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Prior to studying law, Lahham received an MA from the Royal College of Art in 1991, and trained in stone-carving and letter-cutting under David Kindersley, a student of Eric Gill. He also read comparative religions and philosophy during his academic studies. Lahham has a forthcoming work on the jurisprudence of a famed Muslim mystic and philosopher of medieval Andalusia.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S POSITION ON ISLAM AFTER VATICAN II

The purpose of this paper is to outline the official position of the Roman Catholic Church¹ on Islam following the Ecumenical Council of Vatican II. Furthermore, the paper seeks to serve as a brief ecclesiological guide to the manner in which the Vatican views and orders its doctrinal teachings (the *Magisterium*), that is to say the hieratic and juridical structure of the Church's doctrines. The papal function² of enunciating doctrine and the gradation of papal statements will also be delineated in order that such statements may be properly categorised and assessed. It is contended that taxonomy of these discrete subjects are essential to a proper understanding and valorisation of any statement issued by the Church with regard to Islam.

INTRODUCTION

The Ecumenical Council, known as Vatican II, was convoked during the pontificate of John XXIII (d.1963) on 11 October 1962. The reasons for convening the Council were manifold, but were dominated by the desire to complete the process begun by the First Vatican Council³ and to open the Church more fully to the world. This was meant as an opening directed at the world in recognition of its redemption by the passion of Christ, and therefore as a locus of some good that transcended the denigration of original sin. The implementation of the Church's openness, in part due to its universal mission of love, was by manifestly embracing the

1 The Church (Lat. *Ecclesia*) means a convocation designating the assembly of those that God convokes, that is to say, gathers together to form the People of God. The Church is both visible, as a hierarchical body, and invisible as the Mystical Body of Christ. The Church and Christ make up the total Christ (*Christus totus*), and are both one body, the Body of Christ. The Church is also the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and man. It was founded by Jesus Christ, its head, and guided by the Holy Spirit, which is the soul of the Body of Christ. The Eucharist (the transubstantiated bread and wine of the Mass), is the main form through which the Holy Spirit works to establish the community of believers as the Body of Christ. The succession of Christ by St Peter and his successors is based on the words of the Gospel of St. Matthew 16:18-19, wherein Christ nominates St Peter as the rock upon which His Church will be built. (See *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, popular & definitive edition, Burns & Oates, 2000; clauses 781-873).

2 As opposed to the work of the congregations of the Roman Curia, such as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). The CDF was originally called the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition as its duty was to defend the Church from heresy. It is the oldest of the Curia's nine congregations and was founded in 1542 by Pope Paul III by way of the Constitution, *Licet ab Initio*. In 1908, Pope St. Pius X changed the name to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. In 1965, Pope Paul VI gave it its current name. Its duties are set out in para. 48 of the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, *Pastor Bonus*, promulgated by Pope John Paul II on June 28 1988: "The duty proper to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to promote and safeguard the doctrine on the faith and morals throughout the Catholic world: for this reason everything which in any way touches such matters falls within its competence."

3 The First Vatican Council was convened by Pope Pius IX in 1869 inter alia as a reaction to the German episcopacy's Congress of Catholic Scholars,

whole of humanity and not simply those in communion with Rome.⁴

The personalist⁵ premise of common humanity is a conspicuous theme that runs through the entire corpus of Vatican II decrees. Already on 11 April 1963 (a year before the promulgation of Pastoral Constitution⁶, *Gaudium et Spes*) John XXIII wrote:⁷

Any well-regulated and productive association of men in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual man is truly a person. He is a nature, that is, endowed with intelligence and free will. As such he has rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore altogether inalienable. (*Pacem in Terris*, I)

A little further on he states:

It is always perfectly justifiable to distinguish between error as such and the person who falls into error—even in the case

of men who err regarding the truth or who are led astray as a result of their inadequate knowledge, in matters either of religion or of the highest ethical standards. A man who has fallen into error does not cease to be man. He never forfeits his personal dignity; and that is something which must be always taken into account. (*Pacem in Terris*, 5)

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*⁸, promulgated on December 7 1965, continues this thread:

Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in Him [Christ], has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by His incarnation, He, the Son of God, has in a certain way united Himself with each man.⁹ (22)

Moreover, since in virtue of her mission [the Church] and nature she is bound to no particular form of human culture, nor to any political, economic or social system, the Church by her very universality can be a very close bond between diverse human communities and nations, provided these trust her and truly acknowledge her right to true freedom in ful-

inaugurated on 28 September 1863 in Munich. The driving force behind the Congress was the scholar and theologian Fr. Johann Joseph Ignaz von Dollinger (d.1890), whose inaugural address consisted of the radical call for Catholic theology to free itself from the fetters of Scholasticism and to commit itself to historical research in the same manner as German theology (See R. Aubert's *Le pontificat de Pie IX* (1846-1878), Bloud & Gay, 1952; pp.203-209). See below for the Pope's response.

4 Paul VI's Encyclical of 6 August 1964, *Ecclesiam Suam*, reinforces this in his setting out the Church's intention for a universal dialogue: "The dialogue of salvation was made accessible to all. It applied to everyone without distinction. Hence our dialogue too should be as universal as we can make it. That is to say, it must be catholic, made relevant to everyone, excluding only those who utterly reject it or only pretend to be willing to accept it." (76)

5 Personalism could be said to have been founded by Immanuel Kant (d.1804), when he wrote that in the kingdom of ends everything had either value or dignity, and that which constituted the condition under which alone anything could be an end in itself [ie the human person], had an intrinsic and not merely a relative worth. This intrinsic worth is dignity (See his *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 2nd ed., New York, 1949; para. 64). Personalism is a philosophy that considers the person as possessing the highest or supreme value. It is not, however, premised on making the human being the measure of all things. To do this would imply the enforcement of an equivalence of measure between the human person and the subject of comparison. For Max Scheler (d.1928) the person was not a thing, but was indefinable, unknowable and a centre of free acts. Whereas Kant made man a final end in himself, the person identifiable as a subject rather than an object; Scheler defined man as neither subject nor object but a unity of the doing of acts. The Catholic personalist perspective can be traced back to the poet Charles Péguy (d.1914), a prolific writer and philosopher before his tragic death on the Western Front at the outbreak of the First World War. The development of his ideas continued through the writings of Emmanuel Mounier (d.1950) and the philosopher Jacques Maritain (d. 1973). Mounier founded the periodical *Esprit*, which continues to this day. See below for a brief analysis of this perspective.

6 The definition of these conciliar documents is given below in the text.

7 All translations of papal documents, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the official Vatican website: www.vatican.va

8 This seminal conciliar document was instrumental in setting out the new relationship of the Church with the secular world and the modern world. It is significant especially in that it conceded that the world had values that were of use to the faithful, and that the Church could learn from.

9 The revolutionary character of this statement can only be understood when contrasted with the words of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In his *Summa Theologiae* (III^a q. 4 a. 5) he writes: "It was unfitting for human nature to be assumed by the Word in all its supposita." St. Thomas further states in III^a q. 2 a. 5 ad 2: "Neither can it be said that the Son of God assumed human nature as it is in all the individuals of the same species, otherwise he would have assumed all men." (Dominican translation).

filling her mission. For this reason, the Church admonishes her own sons, but also humanity as a whole, to overcome all strife between nations and race in this family spirit of God's children, and in the same way, to give internal strength to human associations which are just. (42)

Pope John-Paul II (d.2005) develops this dramatically in his first Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, of 4 March 1979, ad-



ressed to the Episcopate¹⁰ and the whole world. This Encyclical in effect serves as an elucidation of *Gaudium et Spes*. The following passages are significant for an understanding of paragraph 22 of *Gaudium*:

The dignity which every man has attained in Christ is the dignity of divine adoption. (11)

For this reason man—every man without any exception—has been redeemed by Christ, because with man—every man without any exception—Christ is in some way united, even when man is not aware of it. (13)

We are not dealing with the "abstract" man, but the real, "concrete", "historical" man. We are dealing with "each" man, for each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery. Every man comes into the world through being conceived in his mother's womb and being born of his mother, and precisely on account of the mystery of the Redemption is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church. Her solicitude is about the whole man and is focussed on him in

an altogether special manner. The object of her care is man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God himself. The Council points out this very fact when, speaking of that likeness, it recalls that "man is the only creature on earth that God willed for itself" [*Gaudium et Spes* 24]. Man as "willed" by God, as "chosen" by him from eternity and called, destined for grace and glory—this is "each" man, "the most concrete" man, "the most real"; this is man in all the fullness of the mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ, the mystery in which each one of the four thousand million human beings living on our planet has become a sharer from the moment he is conceived beneath the heart of his mother. (23)

John-Paul II develops this theme further in his Encyclical of 18 May 1986, *Dominum et Vivificantem*. At paragraph 50, he reiterates the theme of union:

"The first born of all creation," becoming incarnate in the individual humanity of Christ, unites himself in some way with the entire reality of man, which is also "flesh" – and in this reality with all "flesh," with the whole of creation.

The notion of the subsistence of the world in the Divine Personality or the immanence¹¹ of God in the world could be considered to be a form of pantheism suggestive of a hypostatic union of the world with God. The importance of these passages, however, lies in understanding the new definition of man that arises from *Gaudium et Spes*. It is this definition that permeates any discussion or dialogue with other faiths. The development of the notion that every man, by virtue of his union with the Word via Christ's Incarnation (*Gaudium* at 22), whether he is aware of it or not, becomes in some way a member of the Church is the foundation of the last Pope's interfaith gathering at Assisi in 1986.¹²

PERSONALISM

The papacy's radical universality premised on the human condition is philosophically conditioned, as opposed to merely theologically conditioned, on the school of personalism. The Vatican II documents are replete with notions of the 'dignity' of man, his 'conscience', his 'freedom'. The Soviet destruction of Churches and their adherents could go far in

¹⁰ See footnote 37 below.

¹¹ John-Paul II states at paragraph 54; He [God] is not only close to this world but present in it, and in a sense immanent, penetrating it and giving it life from within.

¹² This was reinforced by the earlier Vatican II declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* of 7 December 1965 confirming freedom of belief and conscience in the following words: "This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be

explaining this emotive and 'non-theological' language. The aftermath of the Second World War had brought about new realities to consider. The subjugation of Eastern Europe by the Communist ideology with its concomitant repressions, and the defeat of Nazi Germany, the anti-Christian embodiment of an evil and quasi-religious political system, by the combined effort of men of all faiths was a significant factor in the development of the personalist trend in Catholic circles. The combination of faiths standing together to combat atheism is a lesson heeded and implicitly noted in the declarations of Vatican II.

The school of Catholic personalism, for the most part French, began before the Second World War by the group, or circle, of philosophers and sociologists surrounding the figure of Emmanuel Mounier, a sociologist. He founded the review *Esprit* just before the War in 1932, which spawned a variety of intellectual figures that congregated together and were known as *Esprit* groups. A metaphysical basis, however, for personalism was provided by Jacques Maritain (d.1973) during his exile from Occupied France in a series of essays and books.¹³ Nicolas Berdyaev, another founding member of *Esprit*, explains the approach of Mounier in his autobiography:¹⁴

The professed personalism of the group, with which I was in special sympathy, was not a system but an attitude or a theme expressing a search for the transformation of the objective world into a personal universe – an attitude in which the human person is the principal object and the irreducible subject of knowledge.

The wide disparity of views that are commonly asserted as arising from personalism cannot be referred to as a school of thought but rather as a perspective. This is also borne out by the critiques published during the Second World War.¹⁵

THE PERSONALIST ARGUMENT

The central axis of Mounier's doctrine is founded on a psychological distinction between person and individual. The individual is the dispersed or diffracted self amongst other



selves, in a state of love with its singularity. It is further selfish and a fortress of egoism and security, erected around the ego.¹⁶ The person on the other hand is opposed to the individual and enjoys autonomy and spiritual liberty. The person is further self-possessed and self-determined. The person finds himself in giving himself.¹⁷ Mounier goes on to define the person as:

... a spiritual being constituted as such by its manner of existence and independence of being; it maintains this existence by its adhesion to a hierarchy of values that it has freely adopted, assimilated, and lived by its responsible activity and by a constant interior development; thus it unifies all its activity in freedom and by means of creative acts develops the individuality of its vocation.¹⁸

The anxiety over the idea of the person or the individual in Mounier's thought is due to the desire to formulate a philosophical answer to the totalitarian regime, which subordinates the personal life to the interests of the ruling elite or the

immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits." (2)

13 Although, notably, his *l'Humanisme Intégral* was published earlier in Paris, in 1936.

14 Nicolas Berdyaev, *Dream and Reality - An Essay in Autobiography*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1950; p.274.

15 See especially Charles De Koninck's subtle attack on Maritain in, *De la primauté du bien commun contre les Personnalistes*, Éditions de l'Université Laval, Québec, 1943 ; who feared a revival of the heresy of Pelagianism (p.xxii).

16 Emmanuel Mounier, *Révolution Personnaliste et Communautaire*, Fernand Aubier, Paris, 1935 ; p.67.

17 See Mounier, *A Personalist Manifesto*, Longmans, New York, 1938; pp.77-78, 85-87.

18 *Ibid*, p.4.

state. The totalitarian system offered solidarism by subsuming the individual into the state. The personalist sought to distinguish the individual, that temporal entity which could be sacrificed for the common good and which belonged to society, and the person, that entity that can find its full development in God and which the state could not arrogate to itself because it was above society.¹⁹

For Maritain,²⁰ the person *qua* person is not part of society. A person is a microcosm in which the whole universe can be encompassed through knowledge. He is therefore a whole and not merely a part. It could be said that in this perspective, man is an individual by way of his body and a person by way of his soul.

The Thomist view, however, does not accord with this bifurcation.²¹ Man is neither soul nor body but the composite of both (*compositum humanum*). A person is an individual substance of a rational nature.²² An individual is a being divided off from other beings and not divisible itself into other beings. The human individual is individuated by means of his form, but the form cannot subsist by itself in its fullness or possibilities, and therefore it endures and is perpetuated by means of the generation and corruption of a series of numerically distinct individuals. It is form, as principle that informs it, that gives matter its actual being and therefore permits the individual to subsist. The substantiality of the human composite therefore comes from form and not matter, and therefore it could not be said that the dignity of the individual derives from the body.

The relation of dignity and man comes from the understanding that a man, any man, has as his principle of substantiality his soul, which is also a substance. The soul is such a principle precisely because it is an intellect, an immaterial and

therefore incorruptible being. It exists because it is united to a matter constituting a rational substance. The individual, based as he is on the substantiality of the intellect and its immortality (its incorruptibility), is quite simply;

...invested with all the dignity of a permanent being, indestructible, distinct from every other in his very permanence, and an original source of rational activity responsibly deciding his future destiny.²³

Morality and Christian perfection of the virtues are encapsulated in the act of living in perfect accord with reason. The dignity of man, as a rational agent, is derived from the perfection of his nature and the dignity of his end.²⁴ If this is so, then, how can a man lose his dignity? A man may not be stripped of his dignity unless he assents to this being done. He may give away his dignity, but he cannot in the final analysis, have it taken away from him. In one sense, which accords with this perspective, losing one's dignity is not to accord our actions with our final end; that is to say recognising one's place in the Universe. Sin is the turning away from this end, and losing our dignity.²⁵ It is to subordinate the common good, to which end the Universe is ordained, to an individual good.

The personalism of encyclicals such as *Redemptor Hominis* is not singular in its lack of defining how the human personality is bound up with one of the essential dogmas of the Church, namely the dogma of supernatural destiny. The major intellectual influence on Pope John Paul II, according

19 "By Individual we understand man as a social being in his relations to society, namely to the conditions of his political destiny. By Person we understand man as a spiritual being in his relations to the Universe, namely to the conditions of his total destiny. In regard to Society, the Individual is but an abstraction...and in regard to the Person it is Society that is an abstraction." *Henri Simon*, Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée, No. 31, *Bloud*, 1935; p.5.

20 Jacques Maritain, *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*. Geoffrey Bles, London, 1943; p.6.

21 This analysis is based on Etienne Gilson's chapter on Christian Personalism in his, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Sheed & Ward, London, 1936; pp. 202-206.

22 St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I q.29 a. i. *Persona est rationalis naturae individual substantia*.

23 *Ibid*, p.203. Gilson refers explicitly to the Christian individual, but this is in reference to a category of person who holds this to be true rather than as a distinguishing mark of Christian *qua* man. The latter would be absurd, given that God created man and not a Christian, Buddhist etc. I have consequently omitted the term "Christian" as a qualification for the term individual above.

24 St Thomas in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 11.

25 St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II. 64. 2 ad 3.

to Buttiglione,²⁶ is the school of phenomenology.²⁷ Specifically, Karol Wojtyła²⁸ was informed by the personalism of his 'intellectual mentor', Max Scheler (d. 1928), on whose philosophy he completed a second doctorate in 1954. For Scheler, "the idea of personalism means; a concretisation of the order of material values by taking into consideration the bearers of values".²⁹

In this scheme, abstract values reveal themselves as incarnated in an ideal model of person. The hierarchy of values corresponds to differing types of ideal models of persons. In his search for moral development, man has recourse to value-person-types rather than abstract norms or values, from ideal and pure types (Saint, hero etc.) to lower types such as artists. What of the man who looks on these ideal persons? Man is defined by Scheler as a concept in flux. He states that man is a being that transcends itself and is in constant dynamic movement. His humanity precisely resides in his movement from one realm to another; he is a bridge. His existence is as between one realm and another.³⁰

For Scheler a person is pure actuality neither signifying a thing nor a substance. If every human act has an essence, the essences are bound to the act not by the bearer of the acts but

by the Person. The factor of unity is the Person defined as the "concrete, essential ontic unity of acts of essentially different kinds". The Person mediates essences of acts into Being, however, he does not stand behind or above the acts but exists and experiences his self only in the performance of the acts. He remains concrete despite this and is never absorbed by the act. The constant variation from act to act means that the Person is ever-changing: neither substance nor pure becoming.

Scheler states that since the essence of an act is only given in the performance of that act, it does not objectify that act. Acts do not admit of being objects, so a Person is other than the 'I' that can be known as an object. One knows another Person only through the performance of their acts with them, including God, as the absolute Person. This form of participation is inevitable because acts are in the context of society or community. There is therefore an inevitable solidarism. When persons share in the performance of their acts, there is co-responsibility for each other. This gives rise to the Total Person, i.e. the Church or a nation, a unity of spiritual individuals since the being of a person is not mental, nor can he be said to be in time, but performs his acts in time.³¹

26 Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.

27 Phenomenology as a term referring to a whole philosophy was first coined by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (d. 1938). This philosophy stated that the pure phenomenon of thought, that is to say the structures of conscious thought, could be studied from the subjective point of view leading to the attainment of the essences behind the observable phenomena. The central structure of a thought experience is its intentionality, the way it is directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world. Another member of this school of philosophy was Martin Heidegger (d.1976), who studied and took an appointment under Husserl at the University of Freiburg, and was appointed to succeed him in his chair. Whereas Husserl's phenomenology was an attempt to recover a sense of certainty about the world by an examination of the cognitive structure of appearance, Heidegger's phenomenology was to approach Being through a focus on the human Being (*Dasein*) as concerned above all for its fate in an alien world, or as 'anxiety' (*Angst*) towards death (see *Being and Time* I.6).

28 This was the name of Pope John Paul II before he ascended the throne of St Peter. In 1979, Wojtyła published his personalist treatise, *The Acting Person* (D. Reidel, Holland), where his stated aim is to understand the human person, as not only the efficient cause of action but the final cause as well. He does this through an analysis of the act of self-determination, seen as the most comprehensive human experience; a moral experience, making of the self to be morally good or evil. This analysis is deemed to lead to a knowledge of the structure of the human person, because the experience of human action as self-determination is proper to the person insofar as action has its source in the supposit (Lat. *Suppositum*, concrete existing subject) and not in the nature. Supposit is subsistence itself considered as existing concretely in a particular individual. When the supposit is endowed with reason it is called *person*, which Boethius defines: "as an individual substance of a rational intelligent nature." A rock and a dog are suppositis; Zayd and Leyla are persons. *Suppositum* and nature are distinguished as concrete and abstract, that which is (*quod est*) from that by which it is (*quo est*). For St Thomas Aquinas, *suppositum* and nature are one and the same reality but are distinguished only by our way of thinking about them. One and the same reality is then termed nature as meaning an essence and a *suppositum* as meaning something subsisting (*Summa Theologiae* 3a 1-6). For Wojtyła's personalism see the useful essay by Mary T. Clark, "The Personalism of Karol Wojtyła," in Thomas Buford & Harold Oliver (eds.), *Personalism Revisited: Its proponents and Critics*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2002; p. 325. For Boethius see P. Simpson, "The Definition of Person: Boethius Revisited," *The New Scholasticism*, vol. 62, no.2, 1988; pp.210-220.

29 Alfons Deeken S.J., *Max Scheler's Moral Philosophy*, Paulist Press, 1974; p.201.

30 *Ibid*, pp. 182-83. The parallels with Nietzsche are striking.

31 W. Stegmüller, *Main Currents in Contemporary German, British and American Philosophy*, D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, 4th ed., 1969; p.112-118.

The love of another person is love not of that person as a static object but as a dynamic reality. Love envisages the ideal value in the other person, and therefore is 'blind' to the shortcomings of the empirical person, because it sees only the ideal value of his personality.³² If love is to see the ideal value in the other, it also acts as a catalyst for the elevation of the empirical person closer to that ideal value.



This is an all too brief and largely inadequate examination of the idea of the Person in the thought of Scheler,³³ but is included largely to underline the idea that the vocabulary that Pope John Paul II uses in *Redemptoris*, and in his Encyclical of 5 May 1986, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, is Schelerian (although tempered with Kantian ethics), personalist and part Scholastic. A grasp of his synthesis of these three dimensions would better situate the idea of dialogue and what can be inferred from the final ends of such a proposed activity.

THE CONCILIAR DEVELOPMENT

Gaillardetz³⁴ affirms three theological principles emerging out of Vatican II that confirm this expansiveness. Primarily, that the Church, as the whole people of God, has been addressed by the word of God, incarnate in Christ, and dwelling in the Holy Spirit. This means that the revelation is to all men as well as communicants of the Church, in the form of God's personal message. This revelation is personalist in nature, rather than based on doctrinal statements. Furthermore, God's message is not first to the hierarchy, who then communicate or mediate the revelation to the Church. Rather, the Word of God materializes from within the whole

Church and its members, lay and clerical.

The second principle, as set out in *Lumen Gentium* (1), is that the Church is a communion, a sacramental sign and instrument of communion with God and the unity of the whole human race. This means that the new ecclesiology of the Church is founded on communion (Gk. *koinonia*) rather than the institutional Church. This is a change in the hierarchical and pyramidal understanding of the Church, as the new understanding is predicated on a reciprocity and a more egalitarian view of relationship between the differing parts of the Church.

The third principle is that the universal Church is manifested in the local churches. The centralised Vatican structure of pre-Vatican II has given way to a newer understanding of a structure based on a collegiality, referred to as the *communio ecclesiarum*, the communion of local Churches.

The major ecclesiological shift is in the identity of the Church itself. In his Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, of 1943, Pius XII (d. 1958) had identified unequivocally the Church of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church:

If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ - which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church - we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression "the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ" - an expression which springs from and is, as it were, the fair flowering of the repeated teaching of the Sacred Scriptures and the holy Fathers. (13)

In *Lumen Gentium*, the Council subtly modified this definition, for the sake of facilitating ecumenism with other non-Roman denominations:

This Church [i.e. the Church of Christ] constituted and organized in the world as a society, **subsists** in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity. (8) [My emphasis]

³² *Ibid*, p. 192.

³³ Scheler's thought is intuitive, and as such difficult to present concisely and contextually as it avoids systematisation.

³⁴ Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority*, Liturgical Press, 1997; pp. xi-xii.

This dynamic change, as stated above, marks a shift in emphasis in the Church's view of its institutional structure. From the sixteenth century on, the assault of the Reformation had made the Church more defensive with a consequent stress on the legitimacy of Church office and the ordained ministry. In such a climate, the sacrament of holy orders was considered to be more prominent than the sacraments of initiation; baptism and confirmation.³⁵ Vatican II, amongst other things, sought to rebalance this historical shift.

An ecumenical council (from the Gk. *oikoumene* meaning the whole world) is a synod of bishops and ecclesiastical dignitaries convoked from the whole world under the direction of the Pope or his legates. The decrees or documents that result from the council, after papal confirmation, represent the highest manifestation of the Church's teaching authority and are binding on all adherents of the Church. Vatican II represents the twenty-first ecumenical council in the Church's history.

The beginning of the nineteenth century had witnessed the death-knell of the papacy's temporal powers before the might of the French armies. The French Revolution had disrupted the teaching and national position of the Church through its destruction of the universities and theological seminaries. The Jacobins saw the Church as very much a constitutive part of the *ancien régime* that needed to be dismantled, despite the attempt by some in the Church to appease the new tide.³⁶ The French armies of the Directory, now intent on the destruction of the structures of Catholic temporal power, entered Rome. On 29 August 1799, Pope Pius VI was kidnapped, an action sanctioned by the Directory in Paris who referred to him as the 'last Pope'.³⁷ He later died in captivity, a broken man and a martyr. The remaining Cardinals fled to Austrian-held Venice to convene the conclave for the inauguration of a successor.

The election of Pius VII succeeded despite the denial of St Mark's Cathedral as a coronation venue by the Austrian au-

thorities intent on controlling the powers of the new pontiff. The Austrian collapse at the battle of Marengo on 14 June 1800, however, brought Venice under the authority of the French. The new Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, no longer a tool of the Directory, had now reconciled his views on the position of the Catholic Church in national life, and concluded a Concordat with the Pope later in the year. The waning of papal temporal power fuelled the Church's preoccupation with Papal Primacy and its increased centralisation of authority in Rome.

This led to a crisis at the time of the First Vatican Council over the issue of episcopal authority and its relation to papal intervention. There was a widespread need to define where episcopal³⁸ powers of orders and jurisdiction originated. The standard view was that the power of orders stemmed from the apostolic succession by way of episcopal consecration, and powers of jurisdiction were delegated from the Pope. Vatican I did not deal with these issues explicitly due to its interruption, but did address the primacy and authority of the papacy and did extend the authority of the Pope to subsume the *potestas ordinis* of the episcopacy under his *potestas jurisdictionis*.³⁹ Vatican II, in plenary form, recognised the right of the Pope to regulate the episcopacy,⁴⁰ but reasserted that the *potestas ordinis* originated from the apostolic succession. *Lumen Gentium* (27) went on to state that;

Bishops, as vicars and ambassadors of Christ, govern the particular churches entrusted to them by their counsel, exhortations, example, and even by their authority and sacred power, which indeed they use only for the edification of their flock in truth and holiness, remembering that he who is greater should become as the lesser and he who is the chief become as the servant. This power, which they personally exercise in Christ's name, is proper, ordinary and immediate, although its exercise is ultimately regulated by the supreme authority of the Church, and can be circumscribed by certain limits, for the advantage of the Church or of the faithful. In virtue of this power, bishops have the sacred right and the duty before the Lord to make laws for their subjects, to pass judgment on

35 Richard R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, Paulist Press, 2006; p.2.

36 An infamous incident involved Cardinal Chiaramonti's, the Bishop of Imola, Christmas sermon of 1797 in which he baptised democracy. The incident is the more notable as the cardinal was the future pope Pius VII. See Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1981; pp.483.

37 *Ibid*; pp.481-82.

38 The episcopacy (Gk. *episcopoi* meaning overseers) is the institution of the bishops, who have inherited the powers bestowed on the Apostles. See Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Mercier Press, 1960; p.278.

39 See the section below.

40 See note at the end of *Lumen Gentium*.

them and to moderate everything pertaining to the ordering of worship and the apostolate.

The pastoral office or the habitual and daily care of their sheep is entrusted to them completely; nor are they to be regarded as vicars of the Roman Pontiffs, for they exercise an authority that is proper to them, and are quite correctly called "prelates," heads of the people whom they govern. Their power, therefore, is not destroyed by the supreme and universal power, but on the contrary it is affirmed, strengthened and vindicated by it, since the Holy Spirit unfailingly preserves the form of government established by Christ the Lord in His Church.



Through consecration, bishops are also incorporated into the college of bishops (*Lumen Gentium* 22.1), this college succeeding in the authority of the college of apostles (*Lumen Gentium* 18). This is supposed to represent the external aspect of the communion of churches, as each bishop represents a church. The Council goes further and states that;

...it is clear that, by means of the imposition of hands and the words of consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is so conferred, and the sacred character so impressed, that bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the roles of Christ Himself as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, and that they act in His person. (*Lumen Gentium* 21)

In one sense, the Council liberates the *potestas ordinis* of the episcopacy from the *potestas jurisdictionis*, in as far as the papal jurisdiction is limited to a collaborative role rather than the monarchical understanding of Vatican I set out below.

THE FUNCTION OF THE POPE

The Pope is the inheritor of the See of Rome⁴¹ directly from St Peter himself, and not through the succession of Popes before him. The succession of papal powers was and is entirely juristically based on the principles of legal inheritance in Roman law. The 13th century provided an original contribution to jurisdictional theology, namely, the distinction between the "power of ordination" (*potestas ordinis*) and the "power of jurisdiction" (*potestas jurisdictionis*). The canon lawyers began to make a further distinction within the *potestas ordinis*: the distinction between "power of jurisdiction in the internal forum" (*potestas jurisdictionis in foro interiori*) and "power of jurisdiction in the external forum" (*potestas jurisdictionis in foro exteriori*). What this means is that the rights inhering in the office of an ordained man extend not only to explicitly ecclesiastical duties but even to a right of intervention in the secular political realm. In the case of the pope, his claims to "fullness of power" (*plenitudo potestatis*) are, juridically speaking, considered higher than those of a prelate or a king's power in the secular realm. The rise of the Papal States, therefore, is a natural historical concomitant.

The succession in the papacy is a succession of jurisdiction, *potestas jurisdictionis*, and can be traced back historically (in accordance with the Church's claims) to a document of the late second or early third century known as the *Epistola Clementis*. This document is purported to be written by Pope Clement I to St James at Jerusalem, wherein the Pope recounts that St Peter had made the following public declaration before his death:⁴²

I impart to him [Clement] the authority of binding (*ligare*) and loosing (*solvere*) in order that whatever he [Clement] will decide upon earth, will be approved in heaven, for he will bind what must be bound and he will loose what should be loosed.

The Petrine commission has been interpreted to refer to function or *auctoritas* alone and not personal virtues, traits or character of St Peter. The function of Pope therefore is Petrine, the man is not, and this distinction was upheld from the beginning of the Papacy. When the Pope speaks as Pope on doctrinal matters, he binds the Church to that opinion only if he defines a doctrine concerning faith and morals, and stipulates that it be held by the whole Church. This is referred to

⁴¹ The pope is a monarch and is traditionally crowned and ascends to the throne or See of Rome. The Holy See is derived from *sancta sedes*, holy chair, in reference to the throne that the pope occupies after his enthronement.

⁴² Walter Ullman, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages*, Methuen, London, 1961; pp. 44-45.

as an *ex cathedra* statement, which is to say from the throne and in the discharge of the Papal function of Christ's Vicar.⁴³ This definition was agreed in the First Vatican Council in 1869,⁴⁴ convened by Pius IX (d.1878) wherein the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was also put forward and accepted. The infallibility referred only to those declarations made *ex cathedra* and is and was meant to bind (*de fide*) the adherents of the Church on matters of dogma and faith. The First Vatican Council, only formally coming to an end in 1962, defined the nature of *ex cathedra* in the following terms⁴⁵ in the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* (chap. 4, para. 9):

We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is **when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church**, is, by the divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, irreformable. But if anyone - which may God avert! - presume to contradict this definition, let him be anathema. [my emphasis]

The Vatican Council deliberated also in its fourth session on the important relationship of the pontiff with the episcopacy. The Pope is primarily accredited with complete and supreme jurisdictional authority over the universal Church, not simply in matters of faith and morality, but also in regards to the discipline and governance of the Church. This immediate authority was to extend over every Church and over each bishop, priest and believer.⁴⁶ This was without prejudice to the exercise of the ordinary and immediate power of Episcopal jurisdiction. The papal power is stressed as one that strengthens and protects the exercise of the Episcopal power .

After Vatican II, the position changes dramatically as seen above. The juridical primacy of the Pope was promulgated

in the first chapter of Pius IX's *Pastor Aeternus*, and is asserted again in *Lumen Gentium* at 22.2:

[A]s Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he is always free to exercise this power.⁴⁷

As bishop of Rome, however, the Pope is not bishop of any other diocese, despite being head of the universal Church. As bishop of Rome, the Pope is also a member of the college of bishops, and its head. It is at this juncture that the college of bishops and the papacy are united and by virtue of which

the order of bishops, which succeeds to the college of apostles and gives this apostolic body continued existence, is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church, provided we understand this body together with its head the Roman Pontiff and never without this head. This power can be exercised only with the consent of the Roman Pontiff. (*Lumen Gentium* 22.2)

The Pope retains primacy in this structure of ecclesial authority grounded in an ecclesiology of communion. In his Encyclical of 25 May 1995, *Ut Unum Sint*, On the Commitment of Ecumenism, John-Paul II stated that the bishop of Rome

is the first servant of unity. This primacy is exercised on various levels, including vigilance over the handing down of the Word, the celebration of the Liturgy and the Sacraments, the Church's mission, discipline and the Christian life. It is the responsibility of the Successor of Peter to recall the requirements of the common good of the Church, should anyone be tempted to overlook it in the pursuit of personal interests. He has the duty to admonish, to caution and to declare at times that this or that opinion being circulated is irreconcilable with the unity of faith. When circumstances require it, he speaks in the name of all the Pastors in communion with him. He can also—under very specific conditions clearly laid down by the First Vatican Council—declare *ex cathedra* that a certain doctrine belongs to the deposit of faith. By thus bearing witness

43 Vicar of Christ (Lat. *Vicarius Christi*), is one of the titles of the pope, meaning the person who acts as representative of Christ in his duties of shepherd of the flock of the faithful.

44 The First Vatican Council was summoned by the Papal Bull *Aeterni Patris* of June 29 1868, and opened on 8 December 1869. It succeeded in meeting for four sessions. It promulgated two Dogmatic Constitutions, on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius*, in the third session (April 24), and on the Church of Christ, *Pastor Aeternus*, in the fourth session (July 18). The Council closed due to the entry of the Piedmontese forces into Rome on 20 September. The Italian "Risorgimento" which had led to the dismantling of the remaining Papal States and the expropriation of the Legations by Piedmontese advances had now reached Rome.

45 Vincent McNabb O.P. (ed.), *The Decrees of the Vatican Council*, Burns & Oates, 1907; p.47.

46 *Ibid*, p.41.

47 *Ibid*, p.41.

to the truth, he serves unity. (94)

All this however must always be done in communion. When the Catholic Church affirms that the office of the Bishop of Rome corresponds to the will of Christ, she does not separate this office from the mission entrusted to the whole body of Bishops, who are also "vicars and ambassadors of Christ". The Bishop of Rome is a member of the "College", and the Bishops are his brothers in the ministry. (95)

The ministry of the Pope and the college of bishops thus share a duty to preserve the apostolicity of the faith and the duty to safeguard the deposit of faith. They also represent, together, the doctrinal teaching authority of the Church.

THE MAGISTERIUM & THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, was promulgated on 18 November 1965, setting out the understanding of revelation in the Church. The idea of revelation is reaffirmed as the living Word of God proclaimed in the life of the Church.

Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (see Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17) out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends (see Ex. 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them (see Bar. 3:38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having in inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. (2)

This is a very personalist view of revelation wherein God speaks to us as friends, so that we may be taken into fellowship with Himself. The implicit meaning of fellowship could be said to be one of partnership.⁴⁸ If revelation is a relationship that takes the form of a dialogue, Ratzinger comments that the purpose of this dialogue is not information but ul-

timately unity and transformation.⁴⁹ Revelation in this perspective is a subjective disclosure that takes place within man rather than the external dictation of revealed truths.

The Catechism⁵⁰ of the Catholic Church defines the *Magisterium* as the interpretation of the Word of God by the living teaching Church alone. It further adds that the task is entrusted to the bishops in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor of Peter. This authority is exercised to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, the proposition of truths contained in divine revelation or truths having a necessary connection with these.⁵¹ Theologians, on the whole, distin-



guish between the ordinary *magisterium* and the extraordinary *magisterium*.

ORDINARY MAGISTERIUM

This is the day to day teaching of the Church on matters of faith and morals. The term first appeared in the papal Encyclical, *Tuas Libenter*, of 21 December 1863, addressed to the Archbishop of Munich. The *raison d'être* of the letter was to deal with the Dollinger *débâcle*. The increasing influence of the Protestant schools on Catholic theologians in Bavaria was a cause of concern in Rome. Since the pontificate of Gregory XVI (d. 1846), the *magisterium* had not only been

48 This seems to accord with Joseph Ratzinger's, now Pope Benedict XVI, understanding of this. In his commentary on this passage, he states: "...the Council desired to express again the character of revelation as a totality, in which word and event take up one whole, a true dialogue which touches man in his totality, not only challenging his reason, but, as dialogue, addressing him as a partner, indeed giving him his true nature for the first time." Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Burns & Oates, 1968; vol.3 p.172. After each of the four sessions of the Second Vatican Council, Joseph Ratzinger published a pamphlet with reflections on the events and achievements of the respective session. These were then gathered together and translated into English as *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, New York: Paulist Press/Deus Books, 1966. Ratzinger (then Cardinal) was one of the periti at Vatican II, theological experts who drafted the schemas for the consideration of the Council.

49 Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Ibid*, p.175.

50 *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, popular & definitive edition, Burns & Oates, 2000; clause 85 at p.26.

51 *Ibid*, clause 88 at p.26.

concerned with the deposit of faith,⁵² but also with combating the heresies that threatened it. This defence necessitated an entry into the theological sphere of formulating the faith so that errors could be the easier distinguished.

In 1854, the German theologian, Heinrich Denzinger (d.1883), published his *Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum* in which he set out the creeds and decrees of the Church, definitions and doctrinal declarations on an equal footing.⁵³ The theologian's domain had once again receded,⁵⁴ and together with the destruction of the centres of theological study in the early part of the nineteenth century, led to the increasing mediation of the Sacred Scriptures and theology by the *magisterium*.

Against this background, *Tuas Libenter* is a bid (a successful one as it happens) for the expansion of the theological powers of the Pope. Pius IX essentially narrowed the theological field of research and widened the arena of doctrinal decisions that were deemed obligatory by papal fiat. Theology was then relegated to the realm of internal apologetics,⁵⁵ supporting the *magisterium's* mediation of the sacred Scriptures.⁵⁶ On this reading, the shift from disciplinary authority to doctrinal authority had been completed in the aftermath of *Tuas Libenter* and the later Vatican I Council.⁵⁷

The Encyclical decrees that the obligation by which Catholic theologians are strictly bound, is not only confined to dogmas of faith, but must be extended to the theological truths taught by the ordinary *magisterium* of the universal Church together with the infallible decisions of the college of bishops.

The universal ordinary magisterium is activated when the ordinary teaching of the whole college of bishops of the universal Church unites in a judgment on an issue and declares the decision to be held as definitive, and therefore infallible (*Lumen Gentium* 24). It can also include the whole college of bishops in Council or dispersed when intending to propose a non-definitive teaching. The non-universal magisterium does not engage the whole college, but either represents the opinion of an individual bishop, a group of bishops, or the Pope on his own.⁵⁸

EXTRAORDINARY MAGISTERIUM

This can be exercised by the college of bishops or the Bishop of Rome as head of the college of bishops. *Lumen Gentium* (25) clearly establishes that the bishops sitting in ecumenical Council as teachers and judges of the universal Church possess the charism of infallibility. Their decisions are subject

52 The deposit is the sum of saving truths that are handed down by the Apostles to the Church, and which the faithful are obliged to accept and assent to. Article 84 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994 edition) states: "The apostles entrusted the Sacred Deposit of the faith (depositum fidei), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church."

53 This formulaic approach gave rise to the deprecatory use of the term "Denzinger theology", to suggest the untrained and slipshod way it could be used, and was often used. The *Enchiridion* was published in many successive editions since its inception, and is still published today.

54 St Thomas Aquinas speaks of revelation as a communication of the Divine Knowledge. Theology, in his words, is the stamp or impression imposed by this Divine Knowledge on the created human spirit (*Summa Theologiae* I, 1,3). Ott explains that theology is divided into various branches which are all sub-divisions of the one theological science. The theoretical truths of Revelation concerning God and His activity, the science of things to be believed, are dealt with under Dogmatic Theology which is in turn subdivided into positive and speculative. Positive dogmatic theology deals with the doctrines that have been proposed for the belief of the faithful by the Teaching Authority of the Church. Speculative dogmatic theology includes Scholastic theology and any insights into the truths of faith by the application of reason to Revelation. By the end of the 19th Century, the domain of Speculative dogmatic theology had receded before Positive dogmatic theology through the increased intervention of the Papacy in formulating positive statements on the faith. See Ludwig Ott, *Ibid*, pp.3-4.

55 Insofar as Positive dogmatic theology defends the doctrine of the Church against false perceptions or conceptions, then it is considered as apologetics.

56 This compelling historical analysis and argument is made by Giuseppe Alberigo in Piet Fransen (ed.), *Authority in the Church*, Leuven University Press, Belgium, 1983; pp.122-125.

57 *Dei Filius* stated in Chapter III that: "...all those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the Word of God, written [Scripture] or handed down [Tradition], and which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by her ordinary and universal teaching (magisterium), proposes for belief as having been divinely revealed."

See Vincent McNabb O.P. (ed.), *The Decrees of the Vatican Council*, Burns & Oates, 1907; p.23.

58 Richard Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority*, Liturgical Press, 1997; pp. 162-89.

59 I am indebted to Fr. Bob Ombres O.P. in Rome, Fr. Clarence Gallagher S.J. and Stratford Caldecott in Oxford, for their guidance in this section;

to the obedience of faith. The *auctoritas* of the ecumenical Council does not derive from the authority of the Pope (*Lumen Gentium* 22) but from the authority of the college of bishops with the Pope at its head. As the Pope always acts as head of the college, papal infallibility is inevitably attached to the infallibility of the college. This is what is meant by the idea of collegiality in the ecclesiology of Vatican II.

PAPAL PRONOUNCEMENTS & DOCUMENTS⁵⁹

The Roman Curia⁶⁰ has established an official gazette of Papal pronouncements called the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, which contains all written pronouncements and the most significant papal allocutions. All statements are subject to a hierarchy by which the faithful primarily can ascertain their importance and their obligatory nature. *Lumen Gentium* explicitly refers to these papal pronouncements in the following terms:

This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic *magisterium* of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking. (25)

In the course of preparing this paper, the writer had occasion to question various canonical authorities on the juridical weight given to the Vatican II documents. What was striking in the responses received was the range of opinions expressed on this subject.⁶¹ On the traditionalist and *sedevacantist* side of the spectrum, the entire Council was *ultra vires* in that it

proceeded to dismantle the deposit of faith as understood by the Tridentine Church and affirmed in Council at Vatican I. On the liberal side of the Church, the documents are mood setters of the future projection of the laity-centred Church. They are however not binding in an *ex cathedra* manner. For the middle ground, there is agreement that they are binding on the Church as statements of the Pope in Council, thus ostensibly *ex cathedra*, but opinions in this range remain divided as to the hieratic division of the documents. With the exception of the pamphlet referred to in the footnote to this section, no juridical or canonical guide exists to place these categories of documents in a fixed order together with their hieratic implication.⁶²

The first step in analysing any document is to determine its source, so that the type of document may be ascertained. After this, the text may be analysed as to its weight or effect.

VATICAN II DOCUMENTS

There were four types of documents used by the Council. These consisted of constitutions, decrees, declarations and messages.

- 1) Constitutions, dogmatic as well as pastoral, were the most authoritative documents and address the universal Church.
- 2) Decrees were documents that built on constitutional principles and were directed at a particular category of persons.
- 3) Declarations, like *Nostra Aetate*, were policy statements manifesting the teachings of the Church on certain matters, and are liable to be revised with time.⁶³

however, all errors remain my sole responsibility. I have also used the vague but helpful pamphlet prepared by Fr. Francis Morrissey O.M.I., *Papal and Curial Pronouncements: Their Canonical Significance in Light of the Code of Canon Law*, Faculty of Canon Law, St. Paul University, Ottawa, 2nd ed., 1995.

⁶⁰ The Roman Curia is the body of congregations and assemblies that aid the Pope in his governance of the Church.

⁶¹ Fr. Francis Morrissey interestingly concludes his brief pamphlet with a plea to the various legislative organisms of the Church to clarify the legal import of their pronouncements. He also complains that the classification given to some documents in the Canon law have not been followed.

⁶² Another point of concern, to mention in connection to this matter, is the idea of the immutability of these documents. That is to say, if pronounced by the Pope in Council, can they be subsequently revoked or departed from without calling another ecumenical Council? There is a sense of shifting sands in the Catholic Church, which one of my informants referred to as a manifestation of God's Mercy at work in the fog of ill-defined categories and structures within the Church. I remain unconvinced, largely due to the coherence and fluency of the juridical structure of the pre-Conciliar Church. The model has understandably been changed after *Lumen Gentium*, however the transformation has created a casuistic Church unsure of what it holds in its kernel, beyond the emotive discourse of the saving mission of the Church.

⁶³ Parts of *Nostra Aetate*, however, are included in the articles of the Catechism (arts. 839-844), which in turn was promulgated by an apostolic constitution (see below the section on apostolic constitution). To revise *Nostra Aetate* therefore would be problematic.

4) Messages were simply exhortations.⁶⁴

ORDER OF DOCUMENTS

In descending order of formal authority, the papal documents are: apostolic constitutions, encyclical letters, encyclical epistles, apostolic exhortations, apostolic letters, letters, and messages. Legislative texts are those that modify the existing canons of the law.

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION

This is the most solemn form of a legal document, and always issued on the highest authority, by the Pope or a Church Council with the Pope's approval. Apostolic Constitutions are considered to possess the authority of the ancient apostolic constitutions, a collection of laws from the late fourth century; these are believed to include at least 85 canons attributed to the Apostles dealing with ordinations, and the moral behaviour of the episcopacy and other related matters. They eventually became the basis for canon law in the West.

Constitutions are often issued in the form of bulls,⁶⁵ and are signed by the Secretary of State of the Vatican, or by the Pope himself. An example of recent use of this document is the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, on 25 January 1983. The Catechism of the Catholic Church was also promulgated as a constitution on 11 October 1992, *Fidei Depositum*.

When used to proclaim a Church dogma, the document is called a *Dogmatic Constitution*. When used for pastoral teaching, it is referred to as a *Pastoral Constitution*.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

A letter written by the Pope to the entire Church, from the Latin *encyclius* and the Greek *enkyklios* meaning circular. They generally concern matters of doctrine, morals or disci-

pline, pastoral concerns, or significant commemorations. It usually carries a formal title which consists of the first few words of its official Latin text. Encyclicals are not divinely inspired, nor infallible, but are authoritative teaching instruments from the Pope. An encyclical letter is written for the whole Church usually addressed to the bishops and faithful of the Church and all men of good will.

Pius XII referred to the character of these documents in his Encyclical letter, *Humani Generis*, of 12 August 1950:

Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in Encyclical Letters does not of itself demand consent, since in writing such Letters the Popes do not exercise the supreme power of their Teaching Authority. For these matters are taught with the ordinary teaching authority, of which it is true to say: "He who heareth you, heareth me"; and generally what is expounded and inculcated in Encyclical Letters already for other reasons appertains to Catholic doctrine. (20)

The content of such letters, therefore, appertains to the ordinary teaching authority of the Pope; that is to say conveying the ordinary *magisterium* unless stipulated to the contrary.

ENCYCLICAL EPISTLE

A letter written by the Pope to part of the Church, usually to cardinals, bishops or laity in a particular country, leaders of religious orders and/or priests

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

A letter written by the Pope to the Church encouraging its people to take some particular action. These documents are exhortative, as their title suggests, and are not legislative. Apostolic exhortations do not define the development of doctrine, and are lower in formal authority than encyclical letters, which are directed to the universal Church and may define development of doctrine.

⁶⁴ See Fr. Francis Morrissey O.M.I., *Papal and Curial Pronouncements: Their Canonical Significance in Light of the Code of Canon Law*, Faculty of Canon Law, St. Paul University, Ottawa, 2nd ed., 1995; p.21. On 17 August 1966, Pope Paul VI referred to the legislative nature of the documents issued by the Council in a speech to a general audience. He stated: "The Council laid down laws, and they must be respected. But on other occasions it formulated principles, criteria, desires which must be given concrete expression in new laws and instructions..." (*Ibid*, p.21).

⁶⁵ The word comes from the Latin *bullā*, meaning a boss or bubble. The *bullā* was the lead seal that was used formerly to seal the papal document. See Donald Attwater (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, Cassel, 1931.

APOSTOLIC LETTER

These are letters sent to a category of persons, eg. Bishops, and may be issued by the Pope or by a Vatican dicastery, usually for lesser appointments, and for social and pastoral teachings. They are, however, not legislative *per se*.

A common form of an *apostolic letter* is referred to by the term *motu proprio* (Latin. of his own accord); designating the manner it was issued. The term basically means that the Pope has relied on no-one else for the content and has issued it in his own name and on his own initiative. It is the most common source of canonical legislation after the Canon code. Encyclical epistles and other letters are addressed to categories of persons, *motu proprio*s are directed, on the other hand, to the universal Church.

LETTERS

A letter written by the Pope, the head of a dicastery,⁶⁶ or other Vatican office to a Vatican official, the head of a religious order or other dignitary. The contents affect those to whom they are addressed.

The Roman Curia also use letters to address points of doctrine or discipline that are not significant enough to require the Pope's personal attention, or points that have already been addressed by him but require clarification.

DECRETAL LETTERS

These are letters that solemnly proclaim the canonisation of a saint. Although the decision of canonisation may be infallible, still an undecided issue, decretal letters are generally not considered to be legislative.

COMMON DECLARATIONS are common statements issued by the Pope or leader of a Church after meetings or congregations, or leaders engaged in dialogue. These declarations are not legislative and do not bind anyone.

ALLOCUTIONS

Oral pronouncements by the Pope are referred to as allocutions, and are included here for the sake of completeness. These need not be necessarily solemn addresses, enunciating the teaching of Morals or Faith, and are not legislative in nature. An exception to this was a papal allocution given by Paul VI on 5 March, 1973, addressing a consistory⁶⁷ wherein he stated:⁶⁸

We decree that the number of Cardinals entitled to participate in a [papal election] must not exceed 120. We hope, moreover, that this carefully considered norm will have lasting effect and that Our successors in the Apostolic See will want to retain it.

This allocution effected a piece of legislation, in as far as the Pope had a right to do so by his powers. He may have had the power also to bind his successors if the forum and the method of pronouncement had been different. As it happens, his successors were not bound. A subsequent Apostolic Constitution on this subject of 1 October 1975, *Romano Pontifici Eligendo*, rejected the norm set out for his successors in his allocution, but accepted the new decree. The allocution could be seen in two ways. The Pope had set out a norm, which was either given legal effect by the constitution, or that the norm had been given legal effect by the allocution and recorded and perfected by the constitution.

PRONOUNCEMENTS ON ISLAM

This section will examine the main Conciliar decrees and papal pronouncements relating to Islam. It is not our intention to recite every communication given by the Pope or on his behalf, not because of the constraints of time and space, but for the main reason that not every statement at an airport or function facilitates or doctrinally represents an authoritative pronouncement or elucidation of earlier such statements. The paper has consequently relied on the authoritative statements of the Council together with the pronouncements made by Paul VI following upon the Council. The statements and encyclicals of John Paul II have been examined in another section for their definition and understanding of the notion of

⁶⁶ A dicastery (*Gk. dicasteria* meaning court of justice) is a department or collection of departments of the Roman Curia by which the Pope governs the affairs of the Church. See Donald Attwater (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, Cassel, 1931.

⁶⁷ A consistory is an assembly of cardinals and/or bishops and prelates summoned at the discretion of the Pope. It can be secret, semi-public or public. The purpose of convening such a body may be to permit the Pope to announce appointments to the episcopacy, or to give an allocution expressing his mind on a matter of importance. See Donald Attwater (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, Cassel, 1931.

⁶⁸ Fr. Francis Morrissey, *Papal Pronouncements*, p.14.

a personalist dialogue. The plethora of positive statements to Muslims made by the late Pope are too numerous and lack altogether much of the authoritative weight of the Church to be detailed in this study.

The first Conciliar document dealing with Islam was promulgated on 21 November 1964 by Paul VI and entitled *Lumen Gentium*. In paragraph 16 is stated:

Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God. In the first place we must recall the people to whom the testament and the promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh. On account of their fathers this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues: But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Mohammedans, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind.

In *Lumen Gentium*, a dogmatic constitution on the Church (therefore *ex cathedra*), Islam is recognised as a faith that believes in and worships the same God as the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church. This is revolutionary in its implications, because if Muslims are deemed to know the True God, then their revelation must also be, in some degree, necessarily true. To worship God, one must know Him, and one knows Him primarily through revelation.⁶⁹ This is left open to question and the Church has subsequently been careful not to go any further than this.

In the second Conciliar Declaration dealing with the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate*, promulgated on 28 October 1965 by Pope Paul VI, the declaration states at paragraph 3:

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,⁽⁵⁾ who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honour Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the Day of Judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the

dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

The bulk of the declaration deals ostensibly with the relation of the Church to Jewry in the post-war period. The inclusion of the paragraph dealing with Islam was solely due to the historic efforts of the group formed by and around the orientalist and Melchite priest Louis Massignon (d.1963), who



had worked in his last years for a rapprochement between the three Abrahamic faiths.

In his first Encyclical, of August 6 1964, *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI sets out his desire for the Church to engage in dialogue with the non-Christian world. The partners to this dialogue were described in terms of several concentric circles, one of which was termed *those who adore the One Supreme God whom we also adore*. He refers to the Muslims in the following way:

Then we see another circle around us. This too is vast in extent, yet not so far away from us. It comprises first of all those men who worship the one supreme God, whom we also worship. We would mention first the Jewish people, who still retain the religion of the Old Testament, and who are indeed worthy of our respect and love.

⁶⁹ The argument becomes no longer about the falsehood of the Koran, but the extent to which it can be said to be true; that is to say, it becomes an issue of perfection.

Then we have those worshipers who adhere to other monotheistic systems of religion, especially the Moslem religion. We do well to admire these people for all that is good and true in their worship of God.

And finally we have the followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.

Obviously we cannot agree with these various forms of religion, nor can we adopt an indifferent or uncritical attitude toward them on the assumption that they are all to be regarded as on an equal footing, and that there is no need for those who profess them to enquire whether or not God has Himself revealed definitively and infallibly how He wishes to be known, loved, and served. Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that the Christian religion is the one and only true religion, and it is our hope that it will be acknowledged as such by all who look for God and worship Him. (107)

But we do not wish to turn a blind eye to the spiritual and moral values of the various non-Christian religions, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human brotherhood, education, culture, social welfare, and civic order. Dialogue is possible in all these great projects, which are our concern as much as theirs and we will not fail to offer opportunities for discussion in the event of such an offer being favourably received in genuine, mutual respect. (108)

This rapprochement is alluded to further in the approach of Paul VI during his pontificate. On a trip to the Uganda on 1 August 1969, Paul VI took the opportunity to address a speech to the dignitaries and representatives of Islam in that country. In his exhortation he stressed once again the commonality of the two faiths:

How can we express Our deep satisfaction in meeting you, and Our gratitude to you, for granting Our lively desire to greet, in your persons, the great Moslem communities spread throughout Africa? You thus enable Us to manifest here Our high respect for the faith you profess, and Our hope that what we hold in common may serve to unite Christians and Moslems ever more closely, in true brotherhood.

It gives Us pleasure to salute also the Representatives of the Indian and Pakistani communities, which have found, in this country, a fraternal welcome.

...We feel sure that, as Representatives of Islam, you join in Our prayer to the Almighty, that He grant all African believers that desire for pardon and reconciliation so often commended in the Gospels and in the Koran.

Our pilgrimage to these holy places is not for purposes of prestige or power. It is a humble and ardent prayer for peace, through the intercession of the glorious Protectors of Africa, who gave up their lives for love and for their belief. In recalling the Catholic and Anglican Martyrs, We gladly recall also those confessors of the Moslem faith who were the first to suffer death, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight, for refusing to transgress the precepts of their religion.

May the shining sun of peace and brotherly love rise over this land, bathed with their blood by generous sons of the Catholic, Christian and Moslem communities of Uganda, to illuminate all of Africa! And may this, Our meeting with you, respected Representatives of Islam, be the symbol of, and first step towards, that unity for which God calls us all to strive for His greater glory, for the happiness of this blessed Continent!

By the end of 1975, Paul VI⁷⁰ became more cautious in his apostolic exhortation on Evangelisation in the Modern World, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, of the 28 December wherein he states at paragraph 53:

Our religion establishes a real and vital bond with God, which the other religions do not succeed in doing, even if they stretch their arms towards heaven.

This exhortation came out of the bishops' synod of 1974, which had looked at the state of evangelisation in the modern world.

Sullivan links this change in attitude to the influence of the French thinker, and eventually Cardinal, Jean Danielou S.J., who had written in 1964 in an article that the multiplicity of religious forms are expressions of the genius of religious

70 In 1966, the Pope had already reiterated the closing words of *Evangelii* in another exhortation on the 4th Sunday of Lent: "It is religion that determines our relationship with God, and the Catholic religion is the one that fully establishes that relationship: one that is genuine, true, unique; this is the religion that makes God our communion and our salvation. And the other religions? They are attempts, efforts, endeavours; they are arms raised toward Heaven to which they seek to arrive, but they are not a response to the gesture by which God has come to meet man. This gesture is Christianity, Catholic life." Quoted in Francis Sullivan S.J., *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*, Paulist Press, New York, 1992; p.185.

71 See the discussion on Paul VI's change of attitude in *Ibid*, p. 187-88.

personalities who desire God. Religions are thus expressions of the desire for God; revelation (the Christian revelation) is the response God has made; Jesus Christ grants salvation.⁷¹ The particular synod in 1974 had been positive about the non-Christian religions. It is reported that the Asian and African bishops had even suggested an open theology of non-Christian religions which would look on these religions as the embodiment, for their followers, a first but incomplete approach of God towards men. It is this frame of mind that Paul VI refused to countenance in *Evangelii*.⁷²

Sullivan⁷³ places much weight on the proposition that the attribution of a too positive a role on the non-Christian religions in the economy of salvation would endanger the work of the missions and their work of evangelisation. Danielou's theology of religions, therefore, and Paul's pastoral concern led to the change of attitude at the end of his pontificate.

THEOLOGY OF DIALOGUE

In his Encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI had set out the main characteristics to be adopted in any dialogue:

1) Clarity before all else; the dialogue demands that what is said should be intelligible. We can think of it as a kind of thought transfusion. It is an invitation to the exercise and development of the highest spiritual and mental powers a man possesses. This fact alone would suffice to make such dialogue rank among the greatest manifestations of human activity and culture. In order to satisfy this first requirement, all of us who feel the spur of the apostolate should examine closely the kind of speech we use. Is it easy to understand? Can it be grasped by ordinary people? Is it current idiom?

2) Our dialogue must be accompanied by that meekness which Christ bade us learn from Himself: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart." It would indeed be a disgrace if our dialogue were marked by arrogance, the use of bared words or offensive bitterness. What gives it its authority is the fact that it affirms the truth, shares with others the gifts of charity, is itself an example of virtue, avoids peremptory language, makes no demands. It is peaceful, has no use for extreme methods, is patient under contradiction and inclines towards generosity.

3) Confidence is also necessary; confidence not only in the power of one's own words, but also in the good will of both parties to the dialogue. Hence dialogue promotes intimacy and friendship on both sides. It unites them in a mutual adherence to the Good, and thus excludes all self-seeking.

4) Finally, the prudence of a teacher who is most careful to make allowances for the psychological and moral circumstances of his hearer, particularly if he is a child, unprepared, suspicious or hostile. The person who speaks is always at pains to learn the sensitivities of his audience, and if reason demands it, he adapts himself and the manner of his presentation to the susceptibilities and the degree of intelligence of his hearers. (81)

In a dialogue conducted with this kind of foresight, truth is wedded to charity and understanding to love. (82)

The above corresponds, and accords, exactly with Maritain's wartime and personalist *cri de coeur*;

Charity alone...can open the heart to the love of all men, because, coming from God who first loves us, charity desires for all men the same divine good, the same eternal life, as it does for ourselves, and it sees in all human beings the summoned of God, streaming, as it were, with the mysteries of His mercy and the prevenient gifts of His goodness.⁷⁴

He further states;

That love which is charity...goes first to God, and then to all men, because the more men are loved in God and for God, the more they are loved themselves and in themselves. Moreover this love is born in faith and necessarily presupposes faith... And it remains within faith, while at the same time reaching out to those who have not the same faith. That is very characteristic of love; wherever our love goes, it carries with it our faith.⁷⁵

The thrust of Maritain's approach is predicated on the Catholic theological outlook that salvation and eternal life depend on charity,⁷⁶ because it is upon love ultimately that each Christian will be judged. The charity he speaks of presupposes faith or revealed truth. This faith can be explicit or implicit, because faith and grace are offered to all souls regard-

⁷² *Ibid*, p.186.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p.188.

⁷⁴ Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1943; pp.108-09.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.109.

⁷⁶ Charity (Lat. *Caritas*) is defined as the theological virtue by which God is loved above all things for His own sake, and the neighbour as oneself for

less of whether they can know the truth explicitly.

If those souls are in good faith and do not refuse the internal grace offered to them, they have implicit faith in Christ and accept implicitly the entire divinely revealed truth, even if they only believe, having no clearer light, that God exists and saves those who seek Him. [Hebrews xi:6]...If, therefore, Catholics hold that there is no salvation outside the Church, you can see that this maxim can shock only those who understand it wrongly and who are ignorant of what is commonly taught concerning the "soul of the Church." All it means to us that there is no salvation outside the Truth, which, explicitly or implicitly, is freely offered to all.⁷⁷

The Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, sets out several categories of what can be expected and received from the world by the Church. This is in marked contrast to the pre-Conciliar Church, which as teacher of the world, was perfect in its formation and represented the perfect society. At paragraph 44, the Constitution sets out the domains that it receives from the world:

The experience of past ages, the progress of the sciences, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture, by all of which the nature of man himself is more clearly revealed and new roads to truth are opened, these profit the Church, too. For, from the beginning of her history she has learned to express the message of Christ with the help of the ideas and terminology of various philosophers, and has tried to clarify it with their wisdom too. Her purpose has been to adapt the Gospel to the grasp of all as well as to the needs of the learned, insofar as such was appropriate. Indeed this accommodated preaching of the revealed word ought to remain the law of all evangelization. For thus the ability to express Christ's message in its own way is developed in each nation, and at the same time there is fostered a living exchange between the Church and the diverse cultures of people.

The Church also sets out its acceptance of criticism by its enemies and persecutors:

Indeed, the Church admits that she has greatly profited and still profits from the antagonism of those who oppose or who persecute her.

If the world has something to contribute, as the Council contends, then the task of dialogue must have a reciprocal and constructive basis. Ratzinger, in his commentary on paragraph 11, suggests that the whole text of the Constitution is in line with the Church's "religious and by that very fact supremely human" mission. As the Christian faith in God is an expression of true humanism, the attainment of man's full development, this sacral humanism can be opposed to the idea of atheist anthropocentrism, and can consequently serve as a reference point in dialogue :

The problem of God is approached in the mirror of the idea of full human development, and consequently atheism too is examined from the standpoint of humanism. The whole Pastoral Constitution might therefore be described as a discussion between Christian and unbeliever on the question who and what man really is.⁷⁸

If *Gaudium* is founded on a process of dialogue the Church entertains with the world, what of the dialogue with non-Christians? Ratzinger is careful to enunciate the conditions of any dialogue. Primarily, he states, that the two parties must have a certain difference or opposition between them which any process will seek to overcome. This must also be accompanied by a certain level of agreement so that the process may take place. A common intellectual climate must pre-exist in order that there may be points of reference that are in common. The example Ratzinger postulates for this is that of the early Christian missionary preachers, although to what extent their methods can be considered dialogic is uncertain. As for his other example, Christ speaking to the Jews, the common acceptance and shared understanding of the Old Testament is considered a crucial pre-requisite to the establishment of Christ's claim.⁸⁰ Another consideration is the presence of good will between the parties.

The example of the Jews above refers to an internal conversation in Christianity, and is not reflective of the wider faith worlds. It is interesting to note that the two partners of dialogue mentioned are the atheists and the Jews. Atheism is also a by-product of western intellectual thought⁸¹ and operates within a failed Christian world-view. In *Gaudium*, the

the love of God. (See *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, popular & definitive edition, Burns & Oates, 2000; clause 1822 at p.404).

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.105.

⁷⁸ Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Burns & Oates, 1969; vol.5 p.118.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.118.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.117.

⁸¹ A view reiterated by Cardinal Konig and others at the Council during the deliberation of *Gaudium*. *Ibid*, p.145.

bishops are reminded:

By unremitting study they should fit themselves to do their part in establishing dialogue with the world and with men of all shades of opinion. Above all let them take to heart the words which this council has spoken: "Since humanity today increasingly moves toward civil, economic and social unity, it is more than ever necessary that priests, with joint concern and energy, and under the guidance of the bishops and the supreme pontiff, erase every cause of division, so that the whole human race may be led to the unity of God's family."⁽⁴³⁾

This new humanist understanding of the Church⁸² as the Mystical Body of Christ, in whom the entire human race is united, rather than the formal understanding of the faithful being reunited in it, is an important distinction arising from the concessions the Council is keen to make to the modern condition. The necessity to sift for the Word of God in other peoples and religions remains a priority for the faithful as an impulse for integral dialogue. In his Encyclical of 7 December 1990, *Redemptoris Missio*, addressed to the Missions, John-Paul II refers to this:

Dialogue does not originate from tactical concerns or self-interest, but is an activity with its own guiding principles, requirements and dignity. It is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills. Through dialogue, the Church seeks to uncover the "seeds of the Word," a "ray of that truth which enlightens all men"; these are found in individuals and in the religious traditions of mankind. Dialogue is based on hope and love, and will bear fruit in the Spirit. Other religions constitute a positive challenge for the Church: they stimulate her both to discover and acknowledge the signs of Christ's presence and of the working of the Spirit, as well as to examine more deeply her own identity and to bear witness to the fullness of Revelation which she has received for the good of all. (56)

The late Pope is careful to distinguish the necessity for dialogue from the desire to convert the non-Christian but at the same time calls, ambiguously, for their linkage; almost in the

sense that the right hand should not know, or pretend not to know, what the left hand is doing.

In the light of the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue. Instead, she feels the need to link the two in the context of her mission *ad gentes*. These two elements must maintain both their intimate connection and their distinctiveness; therefore they should not be confused, manipulated or regarded as identical, as though they were interchangeable.

But;

... Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with the conviction that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation. (55)

In 1964, Paul VI established the Secretariat for Non-Christians, renamed in 1988,⁸³ the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). The history and activities of this institution are well known or now easily available, so that it warrants only a brief mention.⁸⁴ The PCID is headed by an Archbishop with a Council of members of 30 bishops and cardinals who meet in plenary session every two or three years. The institution has the following responsibilities:

- 1) To promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religious traditions;
- 2) to encourage the study of religions;
- 3) to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.

Dialogue with the Jews is undertaken by a different department of the Curia, the Commission for religious Relations with Jews, which comes under the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

82 Unlike anything intended by Pius XII in his 1943 Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*.

83 By the apostolic constitution, *Pastor Bonus*, of 28 June 1988.

84 The work of Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, and the Jesuit Thomas Michel are well documented to warrant no mention in this paper. Our focus in any case is on the papacy and less on the work of the congregations which would require more space and time to be properly assessed.

85 One should note the simultaneity of these two terms, also later reflected in *Redemptoris Missio*. The document is included in an appendix attached to this paper.

86 See Wulstan Peterburs' encapsulation of these forms in Anthony O'Mahony, Wulstan Peterburs, Mohammad Ali Shomali, *Catholics and Shi'a in Dialogue: Studies in Theology and Spirituality*, Melisende, London, 2004; p.31-32.

In 1984, the PCID issued a document called the *Attitude of the Church Toward the Followers of other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*,⁸⁵ which specified four types of dialogue.⁸⁶

- The *dialogue of life*, which consists in sharing one's life experience.
- The *dialogue of works*, which is that of deeds and collaboration with others in pursuance of humanitarian, social, economic or political goals.
- The *dialogue of experts*, where the respective religious traditions are confronted, deepened and enriched by experts applying their expertise to the common problems at hand.
- The *dialogue of religious experience* is where the adherents of the respective religions can share their experience of faith with humility and good will.

A cursory reading of this document provides ample evidence of the linkage made between the Church in dialogue and the Church as Mission. The evangelisational impulse is ever-present in the dialogic discourse, which is somewhat at a distance from the personalist imperatives of the foundational decrees of the Vatican II Council.

It remains to say that the recent furore over the current Pope's attitude to Islam, whether in the unfortunate speech at Regensburg, or in the restructuring of the PCID into a non-autonomous department at the beginning of his pontificate, is symptomatic of the expression of the inherent duality of the requisite and apostolic need to both evangelise and practise dialogue at the same time. The Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, juxtaposes the Decree of 7 December 1965, *Ad Gentes*, on the Mission Activity of the Church, which states that:

...non-Christians be freely converted to the Lord under the action of the Holy Spirit who opens their hearts so that they may adhere to Him. (13)

The PCID refers to the concept of metanoia that is implied in the biblical notion of conversion, that is to say a turning back. One can say that in that specific and narrow sense, a Muslim may be willing to be transformed by dialogue; that is to say to turn back to God.

CONCLUSION:

This brief entrée or overview of the Vatican position on Islam has largely been an attempt to present the fundamental aspects of the Church's theology of and desire for dialogue in the context of an ecclesiological⁸⁷ and legislative evaluation of papal pronouncements. I have looked at the explicit and implicit mention of Muslims, whether as followers of Islam or as members of the wider human race. Following upon Ratzinger's demand above of a shared intellectual climate for the success and possibility of a dialogue, the significant intellectual shift of the Church from Scholasticism to Personalism needs to be examined and digested by those of another faith entering into dialogue with the Church. A shared understanding that the Church is now philosophically anchored in the modern world (*Gaudium et Spes*), would perhaps avoid fruitless discussions on any preconceived common understanding of immutable categories of theological truths.

The expressions of respect and solidarity with Islam to be found in the various documents of Vatican II are more juridically authoritative and magnanimous than the pronouncements of the years that followed. It is unlikely that *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* can be altered or modified by this Pope or his successors without destroying their own authority. It would seem however that there has been an expedient shift in priority during the last decade towards an ecumenism with the other Christian Churches, notably the Orthodox Churches.

The conclusion of this overview is that the current representation of a centralised and ordered Catholic Church with set and defined categories of theological truths, legislatively and coherently ordered, juxtaposed against a de-centralised pluralistic and theologically-diffracted Islam is disingenuous. Roman ecclesiology remains centralised despite Vatican II, due to the visible institutional structure that Rome historically provides. The theological coherence, however, has diminished, perhaps even unanchored and latitudinarian after the sudden displacement of Scholasticism and the seeming inability to reconstitute a traditional alternative. If effective juridical authority is predicated on theological coherence, the Church has a difficult road to travel to achieve the cohesion and authority it enjoyed pre-Vatican II. The positive aspect of its present position, however, is its potential flexibility and

⁸⁷ This term is used in the sense of that which pertains to the structure of the Church and its functions.

increased compassion to the non-Christian world through the personalist discourse it has adopted in the reformulation of its ecclesiological role in the modern world. The choice of direction in the end lies with the present Pope's formulation of an answer to the question of who exactly constitutes the neighbour whom the Christian is commanded to love, and love as oneself.

APPENDIX I

Code of Canon Law (1983 Edition) - Passages relating to the authority of the Teaching Church

BOOK III.

THE TEACHING FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH LIBER III. DE ECCLESIAE MUNERE DOCENDI

Can. 747 §1. The Church, to which Christ the Lord has entrusted the deposit of faith so that with the assistance of the Holy Spirit it might protect the revealed truth reverently, examine it more closely, and proclaim and expound it faithfully, has the duty and innate right, independent of any human power whatsoever, to preach the gospel to all peoples, also using the means of social communication proper to it.

§2. It belongs to the Church always and everywhere to announce moral principles, even about the social order, and to render judgment concerning any human affairs insofar as the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls requires it.

Can. 748 §1. All persons are bound to seek the truth in those things which regard God and his Church and by virtue of divine law are bound by the obligation and possess the right of embracing and observing the truth which they have come to know.

§2. No one is ever permitted to coerce persons to embrace the Catholic faith against their conscience.

Can. 749 §1. By virtue of his office, the Supreme Pontiff possesses infallibility in teaching when as the supreme pastor and teacher of all the Christian faithful, who strengthens his brothers and sisters in the faith, he proclaims by definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held.

§2. The college of bishops also possesses infallibility in teaching when the bishops gathered together in an ecumenical council exercise the magisterium as teachers and judges of faith and morals who declare for the universal Church that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held definitively; or when dispersed throughout the world but preserving the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter and teaching authentically together with the Roman Pontiff matters of faith or morals, they agree that a particular proposition is to be held definitively.

§3. No doctrine is understood as defined infallibly unless this is manifestly evident.

Can. 750 §1. A person must believe with divine and Catholic faith all those things contained in the word of God, written or handed on, that is, in the one deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, and at the same time proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn magisterium of the Church or by its ordinary and universal magisterium which is manifested by the common adherence of the Christian faithful under the leadership of the sacred magisterium; therefore all are bound to avoid any doctrines whatsoever contrary to them.

§2. Each and every thing which is proposed definitively by the magisterium of the Church concerning the doctrine of faith and morals, that is, each and every thing which is required to safeguard reverently and to expound faithfully the same deposit of faith, is also to be firmly embraced and retained; therefore, one who rejects those propositions which are to be held definitively is opposed to the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Can. 751 Heresy is the obstinate denial or obstinate doubt after the reception of baptism of some truth which is to be believed by divine and Catholic faith; apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; schism is the refusal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.

Can. 752 Although not an assent of faith, a religious submission of the intellect and will must be given to a doctrine which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops declares concerning faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim it by definitive act; therefore, the Christian faithful are to take care to avoid those things which do not agree with it.

Can. 753 Although the bishops who are in communion with the head and members of the college, whether individually or joined together in conferences of bishops or in particular councils, do not possess infallibility in teaching, they are authentic teachers and instructors of the faith for the Christian faithful entrusted to their care; the Christian faithful are bound to adhere with religious submission of mind to the authentic magisterium of their bishops.

Can. 754 All the Christian faithful are obliged to observe the constitutions and decrees which the legitimate authority of the Church issues in order to propose doctrine and to proscribe erroneous opinions, particularly those which the Ro-

man Pontiff or the college of bishops puts forth.

Can. 755 §1. It is above all for the entire college of bishops and the Apostolic See to foster and direct among Catholics the ecumenical movement whose purpose is the restoration among all Christians of the unity which the Church is bound to promote by the will of Christ.

§2. It is likewise for the bishops and, according to the norm of law, the conferences of bishops to promote this same unity and to impart practical norms according to the various needs and opportunities of the circumstances; they are to be attentive to the prescripts issued by the supreme authority of the Church.

APPENDIX II

This is an important document from 1984 that in effect serves as a declaration of policy in regards to the Church's attitude to non-Christians.

The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions :

Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission Secretariat for Non-Christians, (May 10, 1984)

INTRODUCTION

1. A New Stage

The Second Vatican Council has marked a new landmark in the relations of the Church with the followers of other religions. Many Conciliar documents made explicit reference to them, and one in particular, the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, is entirely dedicated to "the relations between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions."

2. A Changing World

The rapid changes in the world and the deepest consideration of the mystery of the Church as "the universal sacrament of salvation" (LG 48) have fostered this attitude toward non-Christian religions. "Thanks to the opening made by the Council, the Church and all Christians have been able to come to a more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ" (RH 11).

3. The Ideal of "Dialogue"

This new attitude has taken the name of dialogue. Dialogue is both the norm and ideal, made known to the Church by Paul VI in the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 6, 1964). Since that time, it has been frequently used by the Council as well as in other Church teachings. It means not only discussion, but also includes all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment.

4. The Vatican Secretariat

As an institutional sign of this desire to meet and relate to the

followers of other religious traditions of the world, the same Pope Paul VI instituted, on Pentecost 1964, in the climate of the Second Vatican Council, the Secretariat for Non-Christians as an organism distinct from the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Its competence was defined in the constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae*: "To search for methods and ways of opening a suitable dialogue with non-Christians. It should strive, therefore, in order that non-Christians come to be known honestly and esteemed justly by Christians, and that in their turn non-Christians can adequately know and esteem Christian doctrine and life" (n. 99).

5. Twenty Years of Experience

Today, twenty years after the publication of *Ecclesiam Suam* and its own foundation, the Secretariat, gathered in plenary assembly, has evaluated the experiences of dialogue which are occurring everywhere in the Church. It has reflected on the Church's attitudes toward other believers, and especially on the relationship which exists between dialogue and mission.

6. A Special Document

The theological vision of this document is inspired by the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent Magisterium. A further in-depth study by theologians remains both desirable and necessary. Drawn from and enriched by experience, this reflection is mainly pastoral in character and encourages behavior formed by the Gospel in its encounters with believers of other faiths with whom Christians live in the city, at work, and in the family.

7. Support Materials for Christian Communities

This document, therefore, is proposed in order to help Christian communities and especially their leaders to live according to the directives of the Council. It offers elements of a solution to the difficulties which can arise from the duties of evangelization and dialogue which are found together in the mission of the Church. Through this document, the members of other religions might also come to understand better how the Church, views them and how it intends to behave toward them.

8. Ecumenical Spirit

Many Christian churches have had similar experiences in their encounters with other believers. Within the ambit of its

Unit I on "Faith and Witness," the World Council of Churches has a sub-unit for "Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies." With this latter body, the Secretariat for Non-Christians has stable and fraternal contacts of consultation and collaboration.

1. MISSION

9. God's Salvific Love

God is love (1 Jn 4:8,16). This saving love of God has been revealed and communicated to mankind in Christ and is present and active throughout the world by means of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the living sign of that love in such a way as to render it the norm of life for all. This mission, Christ's own, is one of love because in him it finds its source, goal, and way of proceeding (cf. AG 2-5,12; EN 26). Each aspect and activity of the Church's mission must therefore be imbued with the spirit of love if it is to be faithful to Christ who commanded the mission and continues to make it possible throughout history.

10. The Church, a Messianic People

The Church, as the Council has stressed, is a messianic people, a visible assembly and spiritual community, and a pilgrim people who go forward together with all of mankind with whom they share the human experience. They ought to be the leaven and "soul" for society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into the family of God (cf. LG 9; GS 9, 40). This messianic people has loved us and has as its goal the kingdom of God, which was already begun by Christ (LG 9). The pilgrim Church is therefore "missionary by its very nature" (AG 2, cf. nn. 6, 35- 36). For every Christian, the missionary duty is the normal expression of his lived faith.

11. The Mission of the Church

"The mission of the Church is carried out by means of that activity through which, in obedience to Christ's command and moved by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, the Church makes itself fully present to all persons and peoples..." (AG 5). The task is one but comes to be exercised in different ways according to the conditions in which mission unfolds. "These circumstances sometimes depend on the Church itself, sometimes on the peoples, groups or individuals to whom the mission is directed.... The appropriate actions or tools must be brought to bear on any given circumstance or situation.... The special end of this missionary activity is evangelization and the foundation of the Church among

peoples or groups in which it has not yet taken root" (AG 6). Other passages of the same Council have stressed that the mission of the Church is also to work for the extension of the kingdom and its values among all men and women (cf. LG 5, 9, 35; GS 39-45, 91, 92; UR 2; DH 14; AA 5).

12. Ways and Aspects of the Mission

The different aspects and manners of mission have been broadly delineated by the Second Vatican Council. The acts and documents of subsequent ecclesiastical teaching, such as the Bishops' Synod on Social Justice (1971) and those dedicated to evangelization (1974) and catechetics (1977), the numerous addresses of Pope Paul VI and John Paul II, and statements of the episcopal conferences of Asia, Africa and Latin America have developed various aspects of conciliar teaching, adding, for example, "as an essential element of the mission of the Church and indissolubly connected to it" (RH 15), the commitment to mankind, to social justice, to liberty and the rights of man, and the reform of unjust social structures.

13. Unified and Complex Reality

Mission is thus presented in the consciousness of the Church as a single but complex and articulated reality. Its principal elements can be mentioned. Mission is already constituted by the simple presence and living witness of the Christian life (cf. EN 21), although it must be recognized that "we bear this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Co 4:7). Thus the difference between the way the Christian appears existentially and that which he declares himself to be is never fully overcome. There is also the concrete commitment to the service of mankind and all forms of activity for social development and for the struggle against poverty and the structures which produce it. Also, there is liturgical life and that of prayer and contemplation, eloquent testimonies to a living and liberating relationship with the active and true God who calls us to his kingdom and to his glory (cf. Acts 2:42). There is, as well, the dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together toward truth and to work together in projects of common concern. Finally, there is announcement and catechesis in which the good news of the Gospel is proclaimed and its consequences for life and culture are analyzed. The totality of Christian mission embraces all these elements.

14. The Task of All

Every local Church is responsible for the totality of mission.

Moreover, every Christian, by virtue of his faith and baptism, is called to carry out to some degree the whole mission of the Church. The needs of the situation, the particular position of the people of God, and an individual's personal charism dispose the Christian to direct his efforts principally to one or another aspect of that mission.

15. The Example of Christ

The life of Jesus contains all the elements of mission. In the Gospels, Jesus is shown in silence, in action, in prayer, in dialogue, and in teaching. His message is inseparable from his deeds; he announces God and his reign not only by word but by his deeds and works which complete his preaching. Accepting contradiction, failure, and death, his victory passes through the gift of life. Everything in him is a means and way of revelation and salvation (cf. EN 6-12); everything is the expression of his love (cf. Jn 3:16; 13:1; 1 Jn 4:7-19). Christians ought to act in the same way: "By this will they know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35).

16. The Early Church

Moreover, the New Testament gives a composite, yet differentiated picture of mission. There is a plurality of services and functions which arise from a variety of charisms (cf. 1 Co 12:28-30; Ep 4:11-12; Rm 12:6-8). St. Paul himself noted the particular character of his missionary vocation when he declared that he was not sent by Christ to baptize but to announce the Gospel (1 Co 1:17). For this reason, alongside the "apostles," the "prophets," and the "evangelists," we find those who are called to deeds for the community and for the assistance of those who suffer. There are the tasks of families, of husbands, of wives, and of children. There are the duties of masters and servants. Each person has a task of particular witness in society. The First Letter of Peter, sent to Christians living in situations of diaspora, gives indications which never cease to surprise by their relevance for today. A passage of this letter was cited by Pope John Paul II in 1979, to the Catholic community of Ankara as "the golden rule of contacts between Christians and their fellow citizens of other faiths: 'Revere the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope which is in you. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience'" (1 P 3:15-16).

17. Illustrious Missionaries

Among the many examples which could be drawn from the

history of Christian mission, the norms given by St. Francis of Assisi, in the *Regola non bollata* of 1221, are significant. The friars who "through divine inspiration would desire to go among the Muslims...can establish spiritual contacts with them [Muslims] in two ways: a way which does not raise arguments and disputes, but rather they should be subject to every human creature for the love of God and confess themselves to be Christians. The other way is that when they see that it would be pleasing to the Lord, they should announce the word of God." Our own century has seen the rise and affirmation, especially in the Islamic world, of the experience of Charles de Foucauld, who carried out mission in a humble and silent attitude of union with God, in communion with the poor, and in universal brotherhood.

18. Respect for Liberty

Mission must always revolve about man in authentic respect for his freedom. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council, while having affirmed for the whole Church the necessity and urgency of announcing Christ, "the light of life, with all apostolic faithfulness and fortitude, even, when necessary, to the shedding of one's own blood" (DH 14), confirms the need to promote and respect the true freedom of the other person, rejecting any form of coercion whatsoever, especially in the religious sphere. "Truth, however, is to be sought in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication, and dialogue. In the course of these, men explain to one another the truth they have discovered or claim to have discovered in order to help one another in their search for truth. Moreover, as truth is discovered, it is by personal assent that men are to adhere to it" (DH 3). "In spreading religious faith and introducing religious practices, everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which could seem to carry a hint of coercion or a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the rights of others" (DH 4).

19. Respect for Each Person

Respect for every person ought to characterize the missionary activity of the Church today (cf. ES 77; EN 79-80; RH 12). "Man is the first path which the Church ought to traverse in carrying out its mission" (RH 14). These values, which the Church continues to learn from Christ its teacher, should lead the Christian to love and respect all that is good in the

culture and the religious commitment of the other. "It concerns respect for everything which the Spirit, who blows where he wills, has produced in man" (RH 12; cf. EN 79). The fact that Christian mission can never be separated from love and respect for others is proof for Christians of the place of dialogue within that mission.

2. DIALOGUE

1. Foundation

20. The Reasons of Dialogue

Dialogue does not grow out of the opportunism of the tactics of the moment, but arises from reasons which experience and reflection, and even the difficulties themselves, have deepened.

21. Personal and Social Requirements

The Church opens itself to dialogue toward fidelity to man. In every person and group there is the aspiration and need to be considered responsible subjects and to be able to act as such. This is the case whether one regards the need to receive or, even more, when one is conscious of possessing something which is to be communicated. As the human sciences have emphasized, in interpersonal dialogue one experiences one's own limitations as well as the possibility of overcoming them. A person discovers that he does not possess the truth in a perfect and total way but can walk together with others toward that goal. Mutual affirmation, reciprocal correction, and fraternal exchange lead the partners in dialogue to an ever greater maturity which in turn generates interpersonal communion. Religious experiences and outlooks can themselves be purified and enriched in this process of encounter. The dynamic of human encounter should lead us Christians to listen to and strive to understand that which other believers communicate to us in order to profit from the gifts which God bestows so generously. Sociocultural changes in the world, with their inherent tensions and difficulties, as well as the growing interdependence in all sectors of society necessary for living together, for human promotion, and, above all, for pursuing the demands of peace, all render a dialogical style of human relationships—today ever more urgent.

22. Faith in God the Father

The Church, however, feels itself called to dialogue principally because of its faith. In the Trinitarian mystery, Christian revelation allows us to glimpse in God a life of com-

munion and interchange. In God, the Father, we contemplate a pervasive love unlimited by space and time. The universe and history are filled with his gifts. Every reality and every event are surrounded by his love. In spite of the sometimes violent manifestations of evil, in the vicissitudes in the life of each individual and every people there is present the power of grace which elevates and redeems. The Church has the duty of discovering and bringing to light and fullness all the richness which the Father has hidden in creation and history, not only to celebrate the glory of God in its liturgy, but also to promote among all mankind the movement of the gifts of the Father.

23. Christ the Redeemer

In God the Son we are given the Word and Wisdom in whom everything was already contained and subsisting even from the beginning of time. Christ is the Word who enlightens every person because in him is manifested at the same time the mystery of God and the mystery of mankind (cf. RH 8,10,11,13). He is the Redeemer present with grace in every human encounter, to liberate us from our selfishness and to make us love one another as he has loved us. As Pope John Paul II has said: "Man—every man without any exception whatever—has been redeemed by Christ. And with man—with each man without any exception, whatever—Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it. Christ, who died and was raised up for all, provides man, each and every man, with the light and strength to measure up to his supreme calling" (RH 14).

24. The Action of the Holy Spirit

In God, the Holy Spirit, our faith allows us to perceive the force of life and movement, and continuous regeneration (cf. LG 4) by the Spirit who acts in the depth of people's consciences and accompanies them on the secret path of hearts toward the truth (cf. GS 22). The Spirit also works "outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body" (RH 6; cf. LG 16; GS 22; AG 15). The Spirit both anticipates and accompanies the path of the Church which, nevertheless, feels itself impelled to discern the signs of his presence, to follow him wherever he leads and to serve him as a humble and discreet collaborator.

25. The Realization of the Kingdom

The reign of God is the final end of all persons. The Church, which is to be "its seed and beginning" (LG 5, 9), is called

from the first, to start out on this path toward the kingdom and, along with the rest of humanity, to advance toward that goal. This duty includes the struggle against, and the victory over evil and sin, beginning always with oneself and embracing the mystery of the cross. The Church is thus oriented toward God's reign until its fulfillment in the perfect communion of all mankind as brothers in God. Christ is the guarantee for the Church and the world that the "last days" have already begun, that the final age of history is already fixed (cf. LG 48) and that, therefore, the Church is equipped and commissioned to work so that there comes about the progressive fulfillment of all things in Christ.

26. The "Seeds of the Word"

This vision induced the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council to affirm that in the religious traditions of non-Christians there exist "elements which are true and good" (OT 16), "precious things, both religious and human" (GS 92); "seeds of contemplation" (AG 18), "elements of truth and grace" (AG 9), "seeds of the Word" (AG 11,15), and "rays of the truth which illumine all mankind" (NA 2). According to explicit conciliar indications, these values are found preserved in the great religious traditions of humanity. Therefore, they merit the attention and the esteem of Christians. Their spiritual patrimony is a genuine invitation to dialogue (cf. NA 2, 3; AG 11), not only in those things which unite us, but also in our differences.

27. Sincere and Patient Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council has thus been able to draw consequences of concrete obligations, that are expressed in the following terms: "That they may be able to give this witness to Christ fruitfully, (Christians) ought to be joined to the people of their time by esteem and love, and acknowledge themselves to be members of the group of people among whom they live. Let them share in cultural and social life by various exchanges and enterprises of human living. Thus, they ought to know well the religious and cultural traditions of others, happy to discover and ready to respect seeds of the Word which are hidden in them.... As Christ himself...so also his disciples should know the people among whom they live. They should establish contact with them, to learn by sincere and patient dialogue what treasures a bountiful God has distributed among the nations of the earth. At the same time, let them try to illuminate these treasures with the light of the Gospel, to set them free, and bring them under the dominion of God their Savior" (AG 11; cf. AG 41; AA 14, 29).

2. Forms of Dialogue

28. Multiplicity of Ways of Dialogue

The experience of recent years gives evidence of the many ways in which dialogue is expressed. The most important and typical forms which are listed below are seen as distinct from one another yet at the same time connected.

29. The Dialogue of Life

Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude; a spirit which guides one's conduct. It implies concern, respect, and hospitality toward the other. It leaves room for the other person's identity, modes of expression, and values. Dialogue is thus the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well as of every aspect of it, whether one speaks of simple presence and witness, service, or direct proclamation (CIC 787, n. 1). Any sense of mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against the demands of true humanity and against the teachings of the Gospel.

30. Dialogue in Daily Life

Every follower of Christ, by reason of his human and Christian vocation, is called to live dialogue in his daily life, whether he finds himself in a majority situation or that of a minority. He ought to bring the spirit of the Gospel into any environment in which he lives and works: familial, social, educational, artistic, economic, or political life. Dialogue thus finds its place in the dynamism of the Church's mission.

31. The Dialogue of Works

A further level of dialogue is that of deeds and collaboration with others for goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed toward the liberation and advancement of mankind. This kind of dialogue often occurs today in the context of international organizations, where Christians and followers of other religions confront together the problems of the world.

32. Collaboration

The field of collaboration can be extremely wide. Referring in particular to Muslims, the Second Vatican Council

exhorts both parties to “forget the past” and to “defend and promote together social justice, moral values, peace and liberty” (NA 3; cf. AG 11,12,15,21). In the same sense, there are the statements of Pope Paul VI, especially in *Ecclesiam Suam* (nn. 110-112), and of John Paul II in numerous meetings with the heads and representatives of various religions. The great problems with which humanity is struggling call on Christians to work together with other believers by virtue of their respective faiths.

33. The Dialogue of Experts

Of particular interest is dialogue at the level of specialists, whether it be to confront, deepen, and enrich their respective religious heritages or to apply something of their expertise to the problems which must be faced by humanity in the course of its history. Such a dialogue normally occurs where one's partner already has his own vision of the world and adheres to a religion which inspires him to action. This is more easily accomplished in pluralistic societies where diverse traditions and ideologies coexist and sometimes come in contact.

34. Comprehension

In this type of encounter, the partners come to a mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's spiritual values and cultural categories and promote communion and fellowship among people (cf. NA 1). In this manner Christians can also work together for the evangelical transformation of cultures (cf. EN 18-20, 63).

35. The Dialogue of Religious Experience

At a deeper level, persons rooted in their own religious traditions can share their experiences of prayer, contemplation, faith, and duty, as well as their expressions and ways of searching for the Absolute. This type of dialogue can be a mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation for promoting and preserving the highest values and spiritual ideals. It leads naturally to each partner communicating to the other the reasons for his own faith. The sometimes profound differences between the faiths do not prevent this dialogue. Those differences, rather, must be referred back in humility and confidence to God who “is greater than our heart” (1 Jn 3:20). In this way also, the Christian has the opportunity of offering to the other the possibility of experimenting in an existential way with the values of the Gospel.

3. DIALOGUE AND MISSION

36. Relations between Dialogue and Mission Dialogue and mission have multiple relationships. We dwell here on several aspects which at the present time have greater relevance because of the challenges and problems they pose and the attitude which they demand.

1. Mission and Conversion

37. The Call to Conversion

According to the Second Vatican Council, missionary proclamation has conversion as its goal: “that non-Christians be freely converted to the Lord under the action of the Holy Spirit who opens their hearts so that they may adhere to him” (AG 13; CIC 787, n. 2). In the context of dialogue between believers of various faiths, one cannot avoid reflecting on the spiritual process of conversion. In biblical language and that of the Christian tradition, conversion is the humble and penitent return of the heart to God in the desire to submit one's life more generously to him. All persons are constantly called to this conversion. In the course of this process, the decision may be made to leave one's previous spiritual or religious situation in order to direct oneself toward another. Thus, for example, from a particular love the heart can open itself to one that is more universal. Every authentic call from God always carries with it an overcoming of oneself. There is no new life without death, as the dynamic of the Paschal Mystery shows (cf. GS 22). Moreover, “every conversion is the work of grace, in which a person ought to fully find himself again” (RH 12).

38. Respect of Consciences

In this process of conversion, the law of conscience is sovereign, because “no one must be constrained to act against his conscience, nor should he be impeded in acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters” (DH 3).

39. The Vivifying Spirit

In the Christian view, the principal agent of conversion is not man, but the Holy Spirit. “It is he who drives one to announce the Gospel and in the depths of one's conscience makes one welcome and understand the word of salvation” (EN 75). He determines the movement of hearts and gives rise to the act of faith in Jesus the Lord (cf. 1 Co 2:4). The Christian is but a simple instrument and co-worker of God (cf. 1 Co 3:9).

40. The Mutual Desire for Growth

In dialogue also, the Christian normally nourishes in his heart the desire of sharing his experience of Christ with his brother of another religion (cf. Acts 16:29; ES 46). On the other hand, it is natural that another believer would similarly desire to share his faith.

41. Collaboration in God's Plan

God never ceases to reconcile persons to himself by the work of his Spirit. The Church relies on the promise made by Christ that the Spirit will guide it in history toward the fullness of truth (Jn 16:13). For this reason it goes out to meet individuals, peoples, and their cultures, aware that the seeds of goodness and truth are found in every human community, and conscious that God has a loving plan for every nation (Acts 17:26-27). The Church therefore wants to work together with all in order to fulfill this plan and by doing so recognize the value of the infinite and varied wisdom of God and contribute to the evangelization of cultures (cf. ES 18-20).

42. The Promotion of Universal Peace

"We also turn our thoughts to all who acknowledge God and who preserve in their traditions precious elements of religion and humanity. We want open dialogue to compel us all to receive the inspirations of the Spirit faithfully and to measure up to them energetically. The desire for such dialogue, conducted with appropriate discretion and leading to truth by way of love alone, excludes nobody. We include in this those who respect highminded human values without recognizing who the author of those values is, as well as those who oppose the Church and persecute it in various ways. Since God the Father is the origin and purpose of all mankind, we are all called to be brothers and sisters. Therefore, if we have been summoned to the same destiny, which is both human and divine, we can and should work together without violence and deceit in order to build genuine peace in the world" (GS 92; cf. also, the messages of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II for the World Day of Peace).

43. Dialogue, Wellspring of Hope

Dialogue thus becomes a source of hope and a factor of communion in mutual transformation. The Holy Spirit directs the carrying out of God's design in the history of the individual and of all humanity until the time when God's children who are dispersed by sin will be reunited as one (cf. Jn 11:52).

44. The Patience of God

God alone knows those days, he to whom nothing is impossible, he whose mysterious and silent Spirit opens the paths of dialogue to individuals and peoples in order to overcome racial, social, and religious differences and to bring mutual enrichment. We live in the age of the patience of God for the Church and every Christian community, for no one can oblige God to act more quickly than he has chosen to do. However, before the new humanity of the 21st century, the Church should radiate a Christianity open to awaiting in patience the maturation of the seeds sown in tears and in trust (cf. Js 5:7-8; Mk 4:26-30).

