected all of us in the seminary at the time into the atmosphere of the lively intellectual discussions and debates of the bishops and theologians in Rome. These were reported to us by faculty members, parish priests, the seminary deacons and in the reports we were able to read in the various Catholic and secular periodicals and reports.

In so many ways (I didn't understand it then) this first article in the first chapter of the document, *Lumen Gentium*, set the tone for the following 44 plus years of ministry as a parish priest. The Fathers of the Council, "gathered together in the Holy Spirit," intended to proclaim the "Gospel to every creature" in order to bring all people to the light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church," for "... 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 (people)."

The council was opening the church to the world and witnessing that all people belong to the One God. For me and many of my contemporaries the importance of the sacramental celebrations we were ordained to celebrate were "concretized" and made "more real" in the service of empowering people to help themselves.

It was here in this first article that I find the roots of the distinction between social service and social action (for change). I trace these basic understandings and insights to this profound realization that sets the stage for the eventual definition that the church is the People of God.

And how has this played out in my life? As of last July 1 I entered that most exalted state—retirement—and I am able to step back and review my years of ministry and the exciting ministries, initiatives and organizations I created, participated in, or joined. I cannot mention them all, only two.

One of them, the recovery community, saved my priesthood and my life thanks to the outstanding and forward thinking men like Fr. Andy Mc Donagh, Fr. Ed McLaughlin, Dr. Jim West, Dr. Vincent Pizanni, Cardinal

Cody and others whose names I forget. This process of recovery helped me to understand my own illness and the generational illness present in both sides of my maternal and paternal family of origin. As I recovered from addiction and being reared in an addictive environment I began to understand also that both the local church I love and serve was and is a part of a national and international church that is dysfunctional and "sick."

The other (organization) I joined was the ACP (Association of Chicago Priests). Really, it was a "re-joining" the ACP which I left 30 years ago. I believed then that the ACP's leadership was not seriously interested in organizing the priests to relate to the grass roots church of the laity and especially the religious women, in the

way I had come to believe was necessary in order to make the entire system work. Both the institutional church and the democracy in which the church of the USA and much of the developed world existed need to have grass-roots participation and a sense of ownership. If commitment is expected from the grass roots then they at the grass roots have to be involved in some way in the formulation of what they will be called on to do.

I certainly was wrong in my judgment of the ACP—well, partly wrong—because at that time I was a sick man and did not have the insight into myself that recovery delivered.

Fast forward this story and reflection... I was called by a member of the Coordinating Board, Neil Fackler, who asked me to place my name in nomination for a position on the coordinating board. I told him my sad story and his response was, "Well if you become a member perhaps you can change the direction of the ACP..." or something to that effect. I was elected to the board. More than just being elected, however, I was elected chairman of the ACP.

And what has resulted because of these providential 'happenings'? Plenty. The board has done marvelous things and we are glad indeed! Three of the most important initiatives the ACP accomplished in the last two years (other than the outstanding spring and fall sessions we sponsored and the wonderful awardees at our Mardi Gras events) are one, the creation of an Auxiliary Membership for the laity and religious who would like to be connected to the ACP and the work of the ACP; two, the re-organization of the Upturn editorial board under the direction of Larry Dowling and assisted by Ted Stone with a focus for the next 4 years on the celebration of documents of Vatican II and their application to our present circumstances; and three,


We can work together...to help our dysfunctional church become healthier by creating a conversation...in a dialogue which will lead to greater transparency, accountability, and collegiality.

the ACP participation in the creation of the new national Association of US Catholic Priests (AUSCP).

In these initiatives I see the first article of the first chapter of *Lumen Gentium* come into play. More people, priests, deacons, lay men, women and religious are being empowered and given a voice to speak with ownership of the church. More will help the church to become more transparent, accountable and collegial. We are all involved in the mystery of the church.

These initiatives will continue the process of the ACP to help build an intentional presbyterate here in the Archdiocese by collaborating with the Presbyteral Council. They offer the ACP the opportunity to draw talented and creative laity people and religious into this same work as well as helping the Episcopal leadership as its members participate in the national efforts of the AUSCP.


These initiatives will also help people to grow in consciousness of the way we can work together, priests, deacons, religious and lay to help our dysfunctional church become healthier by creating a conversation that will allow the people of the People of God to communicate with each other and with our bishops in a context of trust and safety, in a dialogue which will lead to greater transparency, accountability, and collegiality.

The first article of the first chapter of *Lumen Gentium* set the context and content of my ministry in a very profound way. 

The True Pastors of Our Churches

Continued from page 11.

I believe that one of our great insights after Vatican II is that we are gathered and sent. The sending at the end of the ritual is critical to the understanding of the meaning of the Mass. Jesus, whose compassion reaches out to the crowds because they are like sheep without a shepherd, needed to be everyone's urgency. For the Eucharist had transformed us into an *alter Christus*.


Lumen Gentium reminds us that the Church is, by its very nature, Christo-centric. In our history we have always known this and it needs to be emphasized again and again. If I were appointed pastor again, I would give a very similar inaugural homily. Jesus is the pastor of the Church. To either ignore or trivialize this reality is to distort who we are as church. The kingdom happens when the Church is faithful to and continues the mission of the *Lumen Gentium*. 



The Kingdom...

Continued from page 14.

era of renewal there has been much reliance on St. Paul's use of the human body as a metaphor to describe how each of the baptized has been endowed with a special gift for ministry. It coincides with *Lumen Gentium* declaring that every baptized person has a call to ministry in virtue of a spiritual gift received at baptism. Paul's metaphor of the human body aptly describes how these gifts are to be used together for ministry like the individual functions or organs of the body are united in human action, and every part no matter how humble is needed for that life and action of the body. To represent the presence of the Risen Christ in the Church's action, there needs to be a coordination and collaboration of all the members of the Church, with each member having something special to contribute in the common work of ministry.

In chapter two of *Lumen Gentium* entitled "The People of God," there is also an ecumenical dimension for the Church as *Body of Christ* by saying a person becomes a member of the Church through baptism. This does not deny that the Roman Catholic Church is the Church instituted by Jesus Christ, but it does suggest the existence of the Church as *Body of Christ* extends beyond communion with the authority of the papacy. This is why *Lumen Gentium* says that the Church *subsists* in the Roman Catholic Church. This in turn challenges us not to let up in our zeal to overcome the division of Christianity, for this division of Christian communities may be why today's proclamation of the gospel largely falls on deaf ears. The followers of Jesus Christ need to live in fellowship and common worship to be a sacrament as the principal sign used by Jesus Christ for transforming a fallen world into the Kingdom of God. 

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Using the Original 'Mother Tongue': The Language of Love

Chris Kituli

Many cultures in different parts of the world are known to use expressions and idioms to convey hidden information and messages. Idioms such as: brevity is the soul of wit; the milk of human kindness; trying to breathe life into a stone; plus many other idioms conveying to the common person a hidden meaning of what the speaker intends. Jesus, as well, uses various images to convey the inner nature of the Church. Most of the images Jesus used were drawn from the culture and lifestyle of the people He interacted with in his day-to-day ministry.

Three years ago on my pilgrimage to Holy Land I witnessed a touching experience with some shepherds. When we visited the Bedouin community, elderly Bedouins were already out shepherding their flock. It was amazing to see how hundreds of sheep followed Bedouin shepherds without straying. Talk about being amazed and shocked. When Jesus used the image of the sheep and the shepherd, a majority of the people in the Jewish culture understood him. The shepherds lead, feed and protect their flock just as Jesus leads and protects His church. Yes, the truth is that Jesus uses images and metaphors which transcend the immediate meaning, to point to the mystery of the Church and to Himself. There are many images of the kingdom we can liken the Church to in our American culture: The rich farms, the vines, the seasons such as winter and spring, and many other images that allow our local people to grasp the meaning of the kingdom of God.

On a recent sick call in the early hours of the morning, something peculiar struck me. After driving for 20 minutes to get to the hospital, the patient at first declined reception of the sacraments. It turned out that the patient had not been in Church for very many years. He hadn't found love and peace and that's why he alienated himself away from the church. "I didn't and I don't believe I belong to the righteous group. . . I think Jesus has nothing to do with me, Father. I think you should leave," the patient said. I removed my collar and I asked him to look at me as a neighbor rather than a priest. As a neighbor, I started to engage the patient about his ailment. After listening to the patient's life story, I tried to engage him about Jesus and the Church. I talked of Jesus' pains and love for each one of us, especially those who are hurting. We also talked about Jesus as our source of strength, Jesus as our light and the Church as a place where we meet as members of the same family to worship together and strengthen each other. Our conversation took a very positive turn and I celebrated the sacrament of healing with the patient. After four weeks, he came to the office to see me. I took him to the church and we said a prayer of thanksgiving. This patient, who has become a very close buddy of mine, has found a safe heaven with the Church, spending many hours at our adoration chapel. In one of his

recent visits to my office he had a joke for me "I have found what I had lost for many years. I hope 'HE' (Meaning Jesus) has a place for me in this church and the one above."

How is the Church acting as a source of life and strength to thousands of people who have lost hope in this day and age? How can we confront the culture that promises so much, yet gives so little, and at times it gives nothing other than frustration? How will the Church as a sacrament penetrate the lives of people whose hopes have been shuttered by egoism, individualism, materialism, vainglory, violence, hatred and many other vices? The church has to find its meaning despite all these kinds of vices and evil. Even when evil seems to override the good, we have to be encouraged by the fact that the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, came to give life and give it in abundance (John 10:10).

Roman Catholic Christians and their clergy have to work together and very hard to bring life to those whose hopes have been shuttered. Although we receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as individuals, we should not forget that we also do so as a family, the household of God, looking for the salvation of all. This is not an easy thing to do. We have to strive to show those wounded in different ways that the Church welcomes them. The Church of today is at a point of extreme pressure from within and outside. Family visitation by both clergy and the laity to wounded members is essential.

After being away from the Church for 12 years, a family I recently visited decided to come back to church for Sunday Mass. They occupied the third pew in the front row of the church. Unfortunately, there is a family that has been sitting in that pew for many years. When that family later arrived in church for Mass, the looks and the words they gave to the new family was enough to tell them that they were not invited to our community of worship. The new family had to walk out and leave the celebration of the Mass.


After Mass, I had to give the new family a call and persuade them to give it another chance. The following week I had to give them a tour of the church and explain some of the misconceptions of entitlement that are held by many of us who claim to be members of the Catholic Church. We are the vine and the Lord is the vine dresser. What kind of vines do I/we produce? Over the two years that I have been a priest, I have found out that we (Catholics) do not often produce vines receptive to authentic growth; at times the fruit we produce is very sour and unworthy to be served to the discouraged and brokenhearted souls seeking the sweetness of God's compassionate and welcoming love.

During our summer bible camp this year, I mentioned to the teens that, "We are the life of the Church, today,

tomorrow, and the future.” Some of the teens were very curious because they didn’t see themselves as being of any use to the congregation of faith in our parish. “Father, what is it that makes us life for the Church today? We hardly do anything for the Church,” one teen asked. I do feel like we have not engaged our teens in church activities. Some of us as leaders do not want to start activities that will rock the boat or cost us few or more hours of our leisure time. Quite possibly we want “the person coming after us” to do the job, or we are just ministering with the conviction that “even if I gave it a try, this will never work”. The Church has to truly find a way of engaging our teens and help them find a receptive and encouraging haven in the Church.

If the Church is to achieve its true image as the bride of Christ, both clergy and laity have to be on board and speak the same language: the language of Christ, the language of love. All of us ought to be ready to sacrifice our time and talent and treasure to help realize this dream. ‘Catholics Come Home’ was a great success in many parishes. But what kind of a home are these brothers and sisters coming

back to? A welcoming and inviting home will be the best place for them to nurse the wounds they have suffered in their yet un-told life stories. The Church will not realize its image as a true vine if we are not inviting and welcoming. We have to be very creative, at the same time keeping the traditions of the Church. The Lord invites each member of his Church to help revive the hearts of people, to bring hope and love to millions who have given up hope, who have lost faith and do not know the meaning and power of divine/incarnational love.

To bear an abundance of fruits, the Church has, like Christ did, to root out and tear down the walls of injustice, malice, rejection, and discrimination of “ANY” kind. The Church must work to destroy and demolish hatred, prejudice and fear. Jesus calls us to build, to care, to be instruments of concern, gentleness, and understanding. Jesus calls, invites and commands us, through our ministry, to make Him present and visible for others to see, to love, and follow, fortified by the gifts of the Church he founded. 



Opening the Doors to the Voice of Christ Beyond the Church

Father Norman Langenbrunner

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

As a child in the 1950s, I was warned that attending a service in a Protestant church could be a sin. They were heretics, and it was questioned whether they could go to heaven. During minor seminary I easily accepted the Catholic Church as the “one true Church,” although I was troubled that most of my extended family and my friends might be excluded from heaven because they were non-Catholic. I looked for loopholes, but early Church fathers had proposed that “outside the Church there is no salvation,” a teaching repeatedly affirmed by councils and popes.

Pius IX tempered the severity of that doctrine when he wrote that salvation was possible for “those invincibly ignorant of the true religion.” And Pius XII softened it still more when he taught that non-Catholics could be saved if they were “ordained to the mystical body ... by some kind of unconscious desire or longing.”

My reading of the New Testament convinced me that the Church which Jesus founded on Peter and the apostles had to be in the world somewhere, and if I investigated different Christian churches I should be able to find it in one of them. I concluded that what Jesus intended for his Church could be most evidently found in the Catholic Church.

I was just beginning major seminary when Pope Paul VI promulgated the Second Vatican Council’s *Lumen Gentium*,

the Constitution on the Church. There were several items in that document that prompted discussion, and one most notable was found in Article 8. The bishops said that the church established and constantly sustained by Christ “subsists in the Catholic Church.” And they continued, “Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside its visible confines.”

Vatican II confirmed the unique status of the Catholic Church: one, holy, catholic, apostolic, a mainstay of truth, governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. The Church, they explained, was a visible society and a spiritual community—a complex reality with human and divine elements. Through the visible structure of the Church Christ communicates his truth and grace to *everyone*.

Commentators often focus on the Council’s decision to say that the Church of Christ “subsists in” the Catholic Church rather than “is” the Catholic Church. Gerard Philips, a *peritus* (expert) at the council, predicted that this term, *subsistit in*, “would cause floods of ink to flow.” He was right. The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has tried several times to interpret this term.

My interest here is not so much in *subsistit in* but rather in the Council’s admission that outside the Catholic

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A Church in Its Adolescence Still Maturing

Fr. Pat O'Malley

Mundelein Seminary

A confession: I am far more comfortable dealing with the Jesus of the Gospels, and even the Epistles, than I am with the Jesus present in the Church through the Holy Spirit. The article says that the Spirit dwells in the Church as in a temple. Temples and church buildings I understand. Jesus, the Jesus portrayed in the Gospels, I can get my mental processes around most of the time. Even with the resurrected Christ, I find a familiar and welcoming presence.

But, this living Church baffles me time and again. Yes, I believe the Spirit dwells in the hearts of the faithful, and, yes, I believe the Spirit is directing us with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic, but why are we so divided, so contentious, so lacking in confidence? Like many of my contemporaries, I signed on to serve the Spirit-driven church many years ago. The enthusiasm and the hopefulness generated by the Council and by theological works such as *Lumen Gentium* were my bread and butter during those years after the Council. The new directions for scriptural study set loose by Pope Pius XII in 1943 were just emerging in the Catholic world. The whole world was our oyster—or so it seemed.

What happened? I am tempted to say that the Spirit dwelling in this Church fell asleep or, worse yet, was simply amused at our efforts to change and have an impact. To be accurate, some powerful currents emerged around the time of the Council: post-modernism, civil rights, Viet Nam, the death of the two Kennedys and Dr. King, ensuing distrust of all kinds of institutions, Watergate, the list is impressive even in retrospect. The opposition, if you will, was formidable indeed.

Article Four says that the Spirit guides the Church into the fullness of truth. Did we miss something? Were we overcome by a false hubris that we could make the church relevant in a fast changing world?

The article also says that the Spirit makes the Church grow. As we all know, growth is not always an easy process—it entails stress and tension and even pain. Are we in some sort of growth process at this precise time? It's not apparent to me; in fact, quite the opposite. For one thing, here in the U.S., if it weren't for the blessed presence of so many Latinos, our numbers would look vastly depleted. We all know people who have walked away, and their reasons for so doing are varied. Additionally, many "Council" Catholics, who were so charged up with the possibilities back in the 60s and early 70s, are shell-shocked now as the Church seems to be retrenching rather than moving ahead with hope. While they are still loyal, they are questioning many of the directions that seem to be coming from on high. They cite the lack of discussion on hot-button issues,

the seemingly insensitive criticism of Catholic theologians and writers who dare to challenge prevailing winds, even when the challenges are issued in modest and respectful ways. Holy Spirit, where are you?

Despite my misgivings thus far, I am still caught by the overall tone of Article Four. It confidently states that the Spirit perpetually renews the Church and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse, the Lord Jesus. I hold on to that truth, even when the sky is dark and foreboding. Maybe my somewhat guarded optimism comes from old-age and gained wisdom over a long period of time. I was ordained in 1957 when substantial change in the church was a vague dream. When the council began in 1962, like many of my priest friends, I had no idea where it would lead. Actually, at the time, I remember thinking it was a lost cause, especially when the initial reports from the first sessions started leaking out. But a funny thing happened on the way to 1965 and the end of the council. The Spirit took hold with a vengeance.

As personal evidence of that unpredictable Spirit at work, I recall a meeting we Chicago priests had with Cardinal Albert Meyer when he returned from Rome. Because of his intervention on the issue of religious freedom, he had become something of an icon for us American observers. Before the council, Cardinal Meyer had appeared to be a taciturn, almost retiring leader. In the summer of 1960, I was in charge of 170 grammar school boys from Maryville enjoying two weeks at Camp St. Mary's on Clearwater Lake in Wisconsin. One day Cardinal Meyer came to visit us from the Villa across the Lake. It was my responsibility to show him around. Throughout our little tour of the camp, I did all the talking; he hardly said a word. I grew more and more apprehensive as I ran out of conversation, and so, at lunch in the dining room, in desperation, I ventured to ask him, the former Archbishop of Milwaukee, how he felt about the moderate baseball success being enjoyed by the Milwaukee Braves. His reply was short and sweet and, believe me, nipped all further conversation in the bud: "I don't like baseball." Enough said.

Anyway, in the Fall of 1964 upon his return from the Council, the Cardinal met with all of his priests at Resurrection Parish auditorium on the west side in order to give a firsthand report on the progress of the Council. The meetings were held over two days before a crowded hall each day. And each day, the Cardinal was greeted with a prolonged standing ovation from his priests. We were so proud of him. On the second day, after his recap of the Council, at one point, a priest asked a question about the Council's view of a pressing moral issue. As was the custom, Fr. Joe Mangan, S.J., the official archdiocesan

moral theologian rose to offer the official answer. But the Cardinal waved him gently back to his seat. Then he turned to us and, with a smile on his face, he answered, “I don’t know.” It brought down the house. We laughed and cheered and shouted. Despite his new found stature, his obvious humility and modesty won our hearts. The Spirit had worked its wonders on our Cardinal Meyer.

Article Four stated a truth that still challenges us today. “By the power of the Gospel, (the Spirit) makes the Church grow, perpetually renews her ... “ We all know that growth is a sometimes painful process, lots of starts and stops, lots of tension, lots of mistakes. We have surely made our share of missteps along the way these past fifty years.

But, while we have hung in and hung on, I am afraid that what is happening in the Church today is not being seen as growth but as a badly disguised return to old ways. It is said that the hard-liners have resumed control. Dialogue is verboten. Even respectful differences are being seen as misdemeanors. It’s pretty clear to me that the needed changes that took place in the Church after the Council could not make it today. For me, that is more proof of the Spirit at work back in the day.

So maybe what we have to do is trust the Spirit of the Lord even more profoundly, and recognize our present situation as a continuation of that growth time, still painful and uneasy, still contentious, still moving. I am by nature, I think, a reasonable optimist. I believe Jesus when he declares that he will be with us through it all, even to the end of the ages. And I find myself relying more and more

on the words of Article Four: “Thus, the Church shines forth as ‘a people, made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit’”

Here at Mundelein Seminary, my friend, Fr. Larry Hennessey, has a way of bringing his students down to earth when they pontificate and spew out what they think is relevant if wordy theology. “What does it look like?” he asks.

What does that sentence from Article Four say to us here and now, as we are, facing a real world that is not always in tune with our perceptions and our purposes? It says that we, personally and collectively in the Church, should be a light to a world that sometimes prefers the darkness. That we should set aside our differences insofar as that is possible, that we should learn to respectfully dialogue among ourselves and with the other seekers of truth. We can do that, you know, but not without the Holy Spirit, our Spirit of life springing up to eternal life. It will take renewed goodwill on all our parts, and a heckuva lot of just plain kindness. Surely, we the Church, with all our gifts, are capable of that.

I truly believe there is always hope. Article Four closes with this line: “Thus the Church shines forth as ‘a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’” When I read that line once again, I push myself up from my rocking chair, square my sagging shoulder, throw out my puny chest and croak: “Right on, Holy Spirit, right on!”



Peace: The Intersection of God’s Plan and Our Vocations

Rev. James Wallace

Mary, Seat of Wisdom, Park Ridge

I was ordained a priest a little over three months ago, and while the feeling of being a priest is still surreal, I notice an overarching sense of peace in my life that I have never before felt. I’m living the vocation to which God had called me all along (though it took me until college to discover that call). I am fulfilled. I am my most authentic self. I am a priest. And hope I will continue to be fulfilled and live authentically as long as I give myself to the Lord. I cannot deny the emotions, usually excitement and anticipation, I still have when I celebrate one of the Sacraments. I cannot deny the eagerness I still have to get from being involved pastorally in Christ’s mission. But the feeling of peace is what dominates me most. I am assured when I read *Lumen Gentium* (LG) particularly Article 2 of Chapter 1, that my feeling is not happenstance. It is not happenstance because God had a plan for me and I am living that plan. I would like in this essay to reflect on the connection between inner peace and “the Plan of the Father”, the title of this article in the Conciliar document.

In the first paragraph of this short article, we read that not only did God intend to, and indeed, create the world and humankind, but also that he intended to, and did indeed, have Christ as the savior and brother of humanity. The world is not random. Men and women are not the random results of nature. The means of salvation and the Incarnation are not reactionary. Everything is part of the plan. And the plan entails us participating in divine life.

The second paragraph describes another important detail of this plan: the Church. The Church too is not some random creation of men at a point in time. Rather, the Church is part of the Father’s plan from all eternity. She has lived in three stages from the beginning of time: the past stage of the Old Covenant faith before Christ; the present stage of the New Covenant faith with the Holy Spirit and Sacraments, and the future stage of glory at the end of time. The world, humankind, and the Church are the three components of God’s plan for reality.


How does peace fit in with God’s plan? Peace, in my

humble opinion, results when one lives as one is called to live; or, in other words, when all goes according to God's plan. I feel at peace in my first three months of priesthood because I was and am called to be a priest, and I am indeed living that vocation. The same can be said of a parent who is parenting, a football player playing football, a cellist playing the cello. Being ourselves, living as we are meant to live, brings peace.

Yes, there are ups and downs, moments of anxiety, but that does not diminish the overarching sense of peace. The only way peace—or confidence, serenity, however one wants to label it—makes sense is if God has a plan. That is, only if God has intended and did indeed create me to be a priest, or Nancy to be a parent, or Brian to be a football player, or Lorraine a cellist—we can and should feel peace when fully living out our vocations! The same is true of the Church, living out her existence as she is meant to live. There would be no way to be fulfilled if there was no plan to determine the measure of fulfillment. The plan is part of the wisdom and goodness of the Father.

Lumen Gentium also assures us that the examples above of my priesthood, parenting, etc., are not abstract illustrations of the point. God has created the world and everything in it. Everything and everyone is part of God's plan. It is not just Catholic priests who are “conformed to the image of the Son”, but parents and football players and cellists and so on! The peace that we feel is very real and very good.

The Father has had a plan throughout all history for us and for his Church. One of the consequences of this plan, as I've personally concluded from my initial sentiments of priesthood, is the sense of inner peace. For us, peace is the fruit of living as the Father has planned/longs for us to live. For the Church, peace is the fruit of living as Christ has planned his Church to live. And the plan is a beautiful one. It entails us and the Church realizing our true dignity by participation in the Father's divine life.

I realize that I am still on my priestly honeymoon and may not always feel this sense of peace as acutely as I feel it now, but knowing that God has a plan for me and that plan is to be a priest—as the Church has assured me—I pray that as long as I live out my priestly vocation, the overarching sense of peace will prevail. For peace is a fruit of the Father's plan. 



Opening the Doors...

Continued from page 18.

Church's structure “many elements of sanctification and of truth are to be found” (*LG* 8) and that these elements which are gifts proper to the church of Christ “impel us towards catholic unity.” The Council's Decree on Ecumenism added: “Some, and even most, of the significant elements

and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church” (cf. *Unitatis redintegration*, 3).


In his analysis *Council peritus* Father Joseph Ratzinger wrote in 1966 that “the Council tried to see the plurality of ‘Churches’ outside the unity of the one Church. It conceded to non-Catholic Christian communities the honorable name of ‘Church.’ Though they are not ‘the Church,’ they really are ‘Churches.’ The Roman Catholic Church made an important new doctrinal step in officially describing the Eastern Churches and the ecclesiastical communities of the Reformation as ‘Churches.’”

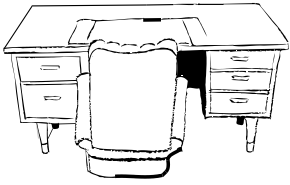
These gestures begun in the 1960s to promote ecumenism are today far less obvious.

There is, however, under the radar of many ecumenical observers, a subtle phenomenon called “the emerging Church.” This ecumenism, described by writer Phyllis Tickle in *The Great Emergence*, is not the political theology of Johann Baptist Metz and his *The Emergent Church*. The emergence in Tickle's book is about the coming together of Christians from various denominations to talk and study and pray. In these meetings there comes the convergence of the best elements of each denomination's tradition. Catholics bring their sense of sacramentality, Baptists their love of the Bible, Quakers their devotion to peace, and so on.

It is no secret that a large number of Catholics gravitate toward the friendlier, more accepting atmosphere they find in some of the mega-churches. Some Protestant groups admire the liturgical worship of the Romans or the unity of bishops forming an unbroken line back to the apostles. This coming together of people who cherish Christ and the Gospel is forming what Tickle describes as “a swirling center, its centripetal force racing ... in ever-widening circles.”

Catholics' acknowledgement that various elements of the one true Church can be found in churches outside the Catholic Church legitimizes admiration for and pursuit of those things which believers find missing or underdeveloped in their own tradition. It is not a false ecumenism that “one religion is as good as another,” but it is a genuine ecumenism that seeks the fullest manifestation of the Church.

Lumen Gentium 8 threw open the door to the restoration of Church unity. To say that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church is to say that what Jesus intended remains visibly present in the world today. It further admits that elements of that Church can be found outside the structures of the Catholic Church, and that these elements cry out for the unity of that Church. It also implies that some elements in the Catholic Church can be discarded without compromising what Jesus intended. *Lumen Gentium* invites us to see the points of light in other churches and work to bring those lights together. The Church *is* the light for all people. 



FROM THE CHAIRMEN'S DESK...

Dennis Ziomek

St. Barbara, Chicago

This is my first letter as Chairman of the ACP. As I look over past chairmen of the ACP, I am humbled to be part of such a wonderful tradition of chairs. I am grateful for the leadership and direction provided by all of the chairs of the ACP, most recently by Len Dubi, Pat Cecil, and Mike Knotek. With the myriad of demands that we have placed upon all of us as priests, I appreciate the time and effort shown by the current members of the Coordinating Board, as well as all of the past members of the ACP Coordinating Board.

Having been a "card carrying" member of the ACP since ordination in 1978, I am very proud to be part of such a long tradition. The founding of the ACP in the '60s has its roots in the spirit and theology of Vatican II. Blessed Pope John XXIII, only three months after his election as pope, said that he would convene an Ecumenical Council to open the doors of the church and let in some fresh air. And when the doors were opened, the fresh air came rushing in. The ACP was some fresh air for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Paul Boudreau, a priest of the Diocese of Norwich, Connecticut, writing about Vatican II for US Catholic, states: The church was no longer the exclusive realm of the priests and the sisters; it belonged to us all. Sunday mornings at church became a happening that involved everybody. People got to know each other. Home-grown ministries sprouted in parishes like dandelions on a spring lawn. Oh, it hasn't been perfect. There is still much to be done. But the legacy of Vatican II is that it can be done, and God knows just the people to do it. Boudreau, P. (2012, September 11). Vatican II at 50: A look back at its highlights. Retrieved from <http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2012/09/vatican-ii-50-look-back-its-highlights>

Our guiding principles of the ACP have included collaboration, dialogue, cooperation, and support with ALL who minister in the church. Our Annual Mardi Gras Ministry Awards continues to acknowledge a variety of people and organizations who contribute to the Church of Chicago in so many different ways. Our Mission Statement, crafted years ago, remains just as relevant today:

- ❖ To cooperate with the Archbishop in the pastoral care of the Local Church.
- ❖ To foster dialogue and support among priests locally, nationally and abroad.
- ❖ To nourish collaboration of priests with others serving in ministry.
- ❖ To promote locally, ecumenism among the Christian churches, and to cooperate with and promote interfaith dialogue with other faiths.

- ❖ To seek cooperative action that promotes peace and justice through the entire metropolitan community, particularly noticing and attending to the needs of the poor and the alienated.
- ❖ To strive for equality of women and men of all races and cultures.

Recently I had a conversation with someone who said, Oh, I didn't know that the ACP was still around. I proceeded to inform him of some of the good things the ACP has been doing. Those of us on the Coordinating Board are very aware of issues facing the ACP and actively dialogue about them. Is the ACP relevant for the Church of Chicago today? How do we increase our membership? How can we attract the more recently ordained? How can we foster the concept of an intentional presbyterate among brother priests who are not from the Chicago area? I strongly believe that the ACP, as an independent priest organization, is just as relevant today as it was in the '60s and '70s. I also strongly believe that the Second Vatican Council remains just as relevant today as it was in the '60s and '70s.

Talk up the ACP with your fellow priests, those in the rectory, those in the deanery, those who are your friends. We need to better communicate who we are and what we are doing to promote ministry in the Church of Chicago. The ACP has been slow to adopt some of the forms of electronic communications. E-mail is now our primary means of communication. The Executive Committee has had conference phone calls to facilitate discussion and planning. The ACP finally has a presence on the WEB. Our new WEB site URL is: www.acpriests.org. The Web site remains under development and will be expanded. There is also now a video on YouTube describing who we are, which you can link to from our home page.

What are some of the good things the ACP has done recently? Our last several ACP Mardi Gras Ministry Awards have been well attended. The Joseph Cardinal Bernadin-Award has been presented to: Irene Friend (2012), Sr. Mary Paul McCaughey, OP (2011), D. Todd Williamson (2010), and Most Rev. Gustavo Garcia-Siller, MSps (2009). The Blessed John the XXIII Award has been presented to Rev. John Cusick (2012), Rev. John Kalas (2011), Rev. Joseph Mulrone (2010), and Rev. Donald Nevins (2009). The ACP has continued to offer seminars and Days of Reflection: Ministry to Young Adults (Fall 2012), Canonical Rights of Priests (Spring 2012), Priests' Personal Finances (Fall 2011), and Violence in our Communities (Spring 2011). A continued popular social activity is the September Boat Cruise. This year the cruise date was pushed up to

the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, September 2. Those attending spanned the generations, from our retired brother priests through seminarians from St. Joseph's College Seminary. In February 2012, we had our annual prayer and pizza gathering with the seminarians at USML. The ACP was also prayerfully supporting our seminarians at Mundelein through our presence at the Rites of Candidacy, Lector, Acolyte, Diaconate, and Priesthood.

On the evening of Pentecost Sunday, May 27, the ACP hosted Evening Prayer at St. Barbara in Bridgeport to show our prayerful support for the LCWR. Attending were many women religious, priests, and friends of women religious. The ACP Coordinating Board discussed at our May meeting what our response should be to the Vatican's April mandate regarding the LCWR. To do nothing would go against the principles of what we stand for as the ACP. While there were members who felt a more dramatic response was needed, the consensus was at that time what was more important was to show our women religious our gratitude and support for the many ministries which they foster, particularly to the children, poor, disenfranchised, marginalized, and abused of society and to pray for them and all involved as the LCWR entered into a week of meetings and dialogue.

Finally, I thank all the efforts of Larry Dowling, Ted Stone, and Marty Marren, as well as all the contributors, for putting together our Fall 2012 issue of Upturn on a most relevant topic as we celebrated the Year of Faith honoring the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. It has been difficult recently to publish an Upturn, not because of anyone's lack of desire, but because of our lack of time. With parish ministry placing upon us so many demands, to set aside time to author a well-written article requires a sacrifice of time. I am very grateful to all who made the time to contribute to our Fall 2012 issue of Upturn.

Fraternally yours,



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100 Years of Service

Not the Last Word...

Continued from the back page.

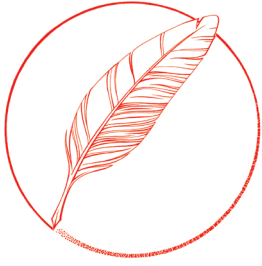
In a recent article from America, Drew Christianson, S.J. makes an appeal to everyone in our church to embrace a spirit and practice of authentic dialogue. To those who resist he says, "For those who are afraid of dialogue among Catholics, we need to ask not only whether their faith is robust enough, but also whether their charity is ample enough and their pastoral sensitivities subtle enough to serve the church today following the model of Christ." There is so much to be gained for the mission of Jesus Christ if authentic dialogue, i.e., dialogue centered in the Author of Life, could happen at and among every level of the church.

In light of the wonderful references to the parables of the kingdom in *Lumen Gentium*, let me offer this:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a gathering of representatives from every social and economic level, poor, middle class, rich, from every ethnicity, race, political persuasion, faith tradition, gender, sexual orientation, ex-offenders, prostitutes, terrorists, gang members, and from every type of family. Everyone with money, prestige, power, or church hierarchical rank from pope to bishop to monsignor to priest to deacon form a standing inner circle facing outward; the remaining form an outer circle where all are seated in comfortable chairs facing inward. The 'dialogue' begins with those in the inner circle removing from their persons any signs or symbols of their prestige or rank and then kneeling, first looking for a few moments into the eyes of the person sitting in front of them, and then washing, drying and kissing their feet, then moving counterclockwise to look in the eyes and kiss the feet of the person sitting before them. Once this is done, those in the outer circle will wash the feet of those in the inner circle. They will then move counterclockwise to look into the eyes and kiss the feet of each other person in the inner circle. Once this is done, one complete circle will be formed with everyone sitting facing inward. Everyone, one at a time, uninterrupted and unjudged, will share their life story, commending their story, one by one, to the collective story at the heart of the circle. Gathered around the central, sacred story of their lives, then, and only then, can they truly, respectfully, talk with each other." 

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Not the Last Word...

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I still remember all the way back to the announcement of Vatican II and then the death of Pope John XXIII. I was in 4th grade at St. Mary Grade School in Paris, Illinois. Although I did not understand what was happening with the Council, I knew it was big. I was also caught up in all of the excitement around John XXIII's death, funeral and the election of Pope Paul VI. As a young boy, I felt the excitement. In fact, I still have a scrapbook that I had made for school with news clippings of all of the events surrounding the death and the election of the new pope.

Growing up in a family with 6 brothers and two sisters, three bedrooms and one bathroom, needless to say, we were forced to interact. Oftentimes those interactions were belligerent and hurtful as siblings can often be to each other. Yet my parents always gathered us around the common table each evening and it was there that I learned about real dialogue, real sharing and listening, and from those many times of breaking bread how solid we were when there were attacks from the outside, and even more wonderfully, how close we are today. Those daily meals were reinforced by our weekly Sunday Mass attendance as a family. Never would any of us have thought of missing a Sunday, nor would we have been allowed to!

As each of us grew into adulthood, our relationship with our parents shifted to a real sense of closeness – still mother, father and kids, but different in the ways that we each have made our way in the world, grounded in those very formative experiences of our youth, still providing a foundation upon which each of us continue to live our lives faithful to our parents' nurturance, yet marking our own unique path.

In conversations with both my mom and dad in later years, I grew to appreciate even more the real dialogue, loving and sometimes challenging conversations, that were often marked with their upbringing in a conservative and at times over-scrupulous church, and with my more and more seeking to understand, not conservative and liberal stances, but instead what the Church offers in teaching and tradition and outreach that we must fight to conserve, and also to study and reflect on the attitudes and strictures that either confine or liberate.

What do we need and work to conserve? What/who do we need and work to liberate? These are questions not only exterior to ourselves, but questions that deserve internal

reflection as well. We can choose to be a solid Deuteronomic people, caught up in rigid ritual and unbending rules that create invisible 'Not Welcome!' signs at the doors of our churches; or we can choose to be a people of the Exodus, seeking freedom from the oppression of our spirits by the sinful forces pervading our world, continuing to struggle, unsure of the journey's end, faithful at times, unfaithful at others, forgiven constantly, but ultimately assured that our God of faithfulness will lead us to the Promised Land if we stick together. There is room for some balance of the Deuteronomic and the Exodian, yet both must always, by Gospel standards, lean in the direction of Love.

As I have read and re-read the documents of Vatican II over the years, they, like the Scriptures, speak in a different way to me today than when I first read them 25 years ago in pre-theology. They are a living document. By their very nature they speak against rigidity while at the same time demanding faithfulness to the Gospel and Apostolic traditions and to the tradition passed on through countless saints and martyrs, many nameless in our church except to those of us who acknowledge those ancestors who over generations formed us by their deep, faith, boundless hope and countless sacrifices.

The Church has had a great dialogue with the past. We continue to interact with the Gospels, epistles and the many writings of saints and doctors of the church. They continue to speak to us and offer great wisdom. Yet I wonder if when we have that dialogue, are we seeking

to connect with the spirit of the saint, the martyr, the doctor, the theologian, perhaps seeking to give us even deeper, perhaps even different, insight as they rest in the heart of the Divine. (I doubt that the resurrected St. Paul, Augustine or Thomas Aquinas would be as hard on women.)

If we can maintain that dialogue with the Gospel and epistles, with saints, martyrs and doctors, still very much living, perhaps they can inform us even more about how a truly respectful, inclusive dialogue that comes, not from a position of authority, but from the heart of the very Author of Life, might continue to give life to the Church and, through the Church, to the world.

There is so much to be gained for the mission of Jesus Christ if authentic dialogue, i.e., dialogue centered in the Author of Life, could happen at and among every level of the church.

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