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A Center conducted by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

Director's Desk

In this issue you will find the up-date of the Bibliography of the International Interchurch Theological Dialogues. You may also find the up-to-date bibliography (in real time) on our web site at all times (<http://www.prounione.urbe.it> click on library and then on bibliography of interconfessional dialogues).

Our readers can also read three texts from the **Centro Pro Unione**'s special series on the Eucharist held as a preparation for the special synod held in October of this year. The opening text of Prof Keith Pecklers looks at the relationship of the Eucharist to the mission of the Church. Prof. Mark Francis looks at the delicate issues surrounding the cultural adaptation of the Eucharist. Lastly, Prof. Marinella Perroni closes this series with a biblical exploration of the question of Eucharistic presence and Jesus' farewell discourse at the Last Supper.

This year's three week Summer Program entitled "Introduction to the Ecumenical and Interreligious Movements" was well attended with students who were enthusiastic about the experience offered. In addition to the usual on site visits we added the experience of a tea ceremony which introduced the participants to the spirituality of the Far East. See the flyer included in this *Bulletin* for further information and a registration form.

The eighth annual Paul Wattson/Lurana White lecture will be given by Mons. Eleuterio F. Fortino, Under Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. He will speak on the origins and evolution of Prayer for unity begun by Paul Wattson celebrated in most parts of the world between 18-25 January. In 2008, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. More information on his lecture is found in this issue.

Lastly, our readers can find the program for the ecumenical symposium sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute «Studi Ecumenici» San Bernardino and the **Centro Pro Unione** to be held at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas - Angelicum, Rome, from Dec 1-3, 2005. The theme of the symposium will be "The Relation between Bishop and the Local Church: Old and New Questions in Ecumenical Perspective".

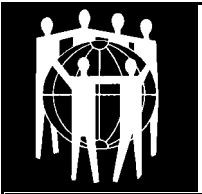
Many of you have known two of our dear friends who have recently passed on to the Lord: Canon Harry Smythe, second director of the Anglican Centre in Rome and Fr. John Long, SJ, who ministered at the Council of Christian Unity and at the Oriental Institute and Russicum. We are very sorrow to have lost these good men but now they enjoy unity with their Maker. May they rest in peace.

We welcomed many groups and guests this year to the Centro. Some of these included St. Olaf's College of Minnesota (USA), the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (Switzerland), a group of Mennonite pastors from Germany, and an International Anglican study group studying the recent ARCIC text on Mary.

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James F. Puglisi, sa
Director





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Centro Conferences

Eucharist and Mission in the 21st Century

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Pontifical Gregorian University and Pontifical Liturgical Institute of Sant'Anselmo

(Conference held at the **Centro Pro Unione**, Thursday, 14 April 2005)

1. Introduction

One of the greatest gifts of the Second Vatican Council has been a recovery of the intrinsic link between Eucharistic participation and the Church's mission within the world. Forty years on as we consider our future as a Church in a postmodern world this relationship is more important than ever. History is always instructive as we try to discern present circumstances and see a path toward the future. So a brief consideration of the historical evolution of our subject is in order.

2. History

The organic relationship between Eucharist and mission found its *locus* in the theology of the Mystical Body of Christ rediscovered at the University of Tübingen in the 19th century and then promoted by the liturgical movement in the 20th. That image of the Church as Christ's mystical body clearly present in the Letters of St. Paul was further developed in the Patristic writings of St. Augustine, but then gradually waned in the medieval period concomitant with the distancing between liturgy and life.

Responding to the ecclesial and especially liturgical *malaise* he witnessed in sixteenth century Germany and faithful to his Augustinian roots, Martin Luther called for a recovery of that unity between Eucharist and Mission lived out in social responsibility. One of his Christmas sermons stands out as a striking example. Preaching about the human response to the incarnation, contemplating the scene of the Son of God born into desperate poverty, Luther wrote:

"There are many of you in this congregation who think to yourselves: 'If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby! I would have washed his linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!' Yes, you would! You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at the time you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. Childish and silly thoughts are these! Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve him, for what you do to your neighbor in need you do to the Lord Christ himself."¹

¹ "Nativity" in *The Martin Luther Christmas Book* (translated by Roland H. Bainton) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 38.

That was Luther in the sixteenth century. But the Church would need to wait a few hundred years for other voices to emerge arguing in a similar vein. I'd like to propose two pivotal figures from the 19th and 20th centuries, each of whom reawakened the Church to recovering worship's social dimension in a unique way, and actually embodied the very organic vision of the Church they were promoting: Johann Adam Möhler of Germany and Lambert Beauduin of Belgium. Neither one had any particular liturgical formation to speak of, yet their contribution to recovering the relationship between Eucharist and the Church's mission in the world has left a lasting mark on the renewal of the Church and its worship.

3. Johann Adam Möhler

Johann Adam Möhler was born in 1796 in Württemberg, the son of a local baker. In 1815 at the age of 19 he began theological study at the newly-opened seminary of Ellwangen. But that seminary proved too distant from intellectual centers and two years later was moved to Tübingen and incorporated into the university. This was particularly astonishing since Tübingen already had a well-established Protestant theological faculty and hardly needed yet a second school of theology.²

Nonetheless the Catholic Faculty of Theology established itself and registered growing interest in new trends both in German Romanticism and idealist philosophy. This moved Catholic theological study at Tübingen away from the sort of classical scholastic and rationalistic theology towards a more integrated scientific and historically conscious approach which would greatly influence Möhler's own theological inquiry. At the heart of German Romanticism and consequently central to the theological agenda at Tübingen was a rediscovery of the organic model of the Church and the role of the Holy Spirit within the Christian community and its worship. Given such concerns it is not surprising that the Pauline and Patristic model of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ would be rediscovered there.

² M.J. HIMES, "Introduction," in J.-A. MÖHLER, *Symbolism* (trans. By James Burton Robertson) (New York: Crossroad/Herder, 1997) xi-xiv.

Möhler was ordained priest in 1819 and three years later he began his tenure as Professor of Church History at Tübingen. As preparation for his new position, he took a seven month sabbatical visiting both Catholic and Protestant theological faculties around Germany, meeting with professors and students, sitting in on lectures. In Berlin he heard lectures by Schleiermacher and was deeply impressed by the vision and approach of the Jewish-Lutheran Church historian Johann August Willhelm Neander. Those encounters would have a profound impact both on his teaching and writing.³

As professor at Tübingen Möhler initially focused his interests around Patristics which offered a new vision of church in relation to 19th century German society leading to the publication of his first book *Die Einheit in der Kirche* in 1825, basing much of his research on the work of Schleiermacher and Neander. The book was not without its difficulties, however, and Möhler would later attempt to re-state some of the propositions and convictions exhibited in that text. Nor was the book uncontroversial: it both inspired numerous young Catholic intellectuals and at the same time alarmed a number of Church leaders as it seemed to call into question the hierarchical nature of the Church itself. His second book *Symbolik* was published in 1832 and was really his magisterial work which explored Protestant doctrinal positions in relation to Catholic tradition.⁴

Thanks to Möhler's openness and scientific curiosity along with that of his colleagues, what evolved was what came to be known as the Tübingen school which stood out in sharp contrast to the sort of Catholic theology being done on the rest of the continent in the 19th century. Not surprisingly, the Tübingen theologians were considered suspect: Catholic theology of that epoch tended to be ahistorical and did not look kindly on modern philosophy. Even at the dawn of the twentieth century some conservative critics blamed the Tübingen school for the evolution of Modernism. Years later, ecclesiologists like Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac promoted a rediscovery of Möhler's work.

4. Lambert Beauduin

As a seminary student in Liège, Lambert Beauduin was greatly influenced by the landmark encyclical of Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* promulgated in 1891: a response to the conditions created by the industrial revolution offering a strong call to social justice, especially regarding labor and the right to a just wage. Six years later in 1897, Beauduin was ordained priest. Thanks to the forward-thinking Bishop of Liège, that diocese had already sponsored congresses on social issues even prior to *Rerum Novarum* and a school of Christian Democrats was founded there. Conservative reactions registered in Belgium criticized the formation of labor unions as well as progressive ideas about the Church's social mission emerging from the Catholic University at Louvain. The Bishop stayed the course nonetheless, and in 1895 established a fraternity of Labor Chaplains – priests

dedicated to promoting faith and spiritual formation among workers. Toward that end those labor chaplains organized residential retreats and formation programs in hostels that could accommodate up to 200 or 300 individuals but as many a thousand would pass through the recreation room each day for a snack or conversation.⁵

In 1899, two years after his own presbyteral ordination, Beauduin offered himself as a candidate for the fraternity and spent the next seven years engaged in pastoral ministry to workers and advocacy for a just wage until he joined the Benedictine monastery of Mont César in 1906. What evolved within Beauduin was a radical transformation of his own understanding of worship in the mystical body in which the Church takes on flesh at the Eucharist. Given his passion for the working class, it was no surprise that he dedicated himself to making Church worship accessible to the poor and uneducated. He wrote:

“What a shame that the liturgy remains the endowment of an elite; we are aristocrats of the liturgy; everyone should be able to nourish himself from it, even the simplest people: we must democratize the liturgy.”⁶

In September, 1909, at Mechelen, during the National Congress of Catholic Works, Beauduin offered an address: “*La vraie prière de l'Église*” in which he called for full and active participation of all people in the Church's life and ministry, particularly in the liturgy. Present was Godefroid Kurth, an historian and a prominent Catholic who shared Beauduin's vision. It was Beauduin's analysis that too often pastors and pastoral assistants put their efforts into social outreach while neglecting the liturgy. Thus he argued that the organic relationship between both was essential to the effective living out of the Church's mission in the modern world. Beauduin and Kurth met during that meeting and devised a concrete plan for putting their vision into practice: liturgical study days for clergy and laity; week-long conferences; retreats for liturgical musicians; the launching of a pastoral liturgical review and the publication of books. All this would have as its goal: promoting the liturgy as the “primary and indispensable source” for the living out of baptismal life and for the Church's mission. And so the liturgical movement in Belgium was born not in a monastery but at a labor conference from where it spread to Germany, other European countries and then to the United States and Brazil in the 1920s.

Beauduin's talent as a bridge-builder spread to other areas as well. In addition to his labor and liturgical pursuits he was also passionate about ecumenism, especially dialogue with Anglicans and the Orthodox. Deeply influenced by the famous “Malines Conversations” of 1921 to 26, Beauduin wrote his own proposal which his friend, Cardinal Mercier read at the fourth conversation (May 19-20, 1925). Beauduin argued that since the pallium had been given by Gregory the Great to Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, in 597, symbolizing effective

⁵ S.A. QUITSLUND, *Beauduin: A Prophet Vindicated* (New York: Newman Press, 1973) 3-5.

⁶ L. BOUYER, *Dom Lambert Beauduin, un homme d'Église* (Tournai: Casterman, 1964) 31 – cited by Bouyer, source not given.

³ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xii-xiv.

jurisdiction over all English bishops, present and future, Beauduin developed the idea that perhaps, just perhaps, there was among Anglican bishops something akin to the power invested in Eastern patriarchs. Thus, he reached the conclusion that the Anglican Communion should be united to but not absorbed by Rome much in the way that Eastern Catholics maintain their liturgical and canonical diversity and autonomy while remaining united to the Bishop of Rome.⁷ It was the same ecumenical passion that led him to found the Monastery of Chevogne in that same year, 1925, as a monastic community specifically dedicated to Christian unity.

5. Lessons from Möhler and Beauduin

The theological foundations of Möhler and integrative vision of Beauduin established a firm foundation for the pre-conciliar liturgical movement of the twentieth century and that social vision of worship held sway as the movement came into contact with the biblical, ecclesiological, ecumenical, and patristic movements of the churches. Those diverse movements led to the same conclusion: Eucharistic participation demanded social responsibility. And the important papal encyclicals of *Mystici Corporis* in 1943 and *Mediator Dei* in 1947 eventually ratified what those pioneers had been promoting. The Second Vatican Council, of course, brought that missionary vision of worship to full stature not only in the Liturgy Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* but also in *Gaudium et Spes* and especially *Ad Gentes*.

What can we learn from Möhler and Beauduin as we consider our own situation and look toward the future? Firstly, each of those figures had the capacity of building bridges and thinking “outside the box.” Möhler forged new paths in the doing of theology through dialogue with philosophers like Schleiermacher and was unafraid to engage in ecumenical and interreligious discussion and even debate. Those encounters greatly influenced the way Möhler taught and wrote theology. For his part, Lambert Beauduin’s formation in labor and social outreach transformed him into the sort of preacher and leader who naturally made connections between Christian worship and the world which further led him to the ecumenical dialogue.

In 1966, just after the Second Vatican Council, J.G. Davies published an important work *Worship and Mission*⁸ in which he addressed the age-old desire to divide the two realities of liturgy and life within the world. Davies criticized worship that remained insular – in the sacristy – isolated from the rest of life and consequently, from the task of mission and evangelization. At the same time, he also criticized the sort of witnessing to the gospel which failed to rely on the Eucharist as its necessary lifeblood. Davies argued for a fundamental rethinking of both liturgical theology and missiology in order to rediscover that indispensable union between the two realities.

⁷ S.A. QUITSLAND, *Beauduin...*, *op. cit.*, 66.

⁸ (London, 1966).

6. Post-Vatican II Worship and Future Challenges

Today in 2005, our world is different from the days of Möhler and Beauduin and even from forty years ago when Davies published the book just mentioned. But their inspiration gives us much food for thought. Religion and religious practice always needs to fight the tendency to compartmentalize faith from life, a church that remains pure and protected from the rest of human society. That was the fundamental problem of Gnosticism in the 2nd century but it remains a perennial temptation which needs to be held in check: dividing the world between the saved and the damned; between insiders and outsiders; between those who have the truth and those who do not. We are increasingly challenged to see ourselves as one body—the one body of Christ. This is, of course, especially crucial as we consider the growth of Islam around the world and our capacity for dialogue. But before we can dialogue with Muslims or Hindus, Buddhists or Jews, we need to find our own common voice as the one body of Christ for what we can do together we must do together. Indeed, the Eucharist that we celebrate calls us to this.

Last year, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, proposed the opening of a special office to treat this important relationship between worship and mission. To his surprise, someone on his Council asked: “But what do those two realities have in common?” to which I believe he responded: “Everything! I have encountered similar reactions in my travels when told by some Jesuits and others: “You are interested in liturgy and that’s fine. But I am interested in social justice and evangelization.” I always respond, of course, that the two are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, for a faithful witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, one cannot live without the other. Having embarked on a new millennium and a new century we are more aware than ever that the Eucharist we celebrate is done within the framework of a “world church.” At the beginning of the twentieth century, 80 percent of all Christians were white and lived in the northern hemisphere. By the year 2020, however, 80 percent of all Christians will be people of color who live in the southern hemisphere.⁹ This change in demographics increasingly makes itself present in multicultural worshiping communities. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Mass is celebrated in 38 languages each month. Our Eucharistic future is clearly multicultural and this presents both an invitation but also a challenge regarding how our liturgical participation will be lived out in mission.

Last October in his Mission Sunday address, the late Pope John Paul II affirmed this inseparable link between Eucharist and Mission as a non-negotiable: *Ite Missa Est*: literally, “Go you are Sent.” But the recognition of that “sending forth” must be lived out intentionally each day as we seek to discover what it means to be Christ’s body in this world, given the complexity of issues and

⁹ K.F. PECKLERS, S.J., “The Liturgical Assembly at the Threshold of the Millennium: A North American Perspective” in M.R. FRANCIS and K.F. PECKLERS, eds., *Liturgy for the New Millennium: A Commentary on the Revised Sacramentary* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 57.

problems that were unknown to us five or ten years ago or even in 2004. The tragedy of the tsunamis that struck on December 26th could not have been imagined even six months ago, but they took more than 200,000 lives and destroyed the lives and towns of hundreds of thousands of others. The magnitude of that tragedy shook the world and found a place in our worship as we remembered the victims and prayed for those who were left behind.

But there are, of course, under-reported tragedies that continue to rock the world: More than 200,000 people die each month due to hunger or hunger-related illnesses. That is equivalent to a 747 jet crashing every 30 minutes. In Africa, more than 30 million people are at risk of starvation. AIDS continues to ravage so much of the African continent taking the lives of 2.5 million people in 2002 alone and leaving more than 11 million African children orphaned. And of those Africans living with HIV/AIDS more than 58 percent are women.¹⁰ During his visit here last November, Anglican Bishop David Beerge told me that more than 50 percent of his South African Diocese is HIV positive. While such statistics have significant implications for Christian worship on the African continent, they also necessarily impact worship throughout the entire church. Indeed, the suffering of Africa, the tragedy of world hunger in places like Darfour, the loss of life in the Tsunamis, the victims of the war in Iraq or of the violence in Palestine and Israel must influence our worship, for when one member suffers the whole body suffers.

That is what worship in the mystical body of Christ means. And it is that sort of solidarity which flows from and indeed is fed by the Eucharist that protects us from the sort of narrow "tunnel vision" and isolationism that runs contrary to the gospel of Christ. "Ite Missa Est: Go, you are Sent." In other words, taking our Eucharistic practice seriously will demand of us the kind of Christian witness in the work of justice and peace that remains open to embracing the whole of God's world as Christ would have us do. The whole of God's world, I say, the insiders and the outsiders, the respectable types along with the great unwashed, believers and non-believers alike, Muslims and Jews as well as Christians. Here again the vision and example of Möhler and Beauduin is instructive because effectively living out the Eucharistic mission in the 21st century will mean "thinking outside of the box" and abandoning our old categories. We will need to look for where the Eucharist is being lived out and yearned for in very unexpected places. And that is our challenge.

Closer to home, there is a pressing issue regarding our topic if Christian worship is to have any viable future here in western Europe and elsewhere in the developed world. Several years ago, the Bishop of Como, Alessandro Maggiolini wrote a book entitled *La Fine della nostra Cristianità* in which he predicts the demise of Christianity in Italy. Bishop Maggiolini laments the fact that churches (at least in the cities) are largely empty on Sunday mornings and those present tend to be much older. He fears that within fifty years, many churches in Italy will be abandoned and

nothing more than museums. The Bishop may, of course, be right. But he then proceeds to offer his analysis of what is taking place: young people are disobedient, not listening to the Holy Father in areas of Church teaching especially regarding sexual morality; divorce is on the rise in Italy; the birth-rate is down and his list continues.

In my own reading of the situation, I tend to assess the reasons for decline in Eucharistic participation somewhat differently. I do not deny a certain degree of validity in what Bishop Maggiolini writes but more fundamentally, I see the problem posited squarely in a credibility gap between what is celebrated on Sunday mornings and the lives of those present in the assembly. It would be easy to blame young people for disobeying church teaching or point to other issues as the root of our problems, but I fear that the reason for decline in church attendance is actually more complex. Our preaching often leaves much to be desired, failing to address the problems in people's lives, and so the credibility gap widens. As some Italian friends have told me, they find no good news in the "Good News" so they look elsewhere, and of course, this mystical body suffers because of their absence.

Addressing this credibility gap, the former Master of the Dominican Order, Timothy Radcliffe, puts it very well:

"Our preaching will only gather in the people of God, if we honestly name their sorrows and joys. We have to speak truthfully, to tell things as they are. Do people recognize their lives in our words? Our congregations include young people struggling with their hormones and the teachings of the Church, married couples wrestling with the crises of love, the divorced, old people facing retirement, gay people feeling on the edge of the Church, sick and dying people. Does their pain and happiness find some space in our words? Do they recognize the truth of their experience in what we say?"¹¹

7. Conclusion

If our words will have meaning and if our Eucharistic worship be credible in the wider context of the Church's mission, then we will need to "listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches" at this moment in our history, and allow ourselves to be led on pilgrimage to those unexpected places: to the margins, to association with "the great unwashed," to those "beyond the pale," for whom Christ came and to whom the Church's mission is directed.

Last year at a Catholic conference in Alberta, Canada, theologian Richard Gaillardetz spoke on the transformative power of the Eucharist. He called the Eucharist "a dangerous prayer because we dare to pray not only the bread and wine be transformed, but that we be transformed."¹² Such transformation lies at the heart of the link between Eucharist and Mission in the 21st century and we clearly have our work cut out for us. Indeed, our witness to the message of Christian hope and salvation proclaimed in credible worship is more urgent than ever.

¹¹ T. RADCLIFFE, OP, "The Sacramentality of the Word," in K.F. PECKLERS, S.J., ed., *Liturgy in a Postmodern World* (London: Continuum, 2003) 140.

¹² Ramon Gonzalez, "Beware the life-changing Eucharist" in *Western Catholic Reporter* (April 5, 2004), p.1-2.

¹⁰ K.A. ANNAN, "In Africa, AIDS Has A Woman's Face," *The New York Times* (29 December 2002) 9.



The Call for Eucharistic Renewal in a Multi-Cultural World

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(Conference held during the Week of Prayer at the **Centro Pro Unione**, Thursday, 21 April 2005)

We live in a world and church profoundly marked by myriad human cultural traditions. Despite—or rather because of—globalization, never before in history have we Roman Catholics and our brothers and sisters of other Christian communions been in a better position to appreciate the variety and richness of the cultural mosaic that makes up the Body of Christ. However, the tessera that form this Christian mosaic are being reconfigured. No longer is the Church demographically dominated by the North Atlantic—the nations of Europe and North America. Rather as Philip Jenkins recently pointed out in his provocative book, *The Next Christendom*,

Over the past century . . . the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Already today, the largest Christian communities on the planet are to be found in Africa and Latin America. If we want to visualize a “typical” contemporary Christian, we should think of a woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian *favela*. As Kenyan scholar John Mbiti has observed, “the centers of the Church’s universality are no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa and Manila.”¹

What implications does this fact have for contemporary liturgical practice in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, especially for the celebration of the Eucharist? Do we Roman Catholics have the resources, both theological and structural, to realistically face the challenge to the liturgical celebration of our faith brought about by these changed circumstances?

I would contend that we do indeed have the resources to take up this challenge. We were all encouraged to hear the new Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, underline the ongoing importance of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council in his first public address. “These teachings,” he

¹ P. JENKINS, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2002) 2.

said, “have shown themselves to be especially pertinent to the new exigencies of the church and the present globalized society.”² With the Pope I am convinced that the basic answer to Eucharistic renewal today in a multicultural world is to be found in the documents of Vatican II which are still relevant to our present situation.

However, we need to be aware of some of the obstacles to renewal that stand in the way. While some of these obstacles are discussed in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*³ and the disciplinary instruction of the Congregation, *Redemptionis sacramentum*,⁴ there is a fundamental obstacle that is not discussed in these documents: the lack of sensitivity to the way cultural pluralism in the church affects the interpretation, reception, and celebration of the Eucharist.

While few Catholics would be totally at ease with the early 20th century Catholic apologist Hilaire Belloc’s proclamation that “Europe is the faith and the faith is Europe,”⁵ it seems to me that there remains a lingering “classicist” attitude toward culture described well by Bernard Lonergan in the introduction to his *Method in Theology*.⁶ It would be helpful to briefly review this attitude, since I am convinced it consciously and unconsciously influences the so-called “new era” of liturgical renewal.

² “... immo enim doctrina pro novis Ecclesiae praesentisque societatis globalizatae, ut aiunt, postulationibus admodum evadit apta.” Benedictus XVI, *Bollettino* N. 0229 (20.04.2005).

³ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (17 April, 2003).

⁴ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum: on Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist* (25 March, 2004).

⁵ H. BELLOC, *Europe and the Faith* (New York: Paulist Press, 1920) 261.

⁶ B. LONERGAN, *Method in Theology* (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1972) xi.

This “classicist” understanding of culture automatically pre-supposes the superiority of the Western European cultural patrimony over non-Western expressions. One is “cultured,” for example, if one is familiar with the “classics” of Western Civilization: the writings of Shakespeare, Racine, and Cervantes, the paintings of Giotto, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, and Goya; the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Especially during the centuries of European colonialism this “classicist” view of culture was the predominant way in which Europeans and North Americans saw their relationship with the rest of the world well into the middle of the twentieth century. It was during the early 1900’s, due to the influence of the birth of social sciences such as anthropology and sociology, that claims regarding the automatic superiority of all things Western were relativized. This led the Council fathers of Vatican II, in their arguably most outward-looking document, *Gaudium et spes* (the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) to declare:

Living in various circumstances during the course of time, the Church, too, has used in her preaching the discoveries of different cultures to spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, to probe it and more deeply understand it, and to give it better expression in liturgical celebrations in the life of the diversified community of the faithful. But at the same time the Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place, is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, nor to any particular way of life or any customary pattern of living, ancient or recent. Faithful to her own tradition and at the same time conscious of her universal mission, she can enter into communion with various cultural modes, to her enrichment and their too (GS 58).

Have we Catholics really understood and taken this affirmation seriously? Despite all of the positive talk about cultural diversity and the crucial need for inculturation in the process of the “new evangelization” constantly voiced in the various continental Bishop’s Synods, despite the dawning realization that the majority of Christians are no longer the direct heirs of the cultural patrimony of the West, despite our rich Catholic traditions of other ancient and venerable rites in the church, have we really understood the relativity of the cultural expressions contained in the Roman Rite? Has the Universal Church received with joy the riches offered by non-Western cultures? I would argue that at present there is a “disconnect” between the way in the normativity of the Roman Rite is understood and what is really needed for a responsible inculturation of the liturgy in much of the Catholic world.

In order to appreciate our present context, a brief overview of history is first in order. To begin I would like to review the post-Conciliar call for liturgical inculturation

that was first enunciated by articles 37-40 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and subsequently enshrined in the various liturgical books and magisterial pronouncements published in the 1960’s and 1970’s. I will start by examining the liturgical *terminus a quo*—the Roman Rite as it was revised by mandate of the Council and proposed as a base model or norm for adapting to local needs. I will then offer an example of what I regard to be the Congregation’s understanding of inculturation of the Roman Rite—moving from relative openness to a tendency that can best be described as “preservationist.” Finally, I will conclude with some positive steps that would promote a responsible and balanced inculturation of the liturgy.

The Revised Roman Rite and the Normativity of the Roman Genius

It has been rightly said that whenever we celebrate the Eucharist we are simultaneously in the presence of several cultures. Naturally, we cannot but help interpret the received liturgical tradition influenced by our own cultural references. It is obvious, for example, that Mass will be celebrated differently in a suburban American parish and in a South American village. While the Roman Rite still bears the marks of the Hebrew and Hellenist beginnings (the use of psalmody between the readings, expressions such as alleluia, hosanna, and maranatha, washing of the presider’s hands and adding water to the wine at the preparation of the gifts, etc.), the most dominant cultural traits—especially in the reformed Roman Rite of Vatican II, come from what has been termed by the great English Roman Catholic liturgical historian Edmund Bishop, “the genius of the Roman Rite.” In a lecture given in 1899, Bishop attempted to articulate what he called “the native spirit animating and penetrating” the Roman rite and what distinguished it from other rites such as the “Gallican or Gothic, Greek or Oriental.” He wrote: “The genius of the native Roman rite is marked by simplicity, practicality, a great sobriety and self-control, gravity and dignity.” Or again: “If I had to indicate in two or three words only the main characteristics which go to make up the genius of the Roman rite, I should say that those characteristics were essentially soberness and sense.”⁷

In fact, it was precisely these characteristics of the Roman genius that the framers of the renewed liturgy sought to recapture.⁸ These characteristics are enumerated in article 34 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

⁷ *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918) 12.

⁸ In contrast to the mistaken accusation that the reformed rites were influenced by a secularizing ideology derived from the Enlightenment. See R. WEAKLAND, “Liturgy as Battlefield: What do the Restorationists Want?” *Commonweal* 129:1 (January 11, 2002) 10-15.

The rites should be marked by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension and as a rule not require much explanation (SC 34).

The purpose of insisting on a return to a more simple liturgical style was basically two-fold: theological and practical. First, many of the simplifications were based on the undeniable authority of history. They reflect how the Roman Rite was practiced during in the fourth to the sixth centuries. Most importantly, it was during this "classical" period of the liturgy that the assembly had an active role in the celebration. Finding an historical precedent for the assembly's participation was a key concern of those charged with proposing the renewal of the Roman Rite. It also reflects the overarching goal of the liturgical reform enunciated in SC 14 as leading the faithful to "full, conscious and active participation of the faithful called for by the very nature of the liturgy." From a practical point of view, the *Ordo Missae* of the Missal of Pius V—the Missal promulgated in 1570 and in use just prior to Vatican II—was very complicated and therefore difficult to adapt. Moreover, the framers of the renewed liturgy were also very aware that this so-called Tridentine Rite was not as "Roman" as some of its enthusiastic proponents today would like to admit. In reality it was an amalgam of Gallican, Franco-Germanic and later medieval texts and gestures, added to a substrata of "late-classical" Roman elements. A return to the "noble simplicity" of the classical Roman liturgy shorn of its subsequent medieval accretions was the way the Council proposed an authoritative form of the Roman Rite that was both intelligible and adaptable to local conditions.

The question of intelligibility with a view to promoting the assembly's participation was a hallmark of the reform. SC 21 states:

In this reform both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and that the Christian people, as far as possible, are able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively, and as befits a community (SC 21).

It is in this way that the revision of the liturgical books in the 1960's and 1970's, enshrined the cultural traits of the "Roman genius" in the liturgy. It must be admitted, however that "simplicity, sobriety, practicality, gravity, dignity" while characteristics of the Roman Rite, cannot be proposed as values universally important for all cultures for all times. It was for this reason that the Constitution on the Liturgy left open the possibility of what it termed "adaptation" to other cultural geniuses. The operant phrase appears in article 38.

Provisions shall also be made, even in the revision of

the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and people, especially in mission lands, provided the substantial unity of the Roman Rite is preserved ... (SC 38).

The phrase calling for the preservation of the "substantial unity of the Roman Rite" was admittedly rather vague, and will not be officially defined by the Congregation for Worship until 1994 in its instruction *Varietates legitimae*. This "substantial unity," according to SC is preserved as long as any changes remain within the "limits set by the standard editions of the liturgical books" (the *editiones typicae*).⁹ Is in important, then, to discuss what these "limits" may be.

The Liturgy Constitution, then, seems to find the *terminus a quo* in the revised liturgical books. It would be helpful at this point to note that the *praenotanda* and pastoral directives in all of the *editiones typicae*, provide for adaptations to local conditions. The Latin phrase in the rubrics, addressed to the presider which appears again and again preceding introductions, explanations, and admonitions in the revised liturgical books: "*his vel similibis verbis*" (in these or similar words) indicates the inherent pastoral flexibility of the renewed rites themselves. While there are invariable parts to the liturgy such as the Eucharistic Prayers, there was always the presupposition that the presider would adapt the celebration to local conditions. This is in dramatic contrast to the totally "scripted" nature of the Tridentine *ordo Missae*. The presence of directives, allowing for adaptation by the presider, the national bishops' conferences and more radical departures from the received rite in accord with article 40 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, indicate that in the reform of the liturgy mandated by Vatican II, we did not simply exchange one set of invariable rubrics for another. Rather, a different spirit is present in the typical editions of the renewed liturgical books that encourage the presider to adapt the rites to local circumstances in order to promote participation of the assembly in the liturgical act. I have heard it said that if one celebrated the current Order of Mass without the adaptations allowed and encouraged by the reformed Rite, one would be celebrating archaeology and not liturgy.¹⁰

The Guiding Principle of the First Translations: Communication

Therefore, while the Roman Genius served as the basis

⁹ See VL 36, which, in effect echoes, SC 39.

¹⁰ This observation is reflected in the works of Fr. Anscar CHUPUNGCO, the internationally recognized authority on liturgical inculturation and former President of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of Sant'Anselmo in Rome. His major books on the topic are: *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982); *Liturgies of the Future* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989); *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992); and *Tradition and Progress*, (Washington DC: The Pastoral Press, 1994).

for the liturgical reform, it was definitely considered a starting point and not an end in itself. While there was a concern that the “substantial unity” of the Roman Rite be preserved, the initial years of liturgical renewal, especially in the translations of the *editiones typicae* into the vernacular, the 1969 Instruction of the Concilium on the translation of liturgical texts, *Comme le Prévoit*, served as the guide for the first generation of translations.¹¹ It had a profound impact on how the various Episcopal Conferences and their committees for translation understood their task. Consistent with the concern of the Council for intelligibility of texts, this document proposed “dynamic equivalence” as an important means to communicate the Roman Rite in the various cultures where it was to be celebrated. Clearly, dynamic equivalent translation is about communication. This document describes the purpose of liturgical translation as “proclaiming the message of salvation to believers and to express the prayer of the Church to the Lord”

To achieve this end, it is not sufficient that a liturgical translation merely reproduce the expressions and idea of the original text. Rather it must faithfully communicate to a given people, and in their own language, that which the Church by means of a given text originally intended to communicate to another people in another time. A faithful translation, therefore, cannot be judged on the basis of individual words: the total context of this specific act of communication must be kept in mind, as well as the literary form proper to the respective language.¹²

The method of dynamic equivalence can also be used with the other “languages” employed by the liturgy as well: gesture, movement, art, and music. In the Roman Rite of Mass for the Dioceses of Zaire, for example, the sign of peace takes place after the penitential rite. An alternative to a handshake is proposed here that would have the members of the assembly wash their hands in the same bowl as a sign of purification, unity, and reconciliation. According to some, the handshake (a western importation) at this moment can seem rather contrived and artificial, while using this reconciling gesture more typical of that part of Africa better expresses the exchange of peace.¹³

¹¹ According to Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, there was always a kind of friction between the *Concilium ad exequendam Constitutionem de sacra Liturgia* established by Pope Paul VI to implement the liturgical reform, and the Curial Congregation for Divine Worship. Given this history, the repudiation of this Document by the CDW years later is easier to understand. See A. BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990) 49-53.

¹² *Comme le prévoit*, 6.

¹³ A. CHUPUNGCO, *Inculturation . . . , op. cit.*, 41; also Conférence Épiscopale du Zaïre, *Rite Zaïrois de la célébration eucharistique* (Kinshasa, 1985) 44-45.

Dynamic equivalence, though, deals mainly with translation. It always takes its lead from the “received liturgy,” i.e., the *editio typica* and seeks to faithfully transmit the message of the Gospel articulated in the liturgical rite. *Comme le prévoit*, however, also recognized that there was a need for the liturgy to be more than just a series of translated texts, even texts translated in a dynamically equivalent manner. The Congregation’s instruction clearly states:

Texts translated from another language are clearly not sufficient for the celebration of a fully renewed liturgy. The creation of new texts will be necessary.¹⁴

Thus, *Comme le prévoit* articulates the “ground rules” that encouraged national bishops’ conferences to go beyond literal renderings of the *editiones typicae* into modern languages. There was a conscious promotion of prayer texts composed in vernacular languages in order to supplement what was proposed by the typical editions. This process was not unlike that which happened naturally in eighth and ninth centuries when the Roman Liturgy was enriched by Franco-Germanic elements.¹⁵

A guiding concern during this first period of when liturgical texts were being translated was clearly that of evangelization. While this first generation of translations—produced under great stress and in a short amount of time—was sometimes marked by the hurried manner in which it was done, the new vernacular liturgy was understood as being the “voice of the church;” a vehicle for proclaiming the Good News of Jesus in a way understandable to people of all cultures. This concern was paralleled in post-conciliar magisterial teaching in the field of missiology. In his groundbreaking 1975 encyclical on evangelization, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI echoes the concern for intelligibility contained in *Comme le prévoit*, applying it to the task of evangelization. He writes:

Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life.”¹⁶

Various attempts at inculturation, following the spirit of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* were begun during this time. The *Roman Missal for the Diocese of Zaire* is the most well-

¹⁴ *Comme le prévoit*, 43.

¹⁵ See A. CHUPUNGCO, *Cultural Adaptation . . . , op. cit.*, 27-30.

¹⁶ “On the Evangelization in the Modern World” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*), Apostolic Exhortation, December 8, 1975. (Washington: USCC) article 63.

known effort which largely interprets the Roman Rite in an African context, changing both gesture and text to better express the content of the *editio typica*. Other experiments were underway in various African countries such as Malawi and Tanzania, as well as in the Philippines, India, and Taiwan—to name just a few.

It would be misleading, though, to think that inculturation, considered in the broad sense, was limited to what were known then as “mission countries.” One striking example of an “inculturated” liturgical element was the approval of a second translation of the Italian Order of Mass which included three new opening prayers for each Sunday inspired by the three cycles of the lectionary. Offered as an option along with a translation of the Latin prayer provided for the Sunday, these scripturally inspired prayers enjoyed a wide success and were translated into other languages. They also served as a precedent for the completely new compositions that were commissioned by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy for its second revision of the Sacramentary: a work that was eventually approved by all the various English speaking Episcopal Conferences by 2/3 majority votes in the 1990’s, but rejected by the Congregation of Worship in part because it contained these new compositions. I will speak of this in more detail later.

The Current Situation: A Change in Direction

It is obvious that over the past fifteen years, those in charge of the Congregation for Worship have taken a decidedly different approach to the liturgical life of the Church. Evidently, this shift is due in part to a feeling that “things had gone too far.” Apart from difficulties experienced by various language groups in having several revised translations of their liturgical books approved, the sea change in attitude is first announced by the Congregation in its 1994 instruction *Varietates legitimae* (Inculturation and the Roman Rite). While there are some very helpful parts to this document, it is somewhat inconsistent. It begins by asserting that “adaptation” is not an adequate expression to describe the process which really should be called “inculturation.” “The expression adaptation, taken from missionary terminology, could lead one to think of modifications of a somewhat transitory and external nature” (VL 4). Following the definition of inculturation that appears in Pope John Paul II’s *Redemptoris Missio* (52), inculturation, according to the instruction, needs to promote a true dialogue between local churches and the universal church; a dialogue that enriches and challenges both parties, based on the mystery of the incarnation.

Curiously, though, the fourth part of VL, in dealing with the process to be followed in areas of inculturation, reverts to the term “adaptation” and presents a very cautious and even reluctant approach to the possibility of modifying the Roman Rite. In a way, this document heralds a shift in the thinking of the Congregation for Worship that will subse-

quently move from its previously more open stance toward inculturation to a cautious and what I would call a “preservationist” mentality. Inculturation now is now seen as a concession rather than as an instrument to aid in the liturgical renewal.

This change in mentality is illustrated by a change in method, especially in more recent curial pronouncements on inculturation. They tend to present the issues “from the top down,” arguing from previous liturgical legislation and giving precedents drawn from a rather focused history of the liturgy and liturgical books of the Roman Rite. The previous more mystagogical approach of taking into account the way the liturgy was being experienced by the people seems to have been abandoned.¹⁷ The overarching concern of the Congregation appears to be in preserving the “substantial unity of the Roman Rite” by maintaining the formal characteristics of the Rite of Mass as a “sign and instrument of unity.”¹⁸ Communication seems now to be a very secondary consideration.

Article 398 of the 2002 GIRM describes well the attitude of the current CDW regarding inculturation: “. . . inculturation requires a necessary amount of time, lest in a hasty and incautious manner the authentic liturgical tradition suffer contamination.” The choice of vocabulary is important here since it betrays this attitude of caution. The presupposition is that liturgical tradition is authentic or “pure” and risks being “contaminated” by inculturation. As stated earlier in the same document “the Roman Rite constitutes a notable and estimable part of the liturgical treasure and patrimony of the Catholic Church, and its riches are of benefit to the universal Church, so that were these riches lost, this would be gravely damaging to her” (GIRM 397). Thus, the Congregation’s starting point is the “pure” Roman Rite that needs to be protected as an absolute good—as an end in itself. We seem to be a long way here from the understanding of *Gaudium et spes* regarding the relationship of culture to faith, and even farther from the concern for effective communication underlying a document like *Comme le prévoit*.

No where more clearly is this “preservationist” mentality toward inculturation better expressed than in *Liturgiam authenticam*—the Congregation’s instruction on the translation of liturgical texts.¹⁹ Space does not permit a full evaluation of this document, but its most problematic aspect is its insistence that modern language translations of the liturgy follow a formal correspondence to Latin syntax and style. In a series of four essays, Princeton University’s

¹⁷ See the discussion of this issue by R. ROPPELT, “A Fuller Light: Communion Under Both Kinds,” in *Worship* 79, 1 (2005) 2-20, especially 18-20.

¹⁸ See VL 54, quoting Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (1969) 221.

¹⁹ *Liturgiam authenticam* On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy (28 March, 2001).

Peter Jeffery has pointed out the many ways in which this document fails to offer a real way forward in regard to liturgical translation. Unlike *Comme le prévoit*, *LA*'s conclusions and directives are based on a rather blinkered reading of the history and theology of the Roman Rite and fail to enter into dialogue with other disciplines, especially the social sciences.²⁰ As Jeffrey succinctly points out:

LA provides all the demonstration we need that much of contemporary theorizing and policy-making about liturgical inculturation is taking place in an informational vacuum, as if theology or canon law were all one needed to know.²¹

A Controversy over Collects

Let me give an example of the way that *LA* seems to be unaware of the culturally contingent nature of the texts of the liturgy. *LA* describes the Roman Rite as a culturally neutral and universal liturgical form that is somehow *automatically* capable of transcending human cultures.

Indeed, it may be affirmed that the Roman Rite is itself a precious example and an instrument of true inculturation. For the Roman Rite is marked by a signal capacity for assimilating into itself spoken and sung texts, gestures and rites derived from the customs and the genius of diverse nations and particular Churches – both Eastern and Western – into a harmonious unity that transcends the boundaries of any single region. This characteristic is particularly evident in its orations, which exhibit a capacity to transcend the limits of their original situation so as to become the prayers of Christians in any time or place (*LA* 5).

While the history of the Roman Rite is indeed one of “assimilation” of various cultural traditions, *LA* presents this ritual tradition as in no need of further “assimilation” of new cultural elements, but capable of speaking meaningfully to all cultures without any further change. It is especially curious that the Instruction offers the orations as embodying this transcultural characteristic, asserting that they are able “to become the prayers of Christians in any time or place.” The best of the orations of the Roman Rite are, in fact, a very particular example of the ‘Roman genius’ of simplicity, sobriety, self-control, gravity and dignity.” As Teodor Klauser, the great German historian of the liturgy, explains, while praising the Roman orations for

their resonant phrases, majestic rhythm, and their ability to make the faithful conscious of the “eternal majesty of God” they:

appeal . . . to the intellect; the faithful’s powers of imagination are scarcely exercised and their feelings are at most only indirectly called into play. In a service which is composed exclusively of such prayers, and in which no other expressions of worship are used to provide a balance, no place is left for those important and powerful forces to be found in the hearts of religious men.²²

One is hard pressed to see how these compositions are always able to “become the prayer of Christians in any place and time.” Having worked on the translation of many of these orations in my years on ICEL’s translation and revision subcommittee, it also must be said that while there are wonderful prayers in this collection, there are also some rather mediocre compositions. They are not all of the same quality: literarily or theologically. It was for this reason that the editors of the 1970 *Sacramentary* thought it necessary to offer alternatives to the Latin opening prayers—and these compositions, “inspired by” the themes of the Latin prayer have been in use for more than thirty years without any noticeable threat to the unity of the Roman Rite.²³

It was also for this reason that various English speaking Conferences of Bishops requested alternatives to the opening prayers in the second translation of the *Sacramentary* worked on by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). As I mentioned above, these prayers, inspired by precedents that had already been approved by the Holy See in the Italian Missal, were new English-language compositions written to reflect the scriptures proclaimed on each of the Sundays in the three year cycle. In this, they differ from the “Roman Genius” reflected in the collects of the Roman Missal which tend to be succinct, abstract and rather cerebral.

In its *Observations* on this proposed translation published in 2002 the Congregation rejects these scripturally based prayers for several reasons: the worry of having too many texts that would “hinder the meditation . . . on the riches already found in the Prayers of the Roman Liturgy; the desire for constant variety that is provoked by a “consumerist” mentality which should not serve as a

²⁰ P. JEFFREY, “A Chant Historian Reads *Liturgiam Authenticam*”, *Worship* 78 (2004) 2-23, 139-164, 236-266, 309-341. (These articles will soon be published in book form: *Translating Tradition: A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam* [Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005]).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

²² T. KLAUSER, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*. Second English Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 41.

²³ Since the publication of the *Sacramentary* in 1970, the US church has had a choice of opening prayer for each Sunday: one, the translation of the prayer proposed by the *editio typica*, and a second “extrapolation” using themes from the Latin composition, but in a style that tended to be longer, a bit more elaborate and as a whole, more accessible to the gathered Assembly.

vehicle for authentic inculturation.” But the most important reason for the rejection seems to have been,

. . . that the characteristic structure and function of traditional Roman Collects, their sobriety, and their reflection on the tension between the transcendent and the immanent, not be jeopardized by compositions that may be superficially attractive by virtue of their emotional impact, but lack the spiritual depth and the rhetorical excellence of the body of ancient prayers, which were not mass-produced at a given moment but grew over the course of many centuries.²⁴

To my mind this explanation crystallizes a “classicist” attitude that seems to be held by the present members of the Congregation in regard to inculturation. According to them, the prayers of the Roman Rite are trans-cultural—capable of being received and “meditated on” by people of all times and cultures because they are all exemplars of the best the tradition has produced. Why would one want to exchange a prayer “contaminated” by inculturation when a classic Roman text is available?

While one can take issue over the *Observations*’ critique that the new collects are inspired by a “consumerist mentality” and lacking in spiritual depth, one can also discern in these comments a conscious valuing of the intellectual and abstract over the “emotional” — a characteristic of the Roman genius that is not universally appreciated by many cultures and which led to the call for alternatives to the Roman collects in the first place. There are also other statements in the *Observations* that make it clear that Congregation places great importance on maintaining traditional doctrinal precision in the vocabulary of the prayer texts even if the meaning of these terms is not immediately apparent. Taken together, these characteristics of the Congregation’s critique seem to illustrate a certain classicist attitude that automatically ascribes superiority to the particular way of praying unique to one particular stage in the development of the Roman Rite. At the same time it belies insensitivity to the range of ways Christians have engaged in liturgical prayer down through the centuries.

It is also interesting to note that in its critique the Congregation does not deal with what I consider the most attractive feature of the new compositions: that they reflect the scripture readings of a particular Sunday. In fact, unlike the traditions of the Christian East which cite the scripture quite often in their prayers, this is a peculiar characteristic of Roman euchology: to quote Klauser again, “fundamentally (the Roman euchology) is far removed

from the Bible.”²⁵

It is unfortunate that at a time when the Council has helped Catholics rediscover the richness of the Bible, that a move to enrich the euchology of the Sacramentary with more direct allusion to the Word of God would be rejected out of hand because it does not follow this characteristic of the traditional Roman euchology. *LA* is very clear in its insistence on one particular style of prayer.

New texts composed in a vernacular language, just as the other adaptations legitimately introduced, are to contain nothing that is inconsistent with the function, meaning, structure, style, theological content, traditional vocabulary or other important qualities of the texts found in the *editiones typicae* (*LA* 107).

In other words, even if a concession were made for the composition of new texts, they would need to sound like a translation from Latin. *LA* emphasizes the importance of the “unitary expression” of the Roman Rite time and again, even at the cost of intelligibility.²⁶ The outcome of all this is clear: since prayers with direct Biblical citations are not in the Roman style, they are not acceptable.

This rejection is even more unfortunate given the ecumenical bridge that these scriptural based prayers would have been able to provide between Catholics and other Christians thanks to the Common Lectionary. These collects were widely appreciated in Anglican and Protestant circles for their sensitive evocation of the scriptural themes contained in the Lectionary readings of the corresponding Sunday. In their preface to a publication containing these prayers, Charles Robertson and Paul Sheppy of the Joint Liturgical Group voice their hope that these prayers would “give added expression to the growing experience of worship as the activity not simply of a neighbourhood congregation, but of the Church universal.”²⁷ The elimination of these prayers from the new Missal represents a missed opportunity for constructively promoting Christian unity.²⁸

A Way Forward toward Renewal

At the beginning of this presentation I asked if we Catholics had the theological and structural resources to take up the challenge of Eucharistic renewal in a multicultural world. I hope that I have persuaded that the process of

²⁵ T. KLAUSER, 42

²⁶ See also *LA* 5, 25, 27.

²⁷ *Opening Prayers: Scripture-related collects for Years A, B, & C from The Sacramentary* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1997) x.

²⁸ Given the importance of prayer in ecumenical dialogue underlined by John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, 23 (1995) these prayers, may yet play an important role among those churches using the Common Lectionary, including the Roman Catholic Church.

²⁴ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Prot n. 429/02/L, *Observations on the English-language Translation of the Roman Missal*, (Rome, 2002.) I, F.

liturgical renewal set in motion by the Council is still able to show us a way forward. This process, sensitive to the many cultural contexts in which the Roman Rite is celebrated, wisely opened the door to diversity within the Roman Rite that would be able to make the riches of the liturgy accessible to those gathered to celebrate fully, consciously and actively. In opening this door, the first stage of liturgical renewal did nothing else than re-propose the traditional manner in which the liturgy had been inculturated by the Church for the first thousand years of its existence.

Documents such as *Comme le prévoit* also placed more technical issues regarding translation of the *editiones typicae* where they more properly belong—in the hands of the national bishops' conferences. It is these conferences, composed of Bishops who know their people, their culture, and the way in which language is used, who are in the best position to judge the adequacy of a liturgical translation. From a common sense point of view, the Congregation is simply not competent to judge the adequacy of all of the vernacular translations of the Roman Rite. It must rely more on the bishops as partners, rather than subordinates in these judgments. Unfortunately, many bishops are frustrated by the fact that in matters liturgical, they are forced to be merely the executors of decisions made in Rome. This feeling was well described by the Japanese Bishops in their response to the *Lineamenta* or preparatory document to the Asian synod in 1997 and significantly is still available on the web site of the Japanese Bishops' Conference. They remark:

. . . it is strange that approval should have to be obtained from the Holy See even for Japanese translations of liturgical and catechetical texts already approved by the Bishops' Conference. To contribute to the evangelization of the region, to encourage inculturation, to build up real "collegiality" among the Churches in Asia, trust should be shown to the Local Churches and the independence of the Local Churches should be respected in matters concerning administration, etc.²⁹

I do not want to give the impression that the Holy See should not have a role in confirming liturgical books. It is appropriate that the Congregation exercise a role of oversight, taking into account the need for maintaining the general contours of the rite as a "sign and instrument of unity."³⁰ At stake, however, is the ability of the local church to engage the culture in which it lives and moves; this is something that is very difficult for those in Rome to be able to judge. Furthermore, a preservationist attitude that seeks to maintain the contingent cultural traits of the Roman Rite as a kind of untouchable "museum" risks making the rites unintelligible and incapable of evangelizing the people. This approach simply does not serve the needs of the Church, nor is it faithful to the spirit of the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council outlined in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Ironically, the dogged insistence by the Congregation on maintaining the formal elements of the Roman Rite risks producing the opposite effect than the one desired. In my travels as Superior General over the past years, I usually pay a courtesy call on the Bishops where the members of my community are working. Being a liturgist concerned with issues of culture, I usually ask the various bishops where I visit how the new directives from Rome regarding changes in the Rite of Mass and the suppression of abuses are being implemented in their dioceses. Over the past years I have spoken with bishops in South America, Africa and Asia (after having seen at times some rather bizarre liturgical celebrations). Granted, this "survey" is anecdotal, but the answer to my question was always the same: "What new directives?" The Congregation may be speaking, but many, including bishops, have stopped paying attention.

At stake is the ability of the liturgy to mediate the liturgical tradition of the Church in a meaningful way to the faithful in the many cultures in which the Roman Rite is celebrated. In order to obtain guidance in taking up this challenge, we only need to look as far as the history of the Roman Rite, underlined by the Congregation itself in *Liturgiam Authenticam*. As we have seen the Congregation asserts that the Roman Rite has "the signal capacity... to assimilate into itself spoken and sung text, gestures and rites derived from the customs and genius of diverse national and particular Churches" (LA 5). What is needed for a Eucharistic renewal in a multicultural world is for this historic hallmark of the Roman Rite, so characteristic of the first millennium of its development, be promoted in the twenty-first century.

²⁹ "A Special Proposal to the Holy See" Official Response of the Japanese Church to the Lineamenta. July 23, 1997. Text available at <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/eng/edoc/linea.htm>.

³⁰ See Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (1969) 221.



La Cena di Gesù: tra addio e presenza

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Al centro del nostro interesse c'è la cena di Gesù, cioè l'ultimo momento di comunicazione tra Gesù e i suoi discepoli prima della sua morte. La nostra riflessione intende guardare da vicino le quattro tradizioni neotestamentarie che di quell'evento hanno reso possibile la reiterazione, a partire da quel «primo giorno dopo il sabato» della risurrezione fino ad oggi. I quattro racconti dell'istituzione, presenti nei tre vangeli sinottici [Mc 14,22-25; Mt 26,26-29; Lc 22,15-20] e nella prima lettera di Paolo ai cristiani di Corinto [11,23-25], rappresentano la parola evangelica più ripetuta ormai da duemila anni. Anche se, purtroppo, questo non significa ancora che a questa parola le chiese siano state in grado di convertirsi per trovare il coraggio di vivere l'unità.

Prima di entrare nell'esame dei testi, ancora una premessa è però necessaria. Mossa e accompagnata dallo Spirito che il Risorto ha donato alla sua comunità, ogni generazione credente ha interpretato e recepito in modo diverso i quattro racconti della cena di Gesù. Sappiamo bene infatti che nessuna comunità cristiana di nessuna generazione cristiana può appropriarsi definitivamente di tutti i significati contenuti nel testo. Esso è ricco di virtualità e di potenzialità infinitamente maggiori di quante le chiese, in ogni tempo, riescono a intercettare. Per questo, nel momento in cui ci si appresta a interpretare i testi, è quanto mai necessario chiarire per quali vie e con quali strumenti si intende procedere all'esame di essi. La storia delle chiese è scandita, in fondo, anche dai diversi metodi con cui i credenti hanno, nelle diverse generazioni, letto e studiato le Scritture sacre.

Oggi, l'attenzione alla prospettiva storica è assolutamente indispensabile. Non c'è dubbio che, per quel che riguarda la fede gli uomini e le donne del nostro tempo sono tentati molto spesso di scendere in una spiritualità a basso costo, forse per reazione all'esigenza entusiasmante ma, spesso, percepita anche come molto faticosa di considerare tutto, anche i fondamenti della religione, con desiderio di capire, di porsi domande, di non accontentarsi di una visione tanto accomodante quanto superficiale. Dobbiamo farlo ormai su tutto, sulla cultura, sulla scienza, sulla politica ... e vorremmo tanto essere esonerati dal farlo per quel che concerne la fede. Per quanto, forse, comprensibile, un simile atteggiamento è però impossibile. Almeno se, in obbedienza al Concilio Vaticano II, anche i cattolici ritengono ormai indispensa-

bile fondare la propria fede sulla Scrittura.

La Scrittura, infatti, non si può capire a basso costo, richiede maturità di approccio, capacità di discernimento critico, ponderatezza di giudizio. Ma è l'unica realtà sulla quale, come Gesù stesso ha detto, l'uomo saggio può costruire la sua casa senza timore che venti e piogge l'abbatano [cfr. Mt 7,24-27].

Per quanto riguarda ora il tema che qui ci interessa, i racconti neotestamentari sulla cena di Gesù con i suoi, dobbiamo innanzi tutto ricordare che quell'ultima cena di cui ci parlano i testi è in realtà anche la prima: l'ultima del Gesù terreno, la prima del Gesù Risorto. I testi riflettono entrambe, come riflettono l'inscindibile rapporto che c'è tra di esse, ci raccontano ciò che è avvenuto «nella notte in cui Gesù fu tradito», ma ce lo raccontano a partire dalla convinzione che quel tradimento come la morte che ne è conseguita non sono state l'ultima parola sulla vicenda di quel profeta di Nazaret perché Dio stesso lo ha risuscitato dai morti.

È chiaro, in conclusione, che la ricerca di quanto è avvenuto nel passato non può pretendere di arrivare ai fatti senza la mediazione dei racconti. Essi non presentano però quanto è avvenuto come un evento neutro, ma a partire dal punto di vista di coloro che li scrivono. Bisogna allora cercare di stabilire cosa dicono i testi e cercare anche di rintracciare, all'interno delle narrazioni, l'evento che esse intendono raccontare.

1. un fatto storico

La storicità dell'ultima cena di Gesù con i suoi discepoli è per le chiese un fatto quanto mai importante perché permette di radicare il sacramento dell'eucaristia nella storia del Gesù terreno. Dobbiamo comunque accettare i limiti delle fonti strettamente storiche dell'evento e tenere sempre presente che arriviamo a circoscrivere il nucleo storico dell'evento solo a partire dalle narrazioni. Cercando di liberare le tradizioni successive dalle aggiunte interpretative possiamo fare luce almeno su una parte della realtà. Per quanto limitato, si tratta però di un nucleo fondamentale, sempre aperto a ulteriori significazioni, il cui sviluppo è stato avviato dalla tradizione.

Più precisamente, possiamo ritenere che i punti di forza su cui poggia la ricostruzione dell'evento storico sono soltanto i gesti e le parole di Gesù. Non è sicuro infatti che l'ultima cena di Gesù con i suoi discepoli sia stata una cena pasquale, ma è invece fuori

di dubbio che Gesù abbia voluto consumare un pasto con i suoi discepoli prima di andare incontro alla morte. La collocazione temporale di esso «nella notte in cui fu tradito» è infatti un dato che ricorre in tutte e quattro le tradizioni. Non ci troviamo quindi di fronte a una delle tante occasioni di condivisione di tavola di Gesù di cui sono punteggiati i racconti evangelici, ma ci viene narrato un avvenimento molto preciso che ha luogo, appunto, «nella notte in cui fu tradito».

Il carattere originario dell'evento risulta dunque con chiarezza dai gesti e dalle parole di Gesù: prende il pane, lo benedice e rende grazie, pronuncia quelle parole che un'attenta critica letteraria ha ormai consentito di mettere a fuoco con sufficiente certezza:

Questo è il mio corpo dato per voi

Questo calice è la nuova alleanza nel mio sangue versato per voi

Vi dico che io non berrò più del frutto della vite fino al giorno in cui lo berrò nuovo nel regno di Dio.

Oltre alle parole sul pane e sul calice, dunque, la tradizione neotestamentaria della cena ci tramanda un detto escatologico di Gesù che, come le altre parole, è indispensabile per capire il significato che Gesù stesso ha dato a questo avvenimento che segna in modo così pregnante un passaggio decisivo per la sua vita e per il suo ministero. Ma andiamo con ordine.

Qual è prima di tutto il significato delle parole di Gesù sul pane e sul vino? La frazione e la distribuzione del pane, usuale nei pasti giudaici, è accompagnata dalle parole *Questo è il mio corpo dato per voi*. La frase pronunciata da Gesù sul pane ha un significato simbolico che va chiarito prestando prima di tutto attenzione a ciascuno dei singoli termini.

La precisazione «questo» pane, rimanda al pane benedetto della cena giudaica, un pane che è dono di Dio. Per questo, per i discepoli, ha il valore simbolico di nutrimento comunitario. Già in sé dunque, cioè prima ancora di ogni altra ulteriore significazione, il pane che Gesù benedice, «questo pane», deve essere capito come mezzo di relazione tra Dio e i discepoli.

Non è altrettanto semplice invece rintracciare il valore dell'identificazione che Gesù stabilisce tra pane e corpo, tra «questo pane» e il «mio corpo». Avere fretta è rischioso. Certamente dobbiamo pensare al corpo inteso non tanto come organismo, ma piuttosto come persona che si esprime attraverso il corpo. Il termine rimanda cioè alla persona che entra in relazione con il mondo e con gli altri. L'uomo non ha un corpo, «è» un corpo e il termine ebraico contiene una sfumatura di fragilità che caratterizza la creatura.

È anche vero, però, che il termine greco utilizzato dai LXX non fa pensare tanto alla persona in quanto dotata di capacità relazionale, ma piuttosto all'uomo considerato nella sua oggettività, l'uomo come schiavo, una realtà abbandonata, un cadavere. Il termine «corpo» indicherebbe allora l'uomo in quanto destinato alla morte e alla decomposizione. Certamente, questo secondo significato è più pertinente al contesto. Se l'espressione «mio corpo» significasse la persona di Gesù in quanto capace di

relazione, la frase non rispecchierebbe il clima denso di tradimento e di morte in cui viene pronunciata, mentre se il significato primario del termine «corpo» implica anche il destino di morte e di decomposizione, allora le parole di Gesù esprimono la sua consapevolezza rispetto a ciò che lo aspetta. In fondo, quella cena suggella anche un po' la fine della speranza. Speranza del Regno, speranza della vittoria pacifica di Dio, speranza di ricostituire Israele intorno alla promessa abramitica che trovava finalmente nel Messia la sua definitiva realizzazione.

Alle parole sul pane fa seguito il gesto della distribuzione. Un gesto che rivela pienamente che già le parole stesse pronunciate da Gesù avevano un carattere dialogico. Esse sono dette a coloro e per coloro che siedono a mensa con lui, il suo corpo che presto sarà consegnato alla morte è come quel pane che crea relazione tra chi lo mangia e Dio. La sua morte non segna la sconfitta di Dio. Anche attraverso la sua morte, quel regno che egli stesso ha proclamato continua ad avanzare.

Possiamo però capire, a partire da queste parole, qual è il significato specifico che Gesù stesso dà alla sua morte. Una morte «per», certamente. Ma si tratta di una donazione come vittima di un sacrificio attraverso il quale vengono espiati i peccati del mondo? In altri passi delle Scritture cristiane come 1Pt 2,24, in cui esplicito è il riferimento a Is 53,12 [«Egli portò i nostri peccati nel suo corpo sul legno della croce, perché, non vivendo più per il peccato, vivessimo per la giustizia»] il senso sacrificale e espiatorio della morte di Gesù è affermato con chiarezza. Con le parole sul pane durante la cena, allora, Gesù avrebbe voluto comunicare che egli accettava la morte in favore dei peccatori.

Va però notato che il verbo «offrire» (dare per) non indica sempre e necessariamente un'offerta rituale. Anzi, proprio nelle parole di Gesù durante la sua ultima cena esso non può averlo perché i peccati diventerebbero la materia del sacrificio. E questo è impossibile. Piuttosto, con l'identificazione tra il pane e il suo corpo donato Gesù evoca tutta la sua vita, che ora arriva ad abbracciare anche la morte, e che è stata una donazione, un sacrificio personale, non culturale. Molte volte nelle Scritture cristiane la preposizione *per* viene utilizzata anche nel senso di una azione che è utile a qualcuno. Affermare quindi che Cristo è morto *per noi* significa riconoscere che Cristo si è dato per amore e l'amore implica molto di più che non semplicemente il riscatto dai peccati. Non più «mors tua, vita mea», ma piuttosto «vita tua, vita mea», una vita che può arrivare a dover includere e accettare perfino una morte ingiusta.

Gesù non ha mai parlato della sua morte come sacrificio redentivo. Egli ha previsto la sua morte, ma l'ha capita come facente parte del disegno di Dio, analogamente alla lunga serie delle morti dei profeti e dei giusti. Certo, con un'intensità superiore a tutte le altre morti, visto il carattere di unicità della sua intima relazione con il Padre e con tutti gli uomini. Gesù sapeva che la sua esistenza aveva una portata per l'umanità intera, anzi, egli ha fatto della sua attività taumaturgica un simbolo della salvezza messianica che stava per realizzarsi pienamente su tutta la terra. Mai però ha espresso questo in un linguaggio culturale. Se allora Gesù non ha mai mostrato, durante la sua vita, nessuna preoccupazione riguardo ai sacrifici culturali e rituali, perché avrebbe

dovuto cambiare stile nel momento della sua morte?

Il carattere simbolico della distribuzione del pane, che rimanda alla cena escatologica e al dono di Gesù ai discepoli, viene ulteriormente sviluppato dalle parole sul calice attraverso le quali quel dono acquista una nuova dimensione, evocando il sacrificio di alleanza tra Dio e Israele conclusosi sul Sinai. Diversamente dalle parole sul pane, però, quelle sul vino sono più difficili da interpretare, anche perché nei testi esse ricorrono in due diverse versioni: «questo è il mio sangue versato per molti» e «questa coppa è la nuova alleanza nel mio sangue per voi». Il gesto di Gesù che accompagna queste parole, dare la coppa da bere, ci aiuta a cogliere il significato di esse. Secondo la prima versione delle parole sul calice, quella di Marco e Matteo, Gesù esprime in modo simbolico che la sua missione è comunicare la vita di Dio mediante l'alleanza stabilita nella morte che egli ha accettato.

Il calice viene infatti paragonato al sangue e rimanda a Es 24,6-8. Si tratta di un sacrificio di comunione. Il sangue non è qui significativo della sofferenza umana, ma simboleggia piuttosto il rapporto di comunione che, a partire dall'alleanza, si viene a stabilire tra Dio e il suo popolo. Secondo il testo di Esodo 24, l'alleanza è un impegno che Dio assume nei confronti del popolo, ma è comunque un'alleanza bilaterale perché il popolo deve impegnarsi a seguire tutti i comandi del Signore (24,3-7).

Le parole sul calice, però, mettono anche in luce che già l'antica tradizione ha apportato una significativa mutazione. Infatti, attraverso il riferimento a Is 53,10-12, alla morte di Gesù viene conferita la stessa portata universale del sacrificio del servo di Jahvé. Il sangue, inizialmente segno di comunione, diviene così mezzo di purificazione. In questa visione, la preoccupazione centrale è divenuta ormai il peccato e l'anelito è quello di garantirsi con tutti i mezzi una liberazione dalla propria colpa.

Va però ricordato che il gesto di Gesù di invitare a «bere la coppa» sottolinea invece il simbolismo dell'alleanza di vita e non il valore espiatorio del suo sacrificio. Si beve per avere la vita, non per purificarsi. L'intenzione del testo della cena e, in concreto, le parole sul calice, sottolineano l'invito ad entrare nell'alleanza che dà la vita sovrabbondante.

La seconda versione delle parole sul calice, quella di Paolo e Luca cosiddetta antiochena, insiste ulteriormente sul tema dell'alleanza: la coppa è l'alleanza, la «nuova alleanza». L'accentuazione cade su «nuova»: non saranno gli uomini a stabilire l'alleanza, dato che essa è sempre fallita, come mostrano anche la grande riforma di Giosia del 622 e la riforma deuteronomica, ma l'intervento di Dio. E si tratterà di un'alleanza «dentro» il cuore dell'uomo [Ger 31,33], non un cuore di pietra, ma un cuore di carne [Ger 36,26-28]. Questa trasformazione e questa nuova alleanza vagheggiata da Geremia ancora non si è realizzata.

Mentre però Geremia non mette in collegamento l'alleanza al sangue, riappare invece nelle parole sul calice il riferimento a Es 24,6-8 e il collegamento tra sangue e alleanza è ancora una volta mediato dal riferimento a Is 53 e, più ampiamente, dai canti del servo sofferente. È la sua mediazione che garantisce il carattere eterno dell'alleanza. La frase «*la nuova alleanza nel mio sangue versato per voi*» rivela un intreccio di testi e un'elaborazione teologica molto ricca.

Prima di terminare questa ricostruzione: qual è il rapporto che lega le parole significative sul pane e quelle sul calice? In quelle sul pane Gesù ha espresso il dono di se stesso, ha invitato i discepoli a dare vita ad una comunità intorno a lui, la cui presenza è significata proprio dal pane da ricevere insieme. Le parole sulla coppa sviluppano piuttosto il tema dell'alleanza in termini cultici e profetici, anche se trasfigurati dalla personalizzazione fattane da Gesù perché l'alleanza è ormai compiuta ed è nuova perché è stata inaugurata da Gesù stesso che ha stabilito la comunione dei discepoli tra loro, con lui e con Dio. In entrambe, comunque, ciò che conta non sono gli elementi fisici del pane e del vino, ma il valore simbolico delle parole stesse e dei gesti compiuti da Gesù.

2. «fate questo in memoria di me»: la tradizione cultica

Il comando «Fate questo in memoria di me» rappresenta un'aggiunta liturgica che affonda le sue radici nelle Scritture ebraiche. «Ricordare» implica azione. Quando Dio ricorda, opera in favore. Ricordare suppone anche un fondamento solidamente stabilito: si riferisce a Dio e agli uomini in un ambito strettamente religioso. La memoria richiesta da Dio (o dai profeti) agli uomini comporta la presa di coscienza dell'alleanza, cioè la scoperta che gli interventi divini del passato hanno senso anche oggi, significa entrare in contatto con Dio (Dt 5,2-3).

Una forma particolare di questo rapporto con Dio che abbraccia tutta l'esistenza umana è quella del culto. Il culto giudaico è caratterizzato dalla memoria. Il calendario liturgico altro non è che la commemorazione dei diversi eventi della salvezza che si sono susseguiti nel tempo: la pasqua (Es 12,14), il sabato (Es 20,8-11), la festa delle capanne (Lv 23,33-44), i sacrifici (Es 20,22-24).

Quale dunque il senso dell'ordine di ripetere il gesto di Gesù riportato dalla tradizione comune a Paolo e Luca?

Il vocabolario proprio del testo rimanda con chiarezza a un'azione culturale: «fare» va inteso nel senso di azione liturgica, culturale; «questo» si riferisce non a tutta la cena ma ai gesti precisi sul pane e sul vino; l'azione di «fare memoria» rimanda alla pasqua. In questo modo la «costruzione della memoria» operata nel gesto liturgico e dal gesto liturgico diviene quanto mai articolata: dietro la memoria della pasqua e della cena c'è dunque l'uscita dall'Egitto e l'evento della croce, due eventi che vengono resi attuali da un segno all'interno di un pasto, il pranzo pasquale ebraico e la cena di Gesù.

Nell'anamnesi eucaristica c'è poi una connotazione tutta particolare ed è l'«io di Gesù», il segno di un'unione con Dio personalizzata. L'evento commemorato è strettamente legato a Cristo. L'ordine di ripetizione eucaristico-liturgico, allora, non mira soltanto a rendere presente l'ultima cena di Gesù, ma a rendere presente ciò che essa significa: la vita comunicata da Gesù con la sua stessa vita, la sua morte e la sua risurrezione. Non si tratta di una dimensione evasiva, che porta ad estraniarsi dalla realtà perché per i credenti l'evento pasquale non è assorbito dal tempo, ma lo domina. Il popolo credente, che si è costituito sul fondamento di questo evento, nel momento in cui «ricorda», si rende presente all'atto fondatore della propria esistenza.

L'ordine di reiterare questo segno apre anche a un futuro lontano che attualizzerà gli stessi eventi per generazioni e

generazioni, rivela quindi sia una dimensione, profetica, cioè aperta all'avvenire, sia una dimensione cultica, rivolta cioè al passato.

Le parole pronunciate da Gesù durante la cena però, lo abbiamo detto all'inizio, non si limitano a quelle sul pane e sul calice. Tranne la versione di Paolo, che contiene al riguardo solo un riferimento molto stilizzato, tutti e tre i racconti dell'istituzione contenuti nei vangeli sinottici ci ricordano che Gesù ha anche detto in quell'occasione un'altra parola: «*Vi dico che io non berrò più del frutto della vite fino al giorno in cui lo berrò nuovo nel regno di Dio*». Si tratta di una parola decisiva per capire il significato pieno dell'eucaristia. E si tratta invece di una parola troppo spesso tralasciata. Qui proprio sta allora, a mio avviso, il nocciolo del problema: basta la categoria della presenza per capire e vivere l'eucaristia o non dobbiamo forse più spesso ricordare che l'eucaristia celebra anche un'assenza e che anche questa assenza costruisce la chiesa?

3. una cena di addio: la tradizione testamentaria

Come per le parole sul calice, anche le parole escatologiche di Gesù ci vengono tramandate in due versioni quella di Mc 14,25 e Mt 26,29 e quella di Lc 22,18. In Luca, poi, esse precedono l'istituzione dell'eucaristia e fanno parte di una composizione redazionale più lunga in cui si trova la benedizione del calice, non accompagnata, però, dalle parole significative (vv15-17).

Partiamo comunque da Marco e Matteo:

Poi prese il calice e rese grazie, lo diede loro e ne bevvero tutti. E disse: «Questo è il mio sangue, il sangue dell'alleanza versato per molti. In verità vi dico che io non berrò più del frutto della vite fino al giorno in cui lo berrò nuovo nel regno di Dio».

Si tratta di una parola escatologica carica di significato. Essa ci riconduce al pensiero di Gesù stesso. Gesù guarda con lucidità alla sua morte. Manifesta la sicurezza che la sua morte non metterà in dubbio il regno di Dio che egli ha annunciato nel corso del suo ministero e attraverso di esso. Gesù parla come un credente giudeo orientato all'attesa della fine dei tempi. Non usa immagini apocalittiche, ma semplicemente utilizza il simbolo del banchetto (Is 25,6; Mt 8,11; 22,1-10; Ap 3,20). C'è però un'aggiunta decisiva: Gesù è sicuro di partecipare al banchetto del regno in quel giorno. Di fronte alla sua morte imminente egli manifesta una fiducia incrollabile nel trionfo di Dio. Egli annuncia che per lui è finito il tempo dei banchetti sulla terra e che quest'ultimo pasto con i suoi è per partecipare un giorno al banchetto celeste quando verrà il regno di Dio.

Per quanto riguarda Luca, invece, il testo è molto più lungo e articolato:

«Ho desiderato ardentemente di mangiare questa Pasqua con voi, prima della mia passione, poiché vi dico: non la mangerò più, finché essa non si compia nel regno di Dio». E preso un calice, rese grazie e disse: «Prendetelo e distribuitelo tra voi, poiché vi dico: da questo momento non

berrò più del frutto della vite, finché non venga il regno di Dio».

Menzionando due coppe Luca tiene separata questa parola escatologica di Gesù dalla parola cultica sul calice. Ancora più decisivo, dunque è per lui che non vada perduto il ricordo di questa dimensione della cena di Gesù con i suoi e, quindi, della celebrazione eucaristica cristiana. Queste parole rendono esplicito e dovrebbero rendere anche esemplare, quindi, l'atteggiamento di Gesù stesso alla vigilia della sua morte.

Esso rivela innanzi tutto il suo rapporto diretto con Dio e la sua fiducia totale nel trionfo del Regno di Dio. Egli considera la morte come un passaggio perché il Regno di Dio verrà ed egli parteciperà al banchetto escatologico. Gesù non fa nessuna previsione apocalittica, ma delinea l'immagine di un banchetto escatologico vissuto nell'intimità con Dio. Né, d'altro canto, Gesù precisa con chiarezza cosa egli stia per compiere o lascia intendere qualcosa a riguardo della sua risurrezione. L'evento escatologico non si realizza nella sua persona, ma deve venire. Ancora: Gesù annuncia che sta per finire la comunione di tavola con i suoi discepoli finché non venga il Regno dei cieli. In quanto simbolizzazione del banchetto di comunione escatologica, allora, l'ultima cena implica un elemento ecclesiale.

Sempre alla luce di Mc 14,25 e par, si chiarisce anche il carattere simbolico della cena perché si tratta di un annuncio che ha tutte le caratteristiche di una proclamazione profetica: imprecisione, percezione di un momento di difficoltà e fiducia nell'intervento salvifico di Dio. I gesti di prendere il pane, benedire, spezzare, distribuire, d'altra parte, sono gesti simbolici, propri di ogni cena giudaica. Le parole sul pane (e sul calice), lo abbiamo visto, rivelano una dimensione di dialogo tra Gesù e i discepoli, come anche in termini relazionali è interpretata la situazione di morte imminente che diviene la morte «per» gli altri di colui che ha vissuto «per» gli altri. Tutto il contesto della cena, gesti e parole, ha un carattere simbolico. Nell'insieme, il gesto di dare il pane accompagnato dalle parole significative costituisce un rito attraverso il quale viene espresso il significato del sacrificio che Gesù sta per compiere. In questo senso, l'atto di Gesù ha certamente una colorazione culturale, di ordine diverso, però da quello dei sacrifici liturgici.

Le parole di Lc 22,15-18, poi, mettono ancora più in risalto il carattere testamentario dell'ultima cena. Certamente, l'ultima cena di Gesù, essendo una cena di addio, ha avuto il carattere di un testamento. Gesù voleva dare le ultime istruzioni, voleva precisare il suo insegnamento e il senso della sua missione. Non è casuale che proprio all'interno degli avvenimenti dell'ultima cena gli evangelisti Luca dia spazio all'ultima istruzione ai discepoli in cui è espresso il punto culminante dell'insegnamento di Gesù e l'elemento costitutivo della comunità discepolare, il servizio reciproco. E si può allora anche capire perché il quarto evangelista ha rinunciato a raccontare l'istituzione dell'eucaristia ed ha preferito piuttosto tramandare il ricordo della liturgia e dell'istruzione diaconale della lavanda dei piedi, accompagnata dal lungo testamento di Gesù prima di andare a morire.

La cena di Gesù come l'eucaristia cristiana, insomma, devono

essere capite non soltanto come il sacramento della presenza, ma anche come il sacramento dell'assenza. Un'assenza carica di certezza nell'avvicinarsi del giorno in cui non ci sarà più bisogno di celebrare l'eucaristia perché tutti i popoli saranno finalmente seduti al banchetto del regno di Dio.

Nel momento in cui la dimensione dell'assenza va perduta, sia pure in favore di un'ipertrofia della presenza, l'eucaristia che noi celebriamo è segno che significa, ma rischia al contempo anche di diventare controsegno. Diviene infatti comprensibile tutto e soltanto all'interno della chiesa invece di essere decodificata soprattutto e innanzi tutto a partire dal regno.

La tradizione evangelica dell'ultima cena di Gesù con i suoi ci impone, invece, di ribaltare la prospettiva. La cena di Gesù ha senso solo se è considerata il riassunto e il momento culminante della prassi del Gesù storico. Non è un pranzo unico, una celebrazione senza precedenti. Tanto l'ultima cena di Gesù che l'eucaristia cristiana possono essere capite soltanto se messe in rapporto con i pasti fraterni di Gesù durante tutta la sua vita terrena. Pasti con i discepoli e con persone di diversa condizione e origine. Basta pensare a Mc 1,31 e par, dove la suocera di Simone, guarita, si mette a servire Gesù e i suoi discepoli; Mc 3,20 secondo cui Gesù e i discepoli entrano in una casa per mangiare e c'era tanta gente che non potevano riuscire a mangiare.

Soprattutto, però, i testi maggiormente significativi sono quelli da cui risulta che il Figlio dell'uomo non segue la vita ascetica di Giovanni Battista [Mt 11,18s=Lc 7,33s] e che i suoi discepoli non digiunano [Mc 2,18-19 e par] oppure la vocazione di Levi il pubblicano [Mt 9,13-17 e par], la parabola delle nozze regali [Mt 22,1-14=Lc 14,16-24; EvTom, 64], l'insegnamento di Gesù sul pellegrinaggio dei popoli e il banchetto messianico [Mt 8,11-12=Lc 13,28-29]. Per non parlare dei racconti della moltiplicazione dei pani e dei pranzi dei discepoli con il risorto.

Questa esperienza dei pranzi di Gesù con i discepoli viene dunque interpretata dalla tradizione post-pasquale con insistenza e in modo più specifico: il pranzo come convivio era un'esperienza abituale del gruppo dei discepoli di Gesù con il loro Maestro. Anzi, Gesù esprime la sua missione e il carattere del suo messaggio non mediante la penitenza e il digiuno, ma mediante i pasti festivi e i pasti di Gesù erano l'espressione del suo avvicinamento verso i pubblicani e i peccatori. I pranzi di Gesù, infatti, avevano una dimensione escatologica, in quanto erano la prima manifestazione della presenza del perdono e della salvezza di Dio offerta agli uomini. Partecipare alla mensa con Gesù, insomma, era un appello alla conversione e una garanzia della partecipazione alla mensa del regno.

4. Conclusione

La dimensione cosiddetta «testamentaria» e quella culturale, dunque, sono entrambe nate dall'ultima cena di Gesù: una prima tradizione, quella testamentaria, insisteva sull'escatologia e il servizio fraterno; una seconda, cultica, ha messo in rilievo il tema della morte redentrice. Ambedue giocano una funzione diversa nell'interpretare questo pasto di addio.

L'interpretazione culturale della cena di Gesù con i suoi prima di essere messo a morte testimonia che molto presto le comunità cristiane sono passate dalla memoria del simbolo alla celebrazione del sacramento. E il passaggio dal simbolo al sacramento fornisce una prima forma di risposta al problema dell'assenza di Gesù. Il racconto culturale esprime il legame personale con Gesù e con i suoi. Gesù è presente malgrado l'assenza: l'eucaristia è una prima forma di risposta al problema dell'assenza di Gesù.

Gesù, però, ha anche lasciato un testamento ai suoi discepoli aspettando di ritrovarli. In modo del tutto proprio, questa tradizione testamentaria esprime la fiducia nel fatto che il discepolo può rimanere unito a colui che, risuscitato dai morti, è sempre vivente assumendo un atteggiamento esistenziale di servizio e di carità, cioè in accordo con il modo di vivere di Gesù stesso.

Molto presto, dunque, la celebrazione eucaristica comincia a perdere il carattere di *pegno* in vista del definitivo inverarsi del regno e ad acquistare il carattere di *impegno* in vista di una vita cristiana coerente. Prassi liturgica consolidata nelle chiese apostoliche, la cena del Signore rende attuale, attraverso la sacramentalizzazione del gesto simbolico del profeta nazareno che viene riletto alla luce della sua morte, l'alleanza tra Dio e il suo popolo.

«Quando fu a tavola con loro prese il pane, lo benedisse, lo spezzò e lo diede loro. Allora i loro occhi furono aperti e lo riconobbero; ma egli scomparve alla loro vista». Forse, se la comunità dei discepoli di Gesù, il Messia Risorto, ritrovasse la dimensione dell'attesa escatologica e sapesse alimentarla nella celebrazione dell'eucaristia, il mondo non avrebbe bisogno di dare fiducia a sempre nuovi messianismi che intercettano i bisogni e calamitano le speranze. Forse, se l'eucaristia che le nostre chiese celebrano non fosse soltanto il riconoscimento di una presenza, ma anche l'ammissione di un addio e di un'attesa, sarebbe più facile sostenersi gli uni con gli altri nell'attesa fiduciosa del regno.

Sia alla fine dell'episodio di Emmaus, che alla fine dell'ultima e definitiva apparizione all'intera *ekklesia*, Gesù scompare dalla vista dei discepoli. In entrambi i casi, però, questa assenza non provoca scoramento. Anzi. I due di Emmaus, rinfrancati, partono di corsa verso Gerusalemme e, dopo l'ascensione, l'intera comunità torna a Gerusalemme con grande gioia. Il congedo che Gesù prende dai suoi discepoli nel momento della cena altro non è, in fondo, che l'appuntamento a ritrovarsi definitivamente nel banchetto escatologico.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF INTERCHURCH AND INTERCONFESSIONAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR CONFESSIONAL FAMILIES CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

A Anglican
AC Assyrian Church of the East
AIC African Instituted Churches
B Baptist
CC Chaldean Catholic Church
CEC Conference of European Churches
CCEE Council of European Episcopal Conferences
CP Constantinople Patriarchate
D Disciples of Christ
DOMBES Groupe des Dombes
E Evangelicals
FC Free Churches
FO Faith and Order
L Lutheran (*includes German 'Evangelische'*)

M Methodist
MECC Middle East Council of Churches
Mn Mennonite
Mo Moravian
O Eastern Orthodox (*Byzantine*)
OC Old Catholic (*includes Polish National*)
OO Oriental Orthodox (*Non-Chalcedonian*)
Pe Pentecostal
R Reformed
RC Roman Catholic
SA Salvation Army
SDA Seventh-Day Adventist
U United Churches
W Waldensian
WCC World Council of Churches

LIST OF DIALOGUES

A-B: Anglican-Baptist International Forum
A-D / aus: Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations
A-L: Anglican-Lutheran International Commission
A-L / africa: All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission
A-L / aus: Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia
A-L / can: Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue
A-L / eng-g: Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England
A-L / eng-nordic regions: Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England
A-L / eur: Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission
A-L / usa: Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
A-L-R / eng-f: Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France
A-M: Anglican-Methodist International Commission
A-M / eng: Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain
A-Mo: Anglican-Moravian Conversations
A-Mo / usa: Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA
A-O: Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission
A-O / usa: Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA
A-OC: Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations
A-OC / na: Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group
A-OO: Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue
A-OO / copt: Anglican-Coptic Relations
A-R: Anglican-Reformed International Commission
A-RC: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
A-RC: International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)
A-RC / aus: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia

A-RC / b: Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
A-RC / br: Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission
A-RC / can: Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission
A-RC / eng: English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
A-RC / eur: Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe
A-RC / f: Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France
A-RC / usa: Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
A-U / aus: Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
AC-CC: Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church
AC-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church
AC-OO / syr: Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church
AC-RC: Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
AIC-R: Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
B-L: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue
B-L / g: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany
B-L / n: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway
B-L / sf: Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland
B-L / usa: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
B-L-R-U / eur: Dialogue between the LCF and the European Baptist Federation
B-M-W / italy: Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy
B-Mn: Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations
B-O: Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue

B-R: Baptist-Reformed Dialogue
B-RC: Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations
B-RC / f: Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France
B-RC / usa (ab): American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
B-RC / usa (sb): Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
CEC-CCEE: Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences
D-L / usa: Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
D-O / rus: Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue
D-R: Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue
D-RC: Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue
D-U / aus: Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
D-U / usa: Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA
DOMBES: Dialogues des Dombes
E-RC: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission
E-SDA: Evangelical-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Dialogue
FC-O / g: Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany
FO: Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies
L-M: International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission
L-M / n: Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway
L-M / s: Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden
L-M / sf: Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland
L-M / usa: US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue
L-Mn / f: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France
L-Mn / g: Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)
L-Mn / usa: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA
L-Mo / usa: Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA
L-O: Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission
L-O / g-cp: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate
L-O / g-rom: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church
L-O / g-rus: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church
L-O / sf: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church
L-O / sf-rus: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church
L-O / usa: Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA
L-O-R / f: Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France
L-O-R / na: Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America
L-OC / g: Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany
L-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
L-OO / copt-s: Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden
L-OO / india: Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India
L-Pe / sf: Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland
L-Pe-R / f: Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France
L-R: Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission
L-R / arg: Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina
L-R / aus: Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia
L-R / can: Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations
L-R / f: Fédération Protestante de France
L-R / usa: Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA
L-R-RC: Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue
L-R-RC / f: Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France
L-R-SDA / f: Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France
L-R-U / eur: Leuenberg Church Fellowship
L-RC: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity
L-RC / arg: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina
L-RC / aus: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia
L-RC / br: National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil
L-RC / can: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada
L-RC / g: Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)
L-RC / india: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India
L-RC / jap: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan
L-RC / n: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway
L-RC / s: Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm
L-RC / sf: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland
L-RC / usa: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
L-SDA: Lutheran-Seventh-Day Adventist Consultations
L-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
M-O: Methodist-Orthodox Commission
M-R: Methodist-Reformed Dialogue
M-RC: Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council
M-RC / eng: English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee
M-RC / usa: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA
M-SA: Methodists and Salvation Army in Dialogue
Mn-R: Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Mn-RC: Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue
O-OC: Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission
O-OO: Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
O-OO / rus: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
O-R: Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue
O-R / ch: Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
O-R / na: Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America
O-R / rus: Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church
O-RC: Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church
O-RC / ch: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
O-RC / f: Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France
O-RC / g: Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany
O-RC / rom: Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)
O-RC / rus: Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church
O-RC / rus-g: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference
O-RC / usa: North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation
O-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
OC-R-RC / ch: Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
OC-RC: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations

OC-RC / ch: Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland
OC-RC / g: Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany
OC-RC / na: Joint Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops
OC-RC / nl: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands
OC-RC / pol: Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland
OO-R: Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue
OO-RC: International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.
OO-RC / armenia: Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission
OO-RC / copt: International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
OO-RC/eritrea: Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
OO-RC / ethiop: Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
OO-RC / india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
OO-RC/syr-india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
OO-RC / usa: Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation
Pe-R: Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue
Pe-RC: Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue

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R-RC/b: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium
R-RC / ch: Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
R-RC / nl: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands
R-RC/scot: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland
R-RC / usa: Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA
R-SDA: International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
RC-SDA: Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church
RC-U / aus: Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia
RC-U / can: Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada
RC-W / italy: Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy
RC-WCC: Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches
SA-SDA: Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
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Key to sub-headings:

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REFLECTION AND REACTIONS: essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers

TEXTS AND PAPERS: documents, reports, statements, official responses

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-compiled by Dr. Loredana Nepi

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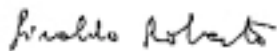
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Centro Pro Unione

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Mons. Eleuterio F. Fortino, dell'Eparchia di Lungro, è Sotto-Segretario del Pontificio Consiglio per la Promozione dell'Unità dei Cristiani. Nel 1965 fu assunto nell'allora Segretariato per l'Unità dei Cristiani come delegato della Sezione orientale. Mons. Fortino ha maturato una diretta e vasta esperienza soprattutto con le Chiese sorelle dell'Oriente Ortodosso. Ne fanno testimonianza le sue puntuali relazioni di sintesi annuali su *L'Osservatore Romano*, dove compaiono anche regolarmente ampi servizi sul cammino del dialogo, i numerosi interventi in Convegni, Congressi, Incontri interecclesiali, nonché i contributi offerti annualmente su riviste specializzate e di ampia e qualificata divulgazione per entrare nello spirito e nella celebrazione della Settimana di preghiera per l'Unità dei Cristiani. È Co-Segretario della Commissione mista internazionale per il dialogo teologico fra la Chiesa cattolica e le Chiese Ortodosse e, dal 1969, fa parte del Comitato misto che annualmente prepara i sussidi per la Settimana di preghiera per l'unità. Mons. Fortino è stato Presidente della Commissione Centrale di Coordinamento del II Sinodo Intereparchiale delle Eparchie di Lungro, di Piano degli Albanesi e del Monastero Esarchico di Grottaferrata. Ne ha seguito e diretto i lavori del lungo *iter*: Commissione Intereparchiale Antepreparatorio (1996-2000), preparazione della "Bozza per la Consultazione delle Comunità locali", di tutti gli altri atti successivi per la programmazione finale e gli schemi per la discussione finale. Infine, egli continua a seguire la stesura definitiva delle Costituzioni del Sinodo.

Nota storica

Nell'anno 1898, lo Spirito di Dio chiamò Madre Lurana White e il Rev. Paul Wattson a fondare una comunità religiosa, in seguito denominata *Suore e Frati Francescani dell'Atonement*.

I Fondatori ebbero la visione di una Società votata all'unità dei cristiani e alla riconciliazione nello spirito di San Francesco di Assisi. Poiché i Fondatori erano episcopaliani, le radici della Società appartengono a quella tradizione, fino al 1909, anno in cui i Frati e le Suore dell'Atonement entrarono in piena comunione con la Chiesa Cattolica. Fu il primo ingresso corporativo nella Chiesa romana dal tempo della Riforma.

Tra le varie attività della Società, risalta quella della Settimana di Preghiera per l'Unità dei Cristiani, iniziata dal Rev. Wattson ed ora celebrata in tutto il mondo.

Fin dai suoi umili inizi, in una cappella abbandonata a Graymoor, N.Y., la Società dell'Atonement ha dedicato i suoi sforzi per l'unità della Chiesa e la riconciliazione in numerosi paesi: Stati Uniti, Canada, Giappone, Inghilterra e Italia. Il tema del centenario celebrato nel 1998 fu *Commemorare, Celebrare, Continuare*.

Le conferenze annuali che onorano la memoria del Rev. Paul Wattson, iniziarono nel 1974 nella «Catholic University of America» a Washington, DC, poi, nel 1980, continuarono all'«University of San Francisco». A queste, nel 1995, si affiancarono le *Paul Wattson Lectures* presso l'«Atlantic School of Theology» di Halifax e dal 1996 anche presso la «Toronto School of Theology». Le *Paul Wattson Lectures* sono tenute da esperti internazionali nel campo dell'ecumenismo e del dialogo interreligioso.

Dal 1998 il Centro Pro Unione organizza ogni anno nel mese di dicembre, delle conferenze in onore di Padre Paul Wattson e di Madre Lurana White. Le precedenti conferenze sono state tenute da Enzo Bianchi (Fondatore e Priore della Comunità di Bose), Sarah Anne Coakley (Università di Harvard), Bruno Forte (Pontificia Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale - Napoli), Anna Marie Aagaard (Professoressa emerita, Università di Aarhus - Danimarca), Robert Taft, SJ (Pontificio Istituto Orientale - Roma), Mary Tanner (Commissione Internazionale del Dialogo Anglicano-Cattolico su Unità e Missione) e Angelo Maffei (Membro della Commissione Fede e Costituzione e della Commissione Internazionale del Dialogo Cattolico-Luterano).