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Lumen Gentium and Unity in Christ

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This essay contends that *Lumen Gentium* (LG) harmoniously integrates three interrelated but importantly distinct kinds of Christian unity. While the emphasis upon sacramental unity found in *Dominus Iesus* contrasted with the emphasis upon ecumenical unity developed in Peter Knauer's influential essay, "*katholische Kirche*" *subsistiert in der "katholischen Kirche"* may be set in opposition to each other and thus regarded as demonstrative of a lack of coherence in LG, this essay argues that Lumen roots these kinds of unity in the mystical unity between Christ and the Church. The significance of this mystical unity, as opposed to a merely functional unity, is examined through analysis of Aquinas's use of the term *una persona mystica* to signify the relationship between Christ and the Church. Sacramental, ecumenical, and mystical unity, as described in Lumen, are mutually illuminative and complementary kinds of unity that shed light upon the nature and universal mission of the Church.

Keywords

Augustine; *Dominus Iesus*; Ecumenism; *Lumen Gentium*; Thomas Aquinas; *una persona mystica*; Vatican II; Yves Congar

The purpose of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, is to 'declare with greater clarity ... the nature of the church and its universal mission' in order to accompany 'the entire human race' on the journey toward achieving 'full unity in Christ'.^[1] Rival interpretations of the meaning of key passages in the document, however, raise the issue of whether this greater clarity has been attained. In this essay, I argue that

the rival interpretations just mentioned result from contrasting emphases on differing kinds of unity with which *Lumen Gentium* is concerned: sacramental, ecumenical, and mystical. I argue further that these kinds of unity, while importantly distinct, are mutually illuminative and do indeed shed light upon 'the nature of the church and its universal mission'.

The arguments of this essay unfold in four sections. The first section examines the exposition of *Lumen Gentium* found in the declaration put forward by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus*.^[2] My focus in this section is on the latter document's interpretation of the ambiguous statement in section eight of LG which proclaims that the Church of Christ 'subsists in the catholic church'.^[3] I argue that the interpretation of this passage found in *Dominus Iesus* is informed by an emphasis upon sacramental unity. The second section analyzes Peter Knauer S.J.'s interpretation of the same passage in "*katholische Kirche*" *subsistiert in der "katholischen Kirche"*.^[4] I contend that Knauer emphasizes ecumenical unity. A third section surveys the historical use of the term *una persona mystica*, particularly as employed by Thomas Aquinas, for the purpose of highlighting the importance of the mystical unity between Christ and the Church that runs as a kind of golden thread throughout all of LG, binding it together, as it were. The final section concludes by considering how the interrelated but importantly distinct kinds of unity scrutinized throughout this essay may be understood as mutually illuminative of one another in a manner that can indeed offer insight into the 'nature of the church and its universal mission' as declared by the Council Fathers during the Second Vatican Council.

I *Dominus Iesus* and Sacramental Unity

The purpose of this section is to assess the explication of LG advanced by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in *Dominus Iesus*. Primarily, this section analyzes the document's interpretation of the following key passage from LG:

This church, set up and organised in this world as a society, subsists in the catholic church, governed by the successor of Peter and bishops in communion with him, although outside its structure many elements of sanctification and of truth are to be found which, as proper gifts to the church of Christ, impel towards catholic unity.^[5]

Based upon the analysis in this section, I contend that the interpretation of the just cited passage found in *Dominus Iesus* is informed by an emphasis upon sacramental unity.

Emphasis upon the Church as a 'visible' community is certainly not an idea introduced into Roman Catholic ecclesiology by the Second Vatican Council. This emphasis may be found, for instance, in the work of Robert Bellarmine in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for whom 'the Church is a group of people as visible and palpable as is the group of the Roman people or the Kingdom of France or the Republic of Venice'. Largely in response to the various European reformations coupled with the rise of rationalism, the Catholic Church of Bellarmine's day had become increasingly defined as a hierarchically oriented, self-sufficient, and perfect society. For Bellarmine, therefore, it is axiomatic that there cannot be salvation without an 'external profession of the faith and sacramental unity' with the 'true Church'.^[6] Hence, Bellarmine's declaration that *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (there is no salvation outside of the Church) is closely bound up with his understanding of the Church as a visible sign of unity amidst a bitterly divided Europe. Though operating in a significantly dissimilar cultural and historical context, LG, too, links the Church's sacramental dimension to its nature and mission:

And since the church is in Christ as a sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity, the council, continuing the teaching of the previous councils, intends to declare with greater clarity to the faithful and the entire human race the nature of the church and its universal mission.^[7]

A comparable perspective is evident in the exposition of LG found in *Dominus Iesus*. According to the latter document's interpretation of LG, the true Church subsists in its fullness as a concrete reality (this is what 'organised in this world as a society' means) in the Catholic Church.[8] There are, however, 'Churches' in imperfect communion with the Catholic Church, because they 'remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist'.[9] This is a reference to Orthodox communities. These communities, according to *Dominus*, are not in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, because they do not accept the doctrine of Papal primacy. Next are 'ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery'. These, *Dominus* contends, 'are not Churches in the proper sense'.[10] This refers to Protestant communities. Though baptism grants them membership into the body of Christ, they lack 'integral profession of faith, the Eucharist, and full communion in the Church'.[11] At the same time, efficacious means of salvation exist outside of the Catholic Church and derive their efficacy 'from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church'.[12] According to this view, salvation can be mediated by the Church to those outside the Church. However, this very mediation is drawing those outside of the Church into the Church, where the fullness of salvation is found.

Thus understood, the key point, in *Dominus*, regarding the 'many elements of sanctification and of truth' that exist outside of the visible 'structure' of the Church, is that these elements, nevertheless, belong to the Catholic Church. From this point of view, LG is not claiming that there is salvation outside of the Church any more than Robert Bellarmine was, since those being saved 'outside' of the Church are still being saved by gifts belonging to the Church and simultaneously impelling them towards 'catholic unity'. The emphasis, then, is upon Christ's Church as a sacrament or 'instrumental sign' of unity:

The Christian faithful are therefore not permitted to imagine that the Church of Christ is nothing more than a collection—divided, yet in some way one—of Churches and ecclesial communities; nor are they free to hold that today the Church of Christ nowhere really exists, and must be considered only as a goal which all Churches and ecclesial communities must strive to reach. In fact, the elements of this already-given Church exist, joined together in their fullness in the Catholic Church and, without this fullness, in the other communities.[13]

That the emphasis here is upon the importance of the sacramental nature of the Church as a sign and instrument of unity is explicitly stated in the very next paragraph: 'The Church is a sacrament—that is, sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of unity of the entire human race.'[14]

Informed by an emphasis upon the Church as sacrament, then, the fullness of salvation exists within the community of salvation that is the Catholic Church, visible and palpable like the Roman Republic or the Kingdom of France ('organised in this world as a society'). Salvation is mediated by the Church even to those 'outside' of the Church but by virtue of this mediation those within the process of salvation are being drawn to the inside of the Church. In this sense, LG may be interpreted, as it is in *Dominus*, as merely reiterating what Catholic teaching has always held regarding the sacramental role of the Church in Christ, as an 'instrumental sign' of unity within a divided world.

In sum, *Dominus Iesus* interprets *Lumen Gentium* with an emphasis upon sacramental unity. This may be regarded as an authentic read of the Dogmatic Constitution which does indeed, 'continuing the teaching of the previous councils', emphasize the sacramental nature and mission of the Church. At the same time, sacramental unity is not the only kind of unity emphasized in LG, as we observe in subsequent sections.

II The Church through the Churches

The purpose of this section is to contrast the reading of key passages in LG examined in the previous section with Peter Knauer S.J.'s interpretation of the same passages in his influential essay: "*katholische Kirche*"

subsistiert in der "katholischen Kirche". [15] While certainly not denying the importance of sacramental unity, Knauer's emphasis is upon ecumenical unity. This latter kind of unity, too, is given priority in LG.

Knauer contrasts the catholic Church (*katholische Kirche*) with concrete communities of which the Roman Catholic Church (*katholischen Kirche*) is one. According to Knauer, the criterion for membership in the catholic Church 'can only be faith in Jesus Christ as Son of God'. [16] It subsists fully in every community where this faith is present, but is lessened in a particular community when that community fails to recognize the full legitimacy of another community. Knauer's emphasis, then, is upon the ecumenical unity of the Church as put forward in LG and further elaborated upon in *Unitatis Redintegratio*: 'Moreover, some, and even most, of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the catholic church.' [17]

The ecumenical unity of the Church emphasized by Knauer may be understood as a unity of understanding capable of overcoming mutual misunderstandings masquerading as a disunity of ideas. Knauer gives the following example to make clear his point:

In the Lutheran Church we find the principle 'scripture alone—*sola scriptura*'; this sounds like a denial of the Catholic principle that the fullness of revelation occurs only through 'scripture, tradition and magisterium' together. But even such a simple word as 'scripture' has a different meaning in the two expressions. 'Scripture' in the Catholic version means 'scripture that still needs to be interpreted properly'. And the meaning of this scripture will be the reality of Church, the event of faith's being handed on, faith that even today has to be proclaimed by a magisterium. In the Lutheran formula, 'scripture' means 'scripture that has already come to be understood in the sense in which it is the word of God'. To scripture understood in this sense, nothing can be added, because 'the word of God' is by definition the ultimate word about all reality. [18]

Accordingly, in Knauer's view, particular Lutheran churches become less the Catholic Church if they regard Roman Catholic teaching regarding the role of tradition and the magisterium as capable only of distorting scripture and thus the transmission of revelation. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church becomes less the Catholic Church when it understands any interpretation of scripture not confirmed by its tradition and magisterium as *ipso facto* contrary to the Word of God. [19]

Based upon the emphasis upon ecumenical unity as advanced by Knauer, 'wide differences of faith between the different Christian Churches' may turn out not to be so wide after all. The Catholic Church is equally manifest in the various Christian communities so long as those are authentic communities of faith. The Roman Catholic Church (*katholischen Kirche*) is such a community, but it is not the only one. The full subsistence of the Catholic Church in the particular communities is more or less present to the degree to which these communities recognize the authenticity of other communities where true faith in Christ is present. Thus, ecumenical unity stresses the significance, importance, and authenticity of those 'many elements of sanctification and truth' that exist 'outside' the visible 'structure' of the Roman Catholic Church.

At this point, we may make some preliminary observations regarding the relationship between sacramental unity as defined in the previous section and ecumenical unity as described in the current section. It is, of course, possible to conceive of these two kinds of unity as opposite poles in a dialectical tension. On the other hand, it could be argued from a binary-oppositionalist framework that one view must finally collapse into the other in order for LG to be coherent. However, this essay does not develop either of the aforesaid approaches. Rather, I contend that LG harmoniously integrates contrasting emphases on the kinds of unity just mentioned along with another, more central, kind of unity—the mystical unity between Christ and the Church.

III Thomas Aquinas on Christ and the Church as *Una Persona Mystica*

The purpose of this section is to review the historical use of the term *una persona mystica*, particularly as employed by Aquinas, with a view toward stressing the significance of the mystical unity between Christ and the Church both historically and in LG. I argue that the mystical unity entailed by the notion of Christ and the Church as *una persona mystica*, informed by Thomas Aquinas, complements both the sacramental and ecumenical emphases upon unity examined in the previous sections.

The papal encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, promulgated by Pius XII on 29 June 1943, is but one example of several twentieth-century attempts to make use of the classical idea that Christ and the Church may be esteemed as one mystical person or *una persona mystica*. As Hans Urs von Balthasar notes, Charles Journet, to cite but one of numerous examples, was ‘fond of citing the dictum of St. Thomas that Christ, Head and Body, *computatur quasi una persona*’.[20] Another example is the influential work of Heribert Mühlen appropriately titled *Una Mystica Persona*. [21] Through the encyclical, as well as the numerous ecclesiological works that followed it, the ‘dictum of St. Thomas’ gained currency in twentieth-century ecclesiology.

In order to understand Aquinas’s use of the term *una persona mystica*, a brief historical investigation of usages of this term is helpful. Such references are semantically multivalent and capable of functioning in diverse modes and contexts.[22] Early references to Christ and the Church as one person have scriptural antecedents and were formulated in numerous ways by patristic exegetes. Origen, for instance, interprets the phrase in the book of Acts, *I am Jesus whom you are persecuting*, as ‘an affirmation of the identity shared by Christ and His ecclesial body’.[23] Origen identifies the *corps ecclésial* strictly with the disciples of Jesus. For Origen, ‘it is plainly evident that whatever might be referred to Christ’s disciples is referred to Him.’[24] Origen’s overarching theme in his exegesis of the passage from Acts is that to persecute the community of disciples (the Church) is to persecute Christ.[25] In this way, the persecution of Christ’s disciples is a continuation of Christ’s suffering.

In the West, an early attempt to make use of the notion that Christ and the Church constitute one mystical person comes in the form of Tyconius’ *Liber Regularum* (ad 382), a work whose insights Augustine is happy to refer his readers to in *De Doctrina Christiana* along with the disclaimer that, ‘It [*Liber Regularum*] must certainly be read with caution, not only because of certain things which, being human, he [Tyconius] gets wrong, but especially because of the things which he says as a Donatist heretic.’[26] The ‘Book of Rules’ is, of course, the first manual for scriptural interpretation in the West, and in it Tyconius lays down seven rules for the interpretation of scripture. It is the first and second rule that concern us here.

In Rule 1, *De Domino et corpore ejus*, Tyconius intends to ascertain the process whereby scriptural discourse indiscriminately shifts (sometimes in the middle of a sentence) its reference from Christ the Head to Christ the body (the Church).

In some cases, the subject is a single person; and yet the different functions of the two teach us that the one person is actually twofold. Thus, in Isaiah, it says: ‘he bears our sins and knows sorrow on our behalf; he was wounded for our iniquities and God delivered him up for our sins’, and so forth (Is. 53:4-6)—a passage which the voice of the church universally ascribes to the Lord. But it goes on to say, still speaking of the same person: ‘and God wishes to free him from affliction, and God wishes to take away his sorrow, to show him the light and to form him with prudence’.[27]

Is. 53:10-11

Tyconius is perplexed as to how Christ can be the referent of both passages. Some may be content simply to say that Christ is the referent of the former verses but not of the latter ones. Tyconius, however, is insistent on the consistency of the Christological referent. If scripture is referring to a person in one passage, with the referent

being Christ, and then refers to the same person again somewhere else, the referent must still be Christ. But this raises a problem: 'Does God wish to show the light to the same one whom he delivered up for our sins or wish to form him with prudence, especially when that one is himself the very light and wisdom of God?'. Tyconius offers a solution: 'Do not these phrases rather apply to the body?'.[28]

The singular person of Christ and the Church becomes further divided in the next rule, *De Domini corpore bipertito*, where we find yet another partition, this time between the left and right side of Christ's body.

Far more necessary is the rule concerning the bipartite character of the Lord's body ... For just as the transition from head to body and back again, as indicated above, is only seen by reason, so also reason alone sees the transition and return ... from the right-hand part to the left or from the left to the right ... For when he tells the body, 'unseen treasures I will disclose to you, that you may know that I am the Lord, and I will take you to myself', he adds, 'but you do not know me, that I am God and there is no other God besides me, and you were ignorant of me'.[29]

Is. 45:3-5

Again, Tyconius wants to know how both of these passages can have the same referent, which he takes to be the body of Christ. In order to resolve the apparent discrepancy, Tyconius again poses a question: 'Do both phrases ... refer to a single mind? Did Jacob with one and the same mind, both receive and not receive God's promise?'.[30] Ultimately, Tyconius concludes that scripture addresses both the right (good) and left (bad) parts (sides) of Christ's bipartite body, because the separation of the two will not occur until the end of the ages.[31] This functional unity between Christ and the Church, then, is key to the exegetical approach of Tyconius.

Tyconius' approach is further developed in the works of Augustine.[32] Congar demonstrates the manner in which Augustine builds on the thought of Tyconius by referencing the following passage from *De Doctrina Christiana*:

The first one [rule] is 'On the Lord and his body'. Sometimes we know that a single being; consisting of head and a body, that is, Christ and his church, is being presented to us; for it was said to the faithful, not without reason, 'so you are the seed of Abraham', (Gal. 3: 29) although there is but a single seed of Abraham, namely Christ. In such cases we should not be puzzled when Scripture moves from head to body or vice versa, while still dealing with the same person. For it is a single person that says, 'He has placed a garland on me as on a husband and arrayed me with ornament like a wife' (Isa. 61:10), but it is of course necessary to appreciate which of these two statements applies to the head (Christ), and which to the body (the church).[33]

Here Congar, following Henri De Lubac, notes an important distinction between Tyconius and Augustine who develops the first rule of the former. For Augustine, it is not merely a functional unity that joins Christ and the Church; the former directs the latter. It is, rather, an organic, ontological, and hence, mystical, unity. The two truly form one subject. Indeed, Congar claims that for Augustine, 'If the declarations of the Scripture are made sometimes *in (ex) persona Christi*, and sometimes *in (ex) persona Ecclesiae*, it is because the two are united in such a way that they constitute one and the same subject, one and the same person.'[34] It is the same 'I' expressing himself in different functions. It is this Augustinian understanding of Christ and the Church as *una persona mystica* that is confirmed and expanded by Aquinas.

Aquinas's first reference to Christ and the Church as a single person comes in Book iii of the *Super Sententias*. [35] In Books i and II Aquinas has already considered God in himself (theology), and the *exitus* of creatures from God (economy), and by Book iii he moves on to the *reditus* of creatures to God which is accomplished in various modes through the Incarnation and the events of Christ's life.[36] One of the modes has to do with Christ's

meriting satisfaction for the sins of the human race.[37] It is in this context that Aquinas, in response to an objection, states:

The head and members pertain to the same person: wherefore since Christ is our head on account of his divinity this plenitude of grace is overflowing into others, and since we are the members of him, his meriting is not extraneous to us, but it overflows into us on account of the unity of the mystical body [*corpus mysticum*].[38]

We see again here the emphasis on mystical unity as opposed to functional unity. Aquinas's reference to the *corpus mysticum* is a response to an objection premised on Ezekiel 18:4; the objection states that 'the soul which has sinned will *itself* die. Therefore, by the same reason, the soul which labors, *itself* it is rewarded, and thus it would seem that Christ is not able to merit for us.'[39] But, Aquinas replies, because Christ is to Church as head is to members, Christ the head can merit for the Church. This is not a function of Christ vis-à-vis the Church but rather an instrumental sign of the mystical unity existing between the two.

Again, in *De Veritate*, Aquinas uses the *una persona mystica* dictum to ponder whether Christ can merit for others. Aquinas notes that 'Christ and the Church are like a person.'[40] The first time we find Aquinas employing *una persona mystica* comes in his response to argument eleven in the same article. Aquinas responds to an objection based on a passage from scripture contending that 'according to Psalms 61:13, it is said *thou wilt render to every man according to his works*. But this would not be if the merits of Christ might be imputed to us. Therefore, Christ did not merit for us.'[41] Aquinas responds by evoking the mystical union between Christ and the Church.

Christ and his members are a single mystical person, so that the works of the Head are in some way the works of the members. And thus, when something is given to us because of the works of Christ, this does not go against what is said in Psalms 61:13 ... Nevertheless, the merits of Christ so benefit us that they cause grace in us through the sacraments, and by this grace we are stirred to meritorious works [of our own].[42]

Aquinas makes a similar argument in question fifteen of the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas has already established the fittingness (*conveniens*) of the Incarnation, the mode of the union, the nature assumed, and it is then under the sub-category of things coassumed that Aquinas examines the perfections and defects of the human nature (body and soul) assumed by Christ. In the first article, Aquinas poses the question of whether there was sin in Christ. Next, he addresses a familiar objection:

It would seem that there was sin in Christ. For it is written (Ps. xxi. 2): 'O God, My God ... why hast Thou forsaken Me? Far from My salvation are the words of My sins'. Now these words are said in the person of Christ Himself, as appears from His having uttered them on the cross. Therefore, it would seem that in Christ there were sins.[43]

One detects here the same issue confronted by Tyconius and Augustine. Hence, Aquinas employs a Tyconian response by drawing from John Damascene:

As Damascene says (*De Fide Orthod.* iii. 25), things are said of Christ, first, with reference to His natural and hypostatic properties, as when it is said that God became man, and that He suffered for us; secondly, with reference to His personal and relative properties, when things are said of Him in our person which nowise belong to Him of Himself. Hence in the seven rules of Tyconius which Augustine quotes is *De Doctrina Christiana* iii. 31, the first regards *Our Lord and His Body, since Christ and His Church are taken as one person*. And thus Christ, speaking in the person of His members, says (Ps. xxi. 2): The words of My sins—not that there were any sins in the Head.[44]

Thus, in Aquinas's view, the Church consists of those whom God helps through Christ: 'Christ's merit extends to others inasmuch as they are His members.' But, again, one must be cautious here of reducing the relationship of Christ and the Church to a merely functional unity. The extension of merit is rooted in an ontological and mystical unity between Christ and the Church understood as a single person. It is not as though Christ possess merit and subsequently imputes it to or exchanges it with his body, the Church. Rather, salvific merit overflows from Christ to the Church, because Christ obtains it and the two are one while remaining two.[45]

In sum, with the term *una persona mystica* Aquinas is referring to a mystical and ontological integrated singularity between Christ and the Church. The intimacy of this union is the cause, not the effect, of salvation. Having established this, we are now in position to evaluate the way in which Aquinas's understanding of Christ and the Church as *una persona mystica* is echoed in *Lumen Gentium*.

The paragraphs leading up to the section eight of LG are primarily concerned with what it means to be united to Christ. God and postlapsarian humanity are divided by sin. 'Those chosen' are united, or rather reunited to God and historically manifested in different forms as 'the people of Israel' in a covenant relationship with God and 'the holy church' or those who believe in Christ. The nature of Christ's mystical union with the Church is signified by the corporeal and spousal metaphors.[46] These metaphors are expounded upon through reference to John 15: 1-8 in Section six of LG:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.[47]

Through our earlier examination of Aquinas's use of the term *una persona mystica*, we are now positioned to appreciate more deeply the importance of the mystical unity conveyed by this passage as well as its contextual significance leading up to Section eight of LG. There is a mystical, as opposed to merely functional, unity between Christ and the Church. In this way, the Church in Christ, refers to a 'complex reality' in the form of a mystical singularity:

This society, however, equipped with hierarchical structures, and the mystical body of Christ, a visible assembly and a spiritual community, an earthly church and a church enriched with heavenly gifts, must not be considered as two things, but as forming one complex reality comprising a human and a divine element.[48]

We may observe in this passage the emphasis on the sacramental unity of the Church as rooted in the mystical unity between Christ and the Church. At the same time, ecumenical unity is upheld insofar as the 'one complex reality' includes some who are outside of the Roman Catholic Church and yet members of the community of salvation by the grace that unites Christ and the Church as *una persona mystica*. The 'catholic unity' that those 'outside' are being drawn more deeply into overflows from the mystical unity between Christ and the Church and is, therefore, both sacramental and ecumenical. Put another way, sacramental and ecumenical unity in LG are not mere functions of the Church, but rather, complementary aspects of that same mystical unity in the light of which the nature and universal mission of the Church as at once mystically united to Christ and thereby instrumental sign of unity in a divided world come into view.

IV Conclusion

This final section concludes the arguments of this essay by reflecting upon how the interrelated but importantly distinct kinds of unity scrutinized in the preceding sections may be understood as mutually illuminative of one another in a manner that can indeed offer insight into the nature and universal mission of the Church as described by the Council Fathers during the Second Vatican Council.

As mentioned above, sacramental and ecumenical unity may be viewed as opposed to each other, whether as part of a dynamic dialectical tension or a static binary-oppositionalism. The emphasis upon the Church as a sacrament, and hence, visibly 'organised in this world as a society' can be interpreted as identifying the Catholic Church with the Roman Catholic Church exclusively, thus minimizing or even negating the 'many elements of sanctification and of truth' that exist 'outside' of the Roman Catholic Church in a manner that absorbs these elements back into the Roman Catholic Church by esoterically redefining the 'outside' into an outer ring of an inside that exists only within the Roman Catholic Church.

Such a view seems at least in tension with, if not the opposite of, an understanding of ecumenical unity that locates the Catholic Church as fully subsisting in every community where authentic faith in Christ is present and lessened in those communities only when they fail to recognize the full legitimacy of another community. To illustrate, consider Peter Kreeft's interpretation of the key passage from LG that we have been analyzing here, offered in the form of analogy:

The Protestant limbs that broke off from the Catholic tree can still have enough life-giving sap (God's truth and grace) from the root (Christ) through the trunk (the Catholic Church) to be the means of salvation for their members. The Church of Christ 'subsists in' (ccc 816; LG 8) the Roman Catholic Church most completely but not exclusively.[49]

To characterize Protestant communities as 'limbs that broke off from the Catholic tree' does not seem consistent with recognizing them as legitimate communities of faith, even if one allows them some sap, which seems contrary to a robust emphasis upon ecumenical unity. On the other hand, a forest within which each tree possesses its own sap to the degree that it recognizes the authenticity of the sap produced by the tree adjacent it may be perceived as detracting from an understanding of the Church as a sacrament capable of operating as an 'instrumental sign' of unity in a divided world.

Yet, from the point of view developed in this essay, it may be precisely at the mesh point of sacramental and ecumenical unity rooted in the mystical unity of the Church in Christ that the nature and universal mission of the Church as put forward by the Second Vatican Council is discernable: 'God has called together the assembly of those who look to Jesus in faith as the author of salvation and the principle of unity and peace, and he has constituted the church that it may be for one and all the visible sacrament of this saving unity.'[50] This passage, I contend, is exemplary of the manner in which LG as a whole weaves together strands of sacramental and ecumenical unity by rooting both in the mystical unity of Christ and the Church understood as *una persona mystica* and this for the sake of elucidating 'the nature of the church and its universal mission' in order to accompany 'the entire human race' on the journey toward achieving 'full unity in Christ'. [51] It is by approaching these interrelated but importantly distinct kinds of unity as mutually illuminative and complementary that greater insight may be had into both the Church's nature and its mission.

Footnotes

1 Vatican ii, Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, in Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. 2, ed. Norman P. Tanner S.J. (Washington, dc: Georgetown University Press, 1990): 1.1. Hereinafter I shall reference this edition as LG followed by the chapter and section numbers. All references are from Tanner's edition. With

regard to capitalization of the words 'Church' and 'Catholic' throughout, or lack thereof, I have followed the stylistic and linguistic conventions employed in the documents cited. When using the words myself, I do not intend by 'Catholic', 'Church', or 'Catholic Church' an absolute identification with the 'Roman Catholic Church'.

2 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 'Dominus Iesus, On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church' (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000).

3 The original draft for LG 1.8 unambiguously declared that 'only the Roman Catholic Church [can] rightly be called Church'. Acta synodalia sacrosancti concilli oecumenici Vaticani secundi, I.4.15. Cited in Peter Knauer S.J., 'Die "katholische Kirche" subsistiert in der "katholischen Kirche"' ('The "Catholic Church" Subsists in the "Catholic Church"') printed in *The Way* 45 (2006), pp. 79-93. The original paragraph was submitted to the Council Fathers on November 23, 1962.

4 Knauer, 'The "Catholic Church" Subsists in the "Catholic Church"'

5 LG 1.8. *Haec ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in ecclesia catholica, a successore Petri et episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritas inveniantur, quae ut dona ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.*

6 Robert Bellamine, *De Controversiis*, ii, Bk iii, 'De Ecclesia militante toto orbe terrarum diffusa' (Naples: Giuliano, 1837), p. 75; see Joseph A. Komonchak, 'Concepts of Communion, Past and Present', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 16 (1995), pp. 321-40. Cited in Komonchak, *Who are the Church?* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2008), p. 17.

7 LG 1.1.

8 di 16.

9 *Ibid.*, 17.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*, 16. Here Dominus is engaging the passage in LG 1.8 referenced at the beginning of this section.

13 di 17.

14 *Ibid.*, 18. One observes here the connection to LG 1.1.

15 Knauer, 'The "Catholic Church" Subsists in the "Catholic Church"'

16 Knauer, 'Die "katholische Kirche" subsistiert in der "katholischen Kirche"', p. 93.

17 Vatican ii, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism, in Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, 1.3.

18 Knauer, 'Die "katholische Kirche" subsistiert in der "katholischen Kirche"', p. 95.

19 I take this view as reminiscent of Leonard Swidler's claim that inter-religious or intra-religious dialogue 'can take place only between equals, or *par cum pari* as the Second Vatican Council put it. Both must come to learn from each other': Leonard Swidler, 'The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (1983).

20 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Spouse of the Word: Explorations in Theology ii* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), pp. 155-56. Balthasar is here referring to the following work: Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, vol. 1: *The Apostolic Hierarchy*, trans. A.H.C. Downes (London & New York: Sheed & Ward, 1955). The reference to Aquinas is from the *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa q.49 a. 1.

21 Heribert Mühlen, *Una Mystica Persona: Die Kirche als das Mysterium der heilsgeschichtlichen Identität des Heiligen Geistes in Christus und den Christen: Eine Person in vielen Personen*, 2nd revised edition (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1967). In this work Mühlen argues that the formula is best explained by pneumatology, i.e., the same Spirit living in Christ and Christians. From this comes his famous ecclesiological maxim that the 'Holy Spirit is one person in many persons' (p. 63). For more on Mühlen and his contribution with respect to our topic see Wolfgang Vondey, *Heribert Mühlen His Theology and Praxis: A New Profile of the Church* (Washington, d.c.: University Press of America, 2004): pp. 99-160.

22 This section builds primarily upon the study by Yves Congar, 'La personne <<Église>>', *Revue Thomiste* 71 (1971), pp. 613-40.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 613. 'Il a, peut-être le premier, souligné dans le Je suis Jésus que tu persécutes, une affirmation d'identité entre le Christ et son corps ecclesial.' Congar is here referencing Origen's commentary on the Gospel according to John (pgxiv/44-45). The Scriptural reference is to Acts 9:5.

24 Origen, *In Jo. i, xii* (pgxiv/44-45). Σαφές δέ, ότι εἰς Ἰησοῦν γίνεται τὰ εἰς τοὺς μαθητευθέντας αὐτῷ ἐπιτελούμενα. When Origen argues later in the same passage, just before the citation from Acts cited in the previous footnote, that to betray one of the disciples is to betray Christ Himself, again he refers to τῶν μαθητῶν.

25 For more on this topic see Avery Dulles, *A Church to Believe In: Discipleship and the Dynamics of Freedom* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 1-18. Also see the interpretation of the community of disciples 'model' in Komonchak, *Who are the Church?*, pp. 28-30.

26 Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*.xxx.43 (pl 34. 82; trans. R.P.H. Green, *Saint Augustine: On Christian Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 90.

27 Tyconius, *The Book of Rules*, ed. Robert Wilken and William Schoedel, trans. William Babcock (Atlanta, ga: Scholar's Press, 1989), pp. 2-3.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

31 Augustine sharply parts ways with Tyconius over this point. See Augustine, *ddciii. xxxii. 44*. We may observe that much has changed from Origen to Tyconius. In the former referring to Christ and the Church as one person is a statement about ongoing persecution, whereas in the latter it is primarily a helpful hermeneutical device. Origen and Tyconius use the reference to Christ and the Church as one person in different modes and contexts. The term has a wide range of semantic meaning.

32 Yves Congar, 'La personne <<Église>>', p. 614.

33 Quoted in *ibid.*; Augustine, *ddciii. xxxii. 44*.

34 Yves Congar, 'La personne <<Église>>', p. 615.

35 *The instances where Thomas refers to Christ and the Church as one person have been compiled by Congar; see 'La personne <<Église>>, pp. 616-617. Congar gives the list chronologically: Super Sent., lib. 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 6 qc. 1 ad 2.; De veritate, q. 29 a. 7 s. c. 3; Super ep. S. Pauli lect., in Col. I, lect. 6; In Ps. xxi, 1; In Ps. xxx, 1, Sum. Theol., IIIa q. 15, a. 1, ad 1; Ibid., q. 19, a. 4; Ibid., q. 48, a. 2, ad 1; Ibid., q. 49, a. 1. Also see the list in the more recent work of Martin Morad, 'Les expressions <<corpus mysticum>> et <<persona mystica>> dans l'oeuvre saint Thomas d'Aquin', Revue Thomiste 95 (1995), pp. 653-64. There are some minor differences between the two lists. Morad has added Super Sent., lib. 4 d. 49 q. 4 a. 3 ad 3. This essay recognizes Morad's addition, but inserts it into the chronological order given by Congar.*

36 *For a formal introduction to the Neoplatonic exitus-reditus schema see Marie-Dominique Chenu, Toward Understanding St. Thomas, trans. A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964); M.-D. Chenu, 'Le plan de la Somme théologique de saint Thomas', Revue Thomiste 47 (1939), pp. 93-107; Jean-Pierre Torrell, Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, & Reception, trans. Benedict M. Guevin (Washington, dc: Catholic University of America Press, 2005).*

37 *It is beyond the scope of the current essay to give an account of the development of Aquinas's thought on the Passion as an efficacious mode of satisfaction. This topic has been the subject of much debate in the secondary literature. Very roughly, we may outline two basic schools of thought. The first wants to see Aquinas as more or less introducing a depersonalized (as opposed to Bonaventure's personalist approach) and Aristotelian notion of satisfaction hinging on the demands of an impersonal order of justice. For familiarity with this school see Johann Auer, Die Entwicklung der Gnadenlehre in der Hochscholastik, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1951); Berndt Hamm, Promissio, Pactum, Ordinatio (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977). To become acquainted with the second school of thought, which emphasizes Thomas' development from the Scriptum super Sententiis to the Summa as increasingly personalist, see Bernard Catão, Salut et Rédemption chez S. Thomas d'Aquin: L'acte sauveur du Christ (Paris: Aubier, 1965); Otto Hermann Pesch, Die Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin (Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald-Verlag, 1967); Gérard Philips, L'union personnelle avec le Dieu vivant (Leuven: University of Leuven Press, 1974; Romanus Cessario, Christian Satisfaction in Aquinas: Towards a Personalist Understanding (Washington, d.c.: University Press of America, 1982). Also see Rik Van Nieuwenhove's essay 'Bearing the Marks of Christ's Passion' in Rik Van Nieuwenhove & Joseph Wawrykow, (eds), The Theology of Thomas Aquinas (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp. 277-302. For a comprehensive summary on merit see Joseph P. Wawrykow, God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).*

38 *Super Sent., lib. 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 6 qc. 1 ad 2.*

39 *Super Sent., lib. 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 6 qc. 1 arg. 2.*

40 *De Veritate, q. 29 a. 7 s. c. 3.*

41 *De Veritate, q. 29 a. 7 arg. 11.*

42 *De veritate, q. 29 a. 7 ad 11.*

43 *st, IIIa q. 15 a. 1.*

44 *st, IIIa q. 15 a. 1 ad 1.*

45 *st, IIIa q. 19 a. 4. See Yves Congar, 'La personne <<Église>>', pp. 617-620.*

46 *LG 1-4.*

47 *The Catholic Bible New American Bible Revised Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).*

48 LG 1.8.

49 Peter Kreeft, *Catholic Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1997), p. 112.

50 LG 2.9.

51 LG 1.1.