

Society of Saint Pius X

**FROM ECUMENISM
TO
SILENT APOSTASY**

25 years of Pontificate

Menzingen 2004

INTRODUCTION

1. The 25th anniversary of the election of John-Paul II is an occasion to reflect upon the fundamental orientation that the Pope has given to his pontificate. In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, he has wished to place his pontificate under the sign of unity: “The restoration of unity of all Christians was one of the principal purposes of the Second Vatican Council (cf. *UR* n° 1) and since my election I have formally committed myself to promote and execute its norms and its orientations, considering as my primordial duty¹.” For the Pope, this “restoration of the unity of Christians” is but one step towards a greater unity, that of the whole human family: “the unity of Christians is open to a unity ever more vast, that of all humanity².”

2. As a result of this fundamental choice:

- John Paul II has esteemed it a duty to “take into hand this conciliar *magna charta*, the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*³” which defines the Church as “a sacrament, that is to say, at the same time a *sign and means* of intimate union with God as well as of *the unity of the entire human race*⁴”. This “taking into hand” had been done in order to “better realize this vital communion in the Christ of all those who believe and hope in him, but also in order to contribute to a greater and stronger unity of the whole human family⁵”;
- John Paul II has consecrated the essence of his pontificate to the fulfilment of this unity, by repeated interreligious meetings, acts of repentance and ecumenical gestures. This has also been the principal reason for his voyages: “they have allowed me to reach the particular Churches in every continent, prompting a sustained attention to the developing of ecumenical relations with the Christians of different confessions⁶”;
- John Paul II has distinguished the Jubilee year 2000 by an ecumenical gesture⁷.

In all truthfulness, “one can say that all the activities of the local Churches and of the Apostolic See have had these last years an ecumenical inspiration⁸”. Twenty-five years have passed, the Jubilee has past, it is now the time of judgment.

3. For a long time, John Paul II has believed that his pontificate would be a new Advent⁹, permitting “the dawn of this new millennium to shine upon a Church that has found again her

¹ John Paul II, *Allocation to the Secretariat for the unity of Christians*, 18 November 1978. *La Documentation Catholique* (DC) n° 1753, 3 December 1978, pg. 1017.

² John Paul II, *Angelus Message* of 17 January 1982. DC n° 1823, 7 February 1982, pg. 144.

³ John Paul II, *First Message to the World*, 17 October 1978. DC n° 1751, 5 November 1978, pgs. 902-903.

⁴ Ecumenical Council Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n° 1.

⁵ John Paul II, *First Message to the World*, 17 October 1978. DC n° 1751, 5 November 1978, pg. 903.

⁶ John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n° 24. Cf. John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 42 : “The ecumenical celebrations are amongst the most important events of my apostolic voyages in the different parts of the world.”

⁷ John Paul II, *Sermon for the opening of the Holy Door of Saint Paul Outside the Walls*, 18 January 2000, DC n° 2219, 6 February 2000, pg. 106: “The Week of Prayer for the Unity of Christians begins today in Rome with the celebration of him who sees us united. I desired that it would coincide with the opening of the Holy Door of this Basilica consecrated to the Apostle of the nations, to emphasize the ecumenical dimension that must distinguish this Jubilee Year 2000.”

⁸ John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n° 34.

⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, n° 1.

full unity¹⁰.” Thus the “dream” of the Pope will be realized: “that all the peoples of the world from different parts of the globe, coming together to unite themselves to the unique God as one whole family¹¹”. But the reality is completely different: “The time in which we live seems to be an aberrant epoch where many men and women seem disoriented¹²”. There reigns over Europe a “sort of practical agnosticism and religious indifferentism” to such a degree that “European culture gives the impression of a ‘silent apostasy’¹³.” The ecumenism is not a stranger to this situation. This analysis of the thought of John Paul II (First Part) will show us that, not without a profound sadness, the ecumenical practices come from a non-catholic thought (Second Part) and lead to a “silent apostasy” (Third Part).

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Sermon given on in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Dimitrios I* on 29 November 1979 at Istanbul. DC n° 1776, 16 December 1979, pg. 1056.

¹¹ John Paul II, *Message for the 15th International Prayer Meeting for Peace*. DC n° 2255, 7 October 2001, pg. 818.

¹² John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, n° 7, DC n° 2296, 20 July 2003, pg. 670-671.

¹³ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, n° 7 & 9, DC n° 2296, 20 July 2003, pg. 671-72.

Chapter I

ANALYSIS OF THE ECUMENICAL THOUGHT

The Unity of the Human Race and Inter-religious dialogue

Christ, united to every man

4. The foundation of the thought of the Pope is found in the affirmation that states that “the Christ ‘has united himself in a certain way to all men of’ (*Gaudium et Spes* n° 22), even if these men are not aware of it¹⁴.” John Paul II explains, actually, that the Redemption wrought by Christ is universal not only in the sense that it is superabundant for the entire human race, and that it is proposed to each of its members in particular, but especially that it is *de facto* applied to all men: if then, from one point of view, “in the Christ, religion is no longer a ‘search for God by trial and error’ (Acts 17, 27), but a response of the faith in God who reveals Himself [...], a response made possible by this unique Man [...] in whom every man is made capable to respond to God”. From another viewpoint, the Pope adds “that in this Man, whole creation responds to God¹⁵.” In actuality, “each man is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery. [...] That 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 conceived¹⁶.” In such a way that “in the Holy Spirit, each person and all peoples have become, by the Cross and resurrection of Christ, the children of God, participators in the divine nature and the heirs of eternal life¹⁷.”

The Meeting at Assisi

5. An immediate application of universality of the Redemption is the manner in which John Paul II treats the relations between the Church and other religions. If the commandment of unity previously described “is that which come from the creation and the redemption, and is thus, in this sense “divine”, these differences and these divergences, even religious, come rather from a ‘human con-sequence’¹⁸” which ought to be “left behind by the progress towards the realization of the grandiose design of unity which precedes the creation.¹⁹” From this follows the inter-faith meetings such as at Assisi, 27 October 1986, during which the Pope wanted to detect “in a visible way the fundamental but ridden unity which the divine

¹⁴ John Paul II, Discourse to the Cardinals and to the Curia of 22 December 1986, *The situation of in the world and the spirit of Assisi*. DC n° 1933, 1 February 1987, pg. 134.

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n° 6.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* n° 13.

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Message to the Peoples of Asia*, 21 February 1981. DC n° 1804, 15 March 1981, pg. 281.

¹⁸ John Paul II, Discourse to the Cardinals and to the Curia of 22 December 1986, *The situation of the Church in the world and the spirit of Assisi*. DC n° 1933, 1 February 1987, pg. 134.

¹⁹ John Paul II, *ibid.*

Word [...] has established amongst all men and all women of this world.²⁰” By these acts, the Pope wishes to proclaim to the Church that “Christ is the fulfilment of the yearning of all the world’s religions and, as such, he is their sole and definitive completion²¹.”

The Church of Christ and Ecumenism

The Unique Church of Christ

6. The divine unity resting intact, the historical divisions come from that which is human; this double scheme is applied to the Church, considered as a communion. John Paul II distinguishes, in fact, the Church of Christ, the divine reality, and the different churches, fruits of “human divisions²²”. The contours of the Church of Christ are fairly ill defined as they overflow the visible limits of the Catholic Church²³. The Church of Christ is an interior reality²⁴. The Church gathers together at least the entirety of Christians²⁵, no matter what

²⁰ John Paul II, *ibid*, pg. 133.

²¹ John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n° 6.

²² John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 42 : “The very expression ‘separated brethren’ tends to be replaced today by expressions which more readily evoke the deep communion — linked to the baptismal character — which the Spirit fosters in spite of *historical and canonical divisions*.”

²³ Ecumenical Council Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3 : “Moreover, some and even very many 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 unique Catholic Church. [...] All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ.” For this reason the document *Lumen Gentium* (n° 8) says that the Church of Christ “subsists in” the Catholic Church, and not that she “is” the Church of Christ. See the commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger, *Ecclesiology of the Conciliar Constitution Lumen Gentium*, conference of 27 February 2000. DC n° 2223, 2 April 2000, pgs. 310-311: “By this expression, the Council differentiates from the formula of Pius XII who in his Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* stated that the Catholic Church “is” (*est*, in latin) the unique mystical body of Christ. [...] The difference between ‘subsists’ and ‘is’ shows the drama of ecclesial division. Even though the Church is one and subsists in a unique subject, *ecclesiastical realities exist outside of this subject*: true local Churches and various ecclesial Communities.”

²⁴ This affirmation follows directly from the manner in which *Lumen Gentium* (n° 7, 8) presents the Church. Up until this point, the Magisterium speaks of the Church using the analogy of Saint Paul, the Church being the body of Christ; body, thus visible: “She is a body and thus the Church is visible to our glances.” (Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum*, DzH 3300) Yet the Council refuses to make this allusion: it treats separately the Church as the Body of Christ (*LG* n° 7) and of the visibility of the Catholic Church (*LG* n°8). Thus it lets to be understood that the Church, Body of Christ [Church of Christ] is not of itself something visible. Certainly, *LG* n° 8 affirms the necessary union of the Church of Christ and of the organic Church: “The society structured with hierarchical organs [Catholic Church] and the Mystical Body of Christ [Church of Christ], are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly [Catholic Church] and the spiritual community [Church of Christ], nor the earthly Church [Catholic Church] and the Church enriched with heavenly things [Church of Christ]; rather they form one complex reality”. But this affirmation is not sufficient: the union of two distinct things – the Church of Christ and the organic Church – is not an affirmation of the unity proper to the Church. This unity on the contrary is refused when it says that the Church of Christ “subsists in the Catholic Church”: the relation between the container and the contents is not that of identity, especially when it is affirmed that the Church of Christ makes itself actively present elsewhere than in the Catholic Church which is perfectly contained therein. In consequence of this affirmation and from the development of *LG* n° 15, John Paul II often states that the baptized, in spite of his ecclesial membership, is and rests united to Christ, incorporated in Him. This theory affirming that the Church is interior is so widespread that the cardinals, even so different as J. Ratzinger and W. Kasper, make mention of it as evident : “ ‘The Church awakes in souls’: this sentence of Guardini has been nurtured for a long time. In fact, it shows that *the Church has been finally recognized and lived as something interior*, which does not exist as some sort of institution facing us, but rather living in ourselves. If, up until then, the Church had been considered firstly as a structure and an organization, *one finally becomes aware that we ourselves are the Church*. She was much more than an organization: She was the organ of the Holy Ghost, *something vital, in the depths of our conscience*. This new awareness of the Church finds its linguistic expression in the concept of the ‘Mystical Body of Christ’ ” (J. Ratzinger, *Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, conference given the 15 September 2001 on the occasion of the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa); “The True nature of the Church – the Church as the Body of Christ – is hidden, and can only be perceived by faith. But this nature, perceived uniquely by faith, becomes realized under visible forms.” (W. Kasper, *The Ecumenical Commitment of the Catholic Church*, conference given 23 March 2003 to the general assembly of the Federated Protestants of France, *Ecuménisme informations* n° 325, May 2002 and n°326, June 2002).

²⁵ “At least”, because Karol Wojtyła goes further in reality, as at the occasion of the retreat that he preached to the Vatican when he was Cardinal: “O God of infinite majesty! The Trappist or the Carthusian confess this God by a whole life of silence. The Bedouin wandering in the desert turns toward him when the hour of prayer approaches. And this Buddhist monk absorbed in contemplation, who purifies his spirit in turning it towards Nirvana: but is it only towards Nirvana? [...] The Church of the Living God unites in her precisely these peoples who in some manner participate to this admirable and fundamental transcendence of the human spirit.” (Karol Wojtyła, *Le signe de contradiction*, Ed. Fayard 1979, pgs. 31-32)

church they belong to: all are “disciples of Christ²⁶”, “in a common membership to Christ²⁷”; they “are one, because, in the Spirit, they are in the communion with the Son, and in Him, in communion with the Father²⁸”. The Church of Christ is thus the Communion of Saints, above all divisions: “The Church is the Communion of Saints.²⁹” In reality, “the communion in which Christians believe and hope in is a profound reality, their union with the Father by the Christ and in the Holy Ghost. Since the day of Pentecost, this union is given and received in the Church, the Communion of Saints³⁰.”

The divisions in the Church

7. According to John Paul II, divisions in the Church which have happened during the course of history never affected the Church of Christ, that is to say that the fundamental unity of Christians amongst themselves has been left inviolate: “By the grace of God, that which belongs to the structure of the Church of Christ has not yet been destroyed, nor the communion which endures with the other churches and ecclesial communities³¹.” These divisions are in reality of another order, they only concern the manifestation of the communion of saints, that which makes it visible: the traditional bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and the hierarchical communion. In refusing one or other of these bonds, the separated Churches interfere only with the interests of the *visible* communion with the Catholic Church, and this only partially: this said communion is lesser or greater according to the number of ties that have been safeguarded. One thus speaks of the imperfect communion between the separated churches and the Catholic Church, the communion of all in the unique Church of Christ remaining intact³². The term “sister-churches” is often used³³.

8. According to this conception, that which unites the different Christian Churches is greater than that which separates them³⁴: “The common spiritual dimension surpasses all the confessional barriers which separates us from each other³⁵”. This spiritual dimension, such is the Church of Christ. If this Church only “subsists³⁶” “in an unique subject³⁷” in the Catholic

²⁶ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 42.

²⁷ John Paul II, *ibid.*

²⁸ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 9.

²⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter concerning certain aspects of the Church understood as communion*, n° 6; DC n° 2055, 2 August 1992, pgs 730.

³⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter concerning certain aspects of the Church understood as communion*, n° 6; DC n° 2055, 2 August 1992, pgs 730.

³¹ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 11.

³² Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3: “For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized *are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect*. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church – whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church – do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to *full ecclesiastical communion*. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles.” After speaking of this visible communion partially broken, the decree adds, in order to show the permanence of invisible communion: “But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ’s body, and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church. [...] The brethren divided from us also use many liturgical actions of the Christian religion. These most certainly can truly engender a life of grace in ways that vary according to the condition of each Church or Community. These liturgical actions must be regarded as *capable of giving access to the community of salvation*.”

³³ Cf. John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 56, 57 and 60; *Allocution in the Basilica Saint Nicolas of Bari*, 26 February 1984. DC n° 1872, 15 April 1984, pg. 414; *Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Assyrian Church*, DC n° 2106, 18 December 1994, pg. 1070; *Sermon pronounced in presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Dimitrios I*, 29 November 1979 at Istanbul. DC n° 1776, 16 December 1979, pg. 1056: “I invite you to pray with fervor for the full communion of our Churches. [...] Beg the Lord that we, pastors of Sister-Churches, might be the best instruments in this historic hour, to govern these Churches, that is to serve them as the Lord wishes, and thus to serve the unique Church which is His Body.”

³⁴ Cf. John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n°16.

³⁵ John Paul II, *Discourse to the delegation of the Lutheran World Federation*, 9 December 1999, DC n° 2219, 6 February 2000, pg. 109.

³⁶ Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* n° 8; Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 4; Declaration *Dignitatis humanae*, n° 1.

Church, she keeps at the least an “active presence” in the separated communities in reason of the “elements of sanctification and truth³⁸” which are present in them. This alleged common spiritual dimension John Paul II wished to ratify by the publication of a martyrology common to the churches: “The ecumenism of the saints, of the martyrs, is perhaps that which is the most convincing. The voice of the *communio of saints* is stronger than that of the troublemakers of division³⁹.”

Neither absorption nor fusion, but reciprocal giving

9. From this, “the ultimate end of the ecumenical movement” is only “the reestablishment of the full visible unity of all the baptized⁴⁰.” A unity so conceived will no longer be realized by the “ecumenism of return⁴¹”: “We reject this method of searching for unity. [...] The pastoral action of the Catholic Church, both Latin and Eastern, no longer tries to make the faithful pass from one Church to another⁴².” In fact this would forget two things:

- -These divisions, which Vatican II analyzes as a breach of charity⁴³, are attributable to both parties: “Evoking the division of Christians, the Decree on Ecumenism does not ignore ‘the fault of men of either parties’, recognizing that the responsibility cannot be attributed ‘only to the other party (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, n° 3)⁴⁴.”
- -Ecumenism is also a “exchange of gifts⁴⁵” between the churches: “The exchange of complementary gifts between the churches makes the communion fruitful⁴⁶.” This is the reason why the unity desired by John Paul II “is neither absorption nor fusion⁴⁷.” Applying this principle to the relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox, the Pope develops this idea: “Today, the two sister-churches of the East and West understand that without a mutual understanding of the profound underlying reasons which characterize the understanding of each of them, without a reciprocal giving of the treasures of the genius they carry, the Church of Christ cannot manifest the full maturity which she had received from the beginning, in the cenacle⁴⁸.”

³⁷ Cardinal Ratzinger, *Ecclesiology of the Conciliar Constitution Lumen Gentium*, conference given the 27 February 2000. DC n° 2223, 2 April 2000, pg. 311.

³⁸ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3; John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 11.

³⁹ John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n° 37.

⁴⁰ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 77.

⁴¹ One understands the term “ecumenism of return” as Pius XI in his encyclical *Mortalium Animos*: “To encourage the to return the dissidents to the only true Church of Christ, as they had in the past the misfortune to separate themselves from her. The return the unique true Church, as we say, clearly visible to our eyes.”

⁴² *Declaration of the International Mixed Commission for the theological Dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Church*, 23 June 1993, also called the “Balamand Declaration”, n° 2 and 22. DC n° 2077, 1 August 1993, pg. 713. This citation only concerns “uniatism”, but Cardinal Kasper gives more systematic formulation “The old concept of ecumenism of return today has been replaced by that of a common journey, which directs Christians towards an ecclesial communion comprised as a unity in reconciled diversity”. (W. Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification : a reason for hope*. DC n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 167)

⁴³ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3: “In subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions made their appearance [...] which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame.” From which the nature of conversion demanded by this document, n° 7: “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way.” Cf. Cardinal Kasper, *Conference to the Ecumenical Conference of Churches of Berlin*. DC n° 2298, 21 September 2003: “‘Conver’. There is no ecumenical reconciliation without conversion and renewal. There is no conversion from one confession to another. This could happen in particular cases, but only for reasons of conscience – this merits respect and consideration. But there is no need for the others to convert, as conversion begins with oneself. Everyone must convert. We must not ask firstly ‘what is wrong with the other’, but rather ‘what is wrong with us; where should we begin to clean house?’”

⁴⁴ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 11; cf. n° 34.

⁴⁵ Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n° 13; cf. John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 28.

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 57.

⁴⁷ John Paul II, *Allocution in the Basilica Saint Nicolas*, 26 February 1984, given in the presence of the Metropolitan of Myre, Konstantinidis (patriarchat of Constantiople). DC n° 1872, 15 April 1984, pg. 414.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The Recomposition of the Visible Unity

10. “Just as in a family the eventual discords ought to leave their place to the recomposition of unity, so also one should do the same for the vast family of the whole Christian community⁴⁹.” This exceeding of human dissensions by the recomposition of the visible unity is the methodology of the Pope. One must apply this methodology to the traditional three bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and the hierarchical communion, seeing that these are what constitute the visibility of this unity.

Unity of the Sacraments

11. One knows how Paul VI has applied this method in the sacraments: in the successive liturgical reforms which applied the conciliar decrees, “the Church has been guided [...] by the desire to do everything to help our separated brethren on the way to union, taking away the stones that could be even the shadow of a risk of stumbling or displeasure⁵⁰.”

12. The obstacle of a Catholic liturgy expressing too much dogma being thus put aside, there remains the problems posed by the liturgies of the separated communities to be overcome. The reform thus gives place to recognition: the Assyrian anaphora (Nestorian) of Addai and Mari was declared valid by a document clearly approved by John Paul II, in spite of the fact that it does not contain the words of consecration⁵¹.

Unity in the Profession of Faith

13. In what concerns matters of faith, John Paul II considers that “the polemics and the intolerant controversies have often transformed into incompatible affirmations of what was in fact the result of two researches investigating the same reality, two different points of view. Today we must find the formula that, taking hold of this reality in its integrity, permits us to overcome the half-reading and to eliminate erroneous interpretations⁵².” This demands a certain latitude in respect to the dogmatic formulas used by the Church up until now. One must resort to historical relativism, in order to make the dogmatic formulas depend on their epoch: “The truths which the Church really understands to teach by her dogmatic formulas are without a doubt distinct from the changing concepts proper to a determined epoch; but it is not excluded that they might possibly be formulated, even by the Magisterium, in terms which carry some traces of such concepts⁵³.”

14. Two applications of these principles are often pointed out as examples. In the case of the Nestorian heresy, John Paul II judges that “the divisions which came about were in large measure due to misunderstandings⁵⁴.” In effect, if the principle which states that “In the first place, with regard to doctrinal formulations which differ from those normally in use in the community to which one belongs, it is certainly right to determine whether the words involved say the same thing⁵⁵” is clear, the practical application is embezzled. From this follows the recognition of the Christological faith of the Eastern Assyrian Church without any demand that they adhere to the formula of the Council of Ephesus, that Mary is the Mother of

⁴⁹ John Paul II, *Angelus* of 17 January 1982. DC n° 1823, 7 February 1982, pg. 144.

⁵⁰ A. Bugnini, *Modification to the Solemn Prayers of Good Friday*. DC n° 1445, 4 March 1965, col. 603. Cf. G. Celier, *La dimension œcuménique de la réforme liturgique*, Editions Fideliter, 1987, pg. 34.

⁵¹ Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, Italian edition, 26 October 2001. *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of East*, Note and orientations of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, DC n° 2265, 3 March 2002, pg. 214.

⁵² John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 38.

⁵³ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 38, quoting the Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. DC n° 1636, 15 July 1973, pg. 267.

⁵⁴ *Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of East*, DC n° 2106, 18 December 1994, pg. 1609.

⁵⁵ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 38.

God⁵⁶. Even more characteristic is the common declaration with the World Lutheran Federation. Its solicitude was not to state the faith and to stay clear of error, but only to find a formulation suitable to escape the anathemas of the Council of Trent: “This common declaration carries the conviction that *the surpassing of condemnations* and questions of momentary controversy *does not signify* that the separations and condemnations be treated lightly or that the past of each our ecclesial traditions be disavowed. Nonetheless, this declaration carries the conviction that a *new discernment* of the history of our Churches has occurred⁵⁷.” Cardinal Kasper summarized it simply with the commentary: “Where we had at first sight a contradiction, we can now see a complementary position⁵⁸.”

The hierarchical communion

15. As far as the Petrine ministry is concerned, the desires of the pontiff are known: to find, in harmony with the pastors and theologians of different Churches, “the forms in which this ministry could realize a service of love recognized by each⁵⁹.” Thus is introduced the standard of the *necessitas Ecclesiae*⁶⁰, understood today as the realization of the unity of Christians, to palliate that which in the exercise of the petrinian ministry could become an obstacle to ecumenism.

16. According to Cardinal Kasper, this proceeding does not suffice. One must overcome the obstacles present in the separated communities, for example the decreed invalidity of Anglican orders⁶¹. The course that he proposes for this is a redefining of the concept of Apostolic succession, no longer “in the sense of a historical chain of the imposition of hands going back centuries to the Apostles – this vision would be a very individualistic and mechanical” but rather as “a collegial participation in a college which, as a whole, goes back to the Apostles by a sharing in the same apostolic faith and the same apostolic mission⁶².”

⁵⁶ DC n° 2106, 18 December 1994, pg. 1069. Cf. DzH, n° 251d and 252.

⁵⁷ *Common Declaration of the World Lutheran Federation and the Catholic Church*, n° 7 (cf. N° 5, 13, 40-42). DC n° 2168, 19 October 1997, pgs. 875.

⁵⁸ W. Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: a reason for hope*. DC n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 172.

⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 95.

⁶⁰ *The Primacy of the Successor of Peter in the Mystery of the Church*, reflections of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. DC n° 2193, 6 December 1998, pg. 1018.

⁶¹ Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae curae*, 13 September 1896.

⁶² W. Kasper, *May They All be One? But How? A Vision of Christian Unity for the Next Generation*, The Tablet, 24 May 2003.

Chapter II

THE DOCTRINAL PROBLEMS POSED BY THE ECUMENISM⁶³

17. The ecumenical practice of this Pontificate is entirely established upon the distinction between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church. This division permits to assert that if the visible communion has been injured by ecclesiastical divisions, the communion of saints, considered as the sharing of spiritual goods in a common union with Christ, has not been broken. Yet this affirmation does not correspond to the Catholic faith.

The Church of Christ is the Catholic Church

18. One cannot distinguish the Church of Christ from the Catholic Church as this ecumenical practice presupposes. By the very fact that the Church is considered as an interior reality, this “Church, Body of Christ”, really distinct from the Catholic Church, rejoins the protestant notion of a “Church invisible to us, visible only to the eyes of God⁶⁴”. This notion is contrary to the invariable teaching of the Church. For example, Leo XIII, speaking of the Church, affirms: “It is because [the Church] is a body that she is visible to our eyes⁶⁵.” Pius XI does not say anything different: “Christ Our Lord, has established His Church as a perfect *society, exterior by nature* and perceptible to the senses⁶⁶.” Pius XII thus concludes: “It is to depart from the divine truth to imagine one Church which cannot be seen nor touched, which would be only ‘spiritual’ (*pneumaticum*), into which the numerous Christian communities, even though separated by the faith, could nonetheless be reunited by an invisible bond⁶⁷.”

19. The Catholic faith thus obliges to affirm the identity of the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church. Pius XII thus identifies “the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ” to “this veritable Church of Jesus Christ – Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman⁶⁸”. Before Pius XII, the Magisterium had affirmed: “There is no other Church but that which built upon Peter alone, in one body joined and convoked together [‘visible’ understood], rising up in the unity of the faith and charity⁶⁹.” Lastly, let us call to mind the exclamation of Pius IX: “There is only one true and holy religion, founded and instituted by Christ, Our Lord. Mother and nurse of virtue, destroyer of vice, liberator of souls, guide of true happiness; she is called: Catholic, Apostolic, Roman⁷⁰.” Following a constant and universal magisterium, the first preparatory schema of Vatican I was going to put forward this condemnatory canon: “If any says that the

⁶³ Limiting ourselves to the refutation of ecumenism, we will not study the teaching of John Paul II concerning the redemption accomplished *de facto* in each person and each nation. We will simply say that such a proposition is completely strange to the Catholic faith and implies its destruction from top to bottom (for example, what becomes of the necessity of baptism?)

⁶⁴ Calvin, *Institutiones*, I. 4, c. 4.

⁶⁵ Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis Cognitum*, DzH n° 3300 ff.

⁶⁶ Pius XI, Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, AAS 20 (1928), pg. 8, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solemnes, *The Church*, vol 1, n° 861.

⁶⁷ Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943), pgs. 199-200, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solemnes, *The Church*, vol 2, n° 1015.

⁶⁸ Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, *Ibid.*, pg. 199, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solemnes, *The Church*, vol 2, n° 1014.

⁶⁹ *Letter of the Holy Office to the Bishops of England*, 16 September 1864, DzH n° 2888.

⁷⁰ Pius IX, *Allocution to the Consistory*, 18 July 1861, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solemnes, *The Church*, vol 1, n° 230.

Church, who has received the divine promises, is not a external and visible society of the faithful, but only a spiritual society of the predestined or of the just known only to God, let him be anathema⁷¹.”

20. By consequence, the proposition of Cardinal Kasper which states: “The true nature of the Church – the Church in so far as the Body of Christ – is hidden and can only be grasped by the faith⁷²,” is certainly heretical. To add that “this nature perceived only by the faith is realized under visible forms: in the proclaimed Word, by the administration of the sacraments, and the ministry of Christian service⁷³,” is insufficient to account for the visibility of the Church: “To become visible” – by only simple acts – is not “to be visible”.

Belonging to the Church by a Triple Unity

21. Seeing that the Church of Christ *is* the Catholic Church, one cannot affirm, as the supporters of ecumenism, that the triple union of faith, sacraments and hierarchical communion is only necessary to the *visible* communion of the Church. This assertion is taken in the sense that the absence of one of these bonds, though manifesting a rupture in the visible communion of the Church, does not signify a vital separation from the Church. On the contrary, one must affirm that these three bonds are *constitutive* of the unity of the Church, not in the sense that just one could unite to the Church, but of the fact that if just one of these three bonds is lacking *in re vel saltem in voto*⁷⁴, one would be separated from the Church and would not benefit from her supernatural life. This is what the Catholic faith obliges to believe, as that which follows will show.

Unity of the Faith

22. If the necessity of the faith is admitted by all⁷⁵, we must state precisely the nature of this faith which is necessary for salvation, and which is thus constitutive of belonging to the Church. The faith is not “this intimate sentiment begotten by the need of the divine” denounced by Saint Pius X⁷⁶, but rather as that described by the First Vatican Council: “a

⁷¹ Second preparatory schema of Vatican I concerning the Church, canon 4, Mansi, 53, 316.

⁷² W. Kasper, *The Engagement of the Catholic Church in Ecumenism*, conference given to the General Assembly of French Protestants, 23 March 2002. *Œcuménisme informations* n° 325 (May 2002) and 326 (June 2002)

⁷³ W. Kasper, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ This triple bond must, let us repeat, be possessed either in fact or at least “by a certain desire or unconscious wish” (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, *AAS* 35 (1943), pg. 243, DzH 3821). But the Church is not judge of this desire. In juridical matters – which is the case here – the Church cannot judge the interior realities of the conscience of each, but only of that which is evident: “Of the state of mind and of the intention, the Church does not judge, as they are interior; but in so far as they are apparent, she must judge them” (Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter *Apostolicae curae*, 13 September 1896, concerning the nullity of Anglican ordinations, *ASS* 29 (1896), pg. 201. DzH 3318). Therefore, even if, *in her pastoral care*, as a good mother, she is inclined to hope of an “at least unconscious desire” of belonging to her when she finds souls that are in danger of death (Dom. M. Prümmer, O.P., *Manuale theologiae moralis*, T. 1, n° 514, 3), nonetheless, *juridically*, the Church does not presume this appertaining in normal situations. For this reason she demands, *ad cautelam*, their abjuration of schism or heresy when they return to the Catholic Church (CIC 1917, can. 2314, §2). For even greater reasons she doesn’t presume the good faith of the dissidents when they are considered as a constituted body, in a community visibly separated from the Catholic Church, such as ecumenism envisages. That which we have said of the three elements necessary in order to belong to the Catholic Church presupposes the said presumption. Willing to leave this out would be moving into the uncertain and the unreal.

⁷⁵ Hebrews 11, 6: “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

⁷⁶ Saint Pius X, *Pascendi dominici gregis*: “The faith, principle and foundation of all religion, resides in a certain internal sentiment begotten by the need for the divine. [...] such is the faith for the modernists, and with faith so understood, the beginning of all religion” (*Acta S. Pii X* (1907), pg. 52. DzH 3477 does not cite this in its integrity). This brief description should be compared to the thought of Karol Wojtyła (*The Sign of Contradiction*, Ed. Fayard 1979, pgs. 31-32): “O God of infinite majesty! The trappist or the carthusian confess this God by a whole life of silence. The Bedouin wandering in the desert turns toward him when the hour of prayer approaches. And this Buddhist monk absorbed in contemplation, who purifies his spirit in turning it towards Nirvana: but is it only towards Nirvana? [...] *The Church of the Living God unites in her precisely these peoples who in some manner participate to this admirable and fundamental transcendence of the human spirit, because she knows that no one can appease the most profound aspirations of this spirit but He alone, the God of infinite majesty.*”

supernatural virtue by which, under the inspiration and the aid of the grace of God, we believe that which He has revealed to us to be true: we believe it, not because of the intrinsic truth of the things seen by the natural light of our reason, but because of the very authority of God who has revealed us these truths, who can neither deceive nor be deceived⁷⁷.” For this reason whoever refuses but one truth of the faith known to be revealed loses completely the faith which is indispensable for salvation: “Anyone who, even of only one point, refuses to really assent to the truths divinely revealed renounces entirely the faith, because he refuses to submit himself to God as the Sovereign Truth, the very motif of the faith⁷⁸.”

Unity of Government

23. “In order to guard forever intact in His Church this unity of faith and of doctrine, He [the Christ] chose a man amongst all the others, Peter...⁷⁹”: so Pius IX introduces the necessity of unity to the chair of Peter, “a dogma of our divine religion which has always been preached, defended, affirmed with one heart and one unanimous voice by the Fathers and Councils of all time.” Following the Fathers, the same Pope develops: “it is from this [chair of Peter] from which flow all the rights of divine union⁸⁰; he who separates himself from her cannot hope to stay in the Church⁸¹, he who partakes of the Lamb outside of her does not have part with God⁸².” Whence this celebrated sentence of Saint Augustine addressed to the schismatics: “That which belongs to you, is your impiety to separate yourselves from us; if, for all the rest, you think and you possess the truth, in persevering in your separation [...] you lack that which lacks in him who has not charity⁸³.”

Unity of the Sacraments

24. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved⁸⁴.” By these words of Our Lord, all recognize the necessity, besides the unity of the faith and the end, of a “community of means appropriate to the end⁸⁵” in order to constitute the unity of the Church: the sacraments. Such is the “Catholic Church [which Christ instituted], bought by His Blood, as the unique dwelling of the living God, [...] the unique Body animated and vivified by a unique Spirit, kept harmoniously together by the unity of the faith, hope and charity, by the bonds of the sacraments, of worship and of doctrine⁸⁶.”

Conclusion

25. The necessity of this triple bond thus obliges us to believe that “whoever refuses to listen to the Church ought to be considered, according to the command of the Lord, ‘as a pagan and a publican’ (Mt 18, 17) and those who have disunited themselves for reasons of faith or of government cannot live in this same Body nor by consequence live by this same divine Spirit⁸⁷.”

⁷⁷ Vatican I, Session 3, c. 3, DzH n° 3008.

⁷⁸ Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, 29 June 1896, ASS 28 (1895-1896), pg. 722. *Pontifical Teachings, Solemnnes, The Church*, volume 1, n° 573.

⁷⁹ Pius IX, Encyclical *Amantissimus*, 8 April 1862, *Pontifical Teachings, Solemnnes, The Church*, volume 1, n° 233, 234-237.

⁸⁰ Cf. Saint Ambrose, Epistle 11 *ad imperatores*.

⁸¹ Cf. Saint Cyprian, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.

⁸² Cf. Saint Jerome, Epistle 51 *ad Damasum*.

⁸³ Saint Augustine, *De baptismo contra donatistas*, lib. 1, ch. 14, §22.

⁸⁴ Mc 16, 16.

⁸⁵ Leo XIII, Encyclical *Satis cognitum*, ASS 28 (1895-1896), pg. 724, *Pontifical Teachings, Solemnnes, The Church*, volume 1, n° 578.

⁸⁶ Pius IX, Encyclical *Amantissimus*, 8 April 1862, *Pontifical Teachings, Solemnnes, The Church*, volume 1, n° 233.

⁸⁷ Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, 29 June 1943, ASS 35 (1943), pg. 203. DzH 3802.

Outside of the Church, no Salvation

Are non-catholics members of the Church?

26. In consequence of that which has been said, the following proposition “those [born outside of the Catholic Church not being able to ‘be accused of the sin of division’] who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect” to the point that “justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ’s body and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church” even though “the differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church – whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church – do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones⁸⁸” must be attentively examined; if this proposition is understood to speak of those who continue in these differences knowingly, it is contrary to the Catholic faith. The clause affirming “they cannot be accused of the sin of involved in the separation” is at least a rash statement: remaining exteriorly in dissidence, there is nothing that indicates that they do not adhere to the separation of their predecessors, the appearances speak rather the contrary. To presume their good faith is not possible⁸⁹, as Pius IX states: “It is of faith that outside of the Apostolic and Roman Church, no one can be saved. [...] Nonetheless, it must be recognized also that with certitude, that those who are invincibly ignorant of the true religion are not culpable before the Lord. But now who truly will go in his presumption to mark the boundaries of this ignorance?⁹⁰”

Are there elements of sanctification and truth in the separated communities?

27. The affirmation that “a number of elements of sanctification and of truth⁹¹” are found outside of the Church is equivocal. This proposition implies in effect the sanctifying power of the means of salvation materially present in the separated Communities. But this cannot be affirmed without distinction. Amongst these elements, those which do not require a specific disposition on the part of the subject – the baptism of a child for instance – are effectively salutary in the sense that they produce grace efficaciously in the soul of the baptized, who thereby belongs to the Catholic Church without need of sanction to such a degree that he has not reached the age of personal choice⁹². For the other elements, which require the dispositions on the part of the subject in order to be efficacious, one must say that they are salutary only in the measure in which the subject is already a member of the Church by his implicit desire. This is what the councils have affirmed: “She [the Church] professes that the unity of the body of the Church has such a power that the sacraments of the Church are only useful for the salvation of those who dwell in Her⁹³.” Yet in so far as they are separated, these communities are opposed to this implicit desire that renders the sacraments fruitful. Thus one cannot say that these communities possess elements of sanctification and truth, except materially.

⁸⁸ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3, of which we cite the complete passage: “The children who are born into these communities and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic Church embraces upon them as brothers, with respect and affection. For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church – whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church – do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ’s body and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church”.

⁸⁹ See above, note 74.

⁹⁰ Pius IX, Allocution *Singulari Quadam*, 9 December 1954, Dz 1647 (old numbering; absent in DzH).

⁹¹ Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n° 8.

⁹² Benedict XIV, Brief *Singulari nobis*, 9 February 1749, DzH n° 2566-2568.

⁹³ Council of Florence, Bull *Cantate Domino* for the Jacobites, DzH 1351.

Does the Holy Ghost use the separated communities as a means of salvation? The so-called “sister-churches”

28. One cannot affirm that “the Spirit of Christ does not refuse to use them [the separated communities] as a means of salvation⁹⁴.” Saint Augustin affirms: “There is but one Church, who alone is called Catholic, and it is she who begets by virtue of that which remains her property in those sects who are separated from her unity, no matter who possesses them⁹⁵.” The only thing that these separated communities can realize by their own power, is the separation of these souls from ecclesial unity, as again Saint Augustine indicates: “It [baptism] does not belong to you. That which is yours are your bad sentiments and sacrilegious practices, and that you have the impiety to separate yourselves from us⁹⁶.” In the degree in which this assertion of the Council contradicts the affirmation that the Catholic Church is the unique possessor of the means of salvation, it approaches heresy. If, in according a “significance and a value in the mystery of salvation⁹⁷”, it recognizes in these separated communities a quasi-legitimacy – such as the expression “sister-churches⁹⁸” makes understood – this assertion is opposed to the catholic doctrine because it denies the unicity of the Catholic Church.

Is that which unites us greater than that which separates us?

29. If the separated Communities are not formally speaking holders of the elements of sanctification and truth – such as was said above – the proposition which states that that which unites the Catholics to dissidents is greater than that which separates them is true materially speaking, in the sense that all of these elements are references that could serve as a base for discussions that would bring them back to the fold. This assertion nonetheless cannot be formally true, and this is why Saint Augustine says: “In many things they are with me, only in a few they are not with me; but because of these few points they have separated themselves from me, it doesn’t mean anything that they be with me with all the rest⁹⁹.”

Conclusion

30. The ecumenism, could only be likened to the “Branch Theory¹⁰⁰” condemned by the Magisterium: “Its foundation [...] is such that it overturns from top to bottom the divine constitution of the Church” and its prayer for unity, “from its highest point stained and infected by heresy, absolutely cannot be tolerated¹⁰¹.”

⁹⁴ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3.

⁹⁵ Saint Augustin, *De baptismo contra donatistas*, lib 1, ch. 10, n° 14.

⁹⁶ Saint Augustine, *De baptismo contra donatistas*, lib. 1, ch. 14, n° 22.

⁹⁷ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 3.

⁹⁸ Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Ecclesiology of the Conciliar Constitution Lumen Gentium*. DC n° 2223, 2 April 2000, pg. 301. “Even though the Church be only one and *subsist* in a unique subject, there are ecclesial realities which exist outside of this subject: veritable local Churches and the diverse ecclesial Communities.” That is in effect that “one finds therein the elements essential for a Church: the preaching of the Word of God and baptism, the active presence of the Holy Ghost, faith, hope and charity, the forms of sanctity even to martyrdom. One can speak of a different configuration of these constitutive ecclesial elements, or Church of another sort or another type.” (W. Kasper, *The Engagement of the Catholic Church in Ecumenism*, conference of 23 March 2002 during the general assembly of the Protestant Federation of France. *Œcuménisme informations* n° 325 of May 2002 and n° 326 of June 2002)

⁹⁹ Saint Augustin, in *Psalm 54*, §19, quoted by Leo XIII in *Satis Cognitum ASS 28* (1896), pg. 724, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solesmes, *The Church*, volume 1, n° 578.

¹⁰⁰ *Letter of the Holy Office to the Bishops of England*, 16 September 1864, This theory “professes expressly that three Christian communities, the Roman Catholic, the Schismatic Greek and Anglican, even though separated and divided amongst themselves, can each lay claim to the name of catholic. [...] This theory asks all the members to recite prayers, and to priest to offer sacrifices for its intention, that is, that these three Christian communions who, as it is suggested, constitute together the whole Catholic Church, may reunite in order to form one unique body.” DzH 2885 & 2886.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, DzH n° 2886-2887.

Chapter III

THE PASTORAL PROBLEMS POSED BY THE ECUMENISM

31. Besides the fact that it depends on heterodox theses, the ecumenism is harmful for souls, in the sense that it relativizes the Catholic faith indispensable for salvation, and it deters from the Catholic Church, the unique ark of salvation. The Catholic Church no longer acts as the lighthouse of truth that enlightens hearts and dissipates error, but rather submerges humanity in the fog of religious indifferentism, and soon into the darkness of the “silent apostasy”¹⁰².

The Ecumenism begets relativism of the faith

It relativizes the harmful breaks made by the heretics

32. Ecumenical dialogue dissimulates the sin against the faith that heresy commits – the formal reason for the rupture – in order to emphasize the sin against charity, imputed arbitrarily to the heretic as well as the child of the Church. It ends up finally *denying* the sin against the faith that constitutes heresy. So John Paul II affirms, concerning the monophysite heresy: “The divisions which have occurred were due largely to misunderstandings¹⁰³”, adding: “the doctrinal formulations which separate them from the formulas in use [...] concern the same content¹⁰⁴.” Such affirmations disavow the Magisterium nonetheless infallible in condemning these heresies.

It pretends that the faith of the Church can be perfected by the “riches” of the others

33. Even if the Second Vatican Council specifies, in well moderated terms, the nature of the “enrichment” given by dialogue – “truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both communions¹⁰⁵” – the ecumenical practice of this Pontificate distorts this affirmation into an enrichment of the faith. The Church abandons a partial view in order to grasp the reality in its integrity: “The polemics and the intolerant controversies have often transformed into incompatible affirmations that which was in fact the result of two researches investigating the same reality, two different points of view. *Today we must find the formula that, taking hold of this reality in its integrity, permits us to overcome the half-reading and to eliminate erroneous interpretations*¹⁰⁶.” And so it is that “the exchange of gifts between the Churches, *in their complementarities*, renders the communion fruitful¹⁰⁷.” If these affirmations presuppose that the Church is not definitively and integrally the guardian of the treasure of the faith, they are not in conformity with the traditional doctrine of the Church. This is why the Magisterium warned against this false valorization of the supposed riches of the other churches: “In coming back to the Church, they lose nothing of the good

¹⁰² John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, n° 9, DC n° 2296, 20 July 2003, pgs. 668 ff.

¹⁰³ *Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of East*, DC n° 2106, 18 December 1994, pg. 1609.

¹⁰⁴ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 38.

¹⁰⁵ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 4.

¹⁰⁶ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 38.

¹⁰⁷ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 57. Cf. Cardinal Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: a reason for hope*. DC n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 167: “It is clearly evident that the end of dialogue does not consist in changing the other party, but to recognize ones own failings and to learn from the other. [...] Where we had firstly seen a contradiction, we may see a *complementary* position.”

which by the grace of God is realized in them up till now, but rather by their return this good will be completed and lead to perfection. Nonetheless one will avoid speaking of this in such a way as to imply that on coming back to the Church they imaging giving an essential element to her that was missing until now¹⁰⁸.”

It relativizes the adhesion to certain dogmas of the faith

34. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the faith has certainly reorganized the supposed “hierarchy of the truths in Catholic Doctrine¹⁰⁹”: this hierarchy “signifies that certain dogmas are based on others, more fundamental, which illumine them. But all these dogmas being revealed, each must be believed with the same divine faith¹¹⁰.” Yet the ecumenical practice of John Paul II is independent of this authentic interpretation. For example, in his address to the Evangelical “Church”, he underlines “that which is important”: “You know that during several decades, my life has been marked by the experience of the challenges which atheism and incredulity launch against Christianity. I have all the more clearly before my eyes that which is important: our common profession in Jesus Christ. [...] Jesus Christ is our salvation, for all. [...] By the force of the Holy Spirit, we become His brethren, truly and essentially children of God. [...] Thanks to the consideration of the Confession of Augsburg and of numerous reunions, we have newly become aware of the fact that we believe and that we profess this together¹¹¹.” Leo XIII had only condemnation for this sort of ecumenical practice, which finds its apotheosis in the Declaration on Justification: “They believe that it is opportune, in order to gain the hearts of those who have wandered, to relativise certain points of doctrine as being of less importance, or to mollify the sense to such an extent that they no longer understand them in the sense that the Church has always held. There is no need of many words to show how much this concept is condemnable¹¹².”

It permits a “permanent reform” of dogmatic formulas

35. The latitude that the ecumenical practice gives itself concerning dogmatic formulas has already been said. It only remains to show the importance of this procedure in the ecumenical process: “The deepening of the communion in a constant reform, realized by the light of the Apostolic Tradition is without doubt one of the most important and distinctive characteristics of ecumenism. [...] The decree on ecumenism (*UR* n°6) mentions the way of formulating doctrine as one of the elements of continuing reform¹¹³.” Such a procedure has been condemned by Pius XII : “In theology some want to reduce to a minimum the meaning of dogmas; and to free dogma itself from terminology long established in the Church and from philosophical concepts held by Catholic teachers. [...] It is evident [...] from what We have already said, that such tentatives not only lead to what they call dogmatic relativism, but that they actually contain it. [...] Everyone is aware that the terminology employed in the schools and even that used by the Teaching Authority of the Church itself is capable of being perfected and polished; [...] It is also manifest that the Church cannot be bound to every system of philosophy that has existed for a short space of time. Nevertheless, the things that have been composed through common effort by Catholic teachers over the course of the

¹⁰⁸ Congregation of the Holy Office, *Instruction De Motione Œcumenica* of 20 December 1949, *AAS* 42 (1950), p. 1454. *DC* n° 1064, 12 March 1950, col. 332.

¹⁰⁹ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 11.

¹¹⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, 24 June 1973. *DC* n° 1636, 15 July 1973, pgs. 667.

¹¹¹ John Paul II, *Meeting with the Evangelic Church Counsel*, 17 November 1980, *DC* n° 1798, 21 December 1980, pg. 1147.

¹¹² Leo XIII, Encyclical *Testem benevolentiae*, 22 January 1899. *ASS* 31 (1899), pg. 471. ed. Fr. *La bonne presse*, vol, 5, pg. 313. Cf. Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, *AAS* 28 (1920), pg. 12. *DzH* n° 3683 : “If it concerns points of faith, it is in not at all licit to distinguish in a manner in which some points are fundamental and others that are not, the first being accepted by all, and the others being left to the free assent of believers; the supernatural virtue of faith has for its formal cause the authority of God revealing, which does not tolerate a distinction of this sort.”

¹¹³ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 17 & 18.

centuries to bring about some understanding of dogma are certainly not based on any such weak foundation. [...] Hence it is not astonishing that some of these notions have not only been used by the Ecumenical Councils, but even sanctioned by them, so that it is wrong to depart from them¹¹⁴.”

It refuses to teach without ambiguity the integral content of the Catholic faith

36. The ecumenical axiom that states “The way and method in which the Catholic faith is expressed should never become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren¹¹⁵” succeeds in solemnly signed common declarations that are equivocal and ambivalent. In the *Common Declaration on Justification* for example, the infusion of sanctifying grace¹¹⁶ in the soul of the just is never clearly taught; the only sentence that makes some allusion is so awkward that it could leave the opposite to be believed: “Justifying grace never becomes a human possession to which one could appeal against God¹¹⁷.” Such practices no longer respect the duty to teach the Catholic faith integrally and without ambiguity, as something “to be believed”: “Catholic Doctrine must be proposed integrally and in its entirety; one must not pass over in silence or hide in ambiguous terms that which the Catholic truth teaches on the true nature and the stages of justification, on the constitution of the Church, on the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, on the true union by the return of separated Christians to the unique true Church of Christ¹¹⁸.”

It puts on an equal level the authentic saints and the pretended “saints”.

37. In publishing a common martyrology of the different Christian confessions, John Paul II puts on an equal level the authentic saints and the supposed “saints”. This forgets the words of Saint Augustine: “If, remaining separated from the Church, he is persecuted by an enemy of Christ [...] and this enemy of Christ says to him who is separated from the Church of Christ: ‘offer up incense to idols, adore my gods’ and kills him because he refuses, he could shed his blood, but not receive the crown¹¹⁹.” If the Church hopes piously that the separated brother dies for the Christ with perfect charity, she cannot affirm this. *By her just rights*, she presumes that the ‘obex’, the obstacle of visible separation, was an obstacle to the act of perfect charity that is the essence of martyrdom. She thus cannot canonize him nor inscribe him in the martyrology¹²⁰.

It provokes a loss of the faith

38. Relativist, evolutionist and ambiguous, this ecumenism directly induces the loss of the faith. Its first victim is the President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Unity of Christians, Cardinal Kasper himself, when he affirms for example on the subject of justification that “Our personal worth does not depend on our works, whether they are good or bad: even before acting, we are accepted and we have received the ‘yes’ of God¹²¹”; again

¹¹⁴ Pius XII, Encyclical *Humani generis*, 12 August 1950, *AAS* 42 (1950), pgs. 566-567. DzH 3881-83.

¹¹⁵ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 11; John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 36.

¹¹⁶ Council of Trent, *Decree on Justification*, c. 7, DzH 1528: “Justification itself is not only the remission of sins, but at the same time the sanctification and renovation of the interior man by the voluntary reception of grace and its gifts.”

¹¹⁷ *Common Declaration on Justification by the World Lutheran Federation and the Catholic Church*, n° 27. DC n° 2168, 19 October 1997, pgs. 875 ff.

¹¹⁸ Congregation of the Holy Office, Decree of 20 December 1949. DC n° 1064, 12 March 1950, col. 330 ff.

¹¹⁹ Saint Augustine, *Sermon to the people of Caesarea*. Preached in the presence of Emeritus, a Donatist bishop, n° 6.

¹²⁰ The Pope Benoît XIV, in his *De servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione*, explains: an heretic, in the invincible ignorance of the true Faith, killed for a dogma of the Catholic Church, cannot be considered as a martyr. In effect, maybe he is a martyr *coram Deo*, but not *coram Ecclesia*, because the Church judges only on the outside and the public profession of the heresy obliges to conjecture the internal heresy. (Cf. *De servorum*, c. 20) The objection concerning Saint Hippolytus, martyr and anti-pope (217-325), is not significant. In fact, if the martyrology mentions him on the 30th of October, the *dies natalis* of pope Saint Pontian, it is because Hippolytus was reconciled to Pontian in the mines of Sardinia, before both had suffered martyrdom in 236.

¹²¹ W. Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, a reason for hope*. DC n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 171-172.

concerning the Mass and the priesthood that “it is not the priest who works the transubstantiation: the priest prays to the Father in order that He become present by the operation of the Holy Spirit. [...] The necessity of the ordained ministry is a sign that suggests and gives a taste of the gratuity of the Eucharistic sacrament¹²².”

The Ecumenism pushes souls away from the Church

39. Not only does this ecumenism destroy the Catholic faith, it also pushes heretics, schematics and infidels away from the Church.

It no longer demands the conversion of heretics and schismatics

40. The ecumenical movement no longer searches for their conversion and their return to the “unique fold of Christ, outside of which are certainly those who are not united to the Holy See of Peter¹²³.” This is clearly stated: “We reject [uniatism] as a method to find unity. [...] The pastoral action of the Catholic Church, both Latin and Eastern no longer tends to make the faithful pass from one church to another¹²⁴.” From this follows the suppression of the ceremony of abjuration in the case of a heretic returning to the Catholic Church. Cardinal Kasper goes very far in these kind of affirmations: “Ecumenism is not done by renouncing our own faith tradition. No Church can practice this renouncement¹²⁵.” He adds as well: “We can describe the ‘ethos’ proper to ecumenism in the following fashion: the renouncement to every form of proselytism whether open or camouflaged¹²⁶.” This is radically opposed to the constant practice of the Popes throughout the centuries, who have always worked for the return of dissidents to the unique Church¹²⁷.

It begets egalitarianism between the Christian confessions

41. The ecumenical practice engenders egalitarianism between the Catholics and other Christians, for example when John Paul II rejoices in the fact that “the expression ‘separated brethren’ tends to be substituted by terms more apt to evoke the profundity of the communion linked to the baptismal character. [...] The consciousness of a common belonging to Christ deepens. [...] The ‘universal brotherhood’ of Christians has become a strong ecumenical conviction¹²⁸.” And moreover, the Catholic Church Herself is practically put on equal footing with the separated Communities: we have already made mention of the expression “sister-churches”; John Paul II rejoices also that “the *Directory for the application of the principles*

¹²² W. Kasper, *30 Jours dans l’Eglise et dans le Monde*, n° 5 / 2003, pg. 22.

¹²³ Pius IX, Encyclical *Neminem vestrum*, 2 February 1854. *Pontifical Teachings*, Solesmes, *The Church*, volume 1, n° 219.

¹²⁴ *Declaration of the Mixed Commission for the Dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Church*, 23 June 1993, also called the “Balamand Declaration”, n° 2 and 22. *DC* n° 2077, 1 August 1993, pg. 711.

¹²⁵ W. Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, a motif of hope*. *DC* n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 167. Cf. W. Kasper, *Conference to Ecumenical Church Assembly of Berlin*, *DC* n°2298, 21 September 2003, pg. 817: “We cannot throw overboard that which has carried and held us till present, that which our predecessors have lived, often in difficult circumstances, and we cannot expect the same from our brothers and sisters of Protestantism and Orthodoxy. Neither them nor we can become unfaithful.”

¹²⁶ W. Kasper, *The Ecumenical engagement of the Catholic Church*, conference given 23 March 2002 during the General Assembly of the Protestant Federation of France. *Œcuménisme informations*, n° 325 (May 2002) et n° 326 (June 2002).

¹²⁷ Cf. For example Pius IX, Apostolic Letter *Iam vos omnes*, 13 September 1868, *ASS* 4 (1868), pg. 131. DzH 2997-2999, inviting the protestants and other non-Catholics to profit from the First Vatican Council in order to come back to the Catholic Church; Leo XIII does the same on the occasion of his Episcopal Jubilee with the Letter *Praeclara gratulationis*, 20 June 1894, *ASS* 26 (1894), pgs. 707 ff. The most well known text is certainly that of Pius XI in the Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, 6 January 1928, *AAS* 20 (1928), pg. 14, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solesmes, *The Church*, volume 1, n° 872: “The union of Christians cannot be attained other than by favoring the return of dissidents to the only true Church of Christ, which they have had the misfortune of leaving.” This practice “of return” is not proper to the 19th century, but rather the great care of the Pope for this cause. In fact, this practice “of return” is constant in the Church. For example, in 1595, Pope Clement VIII said to the metropolitan bishops of Kiev (instruction *Magnus Dominus*, 23 December 1595): “Thanks to the illumination of the Holy Spirit who enlightened their hearts, they have begun to seriously consider the fact that they were no longer members of the Body of Christ which is the Church, as they were no longer linked with Her visible head, the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome. For this reason they have decided to return to the Roman Church who is their mother, the mother of all the faithful.”

¹²⁸ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 42.

and the norms concerning ecumenism calls the communities to which these Christians of ‘the Churches and the ecclesial communities who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church’. [...] Relegating to oblivion the excommunications of the past, the communities, once rivals, today help each other¹²⁹.” To rejoice because of this is to forget that “to recognize the quality of a Church the schism of Photius and that of the Anglicans [...] favors religious indifferentism [...] and stops the conversion of non-Catholics to the true and unique Church¹³⁰.”

It humbles the Church and makes haughty the dissidents

42. The ecumenical practice of repentance deters the infidels from the Catholic Church, in view of the false image that she gives of herself. If it is possible to carry before God the fault of those who have preceded us¹³¹, on the other hand the practice of repentance such as we know it leaves it believed that it is the Catholic Church as such who is sinner, seeing that it is her who asks pardon. The first to believe this is Cardinal Kasper: “The Second Vatican Council recognized that the Catholic Church had been responsible for the division of Christians and underlined that the reestablishing of unity presupposed the conversion of each to the Lord¹³²”. The justifying texts thus don’t mean a thing: the ecclesial note of holiness, so powerful to attract wandering souls to the unique fold, has been tarnished. These repentances are thus gravely imprudent, because they humiliate the Catholic Church and make haughty the dissidents. From which the Holy Office warns: “They [the bishops] in teaching the history of the Reform and the Reformers, will carefully avoid, and with a real insistence, not to exaggerate the defects of Catholics and to hide the faults of the Reformers, or to put into light some elements mostly accidental such as not to see or no longer perceive that which is essential, the defection from the Catholic faith¹³³.”

Conclusion

43. Considered from a pastoral aspect, one must say that the ecumenism of the last decades that it leads Catholics to a “silent apostasy” and that it dissuades non-Catholics from entering into the unique ark of salvation. One must reprobate “the impiety of those who close to men the gates of the Kingdom of heaven¹³⁴”. Under the guise of searching for unity, this ecumenism disperses the flock; it does not carry the mark of Christ, but that of the divider par excellence, the devil.

¹²⁹ John Paul II, *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Congregation of the Holy Office, *Letter* of 16 September 1864, *ASS* 2, 660 ff.

¹³¹ Lamentations 5, 7: “Our fathers have sinned, and are not: and we have borne their iniquities.”

¹³² W. Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification : a reason for hope*. DC n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 168.

¹³³ Congregation of the Holy Office, *Instruction De Motione Œcumenica* of 20 December 1949, *AAS* 42 (1950), p. 1454. DC n° 1064, 12 March 1950, col. 332.

¹³⁴ Preparatory schema of Vatican I on the Church, published in the *Pontifical Teachings* of Solesmes, *The Church*, volume 2, pg. 8*: “We reprove the impiety of those who close the entry into the Kingdom of Heaven to men, on assuring them under false pretexts that it is dishonorable or in no way necessary to salvation to abandon the religion – even false – in which one is born, raised and taught; those also who complain that the Church projects herself as the only true religion, to proscribe and condemn all the religions and sects separated from her communion, as if there could be a possible community between light and darkness, an arrangement between Christ and Belial.”

GENERAL CONCLUSION

44. As attractive as it may first seem, as spectacular as his ceremonies might be watch on the Television, as numerous as the gathered crowds might be, the reality remains: the ecumenism has made of the Holy City the Church a city in ruins. Following a utopian ideal – the unity of the human race – the Pope has not realized how much this ecumenism which he has pursued is truly and sadly revolutionary: it inverts the order willed by God.

45. Ecumenism is revolutionary, and it affirms itself as revolutionary. One remains impressed by the succession of texts that remind us of this: “The deepening of communion *in a constant reform* [...] is without a doubt one of the most important and distinctive traits of ecumenism¹³⁵.” “On taking the idea which John XIII had expressed at the opening of the Council, the Decree on ecumenism represents the formulation of doctrine as one of the elements of *continuing reform*¹³⁶.” At times this affirmation is adorned with ecclesiastical unction in order to become a “conversion”. In the case in point, there is very little difference. In the two cases, that which existed before is rejected: “ ‘Convert’. There is no ecumenical reconciliation without *conversion* and *renewal*. There is no conversion from one confession to another. [...] Everyone must convert. We must not ask firstly ‘what is wrong with the other’, but rather ‘what is wrong with us; *where should we begin to clean house?*’¹³⁷” Typical of its revolutionary characteristic, this ecumenism makes an appeal to the people: “In ecumenical activity, the faithful of the Catholic Church [...] will consider, with loyalty and attention, all that *has need to be renovated* in the catholic family itself¹³⁸.” Truly in this *aggiornamento*, this state of intoxication, the head has need to be overrun by the members: “The ecumenical movement is a somewhat complex process, and it would be an error to wait, from the catholic side, that everything be done by Rome. [...] The intuitions, the challenges must also come from local Churches, and much must be done on a local level before the universal Church makes it her own¹³⁹.”

46. In these sorrowful circumstances, how can we not hear the cry of the Angel at Fatima: “Penance, Penance, Penance”? In this utopian dream, the coming back to good sense must be radical. One must come back to the wise experience of the Church, synthesized by Pope Pius XI: “The union of Christians cannot be attained other than by favoring the return of dissidents to the only true Church of Christ, which they have had the misfortune of leaving¹⁴⁰.” Such is the true and charitable pastoral action for those who err, such ought to be the prayer of the Church: “We desire that the common prayer of the whole Mystical Body [that is to say, the whole Catholic Church] rise towards God in order that all the wandering sheep rejoin the unique fold of Jesus Christ¹⁴¹.”

47. Waiting for this happy hour when reason will return, we keep for our part the wise advice and the firm wisdom that we have received from our founder: “We wish to be in perfect unity with the Holy Father, but in the unity of the Catholic faith, because it is only this unity that

¹³⁵ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 17.

¹³⁶ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n° 18.

¹³⁷ W. Kasper, *Conference to the Ecumenical Conference of Churches of Berlin*. DC n° 2298, 21 September 2003, pg. 820.

¹³⁸ Vatican II, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, n° 4; cf. all of n° 6.

¹³⁹ W. Kasper, *The Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, a motif of hope*. DC n° 2220, 20 February 2000, pg. 167.

¹⁴⁰ Pius XI, Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, 6 January 1928, *AAS* 20 (1928), pg. 14, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solesmes, *The Church*, volume 1, n° 872.

¹⁴¹ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, *AAS* 35 (1943), pg. 243, *Pontifical Teachings*, Solesmes, *The Church*, volume 1, n° 1105.

can unite us, and not a sort of ecumenical union, a sort of liberal ecumenism; because I believe that the crisis in the Church is best defined by this liberal ecumenical spirit. I say liberal ecumenism, because there does exist a certain ecumenism that, if it is well defined, could be acceptable. But liberal ecumenism, such as it is practice by the present Church and especially since the Second Vatican Council, includes veritable heresies¹⁴².” Adding to this our prayers to heaven, where we implore Christ for His Body which is the Catholic Church, saying: “Salvum me fac, Domine, quoniam defecit sanctus, quoniam diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum. Vana locuti sunt unusquisque ad proximum suum : labia dolosa il corde et corde locuti sunt. Disperdat Dominus universa labia dolosa et linguam magniloquam¹⁴³ .

¹⁴² Archbishop Lefebvre, *Conference* of 14 April 1978.

¹⁴³ Psalm 11, 2-4: “They have spoken vain things every one to his neighbour: with deceitful lips, and with a double heart have they spoken. May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.” Concerning this last verse which we cite, one could usefully cite the commentary of Saint John Chrysostome (*In Ps. 11, n° 1*): “He does not speak against them, but in their interest; he does not ask God to destroy them, but to put an end to their iniquities. He does not say in fact: ‘God will exterminate them’ but ‘he will destroy all deceitful lips’. Thus, again, it is not their nature that he wishes to see annihilated, but their language.”