

CENTRO PRO UNIONE

A publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

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Centro Pro Unione

A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement



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Centro Pro Unione Bulletin

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

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, - www.atonementfriars.org - is an ecumenical research and action center.

Its purpose is to give space for dialogue, to be a place for study, research and formation in ecumenism: theological, pastoral, social and spiritual.

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Letter from the Director

This issue of the *Bulletin* – *Centro Pro Unione* contains the texts of two lectures recently given at the Centro as we began celebrating our 50th anniversary.

The 19th annual Paul Wattson and Lurana White lecture in December was given by our friend Rabbi Jack Bemporad. In looking back over these past 50 years of dialogue Rabbi Jack took us on a fascinating journey in his conference entitled: “Between Past and Future. Achievements and Challenges for Interreligious Dialogue”. In addition to his many personal encounters during those exciting days of beginning dialogues he has remained a constant promoter of deepening dialogue not only on the personal level but also on the intellectual level.

The second important study in this issue is placed in the context of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. In a stimulating lecture which engaged those in attendance, Dr. Paul Murray from Durham University, UK, and Director of the Centre for Catholic Studies spoke on the values of what we call today “receptive ecumenism”. He raised the important question about the potential Catholic learning that we may receive from the Reformation Traditions. I hope that you will be challenged as well by reading his lecture: “Receptive Ecumenism and the Quincentennial Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation”.

What can we look forward to in the coming issue? Another lecture of Rabbi Bemporad on “Monotheism and All that It Implies” as well as the talks Celebrating 50 Years of Methodist-Roman Catholic International Dialogue by Ms Gillian Kingston Vice President of the World Methodist Council and Dr Clare Watkins, Lecturer in Ministerial Theology, University of Roehampton, London and the

responses by the two co-chairs of the dialogue, Rev Dr David Chapman and Bishop John Sherrington.

Several other events rounding out this Fall will be the lecture of the Reformed bishop of Debrecen, the Most Rev. Károly Fekete on the historical and present day aspects of the Hungarian Reformed Church in November. This will be followed by the 20th annual Wattson/White lecture in December by Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleis who will speak on “Catholic-Orthodox Relations following the Holy and Great Council in Crete (2016)”. Save the date 14 December, 2017. The next day we will be treated to the presentation of the volume *Luca Marenzio* by Prof. Mario Bizzarini followed by a concert of the vocal group “Prima Pratica Ensemble”.

It is also time to think about your planning the celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18-25 January. See the *Bulletin* for the theme and information for ordering copies in English, Spanish and/or Italian.

Lastly we gladly announce our Annual Summer course in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue from 25 June to 13 July 2018. You can book the course on-line after January. Remember to continue to look at our new website (www.prounione.it) for news and activities of the Centro Pro Unione.

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James F. Puglisi, SA
Director Centro Pro Unione

Between Past and Future Achievements and Challenges for Interreligious Dialogue

Rabbi Jack Bemporad - Director, The Center for Interreligious Understanding
Englewood, New Jersey, USA

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 15 December 2016



▶ Rabbi Jack Bemporad, conference speaker

interreligious peace, although each religion's viewing of the other, in the terminology of the "saved" and the "damned," made achieving real tolerance under state authority a necessity, even though unity among religions was untenable.

However, these agreements did not extend to Jews, who suffered tremendously in the late Middle Ages and what is now called "the Early Modern Period." Hysterical and libelous myths raced through Europe; accusations were made of Jewish poisoning of the wells during the bubonic plague; Jews were said to have killed Christian children for religious purposes during Passover (the so-called blood libel); property of Jews was confiscated; there were forced conversions and Jews were totally expelled from most lands in Western Europe.

To be sure, the state of Christian-Jewish relations varied enormously from period to period, and from land to land, so that no single generalization applies everywhere and in all periods. However, the residue of Christian teaching was such as to relegate the Jews to second-class status, making it easy for them to become objects of persecution. Jews, without conversion, were considered to be damned, and were subject to doctrinal missionizing.

These attitudes were caused by extensive subterranean anti-Judaism in European society in modern times. Two examples illustrate this very well:

The great mathematician Frege in his diary entry of 1924 states:

"One can acknowledge that there are Jews of the highest respectability, and yet regard it is a misfortune that there are so many Jews in Germany, [parenthetically let me just add that the German historian Treitschke had called the Jews 'our misfortune'] and that they have complete equality of political rights with citizens of Aryan descent; but how little is achieved by the wish that the Jews in Germany should lose their political rights or better yet vanish from Germany. If one wanted laws passed to remedy these evils, the first question to be answered would be: how can one distinguish Jews from non-Jews for certain? That may have been relatively easy 60 years ago [he means in the early 19th century]. Now, it appears to me to be quite difficult. Perhaps one must be satisfied with fighting the ways of thinking which show up in the activities of the Jews and are so harmful, and to punish exactly these activities with the loss of civil rights and to make the achievement of civil rights more difficult."

A second example: The *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche* published in the 1930's, under the heading Antisemitism, states:

Introduction

Religions have enormous power. In the past, they were often used, not just to compete and reject, but to repress or even attempt to destroy contending religions. Co-opted by virulent ideologies as well, religions were used to justify persecution and motivate warfare. To a great extent this has changed in recent decades. But I want to underscore that unless religions continue to work, earnestly, for a common good, we will simply continue some of the worst elements of the past.

The Past

Over the centuries, the West was plagued with religious wars: the Crusades, which affected both Jews and Muslims; the Inquisition, which sought to eliminate suspected Jews, and the Hundred Years War, a series of bloody conflicts among Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, etc. Even though the Hundred Years War and other such conflicts were not simply religious wars, religious ideologies were used to motivate and justify the conflicts. On many levels, there was tremendous religious strife, hatred, misinformation, and outright lies told about the beliefs of the "Other(s)" throughout this period, as exemplified by the eighty years of conflict between the Spanish and the Dutch.

The Thirty Years' War was brought to an end finally by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which confirmed the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, which had granted Lutherans religious tolerance in the Holy Roman Empire. The Peace of Westphalia, in resolving the Thirty Years' War, to some extent went further, by extending religious toleration to the three great religions of the so-called Holy Roman Empire—Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism. As a result, the member states of the Empire were bound to allow **at least** private worship and liberty of conscience.

This change was a major advancement towards

“The parameters he expressed guarantee to a good Catholic a perfectly clear conscience in deciding in favor of abolishing civil rights for Jews.”

I could easily multiply these types of statements.

The basic principle with respect to the granting and forfeiting of civil rights however, was made best by Hermann Cohen when he said:

“Neither the Enlightenment nor modern legislation has succeeded in removing from the Jews the burden placed upon them by the prejudice that they represent nothing but a foreign race. This prejudice can and will

limit religious rights of various groups, there are other religions today in danger of suffering the same challenge to their religious rights whether they be Jews or Muslims, or even Christians, such as the Copts in Egypt and the Christians in ISIS Territories. Our age and principles, morally and spiritually, require religions to grant to one another religious rights. We have to overcome the mentality of viewing the other as the enemy, or as damned in his current religion.

The greatness of the Catholic Church’s changed attitude in recent decades is that it has, in fact, granted to the Jewish people religious rights. One cannot stress enough the revolutionary achievement of Vatican II and *Nostra Aetate*, its content and its subsequent development through numerous statements on Jews and Judaism on behalf of various commissions, Pontifical offices, and Papal speeches. Thanks to the great achievements of Vatican II, much of past negativity has been completely overcome.

Looking backward to 1964, the very famous (and then, probably the most authoritative orthodox rabbi in America) Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik wrote an article, entitled “Confrontation” in the orthodox journal *Tradition*.

In that article he maintained that while it was legitimate for Jews and Christians to communicate on matters of social concern (for welfare of the Jewish community) he clearly rejected any dialogue of a theological nature. His justification for rejecting theological dialogue was the posture then of the Christian community, which viewed itself as on a level above Judaism; a posture which viewed Judaism as inferior and Jews as objects of conversion. In that situation, Rabbi Soloveitchik said,

“Non-Jewish society has confronted us through the ages in a mood of defiance, as if we were part of the sub-human objective order. We shall resent any attempt on the part of the populous community to engage us in a peculiar encounter in which our confronter commands us to take a position beneath him while placing himself not alongside, but above us.”

What Soloveitchik was referring to was the history of Christian-Jewish confrontations. Jews were subjected to an asymmetrical position with respect to Christianity for the simple reason that the community of the many had the power. However, Rabbi Soloveitchik also said, “It is self evident that a confrontation of two faith communities is possible only if it is accomplished by a clear assurance that both parties will enjoy equal rights and full religious freedom.”

There’s no question that since *Nostra Aetate* and the supporting Catholic documents, dialogue, at least between Catholics and Jews, has been in terms of two faith communities that enjoy equal rights and full religious freedom. The point I want to make is that the situation in 2017 is a very different one from that which Rabbi Soloveitchik experienced 1964, the year before Vatican II. Would not Rabbi Soloveitchik himself today grant our situation has met the necessary changes for dialogue enunciated above?

At the same time, missionizing by Fundamentalists and other Christian groups has been, and continues to be a



▶ An interesting exchange among attendees

disappear only when the inherent worth of their religion is fully recognized.”

The point that Cohen has made is that whatever civil rights the Jewish people may have achieved have always been held hostage to their receiving religious rights and acceptance, not merely civil rights. The civil rights have had a precarious history as long as contemptuous teachings were repeated, so that their religion was seen as dead, superseded, in fact, vile.

Based on such examples, it is my firm belief that insofar as religious rights are concerned, I don’t think that secular values and the granting of civil rights by the State is sufficient to preserve the religious rights of various groups. For Jews, there is little question that in spite of their having gained civil rights in Europe, these rights were not sufficient to protect them against waves of anti-Semitism. As indicated, despite the extent to which this has largely changed since the emergence of the modern secular state, the rise of racial anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust shows that the Jews are still vulnerable as objects of ideological hatred. So we need religions to acknowledge and grant religious rights to Other faiths. Religion can have –must have– a positive role in the progress of mutual tolerance and understanding.

With the increasing pressure of right wing parties to

very troubling problem for Jews. However, the cessation of active missionizing on the part of the Catholic Church has been stated by Cardinal Cassidy, Cardinal Kasper, and most explicitly reaffirmed by Cardinal Koch in his recent celebration of “50 Years of Christian-Jewish Dialogue.”

So the most revolutionary document by far, treated as having the equivalence of a dogmatic statement, is the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*. What the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* did with respect to Jews can be summarized in two critical points:

First, the need for a reexamination of the relationship between the church and Judaism and the Jewish people, i.e., the movement from a theology of a dead and outdated and superseded Judaism to a theology of a living Judaism.

Second, a rejection of the belief that anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in all its forms is in any way based on Christian or scriptural teaching.

No one could have done more to clarify this than Pope John Paul II when he equated Vatican II with Divine Wisdom. Referring to the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, John Paul gave it the highest level of authority, making it equivalent to a dogmatic statement in the church. Thus in a talk to the Jewish representatives of the Jewish community of Venezuela, the Pope stated,

“I wish to confirm with utmost conviction (*con toda mi profunda conviccion*) that the teaching of the Church proclaimed during the Second Vatican Council in the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*... remains always for us, for the Catholic Church for the Episcopate... and for the Pope, a teaching which must be followed - a teaching which it is necessary to accept not merely as something fitting, but much more as an expression of the faith as an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as a word of the Divine Wisdom.”

It is clear that the statements of Vatican II have become a model for other religions, such as the statement of the USA Presbyterian Church on the relations between Christians and Jews. However, there are two main differences between Catholic and Protestant statements with respect to Jews. The Catholics rooted these statements in scripture, especially Paul’s letter to the Romans in Chapter 11:29, whereas the Protestant Statements mainly tried to correct anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic statement. The Presbyterian statement reads:

- 1) We affirm that the living God whom Christians worship is the same God who is worshipped and served by Jews. We bear witness that the God revealed in Jesus, a Jew, to the True Lord of all, is the same one disclosed in the life and worship of Israel.
- 2) We affirm that the church, elected in Jesus Christ, has been engrafted into the people of God established by the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, Christians have not replaced



▶ Russell Bernie Fellows with Rabbi Jack

Jews.

- 3) We affirm that both the church and the Jewish people are elected by God for witness to the world and that the relationship of the church to contemporary Jews is based on that gracious and irrevocable election of both.
- 4) We affirm that the reign of God is attested both by the continuing existence of the Jewish people and by the church’s proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence, when speaking with Jews about matters of faith, we must always acknowledge that Jews are already in a covenantal relationship with God.
- 5) We acknowledge in repentance the church’s long and deep complicity in the proliferation of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions through its “teaching of contempt” for the Jews. Such teaching we now repudiate, together with the acts and attitudes which it generates.
- 6) We affirm the continuity of God’s promise of land along with the obligations of that promise to the people Israel.
- 7) We affirm that Jews and Christians are partners in waiting. Christians see in Christ the redemption not yet fully visible in the world, and Jews await the messianic redemption. Christians and Jews together await the final manifestation of God’s promise of the peaceable kingdom.

Modern Times: Where to Go from Here?

The main challenge today is: can secular society, without religious underpinnings, guarantee the preservation of democratic values? What is the cement that will hold society together? Religion can and must play a role in doing this as the conscience of society. This is now our great historic task!

What is needed is a continued, critically honest review of our own positions and how they have viewed the Other.



▶ Some participants continue the discussion

Religions must view themselves as agents of and for humanity, as the conscience of culture in dealing with global problems, world peace, hunger, joblessness, and disease.

It is to the great credit of Pope John XXIII that he recognized the extent to which the Catholic Church and Christians had been complicit in denigrating and teaching about Jews with contempt. It was his firm belief that to be true to one's faith is to tell the truth about how one's faith may have treated other faiths. Pope John XXIII planted the seed that was expanded when Cardinal Cassidy in Prague asked forgiveness for acts of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism on the part of Christians. And this culminated in the Millennium Service of Repentance during which the Catholic Church asked forgiveness for past acts in various areas. The prayer that Cardinal Cassidy read during this service was later inserted into the Wailing Wall by Pope John Paul II during his historic visit to Israel:

"God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your name to the nations: We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness, we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the covenant."

The challenge now of religionists in our generation is to respond to the defects of secular society - religion has to become the conscience of our society. This can only be done by embracing the ideal of humanity which enshrines, the concept of the integrity of every human being and a full commitment to peace.

The great Sage Hillel enjoined us not to judge our fellow human being until we stand in his or her place. I believe what he meant is that it is not enough just to put yourself in another person's place, in that person's shoes, or experience the world through that person's categories, through their feelings, their hopes and fears: one must go further and look at oneself with the eyes of the Other. How do you look to him or her? With what eyes do you see me? In genuine dialogue there is

an openness to depths of oneself and depths of the Other that neither had any real awareness or knowledge of eliciting at its initiation. I would go so far as to agree with David Lochhead who claims that dialogue *"is a way of knowing truth that neither party possesses prior to the dialogue."*

It is presumptuous to maintain that the great religions of the world, which have been a source of inspiration and hope for millions of individuals with great religious teachers, have no insights to offer us when we consider the world we live in now. Through true and open dialogue we see that other religions differ from our own, and this awareness should make one consider the possibility that we may not have the full truth, and especially, that the Other may have something to teach us. So dialogue is needed to present a more objective and historically accurate view of one another. One cannot deny that if one were to look at Christian attitudes towards Jews, Judaism, and Islam, at Jewish attitudes towards Christians and Christianity, and at Muslim attitudes towards Christians and Judaism, one would often see negative stereotypes and false representations. Past misunderstandings must be clarified and we must take a new direction in the way we view one another.

There are two ways that this could be done, first, theologically and second, practically. On the theological level, we have to review the theological discussion with respect to exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Each religion can rightly claim that they represent exclusive truths, but such exclusivity cannot descend into an exclusivism which treats other religions in ways that go against fundamental ethical principles.

In my opinion, exclusivism must be retained, since our religious traditions have a history, integrity, authority, liturgy, and credibility. What should be done to all our faiths is to remove the negative aspects of exclusivity - the view that claims that we are right and everyone else is wrong; an invidious contrast, viewing one's own religion as embodying the children of light and the other religions as being children of darkness.

The second is epitomized by Scriptural Resources for Peace®, the product of a Vatican symposium of 38 religious leaders from around the world in January of 2003, which I was privileged to attend. It said:

"Our Scriptures and other traditions are important spiritual resources. We believe that the Scriptures of each religion teach the path to peace, but we acknowledge that our various sacred writings have often been and continue to be used to justify violence, war, and exclusion of others. How can we reinterpret them in light of our new understandings of mutual respect? Our various communities cannot ignore passages that have often been misinterpreted or manipulated for unworthy goals such as power, wealth, or revenge. We must all recognize the need for new, contextual studies and a deeper understanding of the underlying universalistic meaning of our various Scriptures that clearly enunciate the



▶ Bro. Paolo Nicosia, SA



▶ Professor Claudia Melica makes an observation

message and value of peace for all humanity.

“Believers need to reexamine those Scriptural passages that depict people of other religions in ways that conflict with their own self-understanding and correct those depictions in light of the above. This requires an energetic effort to educate properly *our own adherents* to the values and beliefs of others. Interreligious education, that takes seriously the self-understanding of other religious traditions, is essential for communicating the message of peace to new generations. This challenge is to remain true to our own faith without disparaging or distorting that of others.

“Spiritual Resources for Peace include not only our scriptural foundations, but also the example of our fellow believers who, down through history, have taught peace and acted as peacemakers. These include saints, poets, and martyrs who have suffered, who often gave their lives in non-violent commitment to truth, justice and fellowship which they recognized as the foundations of human progress. There are countless persons in the past of every religion whose names are not recorded, but who have valiantly tried to prevent conflict and

war, who assisted victims of violence without regard to religion or nation, and who worked for justice and reconciliation as the basis for establishing peace. By their actions, they have borne concrete witness to the mission of each religious community to be agents of peace amidst the harsh realities of injustice, aggression, terrorism and war. May we learn from them.

“The Spiritual Resources for Peace also include interreligious encounters which have helped many to come together to learn about each other’s faith and shared values, and to discover the possibility of living and working together to build societies of justice and peace. Such encounters seek to instill a spirit of mutual respect and genuine understanding of one another and have helped us to see our religions as a force for good. Mutual respect and honoring differences are not simply lofty goals, but achievable reality.”

Summary

In an address on January 7th 2017 to the diplomatic corps at the Vatican, Pope Francis said:

“We are dealing with a homicidal madness which misuses God’s name in order to disseminate death, in a play for domination and power. Hence I appeal to all religious authorities to join in reaffirming unequivocally that one can never kill in God’s name. Fundamentalist terrorism is the fruit of a profound spiritual poverty, and often is linked to significant social poverty. It can only be fully defeated with the joint contribution of religious and political leaders.”

This must be our guiding principle in determining the future of our religious work. Only if religions reaffirm their commitment to humanity, to the intrinsic dignity of all human beings and provide political leadership with the moral and spiritual guidance; the respect for the sacred and the holy that they represent, then religions will fulfill their calling and their essential role in the world.



▶ Dr. Paola Bernardini asks a question

Receptive Ecumenis and the Quincentennial Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation¹

Paul D. Murray - Professor of Systematic Theology, Durham University

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Friday, 17 February 2017



Introduction

I am grateful to Fr Puglisi for the invitation to share this evening with you and to present this lecture exploring a receptive ecumenical perspective on the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. It is an honour and a joy to connect again with the work of the Centro Pro Unione, which has such significance for Catholic ecumenical endeavour.

Whenever things get ecumenically tough, there is periodic reference to our living through an ecumenical winter. Well here in this beautiful and historic room, we are always in the presence of all four seasons!² It is here that some of the crucial springtime conversations of Catholic ecumenism began at the time of the Second Vatican Council; conversations which were subsequently ripened to maturity and made ready for harvesting.³ It is little wonder, then, that with the benefit of long-perspective, the staff and friends of this Centro recognise that our various ecumenical moods and seasons are not always linear and sequential but sometimes simultaneous and overlapping. For as the gardeners amongst us know, amidst and beneath the apparent slowness and death of winter, real growth is happening; the crucial hard growth that bursts forth in spring.

For many, though sadly not all, the current papacy seems like just such a bursting forth afresh of spring; and, indeed, I think it is.⁴ But it is important to recognise that it too has come out of what preceded it. Its prior context is the papacy of Benedict XVI,



▶ Paul Murray, conference speaker

1 I am grateful to Greg Ryan, my Postgraduate Research Assistant at Durham University, for help in transforming the text of this lecture into publishable format.

2 The Centro Pro Unione is situated in what was originally the Pamphili Family Library within the Collegio Innocenziano on the Piazza Navona. The ceiling is decorated with a fresco by Francesco Cozza of The Triumph of Divine Wisdom, with the Four Branches of Knowledge and the Four Elements. The depiction of Earth includes allegories of the four seasons.

3 For the image of 'harvesting' in an ecumenical context, see Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits* (London and New York, Continuum, 2009).

4 For documentation and further links pertaining to the various expressions of opposition to Pope Francis, see Edward Pentin, 'Clergy and Lay Scholars Issue Filial Correction of Pope Francis', *National Catholic Register* (23rd September 2017), at: <https://goo.gl/Wt41ru>

which in multiple ways created the circumstances in which this papacy has in turn been made possible.

Take, for example, their respective ecumenical teaching. Pope Benedict both stressed the abiding importance of the ecumenical endeavour and emphasised, in continuity with his earlier writings as a private theologian, that each tradition needs to be challenged by the relevant substantive differences of the other traditions rather than just eliding them in service of any premature commonality.⁵ He had no illusions about there being a quick-fix solution on the ecumenical way; just a journey of continuing conversion for each of the traditions. For his own part, Pope Francis has taken this approach forward in a particularly clear and pointed way, and in a manner fully in tune also with Pope St John Paul II's prophetic teaching in *Ut Unum Sint*. Characterising Pope Francis' ecumenical teaching has been

5 See Paul D. Murray, 'Ecumenism, Evangelization and the Conflicting Narratives of Vatican II: Reading Unitatis Redintegratio with His Holiness Benedict XVI Roman Pontiff Emeritus', in Kirstin Kim (ed.), *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice* (Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 99-120.

a recurrent emphasis on the need for us to learn from and across real ecumenical differences in ways that can speak to felt needs in our own tradition and so effect real change.

Most recently, in his homily during vespers at St Paul's Outside the Walls to close the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity, he described ecumenism as:

[A]n invitation to leave behind every form of isolation, to overcome all those temptations to self-absorption that prevent us from perceiving how the Holy Spirit is at work outside our familiar surroundings.

And continued:

Authentic reconciliation between Christians will only be achieved when we can acknowledge each other's gifts and learn from one another, with humility and docility, without waiting for the others to learn first.⁶

By all accounts, when reading his text, the Pope paused and emphasised with repetition the need 'to learn from the other'.

Pope Francis can be heard here as giving eloquent voice to the ecumenical attitude and approach which in recent years has come to be referred to as Receptive Ecumenism. I will say a little more about the key principles of Receptive Ecumenism in a little while.

If we were to look for other specific ways in which the pontificate of Benedict XVI set the context for that of Francis, perhaps most notable is the multiple humbling of the institutional fabric of Catholicism which those years witnessed. There was, for example, the exposure of seemingly systemic dysfunction, both in aspects of our central bureaucracy – à la "Vatileaks" – and in aspects of the relationship between the local churches and initiatives emanating from the organs of the universal church, as evident in the process surrounding the new liturgical translations.⁷ In a different direction, it was during these years also that awareness spread concerning the globally pervasive nature of the clerical sexual abuse crisis and its recurrent mishandling by those in authority. It became clear that what we are dealing with here is not simply a matter of individual pathologies and their mismanagement; but that compounding, obscuring, and even legitimating such individual pathologies and failings have been widespread dysfunctional habits of thought and practice within Catholicism: concerning, for example, clerical status and the unaccountability of those in authority to the

6 See Pope Francis, 'Homily for the Celebration of Vespers on the Solemnity of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle at the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls' (25th January 2017), at: <https://goo.gl/12HsFG>

7 Gerald O'Collins and John Wilkins, *Lost in Translation: The English Language and the Catholic Mass* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017).

governed.⁸

This multiple institutional humbling of the church generated a widespread sense, amongst laity and clergy alike, that it was time to put our own house in order; a sense which appears, in turn, to have been shared by the cardinal electors in the 2013 Conclave and which has subsequently set both the tone and the substantive focus of the current pontificate on honest recognition of our failings and the urgent need for ecclesial renewal. This is the ecclesial context in which Catholics are being invited to mark the quinqucentennial anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. It represents, I believe, a graced moment in the story of Catholicism and on the ecumenical journey; a graced moment for Catholics to ask what the Catholic Church and the life, practice, structures, and habits of mind of Catholicism might still have to learn and receive from the Reformation Traditions.

With that context in view, let us now gain some perspective on what is distinctive about Receptive Ecumenism relative to other ecumenical approaches by briefly sketching this in three steps.

Receptive Ecumenism: the basics⁹

1. In the context of the more mature dialogues, Receptive Ecumenism believes that the concern to overcome historic divisions through such means as: i) clarifying misunderstandings; ii) using fresh concepts to say together what, previously, could only be said apart; and iii) recognising the validity of distinct but compatible theological frameworks has, on the whole, gone as far it can - for the time being at least. For all the real achievements of processes such as those leading to the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, Receptive Ecumenism recognises that some seemingly insuperable obstacles and substantive ecclesial differences still stand in the path of full sacramental and structural communion, differences which do not lend themselves to being explained away, either as misunderstandings or as alternative ways of articulating the same reality.

8 See Marie Keenan, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organizational Culture* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

9 On Receptive Ecumenism, see Paul D. Murray, "Introducing Receptive Ecumenism", *The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture, and Society* 51 (2014), pp. 1-8; also *id.*, "Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning: Establishing the Agenda", in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, Murray (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 5-25; and *id.*, "Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Receiving Gifts for Our Needs", *Louvain Studies* 33 (2008), pp. 30-45; and *id.*, "In Search of a Way", in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecumenical Studies*, Paul McPartlan (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). The Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University maintains an online list of literature related to Receptive Ecumenism, available at: (Durham University Website) <https://goo.gl/vbvoZR>

2. As a consequence, Receptive Ecumenism believes that what we now need is a strategy which prioritises the need for significant ecclesial conversion *within each tradition* in the face of its ecumenical others over the desire for immediate ecumenical convergence *between the traditions*.¹⁰ The assumption is that we will be living with the remaining differences for some time to come and that for each tradition their others' differences represent valuable gifts from which they are called to learn and receive. Doing so will both enrich our own tradition and help to create the conditions in which full communion will eventually become possible.
3. There is an urgent and somewhat self-interested practicality about Receptive Ecumenism, which relates to a sharpened recognition within each of the traditions that for all of our gifts, we nevertheless each have our own particular difficulties which we cannot easily resolve from our own resources alone. So the immediate value of Receptive Ecumenical learning is that the different gifts and perspectives of our ecumenical others can provide us with fresh resource to address our own intractable difficulties.

In summary, this is ecumenism as an instrument of ecclesial reform and renewal and as a practice of *ressourcement* against the lost gifts of Christ and the Spirit present in the other traditions. Tonight's particular exercise in Receptive Ecumenism, asking after a possible Catholic reception of and learning from the Reformation traditions, is conducted in three steps.

First, I reflect on the achievements and the limits of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. I will argue that the Catholic sensibility of graced existence and the associated Catholic instinct for stable structures of grace – e.g. habits, virtues, and the formation of character – still need to engage the challenge and promise of a more actualist, Lutheran understanding of Christian existence as a life of continually renewed graced dependence.

Second, I will draw out how this has implications well beyond the level of individual Christian existence and is of direct relevance also to the need for significant Catholic ecclesial learning and renewal. This will lead to a proposal concerning what it means for the church to understand itself as the creature of the Word in the power of the Spirit.

¹⁰ See "In any case, full communion cannot be achieved by convergence alone but by conversion, which implies repentance, forgiveness, and renewal of the heart". Walter Kasper, "The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: A Roman Catholic Perspective", in *Justification and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement*, William G. Rusch (ed.), (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2003), pp. 14-22 (p. 21).

Third, some initial consideration will be given to identifying what some of the implications of this might be for Catholic habits of mind, processes, and structures.

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and the continuing need for Catholic learning in relation to living grace

Drawing upon different translations of the Pauline language of justification as 'to pronounce righteous' (from the Greek *dikaion*) and as 'to make righteous' (from the Latin of the Vulgate, *iustificare*), Lutheran and Catholic tradition have been shaped by differing instincts, concerns, and fundamental conceptual frameworks in relation to the theology and spirituality of justification.

For Lutheran tradition, the concern has been to maintain the unmerited and utterly unmeritable, gracious approach of God in Christ and the Spirit, who embraces us in forgiveness whilst we are still sinners, enfolding us daily – indeed, moment-by-moment – in the alien righteousness of Christ, and continually conforming us anew to live in accordance with this assured righteousness even whilst we continue, for as long as dwell in the flesh, to be pulled and shaped by the effects of sin.¹¹ As Luther wrote in the Large Catechism, 'Christian life is nothing else than



▶ Rev. Tim MacQuiban and wife

¹¹ See "... all believers as members of the church are involved in a relentless struggle against sin and are in need of daily repentance and the forgiveness of sins. They depend constantly on justifying grace and rely on the promise which is given in the struggle against evil." Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *Church and Justification* (Wurzberg, Germany, 11th September 1993), §155, in *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch (eds.), (Geneva & Grand Rapids, MI: WCC Publications & Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 485-565 (p. 523), available at: (Centro Pro Unione Website) <https://goo.gl/rjt6Y3>



▶ Mons. Bernard Longley and 2 sisters

a daily Baptism' (§65). The truth perceived here is that we stand as unworthy beggars before the God of mercy, who accords us the dignity of the Son and wraps us in the Son's garment. Ironically, something of this is most beautifully expressed in Pope Francis' response to Antonio Spadaro's interview question as to who Joseph Bergoglio is. With reference to his motto from St Bede's commentary on the calling of Matthew, which speaks about the Lord's choosing in mercy, Pope Francis replied: 'I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon ... a sinner on whom the Lord has turned his gaze'.¹²

By contrast, understanding 'justification' to refer not to God's initial gracious embrace of us whilst sinners but to our actually being made just and so able to share for ever in the all-holy life of God, in whom no impurity can be found, the traditional Catholic concern has been to emphasise the dual need for our grace-led, grace-held, and grace-impelled transformation unto sanctification and our own role in this as active agents within the initiative of grace. The truth perceived here is that the grace of God is effective and achieves what it proclaims; like the Word of God, it does not return to heaven without watering the earth and bringing it to fruition in visible, tangible, and reliable ways.¹³

Taken together, we are presented here with the gospel's extraordinary truth concerning the forgiving *and* transforming, accepting and healing grace of God at work for us in Christ and the Spirit. But with these significantly different linguistic assumptions, conceptual frameworks, and fundamental concerns in mind we can already begin to appreciate how it was that the ability to articulate an integrated theology of salvation within western Christian tradition became somewhat "lost in translation" for many centuries. Let us explore this mutual mishearing.

12 See Antonio Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis" (September 2013), at: (Vatican Website) <https://goo.gl/ug86ZS>

13 Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 11:1-3.

On the one hand, given that for the Catholic mind 'justification' has been equivalent to 'sanctification', the Lutheran claims concerning *simul iustus et peccator* could not but be heard as making the nonsensical claim that the blessed come to share for all eternity in the life of the all-pure, all-holy God whilst still in an unregenerate, sinful state. Now, in the light of the remarkable work that Mannermaa and the Finnish school of Luther studies have done over recent decades, we have a keener sense that this represents a somewhat partial reading of Luther's own theology.¹⁴ For Luther, the continually renewed embrace of the sinful believer by Christ in the Spirit itself transforms the believer, as iron is transformed by fire. But whilst recognising this, it needs also to be acknowledged that if the frequent Catholic misunderstanding represents a partial reading of Luther, it is a partial reading which both has been and still can be evidenced within Lutheran tradition

and which has exerted considerable force.

On the other hand, for the Lutheran mind the Catholic emphasis on justification as a self-implicating process of regeneration understandably made it sound as though receipt of God's forgiving embrace is conditional upon the prior achievement of such regeneration in a way that contradicts our absolute need for God's gracious act. Moreover, regardless of the fact that classical Catholic theology of grace in the Augustinian-Thomistic tradition goes to considerable lengths to maintain that this necessary process of Christian regeneration is at once grace-initiated, grace-situated, and grace-drawn, in practice this has frequently sat in uneasy tension with a strong penitentiary emphasis on the believer's responsibility to cooperate actively in this process. Historically, this gave rise to a tendency both towards forms of practical Pelagianism within Catholic spirituality and towards somewhat commodified ways of thinking about how the believer might otherwise obtain access to grace and God's forgiving acceptance.¹⁵

In this context, drawing on and consolidating the significant work of previous phases of both national and international Lutheran-Catholic dialogues since the 1980s, as also the work of ARCIC II on *Salvation and the Church*, the great achievement of the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is to get back behind these respective distortions of Catholic and Lutheran

14 See Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* Kirsi Stjerna (trans.), (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005 [1979]); also Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (eds.), *Union with Christ: the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

15 See Murray, "St Paul and Ecumenism: Justification and All That", *New Blackfriars* 91/1032 (2010) 142-70.

tradition.¹⁶ Methodologically, the regulative, or grammatical understanding of doctrine that was espoused by the great Lutheran ecumenist, George Lindbeck, has been of great significance here.¹⁷ The respective Lutheran and Catholic theologies of grace, justification, and salvation are approached as two differing yet, ultimately, complementary theological frameworks, or languages, for articulating a common reality, albeit with distinct emphases. This is no mean achievement. Lutherans and Catholics can each recognise the other to maintain all that they believe to be essential in this regard and can also recognise that the distinct emphases of the other need not be communion-dividing.

But what does this mean? Does it mean that the Reformation is over?¹⁸ Or is there still work to be done? Karl Rahner famously described the Chalcedonian formula as a beginning rather than as an end point;¹⁹ by which he meant that it is not to be viewed as closing down all subsequent questions but, rather, as providing the parameters within which the further required work of theological understanding is to be pursued. I suggest that the *Joint Declaration* is to be viewed in the same way. Its achievement and its limitation is to have shown that the respective Lutheran and Catholic frameworks and default emphases, traditionally regarded as alien and utterly opposed, can actually be brought into conjoined conversation whilst allowing for respective differences. But that is not yet to have exposed each to the challenge of the differing emphases and concerns of the other.

More specifically, what I want to ask is as to whether, in being able to sign up to the *Joint Declaration*, the Catholic Church has yet begun to hear and to engage the real challenge and promise of Lutheran teaching around justification? A less



▶ Rev. Paul O'Callaghan (Left) makes a point

formal but distinct version of this question would be to ask whether Catholic practice on the ground has yet begun to absorb something of this teaching. To indicate my argument: whilst I think that something like this process has indeed begun to happen informally in the practice of Catholicism and whilst I think we can also see something of it occurring more formally in the teaching of Pope Francis, I do not think that these beginnings have yet come to exert the shaping power over Catholic sensibilities and ecclesial habits of mind, procedure, and structure which they need so to do.

The point is that for Luther, conviction about the absolute primacy of God's gracious approach to us in Christ and the Spirit was not simply a key first principle in a systematic account of God's gracious initiative and of our enfolding within it. First and foremost, it represents an urgently felt, pressing existential and spiritual need: the need, that is, to have assurance of the utterly gratuitous embrace of God, who comes to us whilst we are all too conscious of our sinfulness and who lifts us when we cannot move ourselves. Moreover, this is not a one-off beginning but the constant state of Christian existence: it is a matter of living with a moment-by-moment sense of dependence on this; and allowing nothing to dilute or to confuse this sense.

By contrast, the Catholic systematic articulation of the primacy of grace and the situating, directing, and living of human action within it, appears to operate in a significantly cooler climate. Significant here, for example, is the way in which the Catholic concern to emphasise the necessary reality and visibility of the effects of grace in moral and spiritual regeneration has typically issued in a concern to identify the stable structures of the operation and effects of grace in such things as the habits, the virtues, and the formation of character. The Lutheran suspicion of the latter has been that they too easily become an intermediary focus of concern and striving for the believer.

So the question in relation to this Catholic concern to think through and to encourage committed practices of living in accordance with the stable structures of grace, is as to whether it can be resituated and reframed by being brought into lively

16 See Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids, MI and London: Eerdmans and CTS, 2000/2001), henceforth *Joint Declaration*, available at: (Vatican Website) <https://goo.gl/GSwbgv>

17 George A. Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (SPCK, London, 1984).

18 See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Is the Reformation Over? The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology, 2000* (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 2000).

19 See Karl Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology" (1954), *Theological Investigations* Vol. I, Cornelius Ernst (trans.), (London: DLT, 1961), pp. 149-220 (p. 150); also *id.*, "Magisterium and Theology" (1978), *Theological Investigations* Vol. XVIII, Edward Quinn (trans.), (London: DLT, 1983), pp. 54-73.

affective relationship with a keen sense of our moment-by-moment dependence on the gracious, forgiving-transforming embrace of God, without which we can do nothing? Well, the example I gave earlier, of Pope Francis' sense of himself as a loved sinner in receipt of mercy, suggests that this is indeed possible. Moreover, far from this being a Lutheran-sounding Catholic aberration, it is a response which could have been taken direct from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola. Following this initial encouragement, what I now want to do is to reflect awhile on the way in which the practice of silent prayer itself discloses this possibility to us and, by so doing, takes us into something of the spirituality of living justification by faith in a manner that could very fruitfully refresh and renew wider Catholic sensibility of committed graced existence.

At its simplest, silent prayer is a practice of our becoming attentively aware of our utter dependence, at every possible level, on God as inexhaustible life and mystery, as communicating Word, and as moving breath and Spirit. Even the very physicality of silent prayer is an experience of our utter dependence. As we become conscious of our breathing in and out and of our heartbeat, we become aware of the hair's breadth, gossamer veil, and utterly intangible, elusive, yet decisive reality that separates the remarkable current fact of our existence from the far greater likelihood of our non-existence, together with the depths of its frailty and reality of its finitude. That is, we become aware that we are dependent recipients of life; neither its master nor its creditor, to which something is owed by right.

As complement to this sharpened sense of our absolute dependence and gratitude for the utterly surprising fact of our existence, silent prayer is also a matter of our becoming aware of our being recipients of the gentle grace of God the Spirit, who forms the Word in us, who attunes us to its discerning, and who moves our desires and shapes our will so that we can the more desire this gentle moving of us. During a recent reading of Congar's *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, I came across a beautiful passage about this, where Congar quotes at length from J.-C. Sagne:

At this point, prayer appears as the mystery of God in us and an event of the Spirit, because it is the function of the Holy Spirit to be the desire of God in God himself and also the desire of God in us. The Spirit forms, deepens, expands and adjusts our desire to the desire of God by giving it the same object. The Spirit makes our desire live from the life of God himself, to the point where God himself comes to desire at the heart of our desire.²⁰

A few pages later, Congar turns this appreciation for the movement of the Spirit in silent prayer more explicitly towards the register of justification, forgiveness, and grace. He writes of the way in which we have, at once, a dual-sided experience of being able to be more honest about our sinfulness and our need of forgiveness in specific ways as we are *both* made aware of and judged by its seriousness *and* granted assurance of a loving

acceptance which wants to cover-over and transform this sin. The result is that 'our false excuses, our self-justifying mechanisms and the selfish structure of our lives break down':

The Holy Spirit acts within us or he penetrates into us like an anointing. He makes us, at a level that is deeper than that of mere regret for some fault, conscious of the sovereign attraction of the Absolute, the Pure and the True, and of a new life offered to us by the Lord, and he also gives us a clear consciousness of our own wretchedness and of the untruth and selfishness that fills our lives. We are conscious of being judged, but at the same time we are forestalled by forgiveness and grace, *with the result that our false excuses, our self-justifying mechanisms and the selfish structure of our lives break down.*²¹

I suggest that this is where we would get to if we were really to pursue a Catholic reception of a Lutheran sensibility around justification at the level of the individual believer. It would still be a recognisably Catholic sensibility, with an authenticity and integrity within Catholic spiritual tradition but it would be one expanded, deepened, refreshed, and renewed through a real learning from Lutheran tradition and experience. The result might be well described as a form of charismatic-contemplative Catholicism.

What would it mean to live in accordance with this charismatic-contemplative Catholicism? How might it serve to reconfigure and to free our individual habits of mind *from*, for example, any weighty sense of obligation to achieve, and *towards* a lightness of being loved and lifted, moment-by-moment? Again, how might it serve to resituate Catholic moral theology, spiritual theology, and pastoral counsel from giving, at times, a somewhat notional acknowledgement of the priority of grace whilst encouraging a practical Pelagianism, and towards, instead, a lively, effective, and affective sense of dependence on the movement of grace and the place of prayer in the transformation of our habits and structures of desire? How might it promote a deeper sense that the moral life, the life of virtue, is always lived in the mode of response and of being conformed? And how might it promote a clearer recognition that growth in this life is not linear or neatly progressive ... that it always holds the reality of our frailty within it ... that things have their moment ... that occasions can arise which require a certain agility and spontaneity and not simply the repetition of established patterns?

With such questions in mind, let us turn now from a focus on the implications for the individual believer's habits of mind and action of this Lutheran-resourced, charismatic-contemplative Catholicism, to ask as to whether it might also have implications for the more collective dimensions of ecclesial existence? Suffice for now to say that I agree with Christoph Schwöbel that 'the Reformers' view of the Church contains fundamental insights which are of crucial importance for the self-understanding of the Church, for the way in which the Church regards its institutional

20 J.-C. Sagne, "Du besoin à la demande, ou la conversation du désir dans la prière", *La Maison-Dieu* 109 (1972), 87-97 (p. 94), cited in Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Volume II: 'He is Lord and Giver of Life'; David Smith (trans.), (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983 [1979]), p. 116.

21 Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Volume II: 'He is Lord and Giver of Life'; *op. cit.*, p. 123, emphasis added.

structures and for its ecclesial practice.²²

The relevance of Lutheran actualism to Catholic ecclesial sensibilities and Catholic ecclesial renewal

At the collective, ecclesial level, the Catholic concern for the visibility and reliability of God's gracious transforming act and for identifying the stable structures and carriers of grace, finds expression in the place that Catholic thought and practice accords to the sacraments, the ordained ministry, and the structures of ecclesial authority. Win relation to the level of the individual believer, I wanted both to value this default Catholic instinct and to recognise that it is capable of distortion in a manner that can be helpfully disrupted by the Lutheran emphasis on our moment-by-moment dependence on grace as event. So also, now, at the collective, ecclesial level I similarly want to suggest that all aspects of Catholic ecclesiology need to be resituated within a Lutheran-resourced, charismatic-contemplative Catholic sensibility.

In this regard, if the primary Lutheran concern in relation to the individual believer is to emphasise his/her absolute dependence on the active grace of God, correlatively 'the main ecclesiological concern of the Reformation' was to emphasise the church's 'perpetual dependence on the gospel and subordination to it.'²³ This is what was meant by referring to the church as the 'creature of the Word' (*creatura Evangelii*). In Edmund Schlink's terms: 'The Church is, because Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen One, acts upon her ever anew ... She was not before this action; and she is not for an instant without this action.'²⁴

In this way of thinking, the church is very definitely not a mere community of memory and discipleship. But nor does the church stand as either the authorised substitute for or the delegated representative of the risen and ascended Christ. As John Webster puts it, the presence of Christ and the action of Spirit are not 'convertible into something immanent to the church'. The point is that, in contrast to St Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin, who each thought of the ascended Christ as not ordinarily present in the world, for Luther the risen and ascended Christ is himself immediately and ubiquitously present, moment-by-moment, *in* and *through* the church – in the Spirit's act of grace – but without ever becoming identified *with* the church. Again with Webster:

Taking this point with full seriousness will entail wresting ourselves free from the notion (which very deeply affects much ecclesiology and theology of ministry) that at his ascension Jesus Christ as it were resigns his office in favour of human ministers, and that henceforth the church is the real centre of

ministerial agency. Without an operative theology of the present action and speech of Jesus Christ (which means also, without an operative pneumatology) human acts of ministry threaten to assume his role.²⁵

As initial indication of the basic compatibility of this principle with Catholic ecclesiology and, hence, the possibility of its corrective-critical force being brought to bear in this sphere, it is interesting to note that the Vatican II documents include a number of statements with some resonance with the notion of the church as 'creature of the Word' (see, e.g., *LG* 20 & *PO* 4).

More substantively, and despite Eberhard Jüngel's misunderstanding of it, the very notion of the church as being like a sacrament itself suggests an important distinction between Christ and church, for the point is that sacraments are distinct from the reality, *res*, which they signify and thereby effect. It is for this reason that St Thomas Aquinas tells us that the sacraments are of this order: there will be no sacraments in heaven;²⁶ for there, please God, we will share in the unmediated reality of the Trinitarian communion of God and will not need signs. Consequently, beyond the relatively basic level of being a validated pointer to the life of God and the mystery of salvation, we need not think of the church as being a fully effective sign and unqualified realisation of that which it signifies in any uniform manner. In this order, sacraments are signs precisely of that which is neither fully nor universally realized. They are signs of that which is not the statistical norm. The effective realization of the sacramentality of the church is no different and can properly be thought of as a variegated and variously realized reality; always under the action of the Spirit.

Rahner drew upon this distinction between the *sacramentum* and the *res* of the church as a means of being able to speak about there being sin, and not simply individual sinners, in the corporate and institutional reality of the church in this order.²⁷ He identified this sin of the church as existing in the sign-value, the *sacramentum*, of the church and maintained that whilst, in this sense, sin really exists in the church in this order, it does not in any way compromise the assured and achieved holiness of the church as the communion of saints in God, which is the indefectible *res* of the church. In other words, it is a somewhat both/and approach of saying that we have both the sin-affected *sacramentum* of the church, on the one hand, and the uncompromised and invulnerable *res* of the church, on the other hand.

This could be extended beyond Rahner a little by saying that a key aspect of the sacramentality of the church is not simply that the holy *res* of the church in God can be disclosed

22 Christoph Schwöbel, "The Creature of the Word: Recovering the Ecclesiology of the Reformers", in *On Being the Church* Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy (eds.), (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1989), pp. 110-55 (p. 115).

23 Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, "Church and Justification", *op. cit.*, §36, p. 496.

24 Edmund Schlink, "Christ and the Church", in Schlink, *The Coming Christ and the Coming Church* I. H. Nelson (trans.), (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), p. 116.

25 John Webster, "The Self-Organizing Power of the Gospel of Christ: Episcopacy and Community Formation", in Webster, *Word and Church: Essays in Christian Dogmatics* (Edinburgh & New York: T & T Clark, 2001), pp. 191-210 (pp. 199).

26 St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 3a,61,4, ad.1.

27 See Rahner, "The Church of Sinners" (1947), *Theological Investigations* Vol. VI, Karl-Heinz and Boniface Kruger (trans.), (London, DLT, 1969), pp. 253-69; also *id.*, "The Sinful Church in the Decrees of Vatican II" (1965), *ibid.*, pp. 270-94.

through it, when effective and despite its sin, but that this *res* of the church's holiness can be disclosed precisely in the form of its sinful human reality being shown as being in process of conversion and being made holy in faith. As we find in 'Church and Justification':

As such, this "people", in its historical-terrestrial existence, is by no means immune to temptation, error and sin. It is the "pilgrim" people of God standing under God's judgment for the duration of its earthly pilgrimage and depending upon God's daily renewal of grace and fidelity. Therefore, it needs confession of sin and constant renewal.²⁸

So we have plenty of resources within Catholic theology for protecting the proper distinction between Christ and the Spirit, on the one hand, and the church on the other hand, plenty of resources for maintaining the subordinate nature of the church, and even for properly thinking of the church in its corporate and institutional sacramental reality as *simul iustus et peccator* and not just with reference to the individuals in the church. All of this gives significant support for claiming that the ways in which Catholic ecclesial life, procedure, and structure are actually lived and implemented need be held in critical relation to the calling and theological *res* of the church. As the US Lutheran-Catholic dialogue put it in its 1985 work on Justification by Faith:

Catholics as well as Lutherans can acknowledge the need to test the practices, structures and theologies of the church by the extent to which they help or hinder 'the proclamation of God's free and merciful promises in Christ Jesus which can be rightly received only through faith'.²⁹

But as we noted in relation to the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and its balancing of Lutheran and Catholic teaching concerning God's gracious action in relation to the individual, it can be one thing to demonstrate the compatibility of a critical theological principle with Catholic theological tradition and quite another for Catholic practice to evince any significant appropriation of the challenge and potential which such a principle holds. Here the question, then, is as to why it is that in practice Catholic authority and formal Catholic theology rarely articulate an understanding of the fragility and limits of church teaching and practice? Why it is that the default Catholic emphasis on and genius for the visible and reliable structures of God's gracious self-communication in

28 "Church and Justification", *op. cit.*, §51, p. 499.

29 Lutheran World Ministries and US Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, "Justification by Faith (Common Statement)", §153, in *Justification by Faith: Lutherans and Catholic in Dialogue VII*. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess (eds.), (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), pp. 13-74 (p. 69), citing § 28 / p. 25 in the same document.

the church tend to cover-over their potential frailty? Why it is that it comes more naturally to a Catholic mind-set to think of the church as speaking and acting *with* the authority of Christ, rather than to maintain a consistent focus on the church as *standing under* the authority of Christ in the Spirit.

By way of initial response to these questions, I would identify two key factors. The first relates to a standard distinction in Catholic theology between a general pneumatic endowment of charism and grace to the faithful as a whole and a more specific, directly Christic, endowment to the ordained alone, as secured by apostolic succession and episcopal celebration of ordination rites. This supports an understanding of the clerical hierarchy as the representatives of Christ as the Head of church over against the body of the church as a whole.³⁰

The second factor I would identify as relevant here is the tendency within Catholic practice towards a maximalist account of the indefectibility and infallibility of the church, which gives rise to a default dual assumption: i) that the teaching and practice of the church are true; and ii) that, at any level, the governed should defer to the relevant authority, whether that be the parish to the priest, the people and clergy of the diocese to the bishop, or the College of Bishops to the pope as the Head of the College. As regards the deference and subordination of



▶ Sally Axworth, Ambassador of the UK to Holy See

the governed to the governors, it is to be noted that current canon law basically supports this situation in as much as there is little by way of checks and balances, and any real accountability, "downwards". Similarly, there is little by way of recognition that the indefectibility and infallibility of the church, properly understood, do not do away with human frailty and fallibility in the everyday run of things. If taken seriously, this recognition would place more not fewer cross-checks on authority. As we find in 'Church and Justification':

30 I deal with this point at greater length in other papers which are currently in process of preparation for publication.

From the Lutheran standpoint serious questions to the Catholic view first present themselves where the God-given indestructible holiness of the church and God's promise that the church will abide in the truth are so objectivised in specific ecclesial components that they appear to be exempt from critical questioning. ... The question arises when the Holy Spirit's aid is attributed to them in such a way that as such they appear to be immune from the human capacity for error and sinfulness and therefore from needing to be examined.³¹

In this regard, the current questioning of Pope Francis by the *dubia* cardinals is an interesting case in point.³² The irony here is delicious: where the progressivists are gathering around the Pope to defend him, the arch-conservatives – the natural ultramontanists of the church – are moving to denounce him. Now to be clear: on this, as with so much else, I am with Pope Francis. But if we step back from the heat of the specifics, the *dubia* cardinals are retrieving here an extremely important principle and point of recognition in the tradition: that even the pope can get things badly wrong, even fall into heresy. This has immense implications which we have never yet fully appropriated.

For example, it implies that howsoever we are to understand the indefectibility and infallibility of the church, it does not preserve us from the particular possibility of the pope falling into error. But following from this, the further, more significant, point is that if even the pope is not preserved from this possibility then we can be pretty sure that no other cardinal, bishop, priest, or deacon is preserved either. That is, it reminds us that for all the Catholic instinct and genius for stable structures of grace and for all our conviction that the ordained ministry and the episcopate give us a guarantee of validity, this is not to be understood as an absolute failsafe. Or, more precisely, the ecclesial guarantee is not to be understood as saying that nothing will ever go wrong but, rather, and as with the guarantee on a kettle, in the event of failure, the manufacturer will make things good. Understood in analogous fashion, this is not a guarantee that the church will never fail; nor that anyone in the church – other than our Holy Mother – will be preserved from sin. Rather, the guarantee is that despite our sin, God will neither forsake us, allowing us to fall into fundamental error, nor despise us on account of our sin.

31 "Church and Justification", *op. cit.*, §160, pp. 524-5.

32 See Edward Pentin, "Full Text and Explanatory Notes of Cardinals' Questions on 'Amoris Laetitia': The Full Documentation Relating to the Cardinals' Initiative, Entitled 'Seeking Clarity: A Plea to the Knots in Amoris Laetitia'", in *National Catholic Register*, at: (National Catholic Register website) <https://goo.gl/DWnBFH>; also see the 15th November 2016 interview with Cardinal Burke, at: (National Catholic Register website) <https://goo.gl/H133dX>



Whilst there is not the time to develop it here, my argument would be that, in relation to each of these factors, what is required is for us to develop a proper pneumatological grounding for the church in Catholic theology and practice. If we get our Trinitarian theology right then the Christic and the pneumatic need not be seen as distinct bestowals but rather as inextricably and necessarily interrelated: with the Christic as the form of the pneumatic and the pneumatic as the dynamism of the Christic. Similarly, it would be about recognising that all the structures of authority and stability in the church need 'the constant vivifying power of the Holy Spirit'.³³ Were there to be time, we could reflect on how this pneumatological priority can be seen to be a recurrent theme in Pope Francis's writings. For now, I will limit myself to three specific concluding proposals.

33 "Church and Justification", *op. cit.*, §124, p. 517.

Lutheran influenced charismatic-contemplative Catholicism and the renewal of Catholic ecclesial habits, processes, and structures

First, as regards the Catholic instinct for relative stability of structure in relation to grace and church, what I want to suggest is that whilst this basic conviction about the real transformation of creaturely existence by grace is indeed part of the Catholic genius, it is also part of our weakness and specific temptation. Temptation and weakness because it too easily leads us to view these relatively stable gifts and consequences of effective grace as stable in their own right; as things that we possess and in which we can place our trust rather than as gifts needing to be continually received and renewed afresh. Here, as I have said, I think that Catholicism must learn something from the Protestant instinct for standing under and being held moment-by-moment in the forgiving, healing, gracious movement of God's Spirit. Our constant prayer collectively and not just individually must be *veni Sancte Spiritus*; or to adapt the prayer of charismatic renewal: melt us, mould us, forgive us, heal us, free us, fill us, lead us, guide us, form us, use us.

Second, following this, I think we need to reflect seriously on what it might mean institutionally that the Spirit intercedes for us 'in our weakness'. What it might mean that the Spirit is the one who 'catches us' when our efforts have run their course and our securities have reached their limits. What it means that in the various valleys of our dry bones, that over the swirling depths of our chaos, that from virgin wombs and empty tombs, the Spirit is the one who brings forth life from nought but the infinite hidden depths of God's inexhaustible abundance. I suggest it means that we need to learn not to run from the church's multiple humblings in such things as the clerical sex abuse crisis but to enter into these as moments of grace in which we can trust that we will be remade and renewed in a true Spirit of Catholic renewal.

Third, precisely because the genius of the Catholic instinct for relative stability of structure can also so easily become our weakness, our particular form of idolatry, we need to build openness and recognition of limit into all of our structures and decision-making processes. This is what Pope Francis is recognising in saying that synodality must come to characterise

the entire life of the church at every level.³⁴ It means that at every level of Catholic ecclesial existence, those in authority must be held accountable to the governed, and not just *vice versa*. As we find in "Church and Justification":

For the sake of the gospel, the Reformation doctrine of justification therefore requires that the church's ministry and its decisions should as a matter of principle be open to examination by the whole people of God. As a matter of principle justification debars them from insulating themselves from such an examination. In regard to its decisions the teaching ministry must permit "question or censure", as the Apology says (*Apol* 7,23; *BC* 172), by the church as a whole, for which the promise of abiding in the truth holds good ...³⁵

Or as Werner Jeanrond put it: 'As long as the final power over the community remains only in the hands of one section of the community, the essence of communion authorised by God is destroyed in favour of an ecclesial society authorised only by itself.'³⁶ All of this means that we must learn again what it means to hold Catholic conversation; what it means for us to be called to show to the world what it is to move together ('con') towards ('vers') the living truth of God in the Spirit, who is always both before us and beyond us, with us and for us.

This represents the beginnings of what I think it would be for Catholicism to receive Reform in the context of the humbling of our church.

34 See Pope Francis, "Address Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops" (17th October 2015), at: (Vatican Website) <https://goo.gl/uioviQ>

35 "Church and Justification", *op. cit.*, §213, p. 535.

36 Werner G. Jeanrond, "Community and Authority: The Nature and Implications of the Authority of Christian Community", in Gunton & Hardy (eds.), *On Being the Church*, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-109 (p. 92).

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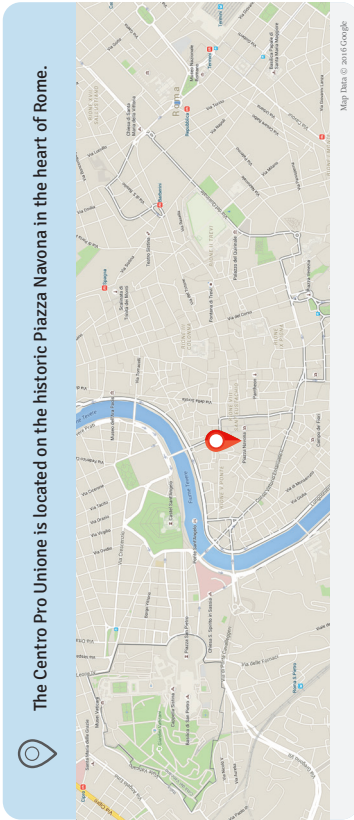
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The Course is "Recognized and Endorsed" by the Graduate Theological Foundation (USA) which can grant up to 6 graduate credits for qualified graduate students.

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Week I

Reformation both Protestant & Catholic: A Close Assessment of Their Reality

Biblical foundations; factions and divisions within the Church; an overview of the Reformation and Catholic Reform movements, the modern ecumenical movement; Vatican II and the Catholic principles of ecumenism; World Council of Churches; worldwide ecumenical and interreligious organizations; Eastern Christianity. On June 29, Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, participation in the Papal Mass of the Pallium.

Week II

From Division to Dialogue

Exploration of the various dialogues which exist between the churches, their context and results; ecumenical documents; reading of ecumenical texts; concept of reception in the ecumenical movement; visit to the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity and for Interreligious Dialogue.

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Speaker Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia

Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware) was born in England at Bath, Somerset, in 1934. He was educated at Westminster School, London, and at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took a Double First in Classics, and then went on to read Theology. In 1965 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford.



He joined the Orthodox Church in 1958, and he was ordained deacon in 1965, being given the new name of Kallistos. In 1966 he was ordained to the priesthood, and later in the same year he took monastic vows at the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, Patmos, Greece, of which he continues to be a member. Returning to Oxford in the autumn of that year, he founded the Greek Orthodox Parish of the Holy Trinity. In 1967 he was promoted to the rank of Archimandrite, and in 1982 he was consecrated titular Bishop of Diokleia, becoming one of the assistant bishops in the Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain (under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople). In 2007 he was raised to the rank of Metropolitan.

During 1966-2001 he taught in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oxford as Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies. In 1970 he became Fellow and Tutor in Theology at Pembroke College, Oxford. During 1992-4 he was Chairman of the Board of the Theology Faculty at Oxford. During 2003-6 he was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge.

Metropolitan Kallistos is active in work for Christian unity. During 1973 - 84 he was a member of the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions, and in 2007 he was appointed the Orthodox Co-Chairman of the International Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, a position which he held until 2016. During 1992-7 he served as the Orthodox Co-Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Orthodox-Methodist Theological Dialogue. During 2006-16 he was a member of the International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Metropolitan Kallistos holds Honorary Doctorates from the University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Lawrence University, Wisconsin (USA), The Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow (Russia), The American College of Greece, Athens (Greece), The Orthodox Faculty of Theology, Belgrade (Serbia), and The St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, Paris (France). He is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Wales, Lampeter, and a corresponding member of The Academy of Athens.

Publications

Metropolitan Kallistos is author of *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin Books, 1963; revised edition 1993), *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (1964), *The Orthodox Way* (1979; revised 1995), and *The Inner Kingdom* (2000). He is co-translator of three volumes of Orthodox liturgical material, *The Festal Menaion* (1969), *The Lenten Triodion* (1978), and the *Supplementary Texts to The Lenten Triodion* (2007), and also of *The Philokalia* (in progress; four volumes so far, 1979-95).

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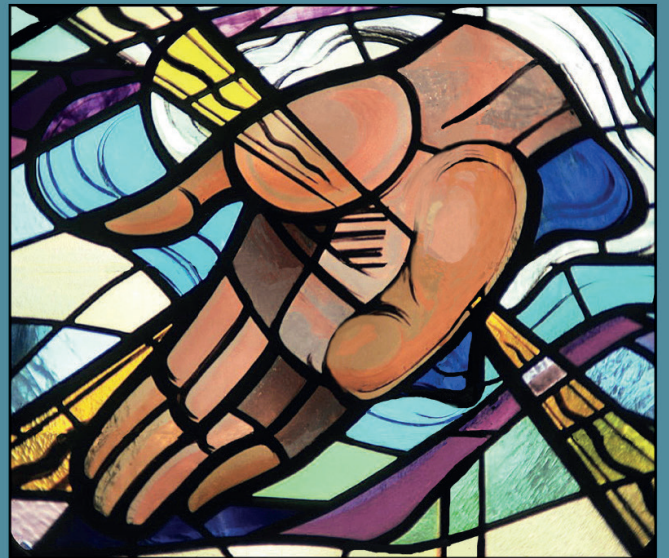
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(EXODUS 15:6)



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