Sociology as a Source for the Reception of Vatican II's Teaching on the Church and Episcopal Conferences

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ABSTRACT

Sociology as a Source for the Reception of Vatican II's Teaching on the Church and Episcopal Conferences

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This thesis examines issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II, proposes hermeneutical principles to engage these issues, and argues that to receive the council's teaching on the church and episcopal conferences one has to combine sociology with the traditional sources of theology such as Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, and church history.

Chapter One studies issues that involve the reception of Vatican II through the perspectives of Walter Kasper, the delegates of the 1985 Synod of Bishops, and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI. It shows that to engage these issues, one has to pay attention both to the historical context of Vatican II and to the documents of the council, to both *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, and to both elements of continuity and elements of discontinuity in the teaching of Vatican II.

Chapter Two explains why one needs sociology to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church. It argues that for the council's bishops the church is more than a mystery of communion promoted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and defended by Joseph Ratzinger in

his debate with Walter Kasper. The church is the sacrament of Christ or a theological and socio-historical reality. As a result, Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, and church history are not sufficient to provide a proper understanding of the church. Sociology should be integrated into conciliar ecclesiology to study the church.

Chapter Three shows how sociology can be integrated into ecclesiology to help theologians receive Vatican II's teaching on the church. The chapter engages Neil Ormerod's critique of Roger Haight's two-language approach to ecclesiology to demonstrate why the relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimension of the church complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology. It argues that Karl Rahner's theology of grace and the church can provide a framework for relating sociology to ecclesiology.

Chapter Four builds on this framework to examine the Vatican's and Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences. It argues that neither the Vatican's nor the Asian bishops' reception can offer a comprehensive understanding of episcopal conferences. To receive this teaching of the council, one has to combine sociological insights from the sociology of organizations with theological concepts from Scripture, canon law, and church teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

Pope John XXIII surprised the church and the world on January 25, 1959, when he announced that he would convoke a new ecumenical council, the twenty-first council in the history of the Catholic Church. In the Apostolic Constitution, *Humanae Salutis*, issued on December 25, 1961, the Pope named the council "Vatican II" and described issues in the world that concerned him, such as atheism and the progress of science.[1] He established a working program to prepare for the council and invited all bishops "to give the church the possibility to contribute more efficaciously to the solution of the problems of the modern world."[2]

On October 11, 1962, the first day of the council, Pope John XXIII addressed the members of the council and identified the principal duty of Vatican II: the defense of the truths of faith and the communication of these truths to modern-day believers.[3] The Pope asked the bishops not merely to guard church teachings, a task that the magisterium had undertaken throughout church history, but also to express and communicate these teachings to the recipients of the council through the use of their languages, theories, and concepts. In the words of John XXIII, "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of the faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration with patience if necessary, everything being measured in the forms and proportions of a magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character."[4]

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[1] Pope John XXIII's Apostolic Constitution, *Humanae Salutis*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 703-4.

[2] Ibid., 705.

[3] Pope John XXIII's *Opening Speech to the Council*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, 714-5.

[4] Ibid., 715.

As a result of the council that took place between 1962 and 1965, the church receives sixteen documents: four Constitutions, eight Decrees, and four Declarations.[5] Of these documents, the four Constitutions offer fundamental teachings on the nature, structure, and mission of the church, church liturgy, and revelation. *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, presents the council's understanding of the nature and structure of the church. *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, explains how the church should engage the world and serve humankind. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, undertakes the task of reforming and promoting church liturgy. *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, explains the meaning of revelation and how the church transmits the truths of faith through the course of time.

Reviewing the documents of the council, Karl Rahner states that Vatican II "was a council of the church about the church. It was a council concerned with ecclesiology, the formal study of the church – with a unity of theme that no previous council ever had."[6] The history of reception of Vatican II gives ample support to Rahner's statement when one examines the

[5] Unless otherwise noted, the texts of the council used in this thesis come from *Vatican II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, trans. and ed. by Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 2007).

[6] Karl Rahner, "The Church: A New Image," in *The Church after the Council* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 38.

numerous articles and books written by theologians[7] and church documents by the magisterium[8] to address various subjects of conciliar ecclesiology, such as the issues of local churches, collegiality, episcopal conferences, and communion in the church.

To interpret the council and communicate its teaching to present-day believers, the Vatican and theologians employ the traditional sources of theology such as Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, and church history. Indeed, as one will see throughout the thesis, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Congregation for Bishops, and many interpreters of Vatican II, such as Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper, draw on these sources to explain and implement conciliar ecclesiology. Such interpretations provide the basis for understanding communion in the church and the theological foundation of collegiality.

However, as I shall argue, these Congregations and theologians generally overlook the council's call to interpret and implement its teaching through the use of modern-day theories and concepts, especially the disciplines of the social sciences such as sociology. According to *Gaudium et Spes*, throughout history the church has learned from the sciences and the treasures hidden in various forms of human culture to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all peoples as well as to the requirements of the learned. This adaptation and preaching of the Gospel "must ever be the law of all evangelization" (GS 44). In order to proclaim the Gospel and explain

[7] It is impossible to list all of the works of theologians who interpret the council, and thus I list only a few of these works: *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vols. 1-5, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967-1969); *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua, and Joseph Komonchak (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987); and *Vatican II: Forty Years Later*, ed. William Madges (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

[8] See *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), and John Paul II, *Apostolos Suos*, at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_22071998_apostolos-suos.html

church teaching, the conciliar bishops invite theologians to "cooperate with people versed in other disciplines by pooling their resources and their point of view" (GS 62). In pastoral care, they ask church officials to use not merely theological principles, but also the findings of secular sciences, especially psychology and sociology (GS 62). By adapting the message of the Gospel and the teaching of the council to the language and knowledge of modern-day recipients, the church can proclaim the Gospel more efficiently and communicate the truths of faith that it has received from Christ and the Spirit.

Heeding the call of Vatican II, theologians have used the social sciences to receive the council and interpret its teaching. Since 1970, one has seen a development of theological exploration at the intersection of economics, administrative sciences, sociology, and ecclesiology.[9] In the field of ecclesiology, for example, theologians such as Patrick Granfield,[10] Clare Watkins,[11] Joseph Komonchak,[12] Roger Haight,[13] and Neil Ormerod[14] have applied insights from sociology to study the church. These scholars hope to contribute their thoughts to

[9] To cite just a few examples, Gregory Baum and Andrew Greeley (ed.), *The Church as Institution* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1974); Michael Crosby, *House of Disciples: Church, Economics, and Justice in Matthew* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988); Michael Horace Barnes (ed.), *Theology and the Social Sciences* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000); and Thomas Woods, *The Church and the Market: A Catholic Defense of the Free Economy* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington, 2005).

[10] Patrick Granfield, *Ecclesial Cybernetics: A Study of Democracy in the Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1973).

[11] Clare Watkins, "Organizing the People of God: Social-Science Theories of Organization in Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991), 689-711.

[12] Joseph Komonchak, "Ecclesiology and Social Theory: A Methodological Essay," *Foundations in Ecclesiology* (Boston, MA: Boston College, 1995), 57-75.

[13] Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. 1 (New York: Continuum, 2004).

[14] Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

the reception of the council's teaching on the church and to make the church an effective instrument of Christ's presence in the world.

By contrast, theologians like Hans Urs von Balthasar and John Milbank were less enthusiastic about the relationship between ecclesiology and the social sciences. While they were careful not to deny valuable insights that theologians can learn from these sciences, they emphasized the danger of theological distortion that could occur if the social sciences are not properly employed.[15] Balthasar, for example, admitted that the dialogue between theology and social theory is necessary and inevitable;[16] however, he criticized the latter for its limited understanding of the human persons and its inability to address theological questions.[17]

To explain why some theologians have been reluctant to integrate the social sciences into ecclesiology, Neil Ormerod offers three reasons.[18] The first is challenges that theologians have to face when entering into another major field of knowledge such as sociology. Like other disciplines of the social sciences such as psychology and anthropology, sociology is a vast discipline. It requires determination on the part of theologians to study diverse theories, concepts, and methods employed by sociologists. However, it is hardly possible for most theologians to

[15] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991); and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology* Vol. 1 (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1989).

[16] Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology* 1, 69.

[17] For his critique of social scientific anthropologies, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Who is Man?" in *Explorations in Theology* 4, 21-3. His views on the limitations of social sciences in their efforts to dicuss religious themes appear in Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Preliminary Remarks on the Discernment of Spirits," in *Explorations in Theology* 4, 338. On the failure of social sciences to recognize their limitations and the consequent tendency to overreach their competence, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth Is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 56.

[18] Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology*, 32-4.

master the whole field of sociology before applying its theories and concepts to ecclesiology. Consequently, theologians have either focused on one particular approach in sociology or appealed to sociology in general, in order to contribute a "sociological imagination" as a source of insights that can be drawn upon in an eclectic manner.

According to Ormerod, the second reason that complicates the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology is the complex nature of sociology as "an ideologically and methodologically divided discipline."[19] In other words, sociologists themselves do not hold the same approach while studying realities such as organization, religion, culture, and knowledge. Ormerod identifies major approaches to sociology used by sociologists to examine social realities such as the functionalist, the critical, and the symbolic interactionist.[20] Theologians who hope to employ sociology must therefore negotiate the relationship among these approaches.

For Ormerod, the third and most serious issue that theologians who engage with sociology must address is the dialogue between sociology and ecclesiology or the application of sociological theories and concepts to interpret the church as a theological and socio-historical reality.[21] To understand why this relationship is an complex issue in need of study, one can turn to Vatican II's teaching on the nature of the church. According to *Lumen Gentium*, the church is like the sacrament of Christ or the sign and instrument of communion between God and humankind (LG 1). It is not merely the sign of Christ's living presence in the world that points

[19] Ibid. 32.

[20] Ibid., 32, 37-41.

[21] Ibid., 33.

believers to God, but also his effective instrument through which Christ and the Spirit work to bring about salvation to all human beings.

As the sacrament of Christ, the church is "the society equipped with hierarchical structures and the mystical body of Christ, the visible and the spiritual community, the earthly church and the church endowed with heavenly riches" (LG 8). In other words, the church is simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality. Accordingly, to understand, explain, communicate, and implement the conciliar teaching on the church, one cannot separate the church's human and socio-historical element from its divine and theological element, and then interpret each element independently. One has to combine sociological insights with theological concepts to offer a comprehensive understanding of the church as the sacrament of Christ.

Different attempts to address the relationship between the theological and socio-historical dimensions of the church have been proposed by theologians. Edward Schillebeeckx and Roger Haight argue that because the church is a single reality composed of the human and the divine element, one has to interpret it through the use of "two (or more) different perspectives, questions, and language games."[22] Theological language describes the church in relation to Christ and the Spirit, while historical and sociological language accounts for the church as a social structure in history and society. To combine the langugages of theology, history, and sociology in one's study of the church, Haight states that theologians need "a theological method that respects these two dimensions of the one church, that does not hold them in balance over

[22] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 210-13; and Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. 1, 38-9.

against each other, but integrates them into a single understanding."[23] The method that Haight suggests to study the church is the method of correlation, which he develops in his early work, *Dynamics of Theology*.[24]

Theologians such as Neil Ormerod remain critical of Haight's application of the method of correlation to ecclesiology. For Ormerod, this approach tends to separate the church into two realities: one is human and the other divine.[25] Theologians first use theories and concepts from history, anthropology, and sociology to study the historical, anthropological, and social dimension of the church as an institution like other institutions in the world. Then, they draw ideas from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teaching to interpret the relationship between the church and God. Having examined the church through the use of two languages, theologians combine knowledge of the church from historical and sociological investigations with knowledge of the church from theological studies to understand the church as a theological and socio-historical reality.

At the heart of the above debate on the method of ecclesiology is one fundamental question: How can theologians integrate sociological theories and concepts into conciliar ecclesiology to interpret the church as a simultaneously theological and socio-historical reality? In this thesis, I attempt to answer the question and argue that to interpret and implement Vatican II's teaching on the church and episcopal conferences, one has to integrate theories and concepts

[23] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. 1, 39.

[24] Roger Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 189-212.

[25] Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology*, 25.

from sociology into ecclesiology. In light of Ormerod's understanding of the issue that complicate the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology and his critique of Haight's method of correlation, I explore Karl Rahner's theology of grace to argue that Rahner's understanding of grace as God's self-communication can resolve the issue identified by Ormerod and enable theologians to justify the application of sociological insights in ecclesiology.

To develop the argument, Chapter One examines different understandings of the hermeneutic of the council through the perspectives of Walter Kasper, the bishops of the 1985 Synod of Bishops, and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI. The chapter points out two issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II: the variety of interpretations of conciliar teaching and the communication of these teachings to present-day recipients of the council. It argues that to receive the council, one has to pay attention both to the historical context of Vatican II and to the documents of the council, to both *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, and to both elements of continuity and elements of discontinuity in the teaching of the council.

Chapter Two explains why one needs sociology to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church. It applies the hermeneutical principles to examine the conciliar teaching on the church and argues that the church is more than a mystery of communion promoted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and defended by Joseph Ratzinger in his debate with Walter Kasper. The church is fundamentally the sacrament of Christ or a theological and socio-historical reality through which Christ and the Spirit work to bring about salvation for the world. As a result, Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, and church history alone are not sufficient to

provide a proper understanding of the church. Sociological theories and concepts should be integrated into conciliar ecclesiology to study the church.

Chapter Three shows how sociological insights can be integrated into conciliar ecclesiology to help theologians receive Vatican II's teaching on the church. The chapter anticipates objections to this approach by engaging Neil Ormerod's critique of Roger Haight's two-language approach to ecclesiology to demonstrate why the relationship between the theological and socio-historical dimension of the church complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology. I shall argue that Karl Rahner's theology of grace and the church can provide a framework for relating sociology to ecclesiology and also enables Rahner to use sociological concepts to interpret the church as an "open system."

Chapter Four builds on this framework in light of the hermeneutical principles to study a specific issue in conciliar ecclesiology, namely, the reception of Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences, with a particular focus on the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). I shall first examine the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences and its use of sources such as Scripture, canon law, and church teaching to interpret the idea of episcopal conferences. As we shall see, these sources are not sufficient to enable the Vatican and Asian bishops to implement the teaching on episcopal conferences as the bishops design the structure of the FABC. The Asian bishops employ theories and concepts from the sociology of organizations to describe the FABC as a voluntary association and to design a hierarchical structure, which allows them to foster a communion with one another and to promote the apostolate for the church and society in Asia. Viewing the Vatican's and the Asian bishops'

reception of episcopal conferences through the lens of the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, it becomes evident that to receive this teaching of the council, it is necessary to combine sociological insights with theological concepts.

CHAPTER ONE

TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE RECEPTION OF VATICAN II

Introduction

Vatican II ended on December 8, 1965 and left the church sixteen documents. The task of the church after the council is to receive, interpret, communicate, and implement teachings of these documents. Some teachings of the council were welcomed by church members and their implementation remarkably changed the way that the faithful participates in the sacraments and the government of the church. For example, the sacraments are now celebrated in vernacular languages in church liturgy, especially in readings and prayers (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 36). The order of permanent deacons has been restored in some regions of the world, especially in the United States (*Lumen Gentium* 29).[26] Diocesan pastoral councils, which involve bishops, religious, and lay people working and discerning together to carry out the church's mission, have been implemented in many local churches (*Christus Dominus* 27).

Despite these achievements, many teachings of the council continue to be contested among theologians and church leaders, and to a certain degree, have been restrained from implementation. Among these teachings, one can mention the church as people of God, communion between the universal church and local churches, collegiality, the reform of the

[26] For a study on Vatican II's teaching on deacons and its implementation, see Michael J. Tkacik, *Deacons and Vatican II: The Making of a Servant Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2018).

Roman Curia, the dialogue of faith and cultures, and the teaching authority of diocesan bishops when they gather in episcopal conferences.[27]

The difficulty of receiving the above teachings of the council invites one to ask two questions: First, what are issues that complicate efforts to interpret and implement Vatican II? Second, how can one engage these issues and implement the council? By interpretation, I mean the act of understanding, explanation, and communication of the meaning of conciliar teachings to the present-day recipients of the council; by implementation, I mean the act of putting Vatican II's teaching into effect.

To answer these questions, the first part of this chapter draws on Walter Kasper's analysis of the hermeneutic of reception of the council to explain issues that make it difficult for him to receive Vatican II. Having done so, I review the magisterium's approach to the interpretation of the council in two documents: The Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops and Pope Benedict XVI's address to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005. The approaches of Kasper, the synodal bishops, and Pope Benedict XVI to the hermeneutic of the council will help one to understand two issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II. The first is the variety of interpretations of conciliar teachings among different receivers in the history of reception of the council. The second is the task of communicating conciliar teachings through languages, theories, and concepts of present-day receivers. To engage these issues, the second part of the chapter proposes three hermeneutical principles: the relationships between the documents and the context of the council, between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, and between elements of

[27] See other questions that remain to be discussed after the council, *Unanswered Questions*, ed. Christoph Theobald and Dietmar Mieth (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1999).

continuity and elements of discontinuity in conciliar teachings. I shall now turn to Kasper's analysis of the hermeneutic of reception of the council to explore issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II.

Part I: Issues that Complicate the Interpretation and Implementation of Vatican II

Kasper's Analysis of the Hermeneutic of Reception of the Council

In his *Theology and Church*, published in 1987, Kasper divides the history of reception of Vatican II into three overlapping phases: the phase of enthusiasm, the phase of disappointment, and the third phase that began with the 1985 Synod of Bishops, to which he neither gives a name nor explains why he does not do so.[28] To understand the connection between these phases in the history of reception of Vatican II, I refer to the third phase as "the phase of magisterial reception." I shall explain the significance of this phase when presenting the approach of the 1985 Synod of Bishops to the hermeneutic of the council.

According to Kasper, the first phase took place immediately after the council. By that time, Catholics around the world believed that the council was a liberating event that would open the door for a comprehensive renewal in theology and practice of the church. For example, in January 1965, Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx introduced the first edition of *Concilium* and outlined a new theology that sought to surpass the old manuals.[29] The journal aimed to

[28] Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 166-7.

[29] The journal *Concilium* began as an outstanding attempt by a group of the conciliar *periti* such as Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Kung, and Joseph Ratzinger *t*o spread the message of Vatican II. For an evaluation of the journal, see Congar's and Rahner's articles in *Twenty Years of Concilium – Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Paul Brand, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Anton Weiler (New York: Seabury Press, 1983).

"offer information about new questions and new answers in all branches of theology … for all those engaged in pastoral work, including qualified laymen and women who bear ecclesiastical responsibilities."[30]

Kasper claims that the phase of enthusiasm was soon replaced by the second: "the phase of disappointment."[31] He does not mention the year when the second phase began because, for him, these two phases were overlapping. They lasted between the end of Vatican II and the beginning of the 1985 Synod of Bishops. In the second phase, theologians and Catholic intellectuals recognized that some teachings approved by the council's bishops had not been implemented. To explain obstacles that prevent the implementation of these teachings, Kasper points to the refusal by a minority of bishops and church members such as Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of Saint Pius X to accept the council.[32] In addition, he mentions criticisms of theologians such as Louis Bouyer, Henri de Lubac, and Joseph Ratzinger about interpretations of some teachings of the council. In Kasper's judgment, these theologians were considered among the progressive reformers during the years of the council, who contributed significantly to the formulation of conciliar documents.[33] Unlike Lefebvre, they criticized not the council itself but interpretations of some teachings of the council promoted by progressive

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[30] Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx, "General Introduction," in *The Church and Mankind* (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965), 1-2.

[31] Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 167.

[32] See Kasper, "Renewal from the Source: The Interpretation and Reception of the Second Vatican Council," *The Theology of Cardinal Walter Kasper*, ed. Kristin Colberg and Robert Krieg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 282. Lefebvre himself wrote a book to denounce publicly many achievements of Vatican II. In his view, the council, "ruinous as it has been for the Catholic Church and for the whole of Christian civilization, was not guided and directed by the Holy Ghost," see Marcel Lefebvre, *I Accuse the Council* (Texas: Angelus Press, 1982), viii.

[33] Kasper, "Renewal from the Source: The Interpretation and Reception of the Second Vatican Council," 282.

reformers. In other words, these theologians, who were considered as progressive reformers in the council, disagreed with other progressive reformers when the council ended concerning how to interpret some teachings of the council.[34] Consequently, for Kasper, a major issue that complicates the reception of Vatican II is the variety of interpretations of conciliar teachings among church members. In his words,

> The council had thrown open the door to the world of today, the other churches and religions, but this often led to a diffusion of what was specifically Catholic, and to an identity crisis. The progressive reformers now complained about the inertia of the church as an institution. The conservatives talked about signs of dissolution. Protest and contention developed on the one side, attempts at restoration on the other. Both finally led to a paralyzing stalemate and a fruitless kind of trench warfare.[35]

To identify a cause of the variety of interpretations of the council, Kasper mentions the juxtaposition of two types of statements in the documents of Vatican II: "conservative" and "progressive" statements. They are often found side by side and one is hardly to be reconciled with another.[36] For Kasper, the presence of these statements in the documents of Vatican II

[34] For a study of conflicts among theologians concerning how to interpret Vatican II, see Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012).

[35] Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 167.

[36] Ibid. For further studies of the council's broader recourse to the hermeneutics of juxtaposition, see Hermann Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council," in *The Reception of Vatican II*, eds. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua and Joseph A. Komonchak (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 27-43, and Angel Antón, "Postconciliar Ecclesiology: Expectations, Results, and Prospects for the Future," in *Vatican II: Assessments and Perspectives*, Vol. 1, ed. René Latourelle (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 423-4.

complicates the reception of conciliar teachings because one can choose some statements to support his/her view and ignore other statements. For example, to argue for the primacy and infallibility of the Pope, his teaching authority and power over the whole church, one group of people in the church can cite a statement of *Lumen Gentium* 22: "The Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise freely." Another group, by contrast, quotes other statements of *Lumen Gentium* 22 to argue for collegiality or the power of all bishops, who are responsible for leading the church when they are in communion with the bishop of Rome: "Together with its head, the Supreme Pontiff, and never apart from him, it [the college of bishops] is the subject of supreme and full authority over the universal church." For Kasper, the presence of these statements and other statements like them in the documents of Vatican II challenges efforts to interpret and integrate conciliar teachings into a harmonious whole. In his words,

> How this integration is supposed to be conceived and practiced in individual cases is by no means clarified in the conciliar texts. So some people have talked about a juxtaposition, a double viewpoint, a dialectic, if not a contradiction between two ecclesiologies, in the conciliar texts … So both conservatives and progressives can find support in individual conciliar statements.[37]

Joseph Komonchak helps one to clarify Kasper's idea of the variety of interpretations when he presents three positions among Catholics about Vatican II between the 1980s and the

[37] Ibid.

1990s, which he calls the "progressive," "traditionalist," and "reformist" interpretation.[38] In Komonchak's view, the progressive interpretation of the council tends to make a sharp contrast between the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar church. This interpretation considers the council as the "new Pentecost," when the Spirit was viewed as once more breathing life into the dry bones of pre-conciliar Catholicism. By contrast, the traditionalist interpretation of Lefebvre and those who followed his view rejects achievements of the council. They claim that many of its teachings departed from the living tradition of the church. Komonchak identifies the reformist interpretation of the council with the view held by de Lubac and Ratzinger, who separate themselves from the above two groups. Supporters of the reformist interpretation of Vatican II argue that conciliar bishops never wished a revolution to form a new church and break the tradition of the church, but a spiritual renewal and pastoral reform of the church.

According to Kasper, another issue that complicates the reception of Vatican II has its roots in Pope John XXIII's concern for "the pastoral character of doctrine." Unlike other councils in the history of the church such as Nicaea (325), Chalcedon (451), and Trent (1545-1563), which are convened to discern false teachings and reconcile schisms among church members, Vatican II tries not to condemn errors, but enters into dialogue with people of the modern world. Indeed, Pope John XXIII states in his opening speech to the council, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, that as a guardian of faith, the church has frequently condemned errors throughout its history. In Vatican II, however, the Pope invites the magisterium to show the world a new image of the church: "the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and

[38] See Joseph Komonchak, "Interpreting the Council: Catholic Attitudes Toward Vatican II," in *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 17-36.

goodness toward the brethren who are separated from her."[39] As mother and the spouse of Christ, the church "prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present-day more by demonstrating the validity of her teaching than by condemnations."[40]

Kasper argues that "Following the opening address of Pope John XXIII, which caused such a stir, the council made a clear distinction between the underlying foundation of faith, which is permanently binding, and its mode of expression."[41] In his view, this distinction complicates the reception of Vatican II because we have now received not only doctrinal statements but also pastoral statements of church teachings. Kasper does not offer clear guidelines to help one understand how to interpret pastoral statements. As regards doctrinal statements, he proposes four principles to explain and communicate these statements to the recipients of the council.

The first principle relates to the interpretation of doctrinal statements as a whole: One should not stress certain teachings of the council while ignoring others. The second principle takes into account the relationship between spirit and text of the council. Here, one cannot understand doctrinal statements of Vatican II if one separates these statements from the spirit that underpins them. The third principle connects the teachings of Vatican II to the teachings of other councils. In Kasper's words, Vatican II "must be interpreted in the context of the living tradition,

[39] Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 716.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 170.

particularly the Trinitarian and Christological confessions of the ancient church."[42] The fourth principle relates to the relationship between conciliar teachings and the present world: the teaching of Vatican II must illuminate the life of people today.[43]

Kasper claims that the above principles can guide one to interpret doctrinal statements of the council. However, "when the pastoral character [of doctrine] is in question, there is not as yet any agreement even as to what should be understood by this [character], in any detailed sense; even less is there any consensus about an appropriate hermeneutic."[44] There are two concepts that one needs to clarify here to understand Kasper's analysis of the hermeneutic of reception of the council: first, the pastoral character of doctrine; and second, principles that one should use to interpret pastoral statements of Vatican II. For Kasper, one cannot interpret pastoral statements in the same way that one explains doctrinal statements. In other words, the hermeneutical principles proposed above by Kasper to interpret doctrinal statements cannot be applied to examine pastoral statements. The questions to which one should pay attention are: What does the pastoral character of doctrine mean exactly? How does this character, in Kasper's view, contribute to the formulation of pastoral statements? As I shall show below, in his attempt to explain the pastoral character of doctrine, Kasper divides conciliar teachings into pastoral and doctrinal statements. Before presenting Kasper's understanding of the pastoral character of doctrine, it is necessary to turn to the source through which he refers to this character, namely, Pope John XXIII's opening speech to the council.

[42] Ibid., 172.

[43] Ibid., 170-3.

[44] Ibid., 170.

According to Pope John XXIII, the council's principal duty is to defend the truths of faith and to communicate them more efficaciously. To achieve this task, the council's bishops must never depart from the truths of faith that they had received from the Scriptures and the teachings of the Fathers. At the same time, however, they have to look to the present, to new challenges, opportunities, and developments of modern sciences and technology.[45] It is clear that the Pope emphasizes the task of guarding the truths of faith and considers this task as a major duty of the council's bishops. Nevertheless, for him, the magisterium's duty is not merely to defend church teachings, but also to communicate these teachings to new recipients of the Gospel through a language that helps them understand the faith. In the words of the Pope,

> The Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step toward a doctrinal penetration, and a formation of consciences in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and exposed through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The deposit of faith is one thing, namely, the truths contained in our venerable teaching, but the manner in which they are formulated is another, always keeping the same meaning and same understanding. It is the latter that must be taken into great consideration, with patience, if necessary, assessing everything according to the forms and proportions of a magisterium, which is predominantly pastoral in character.[46]

[45] Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council, 714.

[46] Ibid.

Kasper explains the meaning of the pastoral character of doctrine as follows: The word pastoral "means bringing out the enduring relevance of dogma. Because dogma is true, it must and can be continually given a new and living impact, and has to be interpreted pastorally."[47] For Kasper, because the conciliar bishops accept and integrate the Pope's teachings into their formulation of the conciliar documents, they use a pastoral language to compose teachings of these documents. Consequently, one finds both doctrinal and pastoral statements in the documents of Vatican II. In the narrower and specialized sense of the word pastoral, Kasper claims, pastoral statements are present in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern Word.[48]

Kasper clarifies the meaning of the pastoral character of doctrine and divides the teaching of the council into pastoral statements and doctrinal statements. However, he does not explain how conciliar bishops receive Pope John XXIII's pastoral character of doctrine and formulate the truths of faith through "the literary forms of modern thought." To further understand the pastoral character of doctrine and how this character of the council's statements complicates the reception of Vatican II, I combine John O'Malley's understanding of style of the council and Christoph Theobald's explanation of the manifestation of the pastoral character of doctrine in the documents of Vatican II.

[47] Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 171.

[48] Ibid., 173.

In his article *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* published in 2007, O'Malley argues that to interpret the council appropriately, one has to take into account both letter and spirit of the council.[49] For O'Malley, the spirit of the council is manifested through the style of its teaching or its literary genre and vocabulary.[50] O'Malley claims that the majority of the conciliar bishops welcomed John XXIII's opening speech and deployed a new style of discourse to engage their readers. Instead of a legislative-juridical style "Let no one dare to say," and "We condemn, reject, and detest" found in teaching of the councils such as Lateran V (1512),[51] one discovers the pastoral character of doctrine in all sixteen documents of Vatican II, especially in the four constitutions. Some elements in change in style of conciliar teachings from early drafts to final documents of the council can be clearly indicated by conciliar documents' vocabulary that

> moves from commands to invitation, from laws to ideas, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to conversation, from ruling to serving, from withdrawn to integrated, from vertical to top-down horizontal, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to friendship, from static to changing, from passive acceptance to active engagement, from prescriptive to principled, from defined to open-ended, from behavior-modification to conversion

[49] John W. O'Malley, "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" John W. O'Malley and David G. Schultenover, *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 52-91.

[50] Ibid., 70.

[51] In this council, Pope Julius II and the bishops condemned those cardinals who had attempted to depose him as follows: "We condemn, reject, and detest, with the approval of this holy council, each and very thing done by those sons of perdition." See *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Norman Tanner, Vol. 1 (Washington: Georgetown University, 1990), 597.

of heart, from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience, from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.[52]

O'Malley's articulation of the style of conciliar teachings helps one understand how the conciliar bishops formulate the truths of faith through "the literary forms of modern thought." However, what the Pope sought to carry out in Vatican II is more than merely elements of literary style. Christoph Theobald argues that to comprehend the pastoral character of doctrine, one should not limit to a few statements of John XXIII's opening speech to the council. One "should analyze – historically – the process of conciliar reception of this principle and show how it becomes the magnet that attracts various texts and textual groups of the council to form a real [textual] corpus."[53] In other words, one has no other ways to comprehend Pope John XXIII's pastoral character of doctrine apart from exploring the manifestation of this character in the documents of Vatican II. These documents, for Theobald, form a "textual corpus" that "despite its internal complexity and multiple forms of compromise, offers a coherent vision."[54] This coherent vision is itself the concrete manifestation of John XXIII's pastoral character of doctrine that "is not completed at the end of the Council and should, instead, be claimed once again and continued locally and globally, every time a new historical context requires it."[55]

[52] Ibid., 81.

[53] Christoph Theobald, "The Principle of Pastorality at Vatican II," *The Legacy of Vatican II*, ed. Massimo Faggioli and Andrea Vicini (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 27.

[54] Ibid., 29.

[55] Ibid., 28.

According to Theobald, the pastoral character of doctrine relates to the conciliar bishops' attention "to the historical and cultural roots of the *recipients* of the Gospel and the discovery that revelation is entirely historical, and therefore subject to continual reinterpretation *according to the situation* of those to whom it is transmitted."[56] In other words, because the truths of faith were revealed by God and interpreted by church members through their languages, experiences, and sciences in particular contexts of church history, these truths need to be formulated in accordance with new languages, experiences, and sciences of those to whom the truths of faith will be proclaimed in a new context. By doing so, "the revealed truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and more suitably presented" to contemporary believers (GS 44).

To illustrate the manifestation of the pastoral character of doctrine in the documents of Vatican II, Theobald mentions the teaching of *Ad Gentes* 4 about the mission of the Spirit. This truth of faith comes from the Acts of the Apostles in which Peter and other apostles were filled with the Spirit and began to proclaim the Gospel in different languages (Acts 2: 1-13). In *Ad Gentes* 4, the conciliar bishops use concepts such as soul, gift, heart, communion, and structure to present their teaching on the mission of the Spirit. They state that the Spirit continues to "make the entire church 'one in communion and ministry; and provide her with different hierarchical and charismatic gifts,' giving life to ecclesiastical structures, being as it were their soul, and inspiring in the hearts of the faithful that same spirit of mission which impelled Christ himself" (AG 4).

[56] Ibid., 28 (emphasis original).

In addition to *Ad Gentes* 4, one can explore other documents of Vatican II to show how the conciliar bishops integrate the pastoral character of doctrine into conciliar teachings. For example, to express the relationship between the church and the world, *Gaudium et Spes* states: "The church, at once, 'a visible organization and a spiritual community,' travels the same journey as all of humanity and shares the same earthly lot with the world: it is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God" (GS 40). This interpretation of the church neither identifies the church completely with other institutions of the world nor does it separate the church from the world. The church exists in this world of humanity. It is like a leaven, which, under the guidance of the Spirit, transforms people of the world into the one family of God. The conciliar bishops use concepts such as visible organization, spiritual community, a leaven, and the family of God, to present the truth of faith about the church and its relation with the world. These concepts come from knowledge and experience of those to whom the bishops attempt to convey the truth of faith about the church.

Having explained Pope John XXIII's pastoral character of doctrine and how this character is manifested in different teachings of Vatican II, one can now understand two issues that, for Kasper, complicate efforts to receive the council: the variety of interpretations of conciliar teachings and the interpretation of pastoral statements of the council. Kasper claims that because Pope John XXIII requests the conciliar bishops to express church teachings through a pastoral language, the church now receives pastoral and doctrinal statements in documents of Vatican II. One may question whether Kasper is right when he separates the teaching of Vatican II into doctrinal and pastoral statements, and then applies different hermeneutical principles to interpret these teachings. To answer this question, I examine the hermeneutic of the council

through the Final Report of delegates who participated in the 1985 Synod of Bishops and the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI. As I shall show below, the approaches of the synodal bishops and the Pope to the hermeneutic of the council will help one to clarify Kasper's understanding of the variety of interpretations of Vatican II. These approaches also shed light on Kasper's distinction between pastoral and doctrinal statements of the council.

The 1985 Synod of Bishops

Pope John Paul II convoked the 1985 Synod of Bishops on January 25, 1985 and invited delegates of episcopal conferences around the world to Rome to revive the spirit of Vatican II, to interpret and implement conciliar teachings.[57] Along with Cardinal Godfried Danneels, the General Secretary of the Synod, Pope John Paul II appointed Kasper to work as the theological secretary of the synod. As the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Ratzinger, who would later become Pope Benedict XVI, was also a member of the synod. The synod marked the beginning of the third phase – the phase of magisterial reception. In this phase, the magisterium took a central role and led the church to receive Vatican II. To explore the synod's understanding of the hermeneutic of the council, one can ask two questions: First, what are issues that complicate the reception of the council viewed through the perspective of the synodal bishops? Second, which solutions did they offer to solve these issues?

In the Final Report of the 1985 Synod, the bishops identify external and internal causes that prevent the church from receiving the council. The external causes include the lack of

[57] For a history of the synod, see Peter Hebblethwaite, *Synod Extraordinary: The inside Story of the Rome Synod, November-December 1985* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986).

material means and church personnel to carry out the conciliar teaching on mission in developing countries, the hostile spirit of the world toward the church, and immanentism. The bishops explain that immanentism "is a reduction of the integral vision of man, a reduction that leads not to his true liberation but to a new idolatry, to the slavery of ideologies, to life in reductive and often oppressive structures of this world."[58] To offer a concrete form of immanentism, the Final Report mentions consumerism or the idolatry of material goods.

In addition to these external causes, the synodal bishops point to internal causes, namely, the reluctance to implement conciliar teachings and a selective interpretation of the council.[59] The Final Report singles out a selective interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church, an interpretation that considers the church as merely an institution, and identifies this interpretation as a flawed understanding of Vatican II's teaching on the church.[60] In the judgment of the synodal bishops, this interpretation does not take into account the relationship between God and the church.[61] To redress this defective interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church, the bishops offer two solutions.

First, they establish hermeneutical principles to deepen the church's reception of conciliar teachings. In the words of the Final Report,

[58] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), II, A, 1.

[59] Ibid., I, 4.

[60] Ibid., I, 4.

[61] Ibid., II, A, 2.

> The theological interpretation of the conciliar doctrine must show attention to all the documents, in themselves and in their close relationship, in such a way that the integral meaning of the council's affirmations – often very complex – might be understood and expressed. Special attention must be paid to the four major constitutions of the council, which contain the interpretative key for the other decrees and declarations. It is not licit to separate the pastoral character from the doctrinal vigor of the documents. In the same way, it is not legitimate to separate the spirit and the letter of the council. Moreover, the council must be understood in continuity with the great tradition of the church, and, at the same time, we must receive light from the council's own doctrine for today's church and the men and women of our time. The church is one and the same throughout all the councils.[62]

These hermeneutical principles show a solution promoted by the bishops of the 1985 Synod to receive Vatican II. The delegates of the Synod establish the principles, but they do not elaborate on them. They simply oppose the separation of conciliar teachings from their expressions in a pastoral language. They emphasize the integral relationship between the spirit and the text of the council. They ask church members to interpret and implement Vatican II in continuity with teachings of other councils. The emphasis of these principles is on the reception of Vatican II in continuity with other teachings in the living tradition of the church. For the synodal bishops, the church of yesterday and the church of today are one and the same subject in salvation history. It was established by God through Christ and continues to be guided by the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples in the world.

[62] Ibid. I, 5.

Second, the synodal bishops promote an official interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church as communion. They claim that "The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the council's documents."[63] This interpretation of the church as communion is an important part of the interpretation of the council as a whole. As we shall see throughout the thesis, one's interpretation of the church will influence one's understanding of other teachings of the council, such as the relationships between the universal and local churches, between the church and its mission, and between the bishop of Rome and other bishops. The synodal bishops reaffirm the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* on the church "as the people of God, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the family of God."[64] They assert that "These descriptions of the church complement one another and must be understood in the light of the mystery of Christ or of the church in Christ."[65] In the end, however, they opt for the term "communion" to describe the church and define it as "a matter of communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit."[66] One thus can ask: Why did the synodal bishops select the idea of communion to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church?

One can partly answer this question when reviewing the Initial Report of the Synod, which points out problems regarding the interpretation of the church as people of God and institution. The following problems were those perceived by the Synod:

[63] Ibid., II. C. 1.

[64] Ibid., II, A, 3.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid. II, C. 1.

> Many of the respondents report that the Council's teaching on the Church has sometimes been incompletely and superficially received. For example, the notion of the Church as People of God, with which the Council describes the Church, has been separated from its salvation-history context and from its coherence with other images and notions of the Church, such as the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit. Some ideological and false ideas have been brought in under the notion "people." In addition, the mystery of the Church and its sacramental condition are often neglected. The Church as an institution is sometimes separated from the Church as mystery, and an opposition is claimed between the Church as communion and the Church as an institution, between the popular Church and the hierarchical Church.[67]

In contrast to these negative evaluations of the church as people of God and institution, the synodal bishops offer positive reasons to explain why they choose communion to describe the church. The idea of communion has its foundation in Scripture and "has been held in great honor in the early Church and the Eastern churches to this day."[68] This idea thus can help church members to retrieve the vision of one church before the divisions among Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant manifestations of Christianity. Moreover, the term communion promotes a dynamic relationship not only between the universal and local churches, but also between the bishop of Rome and other bishops. It concerns both unity and diversity as the signs of true richness in the church, and provides a theological foundation for the conciliar teaching on

[67] The text of the Initial Report was quoted by Joseph Komonchak in his article, "The Synod of 1985 and the Notion of the Church," *Chicago Studies* 26 (1987), 331.

[68] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, II, C, 1.

episcopal collegiality.[69] All in all, the synodal bishops claim that the church as communion can preserve and nurture both diversity and unity in the church, which has its theological foundation in communion within the Trinity. By contrast, the interpretation of the church as institution emphasizes the human dimension of the church to the point that it neglects the relationship between God and the church. This interpretation argues that the church was not established by Christ in salvation history, but was formed and organized by a group of people, who came together in the first centuries of the church.

The synod's refusal of the flawed interpretation of the church as institution provides an example to explain Kasper's idea of the variety of interpretations. Different interpretations of Vatican II's teaching on the church make it difficult for the church to receive the council because church members do not agree with one another concerning how to perceive the idea of the church. If one group of people in the church interprets the church as an institution and another group describes it as communion, then church members are divided. They do not hold the same understanding about Vatican II's teaching on the church and find it difficult to implement this teaching of the council.

Kasper's analysis and the synod's approach to the hermeneutic of the council contribute to one's understanding of the causes that prevent the church from receiving the council. To deepen the study of reception of Vatican II, I turn to another interpreter of the council, that is, Pope Benedict XVI. Having examined this Pope's understanding of the hermeneutic of the

[69] Ibid., II, C, 4.

council, I shall bring together the views of Kasper, the synodal bishops, and Pope Benedict XVI to explain issues that complicate efforts to receive Vatican II.

Pope Benedict XVI's Remarks on Interpreting the Council

Along with Kasper, Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, has significantly influenced the church's reception of Vatican II. He participated in the council and contributed to the formulation of conciliar documents as the *peritus* for Cardinal Joseph Frings, the Archbishop of Cologne.[70] After the council, Ratzinger involved himself deeply in the reception of Vatican II through his writings and his roles as the Archbishop of Munich and Freising (1977-1982), the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1982-2005), and then as Pope Benedict XVI (2005-2013).

In his speech to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005 to mark forty years since the closing of Vatican II, Pope Benedict XVI delivered an important message on the hermeneutic of the council. At the heart of the speech, he mentions two interpretations of the council that, for him, came face-to-face in the history of reception of Vatican II: "the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture," and "the hermeneutic of reform."[71] Benedict XVI rejects the former, and argues against the sharp dichotomy of rupture and discontinuity between the pre-conciliar and the post-conciliar church. In his words,

[70] For a study of Ratzinger's contribution to the council, see Avery Dulles, "Benedict XVI: Interpreter of Vatican II," in *Church and Society*: *The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures: 1988-2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 468-84. Ratzinger evaluated the council and addressed the issues that he had perceived in the council in *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 1966).

[71] See "The Pope's Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005," in *The Crisis of Authority in Catholic Modernity*, ed. Michael J. Lacey and Francis Oakley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 357-62.

> The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church. It asserts that the texts of the Council as such do not yet express the true spirit of the Council. It claims that they are the result of compromises in which, to reach unanimity, it was found necessary to keep and reconfirm many old things that are now pointless. However, the true spirit of the Council is not to be found in these compromises, but instead in the impulse toward the new that are contained in the texts.[72]

Against the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture, Benedict XVI advocates for the hermeneutic of reform that considers the church as one subject in the history of salvation. By promoting the hermeneutic of reform, the Pope authoritatively welcomes the term "reform" into the reception of the council. The hermeneutic of reform accepts the impulse toward the new in one's interpretation of conciliar teachings. This newness comes from "the combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels that the very nature of true reform consists."[73] Joseph Komonchak names the combination of continuity and discontinuity "Benedict XVI's interpretative key" to receive Vatican II.[74]

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[72] Ibid., 358.

[73] Ibid., 360.

[74] Joseph Komonchak, "Novelty in Continuity: Pope Benedict's Interpretation of Vatican II," *America* (February 2, 2009), 12-3.

To clarify this key, one can use the Pope's distinction between "permanent principles" and "contingent matters" of church teaching.[75] Church teaching on contingent matters arises out of particular situations in church history, and thus it can change when historical contexts change. Meanwhile, permanent principles of church teaching are truths of the faith that must be kept unchanged throughout salvation history. These truths are the will of God for the church that must be passed on faithfully from one generation to another.

To understand the relationship between permanent principles and contingent matters of church teaching, one can locate it within the context of the Pope's view of the relationship between the church and the world at the eve of Vatican II. According to Benedict XVI, the conciliar bishops realized that they must engage the world and address three issues to provide guidance for the people of the world: first, the relationship between faith and modern sciences; second, the relationship between the church and modern states; and third, the relationship between the Christian faith and the world religions. In the words of the Pope,

> These are all subjects of great importance – they were the great themes of the second part of the council – on which it is impossible to reflect more broadly in this context. It is clear that in all these sectors, which all together form a single problem, some kinds of discontinuity might emerge. Indeed, a discontinuity had been revealed but in which, after various distinctions between concrete historical

[75] "The Pope's Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005," 360.

> situations and their requirements had been made, the continuity of principles proved not to have been abandoned.[76]

Benedict XVI asserts that some kinds of discontinuity in church teaching are necessary for the reform of the church when it enters into dialogue with the world. However, the Pope does not specify which teachings should be renewed and he leaves this task for theologians to study. To explain Pope Benedict XVI's idea of discontinuity of church teaching, one can relate Vatican II's teaching on freedom to Pope Gregory XVI's (1831-1846) condemnation of the freedom of conscience. In the encyclical *Mirari Vos* published one year after his election, Gregory XVI condemned the freedom of conscience and the freedom of the press. In his words,

> The shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to the absurd and erroneous proposition that claims freedom of conscience must be maintained for everyone. It spreads ruin in sacred and civil affairs, though some repeat over and over again with the greatest impudence that some advantage accrues to religion from it … Experience shows, even from earliest times, that cities renowned for wealth, dominion, and glory perished as a result of this single evil, namely immoderate freedom of opinion, license of free speech and desire for novelty.[77]

[76] Ibid.

[77] Pope Gregory XVI's *Mirari Vos*, as cited by John O'Malley in *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 59.

In contrast to Gregory XVI's condemnation of the freedom of conscience and the freedom of the press, the council presents its teaching on human freedom in *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Declaration on Religious Liberty, as follows:

> The human person sees and recognizes the demands of the divine law through conscience. All are bound to follow their conscience faithfully in every sphere of activity so that they may come to God, who is their last end. Therefore, the individual must not be forced against conscience nor be prevented for acting according to conscience, especially in religious matters (*DH* 3).

Bringing together the teaching of *Dignitatis Humanae* on the freedom of conscience and Pope Gregory XVI's teaching on this subject, one can understand Benedict XVI's hermeneutic of reform. This hermeneutic is manifested through the combination of elements of continuity and elements of discontinuity in the teaching of the church. The continuity of church teaching that Benedict XVI mentions is the continuity of permanent principles such as the truth of faith on the freedom of conscience, which can be founded in the Scriptures and teachings of the Fathers. The discontinuity that he suggests is the discontinuity with those teachings such as Gregory XVI's condemnation of freedom. This teaching was formed out of a particular context in church history when the church faced challenges from the modern world. It thus can change or be reformed when a new context arrives.

Having explained the approaches of Kasper, the synodal bishops, and Pope Benedict XVI to the hermeneutic of the council, I shall now present issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II.

Issues that Complicate the Interpretation and Implementation of Vatican II

Comparing the synod's understanding of the hermeneutic of the council with those of Kasper and Pope Benedict XVI, one recognizes that the synodal bishops and the Pope do not emphasize the pastoral character of doctrine and its influence on the reception of Vatican II in the same way as Kasper did. Besides, the synodal bishops, Kasper, and Pope Benedict XVI identify different causes that complicate the reception of Vatican II.

The synodal bishops consider selective interpretations of the council as a cause that prevents the church from implementing conciliar teachings. They establish hermeneutical principles to deepen the church's reception of the council. Kasper agrees with the synod's teaching when he mentions selective readings of the council between progressive reformers and conservatives. He identifies the juxtaposition of conservative and progressive statements in the documents of Vatican II and the pastoral character of conciliar teachings as the causes that make it difficult for the church to receive the council. Pope Benedict XVI neither mentions selective interpretations of the council, nor does he refer to the juxtaposition of conservative and progressive statements as a cause that obstructs the reception of Vatican II. He argues that the conflict of interpretations between the hermeneutic of reform and the hermeneutic of discontinuity is the cause that complicates efforts to receive the council. The Pope recommends

the hermeneutic of reform as a solution to interpret Vatican II and claims that this interpretation is bearing fruit in the post-conciliar period of the church.

Despite their different explanations of the causes that prevent the church from receiving the council, the synodal bishops, Kasper, and Pope Benedict XVI would likely agree with one another that the variety of interpretations of Vatican II is the underlying cause that must be addressed. In fact, the synodal bishops mention two different interpretations of the conciliar teaching on the church in the Final Report: the church as communion and the church as institution. Pope Benedict XVI points to the hermeneutic of reform and the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture. Kasper mentions the conflict of interpretations of Vatican II between progressive reformers and conservatives.

As we have seen above, the synodal bishops, Kasper, and Ratzinger do not offer the same causes to explain difficulties that complicate the reception of Vatican II. They also do not hold the same understanding concerning the significance of the pastoral character of doctrine in the interpretation of Vatican II. Benedict XVI cites John XXIII's concern for the pastoral character of doctrine to support the hermeneutic of reform. However, he does not explain how this character aids the hermeneutic of reform.[78] Benedict XVI did acknowledge that "the program that Pope John XXIII proposed [the expression and communication of the truths of faith through a pastoral language] was extremely demanding."[79] By contrast, Kasper acknowledges the significance of the pastoral character of doctrine in the reception of Vatican II. He distinguishes

[78] "The Pope's Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005," 358-9.

[79] Ibid., 359.

between the truths of faith and their mode of expression and divides the teaching of Vatican II into pastoral and doctrinal statements.[80] The Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops does not support Kasper's division of conciliar teaching into pastoral and doctrinal statements. The synod teaches that "It is not licit to separate the pastoral character [of doctrine] from the doctrinal vigor of the documents."[81] For the synodal bishops, Vatican II's teaching cannot be split into pastoral and doctrinal statements as if there are two different types of statements in the documents of Vatican II. Therefore, one should not interpret conciliar teachings in *Gaudium et Spes* and consider them as having less authority than other teachings in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Lumen Gentium*. Each of these document presents different dimensions of the church. While *Gaudium et Spes* explains the relationship between the church and the modern world, *Sancrosanctum Concilium* offers principles to reform church liturgy, and *Lumen Gentium* describes the nature and structure of the church.

In my view, the synodal bishops, Kasper, and Pope Benedict XVI do not emphasize enough the importance of the pastoral character of doctrine in the reception of Vatican II. One can realize the importance of this character and identifies the second issue that complicates the reception of Vatican II when viewing the hermeneutic of the council through O'Malley's and Theobald's explanations of the pastoral character of doctrine. O'Malley emphasizes a new style of discourse of conciliar documents that enters into dialogue with new recipients of the council. Theobald points to the reinterpretation of the truths of faith according to the situations of those to whom these truths are communicated. The common feature in both O'Malley and Theobald's

[80] Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 170-3.

[81] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, I, 5.

understandings of the pastoral character of doctrine is the significance of recipients and their social and historical contexts. Because the conciliar bishops welcome Pope John XXIII's concern for the pastoral character of doctrine and integrate this character into their formulation of Vatican II's documents, the church receives conciliar teachings formulated in a pastoral language. To interpret and implement these teachings today, that is, more than five decades after the council, one needs to acknowledge the presence of the pastoral character of doctrine manifested in the teachings of Vatican II and communicate these teachings through present-day recipients' languages, theories, and concepts. This is the task that the church has to undertake to evangelize all peoples of the world.

We can now identify two issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II. The first is the variety of interpretations of the council's teaching among church members, who approach the council from their own perspectives and understandings of the faith. The second relates to the task of communicating the council through language, knowledge, and experience of present-day recipients of the council. The communication of conciliar teachings is a complicated task because the church has to learn and understand recipients' language, experience, and science before using these means to express and communicate these teachings to the recipients. The conciliar bishops recognize the difficulty of this task and they ask the church to call upon "the help of people who are living in the world, who are experts in its [the world's] organizations and its forms of training, and who understand its mentality, in the case of believers and non-believers alike" (GS 44). It is necessary for the church to learn from the world because without doing so, the church cannot enter into dialogue with people of the world and communicate the truths of faith through the use of their languages, theories, and concepts.

Having presented the issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II, I propose the following principles to engage these issues and receive the council: the relationship between documents and the historical context of the council; between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, between continuity and discontinuity.

Part II: Hermeneutical Principles to Interpret and Implement Vatican II

First Principle: The Documents and the Context of the Council

To engage different interpretations of a conciliar teaching, one has to view it not only within the context of its document as a whole and that document's interrelationship with other documents, but also within the historical context of the council that forms the teaching.[82] By the documents of Vatican II, I refer to the sixteen texts officially approved by the conciliar bishops and promulgated by Pope Paul VI. They consist of four constitutions, nine decrees, and three declarations.[83] Of these documents, *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and *Gaudium et Spes* are more foundational ones because they provide the key to interpret other decrees and declarations.[84] For example, to understand the church's mission, one can examine *Ad Gentes*, the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Christus Dominus*, the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People.

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[82] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, I, 5.

[83] See *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, and Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery (New York: Costello Publishing, 2007).

[84] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, I, 5.

The specific teachings of these decrees that relate to the mission of the church can be clarified and understood only if one studies them not merely through their interrelationship with one another, but also through the lens of teachings on the church presented in *Lumen Gentium*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and *Gaudium et Spes*.

Among the constitutions, *Dei Verbum* can act as the hermeneutical key through which one interprets the other constitutions. This document can be classified as the central one because of its theological focus.[85] While *Lumen Gentium*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and *Gaudium et Spes* are more ecclesiologically focused, *Dei Verbum* offers the most fundamental truths of the faith. In Chapter One of *Dei Verbum*, for example, the council presents a core truth: "By divine revelation God wished to manifest and communicate both himself and the eternal decrees of his will concerning the salvation of humankind." (DV 6). This teaching explains the meaning of revelation not merely as the communication of certain truths about God, but fundamentally as God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to all human beings. The self-communication of God can be considered as a fundamental truth because of its significance in comparison to other truths of the faith. In *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism, the council teaches that "When comparing doctrines, theologians should remember that in Catholic teaching, there exists an order or 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith" (UR 11).

[85] See Jared Wicks, *Investigating Vatican II* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 84; Gerald O'Collins, "Dei Verbum and Revelation," in *God's Word and the Church's Council*, ed. Mark O'Brien, and Christopher Monaghan (Adelaide: ATF Theology, 2014), 2; Christoph Theobald, *La reception du concile Vatican II*, I. Accéder à la source (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2009), 769; Ormond Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 42–3; Idem, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019), 5.

Given the teaching on hierarchy of truths, one can argue that God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to humanity is a fundamental truth that sheds light on other truths about the church.[86] *Dei Verbum* presents how revelation takes place in salvation history (DV 2-3), and how the truths of faith have been transmitted from one generation of believers to another (DV 7-8). Building on this teaching on God's self-communication, *Lumen Gentium* describes the church as the sacrament of Christ and the new people of God in salvation history (LG 1, 9).

Having proposed a way to view the relationship between the documents of Vatican II, I shall now examine the context of the council before showing how conciliar documents and the context of Vatican II can be mutually interpreted to explain conciliar teachings.

According to Ormond Rush, although conciliar documents constitute a "fixed" criterion or official teachings of Vatican II set in writing, they "cannot capture the whole of what the council was and is."[87] The whole of the council is composed of the spirit and the documents of the council. To interpret a teaching of Vatican II, one has to examine its meaning manifested not only through conciliar statements and their relationships with one another, but also through the spirit or the historical context of Vatican II. In a broader sense, this context refers to all elements that constitute the council from its being announced by Pope John XXIII on January 25, 1959 to its closing mass on December 8, 1965.[88] In a narrower sense, the historical context of Vatican II is composed of

[86] See Catherine Clifford, "L'herméneutique d'un principe herméneutique: La hiérarchie des vérités," in *L'Autorité et les autorités: L'herméneutique théologique de Vatican II*, eds. Gilles Routhier and Guy Jobin (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2010), 69–91.

[87] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles*, 9.

[88] Ibid., 3.

> the motives and intentions of individual protagonists (as revealed in private diaries or minutes of conciliar commissions), informal meetings of bishops outside the formal meetings, the bishops' encounter with new theological frameworks from the council's theological experts, the bishops' speeches in the aula, written interventions by individual bishops or groups of bishops, the work of drafting commissions and their *relationes* ("reports") back to the council assembly, and the bishops' voting on conciliar procedures, drafts, and final documents.[89]

To explain how the documents and the context of Vatican II are mutually interpretive, one can turn to the conciliar teaching on the church in the text of *Lumen Gentium*. In Chapter One of the constitution, the conciliar bishops adopt different terms and images to present their understanding of the church. They describe the church as sacrament in article 1, as sheepfold, God's field, God's building, and mother in article 6, and body of Christ in article 7. In Chapter Two of *Lumen Gentium*, they consider the church as the new people of God.

This list from the text of *Lumen Gentium* shows different terms and images used by the council to interpret the nature of the church. The interpretation of the text alone, however, cannot answer the question of why the bishops give a privileged place for the idea of the church as sacrament in the first article of *Lumen Gentium*. To shed light on this question, one has to

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[89] Ibid., 3. For another study of the "event of Vatican II," see Joseph Komonchak, "Vatican II as an 'Event'," in *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* ed. David Schultenover (New York: Continuum, 2007), 24-51.

examine *Lumen Gentium*'s teaching on the church in light of its historical context or rather various influences on the formulation of the idea of the church in *Lumen Gentium*.[90]

At the first session of the council, in the fall of 1962, the Theological Commission of the council sent the bishops a draft document on the church entitled *De Ecclesia*.[91] The Theological Commission, headed by the Prefect of the Holy Office, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, did not use the ideas of sacrament and people of God to describe the church. In Chapter One of *De Ecclesia*, "The Nature of the Church Militant," the Theological Commission combined Pope Pius XII's teaching in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis* with the Neo-Scholastic ecclesiology to express the church as the body of Christ and identify this body with the Roman Catholic Church.

> The Holy Synod teaches and solemnly professes, therefore, that there is only a single true Church of Jesus Christ, that Church which in the Creed we proclaim to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic, the Church which the Savior acquired for himself on the cross and joined to himself as body to head and as bride to bridegroom, the Church which, after his resurrection, he handed over to be governed to St. Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs. Therefore, only the Catholic Roman is rightly called the Church.[92]

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[90] To understand the history of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, see Richard Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, and Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 8-26.

[91] The Latin text of the schema can be found in *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, I/4 (Citta del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970-80), 12-91. The English translation of the passages that I use in this chapter comes from the translation of the schema provided by Joseph Komonchak. The link to the translation can be found at https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/draft-of-de-ecclesia-chs-1-11.pdf.

[92] *De Ecclesia*, 7.

According to the Theological Commission, one can receive salvation if one becomes a member of the Roman Catholic Church or is ordered towards the church by desire.

> The Holy Synod teaches, as God's Holy Church has always taught, that the Church is necessary for salvation and that no one can be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded by God through Jesus Christ, nevertheless refuses to enter her or to persevere in her. Just as no one can be saved except by receiving baptism - by which anyone, who does not pose some obstacle to incorporation, becomes a member of the Church - or at least by desire for Baptism, so also no one can attain salvation unless he is a member of the Church or at least is ordered towards the Church by desire. But for anyone to attain to salvation, it is not enough that he be really a member of the Church or be by desire ordered towards it; it is also required that he die in the state of grace, joined to God by faith, hope, and charity.[93]

Reflecting on these paragraphs and the title of the first chapter of *De Ecclesia*, "The Nature of the Church Militant," one recognizes a triumphalist style used by the Theological Commission to describe the necessity of the church for the salvation of the world. For the Theological Commission, the church was not merely the body of Christ, but also a disciplined army "victoriously opposing the gates of hell and the snares of the devil."[94] Those who want to

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[93] Ibid., 8.

[94] Ibid., 2.

be saved have to become members of this church through baptism and live in a state of grace. The militant church or the Roman Catholic Church is the true church of Christ, governed by the Roman Pontiffs, the successors of Peter, who are chosen by bishops under the guidance of the Spirit to lead the people of God.

On November 30, 1962, Cardinal Ottaviani introduced *De Ecclesia* to the conciliar bishops. The draft document preserved many ideas of *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis*, and was qualified by Ottaviani as a pastoral and biblical document. Its critics, however, sharply criticized not only the document's style of expression but also its theology of the church. Bishop Emil Josef De Smedt used three terms to criticize the document: triumphalism, clericalism, and juridicalism. In his view, *De Ecclesia* was written in a triumphalist style, which separated the church from the humble people of God. Its authors lacked an appreciation for the church as a mystery of faith and they portrayed the church as an army of God.[95] Cardinal Achille Liénart pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church and the body of Christ were too closely identified in the text of *De Ecclesia*.[96] Cardinal Joseph Frings criticized the draft statement as not "catholic" because it did not consider richness of the patristic tradition, East and West.[97] The conciliar bishops delivered seventy-seven speeches on *De Ecclesia*, and their views can be summarized by citing a comment from Gérard Philips, the main drafter of *Lumen Gentium*: "Many Fathers found fault with the general approach and spirit of the text. All desired a pastoral approach, but many thought that the best way to obtain this end would be to draw up two documents, one containing

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[95] *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, I/4 (Citta del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970-1991), 142-4.

[96] Ibid., 126-7.

[97] Ibid., 218-20.

dogmatic teaching, the other making practical applications, the second to be directed mainly to the faithful in general."[98]

As the result of criticisms of *De Ecclesia*, the majority of conciliar bishops recognized that this document could not provide a proper vision of the church. In February 1963, a sub-commission of the Theological Commission was formed to revise *De Ecclesia*.[99] By the summer of 1963, the sub-commission produced a second schema on the church and named it *Lumen Gentium*. Its members replaced the title of the first chapter of *De Ecclesia*, "The Nature of the Church Militant" with "The Mystery of the Church." This change in the title of *Lumen Gentium*'s first chapter was significant for one's interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church. It showed that between the second period (1963) and the fourth period of the council (1965), the conciliar bishops no longer considered the church as a victorious army of soldiers who struggle against sin and the devil in the world, but as a mystery of God and the sacrament of Christ, who is the light of all nations. As the sacrament of Christ, the church is both the new people of God and the body of Christ, which has Christ as their head and founder.

The above examination of the historical context that formed *Lumen Gentium*'s teaching on the church is not enough to help one understand the whole of the conciliar teaching on the church. This examination, however, makes clear that one cannot comprehend Vatican II's

[98] Gérard Philips, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: History of the Constitution," *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 107-8.

[99] The sub-commission of the Theological Commission was composed of some leading bishops and theologians at the council. Among the bishops were Michael Browne, Paul Emile Léger, Franz König, Pietro Parente, Andre Charue, Gabreil Garrone, and Joseph Schröffer. Among the theologians were M. R. Gagnebet, André Naud, Karl Rahner, Gérard Philips, Jean Daniélou, and Yves Congar. See Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 13.

teaching on the church if one ignores the historical context of *Lumen Gentium* or a series of events that influenced the formulation of the idea of the church in this constitution. Combining the interpretation of the text with the interpretation of the context out of which *Lumen Gentium* and other documents of the council were formulated, one comes to the conclusion that the church is a mystery of God. It cannot be described as an army nor can one identify it merely as the body of Christ. The conciliar bishops give a privileged place for the idea of the church as mystery or the sacrament of Christ in the first article of *Lumen Gentium* because no single image is suitable to describe the mystery of the church.

Having examined the relationship between the text of *Lumen Gentium* and its historical context to interpret the church, one can state the first hermeneutical principle of Vatican II as follows: the council must be interpreted in light of both conciliar documents and their interrelationships and historical contexts or a series of events that produced conciliar teachings. By doing so, one comes to know why and how these teachings were formed and what the conciliar bishops wanted to pass on to their receivers in a new context of the world.

Second Principle: *Ressourcement* and *Aggiornamento*

To receive Vatican II today, the interpretation of conciliar documents and the interpretation of the council's context are not enough. The relationship between the documents and the context of the council is essential to comprehend conciliar teachings. Nevertheless, this relationship alone cannot deepen one's understandings of conciliar teachings and communicate these teachings to present-day receivers. As we have seen above, in his opening speech to the council, Pope John XXIII requested the bishops not merely to guard the truths of faith that they

had received, but also to communicate these truths to their receivers through a pastoral language. The bishops welcomed the Pope's request and turned to Scripture and patristic theology to examine church teachings. Then, they formulated these teachings through a pastoral language to enter into dialogue with their hearers. As a result, to receive Vatican II today, one can follow the footsteps of the conciliar bishops and return to the sources of faith to deepen one's understanding of conciliar teachings, and then communicate these teachings to present-day recipients of the council through their language, experience, and knowledge. Put simply, it is necessary to consider the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento* in one's reception of Vatican II.

Ressourcement is a French word which, according to Gabriel Flynn, was coined by the social critic Charles Peguy (1873-1914), means "returning to the sources."[100] It was then used by theologians of the *nouvelle théologie*[101] and theological experts of the council such as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Gérald Philips, and Joseph Ratzinger.[102] Meanwhile, *aggiornamento* is an Italian word that means "adapting and updating." Max Vodala points out that *aggiornamento*

[100] Gabriel Flynn, "Introduction: The Twentieth-Century Renaissance in Catholic Theology," in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-century Catholic Theology*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and P. D. Murray, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.

[101] See Gerard Loughlin, "*Nouvelle Théologie*: A Return to Modernism?" and Jurgen Mettepenningen, "*Nouvelle Théologie*: Four Historical Stages of Theological Reform towards *Ressourcement* (1935-1965)," in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-century Catholic Theology*.

[102] Gerald O'Collins, "Ressourcement and Vatican II," in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-century Catholic Theology*, 373-4; Jared Wicks, "Theologians at Vatican Council II," in *Doing Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 187-223.

had been central to the vision of the historian Angelo Roncalli before he became Pope John XXIII,[103] who alluded to *aggiornamento* in his opening speech to the council:

> By bringing herself up to date where required, and by wise organization of mutual cooperation, the church will make men and women, families, and peoples really turn their minds to heavenly things … She must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world, which have opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate.[104]

The conciliar bishops do not explicitly mention *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement* in the documents of Vatican II, but one does find different manifestations of these terms in conciliar teachings. For example, at the beginning of *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, the council refers to the relationship between *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement* as follows: "The up-to-date renewal of the religious life comprises both a constant return to the sources of Christian life in general and to the primitive inspiration of the institutes, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time" (PC 2).

In addition to this key paragraph, Gerald O'Collins lists other references to *ressourcement* in *Optatam Totius*, the Decree on the Training of Priests, *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, the Decree on the

[103] See Max Vodola, "John XXIII, Vatican II, and the Genesis of *Aggiornamento*: A Contextual Analysis of Angelo Roncalli's Works on San Carlo Borromeo in Relation to Late Twentieth Century Church Reform" (PhD diss., School of Philosophical, Historical, and International Studies, Monash University, Melbourne, 2010).

[104] See "Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council," 714.

Ministry and Life of Priests.[105] According to O'Collins, "Without ignoring other sources that should be retrieved (liturgical sources, the writing of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and in particular, 'the spiritual riches of the Eastern Fathers'), the conciliar documents repeatedly stressed the need to return to the Scriptures, the pre-eminent source for Christian faith and life."[106]

Apropos of *aggiornamento*, one finds its expression in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "The sacred council has set out … to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to encourage whatever can promote the union of all who believe in Christ" (SC 1). Similarly, *Gaudium et Spes*, the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World states that: "The church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and languages of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all and the requirements of the learned, insofar as this could be done" (GS 44).

The above examination of conciliar teachings shows that to receive Vatican II today, one has to pay attention to the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*. On the one hand, one must return to the Scriptures, the teachings of the Fathers and other councils to examine conciliar teachings in the context of the whole tradition of the church. On the other hand, to communicate conciliar teachings to new recipients of the council, one has to study their

[105] Gerald O'Collins, "*Ressourcement* and Vatican II," 372-91.

[106] Ibid., 374.

cultures, sciences, and languages. It is here that one again recognizes the challenging task that Pope John XXIII requested the conciliar bishops and the whole church to undertake, that is, the communication of the truths of faith to new recipients through a pastoral language. For the Pope, the truths of faith should not be kept in the believing community as its private possession. They must be communicated and put into practices, so that all peoples of the world can receive and understand loving messages that God wishes to communicate to them through the proclamation of the church. By doing so, the church continues the mission of Christ and evangelizes those who believe in Christ.

Third Principle: Continuity and Discontinuity

As I have explained above, Pope Benedict XVI promotes the hermeneutic of reform, which combines elements of continuity with elements of discontinuity, to interpret and implement the teaching of Vatican II.[107] The relationship between these elements brings about a reform in the church and enables it to adapt to a new context of the world.

The elements of continuity promoted by Vatican II are easily identified. They are the truths of faith such as the inauguration of the church by Christ (LG 5, 9); the self-revelation of God through Christ and the Spirit in salvation history (DV 3-4); the Scriptures as the word of God put down in writings under the inspiration of the Spirit (DV 9); the church as body of Christ (LG 7); the papacy (LG 22); the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species (SC 7); the seven

[107] "The Pope's Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005," 360.

sacraments, and so on. These teachings are the truths of faith revealed by God to the church that can be found in the Scriptures and the teachings of the Fathers.

Elements of discontinuity promoted by Vatican II and Pope Benedict XVI are more difficult to identify. Pope Benedict XVI does not understand elements of discontinuity in a negative sense as those teachings that break from church tradition and Scripture. Instead, he views them as necessary elements to reform the church. In addition to the teaching of *Dignitatis Humanae* on the freedom of conscience that I explained above, Peter Hünermann identifies four elements of discontinuity as stated by the council: a break with Christendom when the church dominates all things and everyone; a break with the division between Eastern and Western Christianity; a break with the separation between Catholics and Protestants; a break with the tense relationship between the church and the modern world.[108] Vatican II's teachings that mention these elements can be found in the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Church, the Decree on Ecumenism, the Declaration on Religious Liberty, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, where the conciliar bishops present their understanding of the dialogue between faith and culture (GS 57-58).

According to Pope Benedict XVI, "if we interpret and implement it [the council] guided by a right hermeneutic [the hermeneutic of reform], it can be and can become increasingly powerful for the ever necessary renewal of the church."[109] The hermeneutic of reform would

[108] See Peter Hunermann, "Kriterien für die Rezeption des II. Vatikanischen Konzils," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 191 (2011), 126-47.

[109] "The Pope's Address to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2005," 362.

renew the church's understanding of itself and its relationship with the world in accordance with the vision set out by the council. Reform and renewal of the church help its members to recognize that the church has not yet arrived at the reign of God. It is constantly guided by the Spirit manifested through all members of the church to become an effective sacrament of God's self-communication to all peoples in the world (LG 4).

All in all, to receive Vatican II today, one can employ the triple-dialogues between the documents and the context of the council, between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, and between continuity and discontinuity. While the first principle draws meanings of conciliar teachings manifested through the relationship between the documents and the historical context of the council, the second principle deepens the meanings of these teachings in light of the Scriptures and church tradition, and then communicates the teachings under examination to new recipients of the council through a pastoral language. The third principle combines elements of continuity with elements of discontinuity in the teachings of Vatican II to reform the church. The church receives, interprets, communicates, and implements the council when it constantly listens to the Spirit revealed through the whole people of God to renew its understanding of itself and its relationship with the world. Put differently, by listening to God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to the whole people of God in their ongoing process of reception of the council, the church takes part in the development of tradition. "Thus, as centuries go by, the church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in it" (DV 8).

Conclusion

This chapter attempts to point out two issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II: the variety of interpretations of conciliar teachings and the task of communicating these teachings to new recipients of the council. These issues are interrelated in the ongoing process of reception of Vatican II. If the church cannot interpret conciliar teachings properly, then the church fails its task of passing the truths of faith that the conciliar bishops wanted to communicate to all those who believe in Christ. If the church understands conciliar teachings but cannot communicate these teachings in a way that new recipients of the council can receive and accept, then the truths of faith will not reach their hearers and remain a private possession of the magisterium. It is the task of communicating the truths of faith to which Pope John XXIII invites not only the conciliar bishops but also all members of the church to carry out in today's world.

To explain how the hermeneutical principles presented above enable one to engage the variety of interpretations of the council, in the next chapter, I study the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on communion between the local and the universal church. As we have seen, Kasper and Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI contribute significantly to our understanding of the hermeneutic of the council. They both participated in the 1985 Synod of Bishops, and the Synod's interpretation of the church as communion has shaped their ecclesiologies. Nevertheless, they interpret the meaning of communion between the universal and the local church divergently. Their variety of interpretations of the church as communion thus provides material for the study of the conciliar teaching on the church and enables us to address the question of why we need sociology to receive Vatican II's teaching on the church.

CHAPTER TWO

VATICAN II'S TEACHING ON THE CHURCH AND ITS RECEPTION IN THE RATZINGER/KASPER DEBATE

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter One, the delegates of the 1985 Synod of Bishops promoted the idea of communion to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church. For the synodal bishops, "The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the council's documents."[110] In 1992 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (hereafter CDF) offered an official interpretation of the church as communion in the "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion."[111] The CDF stated that "The concept of communion (*koinonia*), which appears with a certain prominence in the texts of the Second Vatican Council, is very suitable for expressing the core of the Mystery of the Church, and can certainly be a key for the renewal of Catholic ecclesiology."[112]

[110] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), II, C, 1.

[111] The Latin version of the text "LITTERAE AD CATHOLICAE ECCLESIAE EPISCOPOS DE ALIQUIBUS ASPECTIBUS ECCLESIAE PROUT EST COMMUNIO," can be found at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communionis-notio_lt.html. The text used in this paper comes from an English version on the website of Vatican. See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communionis-notio_en.html.

[112] Ibid., 1.

The Synod's understanding of the church as communion has been adopted by many theologians to interpret and communicate the conciliar teaching on the church.[113] Among prominent promoters of communion ecclesiology in the church, one can single out Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper. According to Ratzinger, "ultimately, there is only one basic ecclesiology [communion ecclesiology], which certainly can be approached and worked out in different ways, depending on which of the various aspects are stressed or highlighted."[114] According to Kasper, "For the church, there is only one way into the future: the way pointed by the council, the full implementation of the council, and its communion ecclesiology. This is the way that God's Spirit has shown us."[115]

Although Kasper and Ratzinger adopt the same term "communion" to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church, they disagree about the meaning of communion in regard to the relationship between the local and the universal church. Ratzinger defends the CDF's interpretation of the universal church as a reality, which takes precedence, ontologically and temporally, over the local churches. Kasper objects to Ratzinger's interpretation of the church and argues that there is only one church manifested in two dimensions, universal and local. For Kasper, these dimensions of the church cannot be separated either in the will of God or in salvation history. The disagreement between Ratzinger and Kasper concerning the idea of the church as communion invites theologians to address three questions. First, what is the meaning

[113] For studies of communion ecclesiology, see J. M. R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992); Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000); Brian Flanagan, *Communion, Diversity, and Salvation* (London: T & T Clark, 2011); and Scott Macdougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology* (New York: T & T Clark, 2015).

[114] Ratzinger, "Ultimately There is One Basic Ecclesiology," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 June 1992, 1.

[115] Kasper, *Theology and Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 150.

of "church" in accordance with Vatican II? Second, why do Ratzinger and Kasper diverge in interpreting the meaning of communion between the universal and the local church? Third, what are implications of their discussion for the study of conciliar ecclesiology?

To answer these questions, I apply the hermeneutical principles proposed in Chapter One to interpret the conciliar teaching on the church. Having done so, I examine the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on the church and argue that for the council the church is more than a mystery of communion promoted by the CDF and defended by Ratzinger in his debate with Kasper. The church is also a community of Christ's disciples in history, who unite with Christ and with one another to proclaim the Gospel. More accurately, the church is the sacrament of Christ or a theological and a socio-historical reality manifested in the new people of God, who gather around the representatives of Christ to celebrate the sacraments and partake in the mission of Christ and the Spirit. This statement implies, as the thesis will argue, that offering a proper interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church requires supplementing the use of Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, and church history with sociological insights into the human dynamics of church as an organization.

Part I: An Interpretation of Vatican II's Teaching on the Church

As already indicated in the previous chapter, one needs three hermeneutical principles to interpret conciliar teachings properly: attention to both the documents and the historical context of the council; to both *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*; and to both continuity and discontinuity. As we shall see below, I apply the second hermeneutical principle, the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, to deepen the meaning of sacrament used by the

council to describe the church. The third hermeneutical principle, the relationship between elements of continuity and elements of discontinuity, will then be employed to explain the council's teaching on the ministry of the Pope and the ministry of the bishop. To understand the council's teaching on the church, the primary principle that I shall use is the first one, the relationship between the council's documents and the historical context of Vatican II.

The first hermeneutical principle examines a teaching of Vatican II not only within the context of a document where one finds the teaching under investigation but also that document's interrelationship with other documents. In addition, one has to examine that teaching within the historical context of the council. Regarding the council's teaching on the church, the key document through which the bishops explain their understanding of the church is *Lumen Gentium*. This document presents the council's teaching on the nature and structure of the church. To interpret the church, however, one cannot explore merely the teaching on the church in the text of *Lumen Gentium* and the interrelationship between this document and other documents, but also the teaching under discussion in relation to the historical events or various influences that inform it.

Viewing the concilar teaching on the church in *Lumen Gentium* through the first hermeneutical principle, one can recognize two important ideas deployed by the council to describe the church: sacrament and people of God. While sacrament is given a privileged place in the first article of *Lumen Gentium*, people of God is present in the second chapter of the constitution. To comprehend the council's teaching on the church, one can begin with the idea of the church as sacrament by studying the historical context that forms this teaching.

The Church as Sacrament

According to Dennis M. Doyle, the idea of the church as sacrament was introduced into the second draft of *Lumen Gentium* in the summer of 1963 through the German schema.[116] The main contributors of this schema were Otto Semmelroth, Karl Rahner, and Alois Grillmeier.[117] They promoted the idea of sacrament to address many difficulties that they perceived in the structure and content of the draft document *De Ecclesia*. After the debate on the church in the final week of the first period of the council, they realized that the majority of the conciliar bishops would not accept an interpretation of the church as militant. Futhermore, for bishops such as Achille Liénart, the idea of the body of Christ would not be identified solely with the Roman Catholic Church. The draft document needed an organizing concept, which offered a clear vision of the church and combined the invisible and theological dimensions of the church with the church's visible, social, and historical dimensions. As a result, the authors of the German schema recommended the idea of sacrament to describe the church and submitted the text to Gérard Philips, the main drafter of *Lumen Gentium*.

The sub-commission of the Theological Commission received the idea of the church as sacrament and integrated it into the first paragraph of *Lumen Gentium*: "The church, in Christ, is [like] a sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race." The qualification 'like' (*veluti*) makes clear that, for the fathers of

[116] See Dennis M. Doyle, "Otto Semmelroth, SJ, and the Ecclesiology of the 'Church as Sacrament' at Vatican II," *The Legacy of Vatican II*, ed. Massimo Faggioli and Andrea Vicini (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 207.

[117] See Dennis M. Doyle, "Otto Semmelroth and the Advance of the Church as Sacrament at Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 76 (2015), 76.

Vatican II, the church is not an eighth sacrament in addition to the seven sacraments. The church is like these sacraments, but not identical with them. To clarify the conciliar teaching on the church as sacrament, one can relate this teaching to the teaching on the sacraments in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

According to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify the people of God, build up the body of Christ, and worship God. The sacraments are not merely visible signs that point believers to God, but also sacred and efficacious signs.[118] Through words and objects performed by ministers of the church, the sacraments confer grace to those who believe in Christ (SC 59). Like the sacraments such as Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, the church is a visible and sacred sign, which confers grace and points the faithful to God. It is composed of visible elements such as Scripture, church teachings, liturgical practices, people of God, and the church's hierarchical structure.

The church, however, is more than a visible and efficacious sign like the seven sacraments. It is the sacrament of Christ or his universal sacrament of salvation (LG 48), which came into being through the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (SC 5). There is a unique relationship between Christ and the church, which makes the church more than the sacraments and other visible elements of the church such as Scripture and people of God. To further understand the meaning of the church as the sacrament of Christ, one can employ the

[118] For studies on the history of the sacraments, see Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality*, rev. ed. (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1994); German Martinez, *Signs of Freedom: Theology of the Christian Sacraments* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2003); Kevin W Irwin, *The Sacrament: Historical Foundation and Liturgical Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 2016).

second hermeneutical principle, the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, and turn to Scripture to find out the meaning of sacrament.

Originating in the Latin root *sacer*, the term sacrament was the Latin translation for the Greek *musterion* or mystery. The idea of mystery does not imply that something is unintelligible, but something that remains hidden and cannot be comprehended without revelation.[119] The Synoptic writers use *musterion* to describe Christ as the mystery of the reign of God. For example, the writer of Mark's Gospel states that "To you has been given the mystery (*musterion*) of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables" (Mark 4:11-12). This saying of Jesus does not make clear the meaning of the mystery of God's reign. Viewing it within the context of the Gospels, one recognizes that Jesus himself is the mystery of the reign of God revealed to the closer circle of his disciples, whose eyes were open to see Jesus as the self-manifestation of God (Matthew 13:11-16). As the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1:14), Jesus is the manifestation of God, the Father. He and the Father are one (John 10:30). Those who see Jesus and hear him see and hear the Father because the Father is present and active through Jesus (John 14:9-10).

In addition to the Gospels, St. Paul proclaims in his letters that Christ himself is the revelation of a mystery kept secret for generations (Ephesians 1:8-10; Colossians 1:26-27). This mystery "was revealed in flesh, vindicated by in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among

[119] For a study of the term "sacrament" and its relation to the mysteries of Christ and the church, see Otto Semmelroth, *Church and Sacrament* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, 1965); Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (New York: Crossroad, 1963); Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963); and Rene Latourelle, *Christ and the Church: Signs of Salvation* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1972).

Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, and taken up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). In other words, for St. Paul, Jesus is a divine mystery manifested in the incarnation and glorification of Christ to all peoples of the world. He is the sacrament of God or God's self-communication to make known the love and will of God concerning the salvation of humankind.

With this scriptural interpretation of the meaning of sacrament, one can more fully comprehend the church as the sacrament of Christ in the first article of *Lumen Gentium*. Just as Christ is the sacrament of God, the church is the sacrament of Christ. The church is neither Christ himself nor the combination of all visible elements that constitute the church. The church is the visible and efficacious sign of Christ's living presence in time and space. Through the sacraments performed by church ministers, Christ and the Spirit confer grace to those who believe in him and act through them to bring about salvation for all peoples in the world.

The above examination of the church as the sacrament of Christ enables one to infer two implications of the idea of sacrament for the interpretation of Vatican II. First, because the church is the sacrament of Christ, one cannot understand the church and other teachings of the council if one separates them from Christ and the Spirit. More concretely, to interpret teachings such as the ministry of the bishop, episcopal conferences, and collegiality, one has to show how Christ and the Spirit work through bishops. These teachings of the council cannot be comprehended if one fails to explain the presence of Christ and the Spirit in individual bishops, groups of bishops, and the whole college of bishops, who act in the name of Christ and guided by his Spirit to serve the people of God and lead them to carry out the mission.

Second, the idea of the church as sacrament overcomes a limitation of the idea of the church as body of Christ. As we have seen in Chapter One, the Theological Commission of the council promoted the idea of body of Christ in the draft document *De Ecclesia* to emphasize the union between the church as body of Christ and Christ as the head of this body. The church as the body of Christ, however, risks insufficiently differentiating between Christ and the church. This interpretation is in danger of neglecting the church's human elements and presenting the relationship between Christ and the church as a kind of "Christomonism." Robert Kress explains that this Christomonism "described the union of Christ and his members in such a way that they seemed to have been absorbed into Christ. There was no longer a union of the two, the human and the divine, into one body. There was only a one – a mixture of the divine and human in which neither the divine nor the human as such continued to exist."[120] The idea of the church as sacrament addresses this limitation of the church as body of Christ. As the sacrament of Christ, the church is not Christ himself, but the visible and effective sign of his presence in the community of believers, who continue his mission in the world under the guidance of the Spirit.

To comprehend more fully the conciliar teaching on the church, I turn from the teaching on the church as the sacrament of Christ to the teaching on the church as people of God and study the relationship between Christ and the people of God. In other words, one can ask how Christ is present in the church and works through its members to make the church a visible sign of his living presence in the world. To answer this question, I examine the historical context or various influences that form the idea of church as people of God.

[120] Robert Kress, *The Church: Communion, Sacrament, and Communication* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 68.

The Church as People of God

The idea of people of God was not given a prominent place in the draft document *De Ecclesia*. One finds this idea in chapter six of the draft document, "The Laity." The Theological Commission of the council used the idea of people of God to describe the universal priesthood of all believers, who become members of the church by virtue of their baptism. After the debate on *De Ecclesia*, the sub-commission of the Theological Commission produced a four-chapter schema and presented the material on people of God and laity in the schema's third chapter.[121] In the 1963 summer meeting of the Central Commission of the council, Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens proposed the idea of separating the material on people of God from the material on laity, placing the former after the opening chapter, "The Mystery of the Church," and before the chapter on "The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church and the Episcopate in Particular." On September 30, 1963, bishop Giuseppe Gargitter presented Suenens's proposal to the conciliar bishops, and they enthusiastically received it.

Yves Congar, one of the main drafters of *Lumen Gentium*, offers three reasons to explain why the conciliar bishops welcomed the idea of people of God to describe the church and placed it in the second chapter of *Lumen Gentium*.[122] First, they wanted to show that like other peoples in history and the world, the church is still in the process of constructing itself under the guidance of the Spirit. The church has not yet arrived at its final destination, the reign of God. On its pilgrim journey, the church must learn from the Spirit to undertake the mission entrusted

[121] See Richard R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 14-19.

[122] Yves Congar, "The Church: The People of God," in *The Church and Mankind* (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist, 1965), 11.

to it by Christ.[123] Second, the mission of Christ invites church members to enter into dialogue with various peoples and proclaim the Gospel to them, who have not yet known the God of Jesus Christ, but seek God and live their lives in accordance with the guidance of their conscience.[124] Third, the idea of the church as people of God "explains what all the members of the people of God hold in common on the plane of the dignity of Christian existence, prior to any distinctions among them based on office or state."[125]

Congar's interpretation of the church as the people of God offers one insights to understand why the idea of people of God was chosen to describe the church. This idea can explain the visible, historical, and social dimensions of the church as a people in history. As we shall see below, the idea of people of God can also express the theological dimension of the church. It enables the conciliar bishops to interpret not only the relationship between Christ and all members of the church as a whole, but also the presence of Christ in legitimately organized groups of the faithful in their local churches. To deepen the idea of the church as people of God and comprehend how it relates to the idea of the church as sacrament, I shall examine the conciliar teaching on the church as people of God in the texts of *Lumen Gentium*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and *Christus Dominus*. This examination will show that, for the conciliar bishops, the church is a visible, historical, and social reality composed of various members, who unite with Christ and with one another under the leadership of the Pope and the bishops as Christ's representatives to carry out the divine mission in the world.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

According to *Lumen Gentium*, the church consists of those who are reborn as sons and daughters of God through Baptism (LG 9). Like other groups of people, the church has a tradition, a culture, and a history. The history of this people links the followers of Christ to the Jewish people, the people chosen to be God's sons and daughters through the covenants established by God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[126] The idea of the church as people of God thus stresses the historical dimension of the church and its relationship with the people of Israel. This idea, moreover, announces the newness of the covenant between Christ and the church: "Christ instituted this new covenant, the new covenant in his blood (1 Corinthians 11:25); he called a people together made up of Jews and Gentiles, which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit, and it would be the new people of God" (LG 9). The new people of Israel differs from the old one in the sense that they believe in Christ and consider him as their head and leader. Christ unites the members of this people with him and with one another when they participate in the sacraments and the mission of Christ under the leadership of the Pope and the bishops, the representatives of Christ on earth.

As one people called together by Christ in history, the new people of God receive one faith, one hope, one baptism, one salvation, and one common vocation to holiness (LG 39). There is no inequality among this people because they share in the same priesthood of Christ (LG 10). Christ exists in his people, fills them with his Spirit, and grants them different

[126] For studies of the covenant between God and Israel, see H. F Wickings, *The Covenant People of God* (London: Independent Press, 1956); Hans-Joachim Kraus, *The People of God in the Old Testament* (New York: Association Press, 1958); Ernest W Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Kari Kuula, *The Law, the Covenant and God's Plan* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1999).

hierarchical and charismatic gifts to make them ready to undertake various ministries and offices in the church (LG 4, 12; AG 4). He also provides the church a hierarchical structure to serve its members and preserve a communion among them (LG 9, 24). The new people of God, accordingly, depends completely on Christ. In him, they live, move, and have their being (Acts 17:28).

Although the church is composed of those equal in one faith, one baptism, and one vocation, it is also a hierarchical society willed by Christ (LG 20). For the conciliar bishops, Christ established a hierarchical structure in the church when he called to himself those he wanted, appointed the twelve to be with him, and sent them out to proclaim the Gospel (LG 18-19). To unite the church and continue its mission in accordance with the will of Christ, the twelve appointed their successors in this hierarchically structured society (LG 20). The hierarchical structure of the church consists of a variety of offices: bishops, priests, and deacons (LG 28). They receive their gifts from the Spirit of Christ through the sacrament of Orders to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, sanctify the faithful, and unite those who believe in Christ to carry out his mission (LG 26-29).

Within the hierarchical structure of the church, the council states that the Pope and the bishops form one episcopal college to unite and serve the people of God (LG 22, 24; CD 6). As the successor of Peter, the Pope is the head of this college, while the bishops, the successors of the apostles, are the college's members (CD 4). The ministry of the Pope is "to promote the common good of the universal church and the particular good of all the churches" (CD 2).

Together with the bishops, the Pope acts in the name of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, sanctify the faithful, and lead them to carry out the mission of Christ and the Spirit.

The council further explains the relationship between the Pope and the bishops when it presents the teaching on the ministry of the bishops. Like the Pope, the bishops receive the fullness of their power from the Spirit of Christ through episcopal consecration (LG 21). This power is proper, ordinary, and immediate in the sense that it belongs to the bishops personally, officially, and directly (LG 27). Accordingly, the bishops are not the Pope's agents or delegates, who act on behalf of the Pope. They are the representatives of Christ and act in his name to teach, sanctify, and govern a portion of God's people entrusted to their care (CD 11). In communities of the altar under the ministry of the bishop, "though they may often be small and poor, or dispersed, Christ is present through whose power and influence the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church is constituted" (LG 22, 26).

The church of Christ is thus fully realized in local communities or churches each time the people of God gather around their bishops to participate in the sacraments, especially the sacrament of the Eucharist (SC 41). The Eucharist, celebrated by the bishops in the name of Christ, makes Christ present and active in the midst of the faithful (SC 7). Through the bishops as his representatives, Christ sanctifies the faithful, preaches the word of God to them, and makes them his visible sign or the sacrament of salvation for the world.

As we shall see below, the conciliar teaching on the manifestation of the universal church in the local churches became the topic of discussion between Ratzinger and Kasper. This debate

will be the subject of discussion in the second part of this chapter. It has implications not only for one's understanding of the ministry of the bishop but also for one's interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church.

To deepen one's understanding of the relationship between the Pope and the bishops, I apply the third hermeneutical principle to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the ministry of the Pope and the ministry of the bishop. As explained in Chapter One, this principle combines elements of continuity with elements of discontinuity found in the conciliar documents to reform the church. We shall see that the conciliar teaching on the ministry of the Pope is an element of continuity, while the conciliar teaching on the ministry of the bishop is an element of discontinuity. For Pope Benedict XVI, who promotes the use of these elements to receive Vatican II, elements of discontinuity are not teachings of the council that break from Scripture and church tradition. They are church teachings which retrieve a deep understanding of the church manifested in Scripture and the tradition of the church.

The teaching on the ministry of the Pope has been traditionally affirmed in Roman Catholic Church. The church believes that Peter was martyred in Rome after the year 60. As the successor of Peter, the Pope is the bishop of the local church of Rome, who is responsible for the unity and mission of the church of Rome and other local churches, which are in communion with Rome. Although the Popes of the first four centuries certainly saw themselves as successors of Peter, Leo the Great (440-461) was the first who claimed Peter's place.[127] Since Leo the Great,

[127] See Richard P. McBrien, "The Papacy," in *The Gift of the Church*, ed. Peter Phan (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 323-4. For studies of the ministry of the Pope, see Jean-M R. Tillard, *The Bishop of Rome*, trans. John de Satge (Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, 1983); Klaus Schatz, *Papacy Primacy: From its Origin to the Present*, trans. John Otto and Linda Maloney (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996).

Popes increasingly regarded themselves as standing in the place of Peter and exercised their authority not only over all of the faithful but also over other bishops. The Pope's role as bishop of the local church of Rome, however, had been obscured long before Vatican II, and especially by the teaching on the papacy in *Pastor Aeternus*, Vatican I's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ. The teaching of this council gave civil leaders such as Otto von Bismarck, the German chancellor at the time, the impression that the Pope is the only one who holds absolute power. As a result of this view, many believed that bishops had no real authority; they were merely the Pope's delegates who receive their power from the Pope to govern local churches.[128]

The conciliar bishops attempted to redress this wrong interpretation of the relationship between the Pope and the bishops when they combined the teaching on the ministry of the bishop and the teaching on the ministry of the Pope in different texts of Vatican II.[129] For example, in article 22 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Pope is described as the one who has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church. Together with the Pope and never apart from him, the bishops also hold full, supreme, and universal authority over the whole church. In article 23 of *Lumen Gentium*, the fathers of Vatican II present the Pope as the perpetual and visible source of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole faithful, while the bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity of a portion of God's people in their local churches.

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[128] See Richard Gaillardetz and Catherine Clifford, *Keys to the Council*: *Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 111-2.

[129] The effort to redress this misinterpretation began with the 1875 statement of the German Bishops which, in response to Bismarck, sought to clarify the council's teaching. Pius IX then wrote to the German bishops, thanking them for clarifying the true import of Vatican I's teaching. See *Readings in Church Authority*, eds., Gerard Mannion, Richard Gaillardetz, Jan Kerkhofs, and Kenneth Wilson (London: Ashgate, 2003), 223.

The combination of these teachings of the council offers a complex understanding of the relationship between the Pope and the bishops. The bishops and the Pope are both the representatives of Christ. Christ acts through them to unite the church and lead the people of God to carry out his mission. As members of the episcopal college and parts of this body, the bishops cannot separate themselves from the Pope and other bishops when they preach the Gospel, sanctify the faithful, and lead the church's mission. Likewise, as the head of the college, the Pope cannot act alone in his governance of the church. He cannot consider the bishops as his delegates, but the representatives of Christ in local churches. In communion with the bishops, the Pope serves the whole people of God and leads the mission entrusted to him by Christ and the Spirit. This relationship between the Pope and the bishops will be the subject of discussion in Chapter Four of the thesis when I examine the approach of the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II to the conciliar teaching on episcopal conferences.

One can now understand why Vatican II places the idea of the church as people of God after the idea of the church as sacrament. Viewing the church as people of God brings together the invisible, theological and the visible, socio-historical dimensions of the church. This image enables one to describe how the church as sacrament or the visible sign of Christ becomes concrete in the communities of those who believe in him. Put it another way, the idea of people of God can explain not only the relationship between different groups of members in the church, but also various manners through which Christ exists in the church. Christ calls those who he wants together to be with him. He establishes a hierarchical structure in the church, fills the church with his Spirit, and unites all the faithful through the leadership of the Pope and the bishops. He is present in the midst of all believers when they take part in the sacraments

celebrated by the bishops, who act in the name of Christ. In addition, he works not merely through the clergy, who teach, sanctify, and govern the people of God, but also through the religious and the laity, who become his witnesses before the world (LG 35). All in all, it is through the living relationship with Christ and the Spirit that the people of God become his sacrament or the universal sacrament of salvation (LG 48).

Although the idea of the church as people of God emphasizes both the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church as the sacrament of Christ, it can be used one-sidedly to stress the socio-historical dimension of the church as mentioned in the Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops. As we shall see, the CDF and Ratzinger point out a danger associated with the idea of people of God if one uses it exclusively to interpret the conciliar teaching on the church. For the CDF and Ratzinger, one has to combine the idea of sacrament and people of God with the idea of communion to offer a comprehensive understanding of the church. To further clarify the church as people of God and explain how the church becomes the sacrament of Christ in the world, I turn now to the conciliar teaching on the missionary nature of the church.

The Missionary Nature of the Church

Building on the teaching on the church as sacrament and people of God in *Lumen Gentium*, *Ad Gentes* interprets the church as "the universal sacrament of salvation" and roots the mission of the church in the mission of Christ and the Spirit (LG 2-4; AG 1, 5, 15). In the words of *Ad Gentes*, "The church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit." (AG 2). This

statement of *Ad Gentes* shows two important truths about the reason for the existence of the church and the foundation of the church's mission.

First, God is the primary agent of all missionary activities in the church. God loved the world and became flesh in the person of Christ to reveal God's self to the world (DV 2, AG 3). Christ established the church as his universal sacrament of salvation, revealed himself to the church through his words and deeds, and sent the apostles into the world to proclaim the Gospel (LG 3, AG 5). When Christ completed his work on earth, he sent the Spirit on the day of Pentecost to sanctify the church and guide its members to continue the mission (LG 4, AG 4). This mission "is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany, and realization in the world and in history" (AG 9).

Second, the mission of Christ and the Spirit is the reason for the existence of the church. As a result, every element of the church such as its members, the Scriptures, liturgical practices, church teachings, canon law, theology, and the hierarchical structure of governance must serve the mission. This understanding of the missionary nature of the church invites its members to use all means established by Christ under the guidance of the Spirit to witness to Christ and proclaim his Gospel to all peoples in the world (AG 3). Without the presence of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit, the church would close itself behind locked doors like the community of Jesus's disciples before the coming of the Spirit (John 20:19-23; Luke 24:33-43). Viewing from this perspective of the mission, all members of the church are called to participate in the mission.

The above interpretation of the church as people of God and its missionary nature makes one aware that the church becomes the sacrament of Christ when the faithful unite with Christ and with his representatives, the Pope and the bishops, to participate in the mission of Christ and the Spirit. This mission is one and the same everywhere and in all situations; however, it may not always be exercised in the same way because of different circumstances where the church finds itself in the world. In the words of *Ad Gentes*,

> The differences which must be recognized in this activity of the church, do not follow from the inner nature of the mission itself, but from the circumstances in which it is exercised. These circumstances depend either on the church itself or on the peoples, groups or individuals to whom its mission is directed (AG 6).

The council recognizes an issue that complicates the mission of the church, namely, diverse contexts of the world and circumstances of its people. In some areas of the world where the church has not yet taken root, missionaries proclaim the Gospel and plant the seeds of the church (AG 6). In other parts of the world where the church cannot evangelize publicly, missionaries bear witness to Christ by works of mercy and charity (AG 11-12). In countries where their peoples have already received the Gospel, the church has to discern whether missionary activities should be exercised when new set of circumstances arise (AG 6).

Given different contexts where the church carries out the mission, one must ask how the church makes Christ present and becomes his universal sacrament of salvation in these contexts. The council answers this question when it asks church members to scrutinize the signs of the

times if they are to undertake the mission of Christ (GS 4). For the conciliar bishops, the church must read the signs of the times to understand "the joys and hopes, the griefs and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted" (GS 1). These signs include complex changes in the lives of people around the world as a result of the progress of technology and the promotion of human freedom. People are more aware of their unity and mutual interdependence. At the same time, they are split into opposing ideologies (GS 4). The signs of the times are also expressed through the conflict between developing and developed nations, the rise of atheism (GS 19-21), and the desire of the poor to obtain a life worthy of their nature as human beings (GS 9). Building on this understanding of the social world, the church enters into dialogue with peoples of the world and proclaims the Gospel to them.

In addition to the teaching on the signs of the times, the council promotes the idea of episcopal conferences to make the church the sacrament of Christ in different contexts of the world. The council recognizes that many conferences were already established in different countries before Vatican II.[130] These conferences united bishops with one another, enabled them to understand common problems which faced their dioceses, and produced pastoral plans suitably adapted to the different contexts of local churches. As a result, the council encourages the establishment of episcopal conferences and describes the conferences as assemblies of bishops, in which bishops of a certain country or region jointly exercise their pastoral office to promote greater good offered by the church to humankind. Members of these conferences consist of all local bishops and other titular bishops to whom the Apostolic See or episcopal conferences have entrusted some special works (CD 38).

[130] For a history of episcopal conferences, see Giorgio Feliciani, *Le conferenze episcopali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1974).

This teaching of the council on episcopal conferences will be the subject of discussion in Chapter Four of the thesis. Together with the teachings on the church as the sacrament of Christ, the church as the new people of God, the ministry of the bishop, and the presence of the universal church in the local church, the teaching on episcopal conferences invites the church to enter into dialogue with different peoples of the world and proclaim the Gospel to them. By doing so, the church follows Christ and walks in the same way that he walked, the way of incarnation, love, and service to proclaim the Gospel and the coming reign of God.

In summary, to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church, one has to consider the relationships between the documents and the context of the council, between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, and between continuity and discontinuity. Applying these principles to examine the teaching on the church, one recognizes that the church is the sacrament of Christ or the visible sign of his living presence in the new people of God. In other words, the church is a theological and a socio-historical reality manifested not only through the relationship between Christ and all members of the church, but also through the relationships between different groups of peoples in the church, who unite with Christ and with his representatives to celebrate the sacraments and carry out the mission in diverse contexts of the world. In these local gatherings of the faithful, Christ is present through his Spirit, through whose power and influence the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church exists. Given this interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church as the sacrament of Christ, I turn now to the reception of the teaching on the church in the Ratzinger/Kasper debate.

Part II: The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate on the Church

In the aftermath of Vatican II, theologians debated various subjects of conciliar ecclesiology. One of the most famous debates occurred between Ratzinger and Kasper. In their debate, Ratzinger and Kasper did not employ the ideas of sacrament and people of God to describe the conciliar teaching on the church, nor did they mention the church's missionary nature. Instead, they focused on the idea of communion to explain how the one church of Christ is manifested in many local communities or churches. As we shall see, the idea of the church as communion enriches one's understanding of the church because it takes into acount the universal and the local dimension of the church. Nevertheless, this idea tends to overlook the relationship between Christ and church members and prioritize the theological over the social and historical dimensions of the church. To justify this claim and point out implications of the Ratzinger/Kasper debate for conciliar ecclesiology, I shall first present the context of the debate, and then analyze their arguments and use of sources for ecclesiology.

The Context of the Debate

Seven years after the publication of the Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops, the CDF issued the "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion" (hereafter Letter to the Bishops). In a press conference after the publication of the letter, Ratzinger, the then-Cardinal Prefect of the CDF, stated that:

> The purpose of this document is to highlight the correct concept of 'communion' in line with Vatican II and the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, where the

> Bishops again emphasized the centrality of this category for an adequate view of God's Church. The document's immediate sources, then, are the Council and the 1985 Synod, but the magisterial documents also provide a deeper understanding of the Bible and the Fathers and, thus, an adequate interpretation of ecclesiological realities today.[131]

Ratzinger's explanation of the purpose of the CDF document helps one to recognize four major sources used by the CDF to receive Vatican II's teaching on the church: Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, the documents of Vatican II, and the Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops. The CDF returns to the sources of faith, that is, Scripture and patristic theology, to deepen the meaning of communion in the church and justify the use of this term to describe the church. However, the CDF does not emphasize sources such as sociological theories and concepts, and the experience of communion between church members to explain the church as communion. Put differently, the CDF prioritizes *ressourcement* over *aggiornamento* in its interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church.

In the introduction to the letter, the CDF expresses a serious concern that some approaches to conciliar ecclesiology "suffer from a clearly inadequate awareness of the church as a *mystery of communion*."[132] These approaches have not sufficiently integrated the idea of the church as communion into the idea of the church as people of God, body of Christ, and sacrament. To interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church, the CDF turns to the Scriptures and

[131] Ratzinger, "Ultimately There is One Basic Ecclesiology," 10.

[132] *Letter to the Bishops on the Church as Communion*, 1 (emphasis original).

the patristic tradition to argue for the idea of the church as communion. Communion in the church involves vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension of the church is the union between each member of the church and God. As the fruit of their union with God, church members are in communion with one another, which is the horizontal dimension. Communion in the church is the communion among its members through Christ and the Spirit in the teachings of the Apostles, in the sacraments, and in the hierarchical order.[133] As a result, Ratzinger claims that, for the CDF, the church "is not simply a moral or psychological union in nature, but is [also] an ontological and supernatural union, and it implies a spiritual solidarity among the members of the church inasmuch as they are members of one Body, i.e., the Body of Christ."[134]

Although the CDF mentions the ideas of the church as sacrament and people of God in the first article of the Letter to the Bishops, it neither explains the meanings of these ideas nor does it show how the church becomes the sacrament of salvation for the world through the living relationship between Christ and the people of God. Instead, the CDF focuses exclusively on the church as communion to reject what it sees to be a flawed understanding of communion that comes from an interpretation of the church as institution. In the CDF's assessment, those who promote this interpretation argue that the church was established by the communion of a group of people who came together in the first centuries of the church. In the Letter to the Bishops, the CDF avoids mentioning the names of theologians who promote this interpretation of the church as institution. However, in his lecture on "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*," Ratzinger makes clear that the object of admonition in the Letter to the

[133] Ibid., 3, 4.

[134] Ratzinger, "Ultimately There is One Basic Ecclesiology," 10.

Bishops is a trend of liberation ecclesiology promoted by the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff.[135] Ratzinger characterizes Boff's interpretation of communion in the church as "ecclesiological relativism." He explains that, for Boff, the historical Jesus neither thought nor conceived of founding a church.[136] As a result,

> The church, as a historical reality, would have only come into existence after the resurrection, on account of the loss of the eschatological tension towards the immediate coming of the kingdom, caused in its turn by the inevitable sociological needs of institutionalization. In the beginning, a universal Catholic Church would certainly not have existed, but only different local Churches with different theologies, different ministries, etc. No institutional Church could, therefore, say that she was that one Church of Jesus Christ desired by God himself; all institutional forms thus stem from sociological needs and, as such are human constructions, which can and even must be radically changed again in new situations.[137]

In Ratzinger's judgment, Boff does not believe in the existence of the one and the universal church of Christ willed by the historical Jesus. Boff's interpretation of the church promotes the idea that there were many communities in the beginning of Christianity. The members of these communities believed in Jesus and followed him. After his resurrection, they

[135] Leonardo Boff's communion ecclesiology criticized by Ratzinger and the CDF can be found in Boff's work, *Church: Charism and Power* (New York: Crossroad, 1985).

[136] Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 19 September, 2001, 7-8.

[137] Ibid, 8.

came together and formed church laws, teachings, and practices to unite with one another and to continue the mission entrusted to them by Christ. Consequently, the church is not a theological reality willed by God and established by the historical Jesus, but rather a historical and social reality formed by the will of groups of people in the first centuries of the church.

Against Boff's interpretation of the church as an exclusively socio-historical institution, the CDF returns to the sources of faith and appeals to the Scriptures and the patristic tradition to argue for the ontological and supernatural existence of the church. The church exists ontologically in the will of God before the creation of all things, and it comes into being temporally on the day of Pentecost. In the words of the CDF,

> According to the Fathers, *ontologically*, the Church-mystery, the Church that is one and unique, precedes creation, and gives birth to the particular Churches as her daughters. She expresses herself in them; she is the mother and not the offspring of the particular Churches. Furthermore, the Church is manifested, *temporally*, on the day of Pentecost in the community of the one hundred and twenty gathered around Mary and the twelve apostles, the representatives of the one unique Church and the founders-to-be of the local Churches, who have a mission directed to the world: from the first the Church *speaks all languages*.[138]

For the CDF, the church of Christ, which is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, is the universal church. One has to consider the church primarily as a theological reality, and not

[138] *Letter to the Bishops on the Church as Communion*, 9 (emphasis original).

merely a socio-historical one. The church of Christ cannot be conceived as the sum of the local churches or the result of their communion.[139] In other words, the communion of all local churches cannot bring about the universal church, which is "ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular church."[140] As a result of this argument, the CDF argues that every local and individual church is not complete in itself. They arise within or are formed out of the universal church. The universal church is like a mother, who gives birth to the local churches as her sons and daughters. As offspring of the universal church, the local churches receive their ecclesiality in and from the universal church.[141]

In 1999, seven years after the publication of the Letter to the Bishops, Kasper, then-bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, wrote an article entitled "Theology and Praxis of the Bishop."[142] In this article, he objects to the CDF's interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church, which emphasizes the significance of the universal church over the local church. Kasper argues that the church on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, to which the CDF appeals to justify the temporal priority of the universal church, is the church "universal and local in its single reality."[143] He states that the universal and the local church always exist at the same time, and that the event of Pentecost cannot be used to justify the priority of the universal church over the

[139] Ibid., 7.

[140] Ibid., 9.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Walter Kasper, "Zur Theologie und Praxis des bischöflichen Amtes," in *Auf neue Art Kiche Sein: Wirklichkeiten-Herausfoderungen-Wandlungen*, ed. Werner Schreer and Georg Steins (Munich: Bernward bei Don Bosco, 1999), 32-48.

[143] Kasper, "Zur Theologie und Praxis des bischoflichen Amtes," as translated by Kilian McDonnell in "The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches," *Theological Studies* 63, no. 2 (June 2002): 231.

local church. In the words of Kasper, "Of course, this [event] is a Lukan construction, for, looking at the matter historically, there were supposedly from the beginning a number of communities in Galilee alongside the Jerusalem community."[144]

Kasper attempts to restore a proper balance between the universal and the local church. In his judgment, the CDF is right when it rebukes those who claim that the local church is a self-sufficient subject. However, the CDF goes beyond Vatican II's teaching on the church when it argues that the universal church is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to the local church. Kasper maintains that the CDF's position is "a theological attempt to restore Roman centralism … a process which appears to have already begun."[145] If the CDF was to be successful in implementing this interpretation of communion in the church, "the proper relationship between the local and the universal church has been thrown out of balance."[146]

To further understand the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on the church, one must first analyze Ratzinger's argument for the CDF's interpretation of the priority of the universal church over the local church, and then evaluate Kasper's response to Ratzinger's argument.

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Kasper, "Zur Theologie und Praxis," 43 as translated by Kilian McDonnell in "Walter Kasper on the Theology and Praxis of the Bishop's Office," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), 712.

[146] Ibid.

Analyzing Ratzinger's and Kasper's Arguments on the Church as Communion

In the Letter to the Bishops, the CDF justifies the ontological priority of the universal church by appealing to the teaching of the Fathers and the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians. Using St. Paul's analogical language, the CDF affirms that the universal church is like a mother, who expresses herself in the local churches as her sons and daughters: "She is the mother and not the product of the particular Churches (Galatians 4:26)." Furthermore, for the CDF, the Fathers, such as the author of *Shepherd of Hermas* and Clement of Rome, believe that, ontologically, the church is manifested in its unity or oneness: "the Church that is one and unique, precedes creation, and gives birth to the particular Churchs as her daughters."[147]

In his article "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*," Ratzinger explains the CDF's argument for the ontological priority of the universal church. He claims that for St. Paul, the universal church is the heavenly Jerusalem, which is already present in the church of Christ.[148] In Ratzinger's view, the Fathers hold the same teaching as St. Paul about the universal church as a theological reality when they view the Torah, Israel, and the church as being pre-existent: "Since the Fathers were convinced of the ultimate identity between the church and Israel, they could not see in the church something that took place by chance at the last hour, but recognized in the gathering of the peoples in accordance with God's will, the internal purpose of creation."[149] Like the Torah and Israel, the church of

[147] *Letter to the Bishops on the Church as Communion*, 9, note 42, with references to the Shepherd of Hermas, Vis. 2, 4: PG 2, 897-900; St. Clement of Rome, Epist. II ad Cor., 14,2: Funk, 1, 200.

[148] Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*," 6.

[149] Ibid.

Christ or the universal church must exist in the will of God, and cannot be conceived as a human product shaped by the will of a group of people in history.

To argue for the temporal priority of the universal church, the CDF bases its argument on the Lukan interpetation of the church in the Acts of Apostles. It states that "the Church is manifested, temporally, on the day of Pentecost in the community of the one hundred and twenty gathered around Mary and the twelve Apostles … from the first day the Church speaks all languages."[150] For the CDF, the apostolic church on the day of Pentecost is the expression of the heavenly Jerusalem in time and history. This church, Ratzinger explains, "began in the community of the 120 gathered around Mary, especially in the renewed community of the Twelve, who are not members of a local church, but the Apostles who will take the Gospel to the ends of the earth."[151] As a result, those gathering around Mary and the Apostles on the day of Pentecost cannot be considered as the members of the local church of Jerusalem. They are "the representatives of the one unique Church and founders-to-be of the local Churches."[152] We have seen that the CDF and Ratzinger argue for this position because they want to reject Boff's interpretation of the church as a social and historical reality. In their view, the universal church is not composed of the local churches, nor can it be reduced to the sum of all elements in the church such as the people of God, the Scriptures, liturgical practices, doctrines, laws, and hierarchical structures of governance.

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[150] *Letter to the Bishops on the Church as Communion,* see no. 9, note 43, with references to Acts 2: 1 ff. St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, III, 17, 2 (PG 7, 929-930).

[151] Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*," 6.

[152] *Letter to the Bishops on the Church as Communion*, 9.

In his article "On the Church: A Friendly Reply to Cardinal Ratzinger," Kasper accepts Ratzinger's position concerning the pre-existence of the church in God. He acknowledges the teaching authority of the Fathers when they identify the pre-existence of the church with the pre-existence of Israel and the Torah in the will of God. However, Kasper points out that Ratzinger's interpretation of St. Paul's idea of the church in Galatians 4:26 cannot justify the ontological primacy of the universal church over the local church. In Kasper's words, "Who would assert that when Paul speaks of the pre-existence of the church in God's saving will, he refers only to the universal church and not to the concrete historical church that exists 'in and from' the local churches? Who would say that the one historical church, existing 'in and from' the local churches, does not pre-exist in its entirety in God's mystery?"[153]

The point here is that, although Kasper and Ratzinger accept the teaching of St. Paul and the Fathers concerning the universal church as mother and "the church's pre-existence in the will of God," they interpret the concept of the church's pre-existence differently. For Ratzinger, the pre-existence of the church refers to the ontological priority of the universal church over the local church, while Kasper refuses to associate the pre-existence of the church with the ontological priority of the universal church over the local church. For Kasper, God wills the simultaneous existence of the universal and the local church. The universal dimension of the church cannot be separated from its local dimension both in the will of God and in salvation history.

[153] Kasper, "On the Church: A Friendly Reply to Cardinal Ratzinger," section "Controversy: Points of Disagreement."

Kasper also holds a different opinion than Ratzinger about the temporal priority of the universal church. He argues that the "Pentecost event" in the Acts of the Apostles is a Lukan construction. This event takes place not only in the Christian communities in Jerusalem but also in other communities across Galilee.[154] Kasper holds the view that "the narration of the 'Pentecostal event' does not refer to the universal church as such, but to the gathering of the Jewish 'diaspora,' which over time, through the guidance of the Spirit, will expand into a church of all nations."[155] To support this view, Kasper takes into account the history of the early church. He states that "The correct history of the beginnings of the church is found comprehensively in the narrations of its initial expansion, and not in Luke's isolated passage about Pentecost."[156] Underlying Kasper's argument against the CDF and Ratzinger is a fear that the CDF's teaching on the priority of the universal church would promote an excessive centralization of the church's authority manifested in the Pope and the Apostolic See.

In his article "A Response to Walter Kasper: The Local Church and the Universal Church," Ratzinger accepts Kasper's caution concerning the danger of an over-centralization of the church's authority in the Pope and the Apostolic See.[157] He writes that "Kasper's text was quite rightly understood everywhere as a warning cry against a new, theologically veiled form of Roman centralism and as an emphatic criticism of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ratzinger, "A Response to Walter Kasper: The Local Church and the Universal Church," *America* 185 (November 7-11), 2001.

Faith."[158] However, for Ratzinger, "the Letter from the Congregation never dreamt of identifying the reality of the universal church with the Pope and Curia."[159] Ratzinger states that the church of Rome is not identical with the universal church, but rather a local church like other local churches, even though it has a peculiar and universal responsibility for the whole church.[160]

Given Ratzinger's understanding of the church of Rome as a local church, the question remains as to what he means by the universal church. For Ratzinger, the universal church is the church of Christ or his mystical body. Therefore, it is a theological reality that takes precedence, ontologically and temporally, over the local church. In the same way as Israel and the Torah, the universal church exists in the will of God before the creation of all things. It came into being on the day of Pentecost in the community of the one hundred and twenty disciples gathered around Mary and the twelve Apostles. The church of Christ is present in the local churches around the world, and they are constituted after the model of the church of Chirst. These local churches, however, are not identical with the church of Christ, but portions of the people of God entrusted to bishops to be guided by them with assistance of their clergy.

As has now become clear, the difference between Ratzinger and Kasper is the issue of ecclesial priority of the universal church and its relation to the local churches. The universal church that Ratzinger has in mind does not exist historically and spatially in the same way that the local churches exist. At present, the universal church is manifested in the local churches, but

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid.

the local churches themselves are not the universal church, neither one individual church nor the sum of individuals. By contrast, Kasper claims that the universal and the local church exist simultaneously in the will of God and on the day of Pentecost. The universal church cannot be separated from the local churches, and it is always present in the local churches. Consequently, for Kasper, the local churches cannot be considered as the provinces of the universal church under the governance of the Pope and the Apostolic See.

Kasper's interpretation of the local churches and his understanding of the ministry of the bishop can find support in the teaching of Vatican II. For the council, the bishops are the representatives of Christ in their local churches, who receive the fullness of their sacramental power through episcopal consecration to teach, sanctify, and govern a portion of God's people entrusted to their care (LG 26, 27, CD 11). In communion with other bishops and the Pope as pastor of the whole church, they govern and lead the people of God to carry out the mission of Christ. As we shall see in Chapter Four of the thesis, Asian bishops, who are members of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, adopt Kasper's interpretation of the relationship between the local and the universal church to undertake their ministries and serve the people of God in Asia. Their teachings and pastoral plans contribute significantly not only to the mission of the local church in Asia but also to the mission of the whole church.

Ratzinger's and Kasper's differing interpretations on the meaning of communion between the local and the universal church lead one to the question of how they arrive at divergent understandings of the conciliar teaching on the church. As we shall see below, Kasper and Ratzinger disagree about the relationship between the local and the universal church because

they hold different roles within the governance of the church and emphasize differently the importance of the pastoral character of doctrine to receive church teaching. Moreover, Kasper focuses on the historical data for the foundation of the church, while in the context of this debate Ratzinger considers the church as a theological reality and shows less concern for historical data as a source for ecclesiology.

The Use of Sources for Ecclesiology in Ratzinger and Kasper

Reading Ratzinger's and Kasper's writings on communion between the local and the universal church, one can recognize that they return to the sources of faith and use Scripture and patristic theology to interpret the church. As an expert in the theology of the Fathers, Ratzinger indeed turns to biblical texts and teachings of the Fathers to explain communion in the church.[161] Integrating the Fathers' interpretation of the Scriptures into theology is one of the features of Ratzinger's method. For example, in his interpretation of *Lumen Gentium*, Ratzinger appeals to the teachings of the Fathers to justify the existence of the one and universal church in the will of God before the creation of all things.[162]

Ratzinger, however, does not take into account the historical data of the foundation of the church in the interpretation of Acts 2. In his words, "There is no intention to discuss the question of the historical aspect of this account. What matters is the theological affirmation which Luke

[161] Ratzinger's dissertation is 'The People and House of God in Augustine's Doctrine of the Church.' For a study of Ratzinger's ecclesiology and his method, see Theodor Dieter, "Joseph Ratzinger," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, ed. Paul Avis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Philip Franco, "The Communion Ecclesiology of Joseph Ratzinger: Implications for the Church of the Future," *Vatican II: Forty Years Later*, ed. William Madges (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 3-25.

[162] Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*," 6.

has at heart."[163] For Ratzinger, after Pentecost the local churches arise within and out of the universal church. The universal church is thus a theological reality, which cannot be observed and explained completely by means of human experience, historical data, and theories of sociology. It is here that one can understand why Ratzinger does not emphasize the pastoral character of doctrine to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church. In other words, Ratzinger's interpretation of the church prioritizes the theological dimension of the foundation of the church, which shows less concern for sources such as biblical history, social theories, and human experience to explain the social and historical dimensions of the church.

Ratzinger's account of the church as communion is not convincing to Kasper. Like Ratzinger, Kasper offers a theological interpretation of the church. Unlike Ratzinger, however, he views the universal church as simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality. To justify his interpretation of the church, Kasper combines pastoral experience and church history with the Scriptures. These sources provide insights and convince him that the universal church or the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church of Christ cannot be considered as prior ontologically and temporally to the local churches.

As already indicated, for Kasper, the history of the early church was manifested not merely through the event of Pentecost, but also through the narrations of the local communities' initial expansion in the first centuries of the church.[164] In Kasper's view, the proof of the existence of these communities can be found in the letters of St. Paul: "For Paul, the one church

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid., section "Historical Dimensions."

of God comes to life in each local church. Thus, there is the church of God in Corinth and so forth. The church of God is present in each of them."[165] Moreover, Kasper points out that practices of members of the early church support the idea of the simultaneous existence of the local church and universal church. Because the one and universal church was presented in each and all local churches, bishops of the early church respected the authority of one another. No one claimed to have autonomy.[166]

Significantly, Kasper comes to the conclusion of the simultaneous existence of the local and the universal church not merely through his interpretation of St. Paul's view of the church and his understanding of the history and practices of the early church, but also through his pastoral experience. He writes,

> I reached my position not from abstract reasoning but from pastoral experience. As the bishop of a large diocese, I had observed how a gap was emerging and steadily increasing between norms promulgated in Rome for the universal church and the needs and practices of our local church. A large portion of our people, including priests, could not understand the reason behind the regulations coming from the center; they tend, therefore, to ignore them. This happened concerning ethical issues, sacramental discipline, and ecumenical practices. The adamant

[165] Ibid.

[166] Ibid.

> refusal of Communion to all divorced and remarried persons and the highly restrictive rules for Eucharistic hospitality are good examples.[167]

Kasper's pastoral experience as the bishop of the church of Rottenburg-Stuttgart makes him aware of a challenge that any diocesan bishop must face. In his role as a member of the episcopal college, he must unite with other bishops and the Pope to govern the universal church. He is responsible for implementing universal teachings promulgated by the Pope and the Apostolic See to ensure the unity in the church. However, as a shepherd of a local church, he must listen to his people and care for each of them individually. He cannot apply the same universal laws and teachings to every situation that his people are facing in their daily lives. To solve this tension, Kasper proposes that "the bishops must be granted enough vital space to make responsible decisions in the matter of implementing universal laws."[168] The bishops can interpret and implement church teaching responsibly when they recognize that the universal church is not ontologically and temporally prior to the local churches. The universal church or the one church of Christ is always present in the local churches governed by diocesan bishops who are in communion with other bishops and the bishop of Rome.

As the Prefect of the CDF, a Congregation of the Roman Curia, Ratzinger emphasizes the unity of the whole church under the universal governance of the Pope. To argue for this unity, Ratzinger deploys philosophical and theological concepts such as pre-existence, and ontological and temporal precedence. He claims that the church of Rome is not a universal church, but a

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid., section "A Pressing Pastoral Problem."

local church with a peculiar and universal responsibility.[169] The church of Rome has a universal responsibility for the whole church because the Pope is the bishop of Rome, who by virtue of his office as Vicar of Christ, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church. This interpretation can give an impression that it is merely the Pope, who has a universal responsibility and power over the whole church.

All in all, Kasper and Ratzinger interpret the meaning of communion between the local and the universal church divergently because they use different sources and approach the church as communion from different perspectives or positions within the church. Apart from the Scriptures and the patristic tradition, Kasper takes into account church history and pastoral experience as sources to interpret the relationship between the local and the universal church. Meanwhile, Ratzinger appeals to the Scriptures and the teachings of the Fathers, but leaves church history and pastoral experience in the background. One thus can recognize that perspective through which one interprets Vatican II and sources that one deploys can contribute to one's understanding of the council.

Having analyzed Ratzinger's and Kasper's arguments and their use of sources to receive Vatican II's teaching on the church, I shall now review their interpretation of the church through the lens of conciliar ecclesiology presented in the first part of the chapter. This examination will yield useful insights for the study of Vatican II's teaching on the church, and point out two implications of their debate for conciliar ecclesiology. First, the church cannot be considered as a merely theological reality, but also a social and historical one. Second, to interpret the church as

[169] Ratzinger, "The Local Church and the Universal Church," 10.

a theological and a socio-historical reality, one needs to integrate theories and concepts of sociology into conciliar ecclesiology.

Implications of the Ratzinger/Kasper Debate for Reception of Conciliar Ecclesiology

As we have seen above, for Ratzinger, the church of Christ is the universal church, which existed in the will of God, and was then manifested in the community of the one hundred and twenty disciples gathering around Mary and the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Ratzinger's interpretation of the church prioritizes the theological dimension of the church or the relationship between the one God and the one church. God willed the church before the creation of all things and brought the church into existence through the Spirit. His use of the idea of communion to describe the church emphasizes unity and harmony in the apostolic community, but does not take into account conflicts among members of the early church such as the Peter/Paul dispute at Antioch (Galatians 2:11-14). In other words, Ratzinger's understanding of the church as a mystery of communion is unable to account for the complex relationship in the church. This critique would apply to all communion ecclesiologies, which are in danger of separating the church from time and place and do not stress the social dimension of the church or multiple relationships among various groups of peoples in the church.

In contrast to Ratzinger's communion ecclesiology, Vatican II's teaching on the church gives prominence to both theological and socio-historical dimension of the church. For the council, the church is a sacramental reality or a visible sign of Christ's living presence in the people of God. In other words, the church is a theological and a socio-historical reality, which is fully realized in local communities of the faithful when they gather around their bishops to

celebrate the sacraments and partake in the mission of Christ. Viewing Ratzinger's interpretation of the church through the lens of conciliar ecclesiology, one recognizes that the church of Christ is more than a theological reality presented in Ratzinger's interpretation. The church is the sacrament of Christ or a theological and a socio-historical reality manifested in the community of Christ's disciples in time and different contexts of the world. To offer a proper interpretation of the church in accordance with Vatican II, one has to take into account both the theological and the social and historical dimension of the church.

Unlike Ratzinger's interpretation of the church, Kasper considers the church as simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality. His understanding of the history of the early church and his experience as bishop of a local church convince him that bishops cannot be considered as the Pope's delegates. For Kasper, because the church of Christ is fully present and realized in the local communities under the ministry of the bishops, the bishops are the ones who act in the name of Christ to serve the people of God and lead them to carry out the mission.

Kasper's interpretation of the ministry of the bishop encourages bishops to redress "the problem of centralism," which underpins Ratzinger's understanding of the church.[170] As we shall see in Chapter Four when analyzing Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter on the Theological and Juridical Nature of Episcopal Conferences, Ratzinger's interpretation was used to argue that the Pope and the Roman Curia are the ones who have a universal power over the whole church, and they can entrust to local bishops, who are members episcopal conferences, specific areas of

[170] Ratzinger, "A Response to Walter Kasper: The Local Church and the Universal Church," 10.

competence.[171] The council, however, teaches that together with the Pope, the college of bishops is also the subject of supreme and universal power over all of the faithful. As the members of the episcopal college, all bishops, by virtue of their apostolic office, share joint responsibility for the whole church, especially the mission of the church (LG 22, CD 6).

Although Kasper considers the church as a theological and a socio-historical reality in his debate with Ratzinger, he does not emphasize the social dimension of the church. As we have seen, Kasper takes into account the relationship between bishops of the early church as an evidence to justify his view of the simultaneous existence of the local and the universal church. However, he neither describes the relationship between bishops and other members of the early church, nor does he show how church members work together to carry out the mission of Christ. In other words, Kasper's interpretation of the church does not do justice to the council's teaching on the church as people of God and the missionary nature of the church. To examine the relationships among multiple groups of members in the church and explain how they cooperate to carry out the mission of Christ in the different contexts of the world, one cannot employ merely Scripture, patristic theology, church history, and pastoral experience, the sources used by Ratzinger and Kasper. Sociology can be integrated into conciliar ecclesiology to study the church as a theological and a socio-historical reality.

Sociology is a discipline of the social science that can unveil the social world and various structures of this world. Sociologists employ sociological theories and concepts to explore social

[171] Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Apostolos Suos*, 13, see http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_22071998_apostolos-suos.html

structures and relationship among different groups of peoples in society.[172] Sociology can be considered as a source to help theologians receive Vatican II because it offers theories and concepts to examine relationships in the church. More concretely, sociology can provide theologians with theories and concepts to implement conciliar teachings on church organizations such as episcopal conferences, the Roman Curia, and diocesan pastoral councils. As we shall see in the next chapter, sociology provides Karl Rahner with concepts to interpret the relationship between members of the church, who receive different hierarchical and charismatic gifts from the Spirit to undertake multiple ministries in the church. In the final chapter, we shall see that the sociology of organizations is a vital source that enables Asian bishops to implement Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences. They use sociological theories and concepts to design a hierarchical structure, which unites them with Christ, with one another, and with the Pope to promote the mission of Christ and the Spirit in the social context of Asia.

Conclusion

This chapter applies the hermeneutical principles proposed in Chapter One to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church. It reviews the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on the church through the lens of conciliar ecclesiology to argue that the church is more than a mystery of communion manifested through the communion between the local and the universal church. The church is also a group of people, who unite with Christ and with one another under the leadership of the Pope and the bishops to carry out the mission of Christ and the Spirit. As a concrete people

[172] For an account of sociology, see Richard Schaefer and Robert Lamm, *Sociology: A Brief Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997); John Macionis, *Sociology* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1987); Johann Graaff, *What is Sociology?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

in history and society, the church is present in local assemblies of the faithful when they gather around their bishops as the representatives of Christ to celebrate the sacraments and partake in the mission of Christ and the Spirit. As a result, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church cannot be considered as merely a reality of communion interpreted by the CDF and defended by Ratzinger in his debate with Kasper. It is the sacrament of Christ or his living presence which is fully manifested in the gatherings of the faithful in their local churches. To receive the teaching on the church as a sacramental reality, one has to combine sociology with the traditional sources of theology such as Scripture and patristic theology to interpret the church as a theological and a socio-historical reality. The question to which one should turn now is how sociology provides insights and helps theologians to receive Vatican II's teaching on the church.

CHAPTER THREE

INTEGRATING SOCIOLOGY INTO CONCILIAR ECCLESIOLOGY: KARL RAHNER'S APPROACH

Introduction

The analysis in the previous chapter of the Ratzinger/Kasper debate argued that sources such as Scripture, patristic theology, pastoral experience, and church history are not sufficient to help theologians interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church. For the council, the church as the sacrament of Christ is simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality. While the theological dimension of the church involves the relationship between Christ and the church, the social and historical dimension of the church involves the structure of the relationships between different groups of church members, who come together to worship God and to carry out the mission in various social and local contexts of the world. To describe and communicate the council's teaching on the church, one has to take into account not only the relationship between Christ and the church, but also the relationship between those who participate in social structures such as the episcopal college, the Synod of Bishops, episcopal conferences, and diocesan pastoral councils to continue the mission of Christ and the Spirit.

The relationships in the church and the church's social structures invite theologians to combine sociological insights with theological knowledge to receive Vatican II's teaching on the church. To employ sociology in ecclesiology, one has to clarify what sociology is, what are the issues that complicate the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology, and how sociological

knowledge can aid theologians to study the church, its structures, and its mission in different contexts of the world.

Within the purview of this chapter, I shall first offer an account of major approaches to sociology as they relate to ecclesiology, and then examine Roger Haight's method in ecclesiology to show one approach to integrating sociological concepts into ecclesiology. Having done so, I take into account Neil Ormerod's critique of Haight's method to elucidate a fundamental issue that complicates the use of sociology in ecclesiology, namely, the relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimension of the church. In light of Ormerod's critique of Haight's method, I explore Karl Rahner's theology of grace to argue that his understanding of grace as God's self-communication can resolve the issue that Ormerod identifies and enable theologians to justify the application of sociological insights in ecclesiology.

In the second part of this chapter, I study Rahner's ecclesiology to explain how sociology allows him to describe and communicate Vatican II's teaching on the church. As we shall see, although Rahner does not directly use many sociological ideas in his interpretation of the church, his theology of grace and his view of the church as the sacrament of salvation shed light on the application of sociology in ecclesiology. Indeed, Rahner's interpretation of the church enriches the account of conciliar ecclesiology that I presented in the previous chapter and deepens one's understanding of the relationship between the local and the universal church. Building on the idea of the church as the sacrament of salvation, Rahner employs a sociological concept, namely that of "open system," to express the relationship between church members and the relationship

between the Spirit and Christ's disciplines, who receive different hierarchical and charismatic gifts from the Spirit to undertake various ministries in the church. I hope to convince readers that Rahner's use of the concept of the open system, although limited in its scope, can provide a model for the further integration of sociology into ecclesiological analysis.

Part I. Sociology and its Relationship with Ecclesiology

Even though social scientists define sociology differently, there is a general agreement that sociology is a sub-discipline of the social sciences, one that studies social structures and relationships between different groups of peoples in society.[173] Sociology tries to model itself after the natural sciences, and like the sub-disciplines of the natural sciences such as physics and biology, sociologists derive knowledge from the facts of experience directly established by careful, unbiased use of the senses. Then, they bring these facts together through inductive reasoning to form scientific theories and concepts.[174] Having developed scientific theories and concepts, sociologists employ them to explore, explain, and predict diverse phenomena in the social world.

While physicists study material realities such as radio waves and electrons, sociologists investigate human subjects and their relationships in society. Human subjects are much more complicated than physical realities because they have freedom, self-awareness, reason, and

[173] For an introduction into sociology, see Richard Schaefer and Robert Lamm, *Sociology: A Brief Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997); John Macionis, *Sociology* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1987); and Johann Graaff, *What is Sociology?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[174] For a study of the nature of science and how scientists acquire knowledge through the principle of induction, see A. F. Chalmers, *What is This Thing Called Science?* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999).

emotions. As a result, sociologists cannot manage the behaviors of the subjects in the same way that physicists control objects in their experiments. Moreover, human subjects are complex because they interact with one another to form social structures such as families, colleges, and business organizations, which, in turn, shape the behaviors of the subjects under investigation.

The diversity within sociology further complicates its relevance to ecclesiology. As Gregory Baum notes, although sociologists' interests include organization, religion, knowledge, culture, and politics, they do not hold the same approach and presuppositions among themselves when they examine social realities such as colleges, business firms, and voluntary organizations.[175] Consequently, Baum reminds theologians who enter into dialogue with sociologists to be aware of what kind of sociology, approach, and presuppositions are held by the sociologists with whom the theologians want to engage.[176]

Most contemporary sociologists agree about three major approaches to sociology: functionalist, critical, and symbolic interactionist.[177] Each approach has its own sets of presuppositions, but they all deploy the same scientific method to study social realities. Before showing how sociology is relevant to ecclesiology, I shall explain the functionalist, the critical, and the symbolic interactionist approaches to sociology.

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[175] Gregory Baum, "Sociology and Theology," *The Church as Institution*, ed. Gregory Baum and Andrew Greeley (New York: Herder and Herder, 1974), 22-3.

[176] Ibid., 24.

[177] Graaff, *What is Sociology?*, 27-54; Schaefer and Lamm, *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*; and Anthony Giddens, *In Denfense of Sociology* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996), 65-77.

Approaches to Sociology and their Relevance to Ecclesiology

The functionalist approach to sociology emphasizes the way in which the diverse parts of a social reality are linked together to maintain social stability, cooperation, and development. Underlying this approach is an assumption that "societies can be seen as persistent, cohesive, stable, generally integrated wholes, differentiated by their cultural and social-structural arrangements."[178] According to Emile Durkheim[179] and Talcott Parson,[180] the leading figures of this approach, we live in a socially constructed world, which has a powerful and lasting influence on the way that each person lives, believes, and acts. The social world exists prior to our entry into it, and it continues to exist after our departure from it. Because humans are social beings, we always want to belong to social structures such as colleges, churches, and business firms to study, work, and develop our potential. These social structures shape our beliefs and practices when we observe the rules and practices established by the founders of the social structures.

By contrast, the critical approach to sociology assumes that human society is characterized by inequality and conflict that generate changes. This approach complements the functionalist approach by highlighting not integration and harmony among diverse elements of a social structure, but division and conflict based on social inequality. Among the key theorists of the conflict approach are Karl Marx[181] and W. E. B. Du Bois.[182] They study how social factors

[178] E. C. Cuff, W. W. Sharrock, and D. W. Francis, *Perspectives in Sociology* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 27.

[179] See Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

[180] See Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: Free Press, 1949).

[181] See Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore (Chicago, IL: Pluto Press, 1996).

[182] See W. E. B. Du Bois, "Sociology Hesitant," in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays*, ed. Nahum Dimitri Chandler (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

such as class, race, ethnicity, sex, and age can be the causes of unequal distribution of money, power, education, and social prestige. Marx and Du Bois believe that human behaviors are best interpreted not in terms of harmony and cooperation, but in terms of conflicts and tensions between competing groups of people in society. Such conflicts need not be violent; they can take the form of labor negotiations, party politics, competition between religious groups for members, or disputes over the federal budget.

The functionalist and the critical approach to sociology share a macro-level orientation, namely, a focus on broad social structures. These approaches take in the big picture, like one observing a city from high above in a helicopter. Hence, they can offer a comprehensive and synthetic account of social mechanisms and change. By contrast, the symbolic interactionist approach is a micro-level theory that focuses on relationships among individuals in social structures. Sociologists such as George Mead[183] and Alfred Schutz[184] look for patterns of interaction between individuals in the social world. Their studies often involve observation of one-on-one interactions and are based on the assumption that society is the product of countless everyday relations between distinct subjects. Mead and Schutz also consider human beings as social subjects living in a world of meaningful objects. These objects may include material things, actions, other people, human relationships, and symbols. Focusing on the everyday interactions of individual subjects, sociologists who adopt the symbolic-interactionist approach believe that these interactions enable them to comprehend the social world better from a closer

[183] See George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

[184] See Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967).

perspective, overcoming the limitations typical of the macro-level approaches to study social realities.

Because each of these approaches highlights different dimensions of social realities, the majority of contemporary sociologists agree that the richest and most ideal interpretation of the social world should derive from applying all three approaches.[185] For example, to understand the consequences of high levels of unemployment in the United States, the functionalists examine how unemployment reduces the demand for material goods but increases the need for public services, and thus leads to new jobs in government organizations. The interactionists focus on the impact of unemployment on family life, as it is manifested in personal issues such as divorce, domestic violence, and the use of drugs. Sociologists with the critical perspective might draw attention to uneven distribution of unemployment within labor force in society, and how it is likely to affect women and ethnic minorities.

Despite different approaches and assumptions in their studies of social realities, sociologists follow the same scientific method, which includes five steps: (1) defining problems; (2) reviewing literature; (3) formulating hypotheses; (4) selecting research designs, collecting and interpreting data; (5) stating conclusions. Paul Diesing explains that sociologists use the scientific method to explore human interactions within social structures. As a result of their studies, they receive three kinds of knowledge:

[185] Macionis, *Sociology*, 22-5; Schaefer and Lamm, *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, 15.

> (1) systems of laws which describe interconnected regularities in society; (2) descriptions, from the inside, of a way of life, community, person, belief system, or scientific community's beliefs; (3) structural models, mathematical or verbal, of dynamic processes exemplified in particular cases. The three kinds overlap, since both life descriptions and structural models can include regularities, and a system of laws can produce a characteristic dynamic or time path.[186]

Diesing points out that sociological laws, theories, models, and concepts are not products of an individual scientist, but rather of a community of scientists, who belong to the same tradition or follow the same research program. Using theories, laws, models, and concepts initiated by founding fathers of sociology such as Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber, sociologists examine social realities. In the process of their studies, they may produce new concepts, laws, and theories, which possibly change, enrich, and refine established laws and theories.[187]

Given the above approaches to sociology, one can recognize the first issue that complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology: the diversity of subjects in sociology and the different approaches to social realities. To employ sociological insights in ecclesiology, theologians have to identify which field of sociology and which approach to sociology they want to engage. Also, theologians have to be aware of the presuppositions of the approach that they choose because these presuppositions will influence their interpretations of the church and the church's relationship with the world.

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[186] Paul Diesing, *How Does Social Science Work? Reflections on Practice* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 325.

[187] Ibid.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, for example, adopts the critical approach to sociology in his article, "Theology and the Social Sciences," and uses Marx's ideas of class struggle and social conflict to describe his understanding of the social world in Latin America.[188] Having offered an analysis of the social world, he invites the church to respond to the issues of poverty, class struggle, and conflict in Latin America by proclaiming the Gospel of love, justice, and liberation to all peoples, especially to those who are poor and neglected. The presupposition of the critical approach to sociology shapes Gutiérrez's analysis of the social context of Latin America in terms of social conflict and class struggle between different members of society.

By contrast, theologians such as Roger Haight, who opts for the functionalist approach to sociology, do not consider the relationship between the church and the society in terms of conflict and class struggle as Gutiérrez does. Instead, Haight uses sociological concepts from the sociology of organizations to interpret the church as simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality, whose members work together to carry out their mission in different historical and social contexts of the world.[189] In the concrete, for Haight, the church, like other social structures, consists of essential elements such as members, goals, activities, and organizational structures. It exists in the world and thus must enter into dialogue with other social groups to proclaim the Gospel.[190] Building on the assumption of harmony and cooperation among members of social structures, which is characteristic of the functionalist approach to sociology,

[188] See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 53-84.

[189] Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. I (New York: Continuum, 2004), 38.

[190] Ibid., 93-110.

Haight describes how church members formed rituals, laws, Scripture, and creeds, and collaborated to continue the mission entrusted to them by Christ.

Given the variety of sociological approaches that theologians can employ in studying the church and the church's relationship with the world, I examine Haight's method in ecclesiology as only one concrete example to further clarify how sociological insights enable theologians to explore the church. As I shall make clear below, Haight's method in ecclesiology and Ormerod's critique of Haight's method will show theologians a fundamental issue that complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology, namely, the relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church. To understand why these dimensions of the church make it difficult to combine sociological insights with theological concepts to interpret and communicate the reality of the church, I turn now to Haight's account of the method in ecclesiology.

Haight's Method in Ecclesiology and Ormerod's Critique

In his major three-volume work on ecclesiology, *Christian Community in History*, Haight promotes an "ecclesiology from below," whose primary focus is the empirical church or the concrete community of Christ's disciples in history.[191] The first volume of the work is most relevant to our discussion of the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology because Haight addresses there the question of method in ecclesiology, and then applies the method that he

[191] Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History*, 3 Vols. (New York: Continuum, 2004-8). For reviews of Haight's understanding of method in ecclesiology, see Martin Madar, "Roger Haight's Contribution to Method in Ecclesiology and its Implications for Ecumenical Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47 (Spring 2012), 207-226; Bradford E. Hinze, "Roger Haight's Historical Ecclesiology," *Religious Studies Review* 32 (April 2006), 81-5.

proposes to examine the formation of the church. In this volume, which covers the time from the beginning of Christianity to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Haight follows a four-fold format to study the church. First, he offers a historical account of the development of the church to show how the church was established and how it changed in different periods of history. Second, he uses insights from the sociology of organizations to analyze the essential elements of the church's organizational structure. Third, he takes into account the theological dimension of the church and describes how Christ and the Spirit were presented and worked through church members to carry out the divine mission in the world. Having explored the historical, social, and theological accounts of the church, Haight combines insights from these studies to identify ecclesiological principles such as the relationships between charisma and office, between change and continuity, and between organization and environment. He claims that these principles can help Christians and those outside the church to understand the church as a theological and socio-historical reality.

Viewing the four-fold format that Haight employs to study the church, one can recognize that he distinguishes between the historical, the social, and the theological dimensions of the church, examines each dimension independently, and then brings them together to offer a comprehensive interpretation of the church. The question that faces Haight's approach to ecclesiology is how to separate different dimensions of the church, and then connect them so that one can understand the church as a whole. To answer this question, Haight uses the method of correlation, which he develops in his early work, *Dynamics of Theology*.[192]

[192] Roger Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

According to Haight, the method of correlation "finds its basis in the distinction between original and dependent revelation."[193] Original revelation is God's self-manifestation given to the first groups of people who experience the events of revelation. One can find these events in Scripture, which reports stories and experiences of individuals or groups who encounter God through prophets and Christ in salvation history. Dependent revelation is the reception, interpretation, and communication of original revelation in communities of believers throughout salvation history. For Haight, God's self-manifestation does not stop at the times of the first receivers of revelation. Instead, God continues to reveal God's self through Scripture, the sacraments, and church teachings to those who believe in God and the church, and thus the experience of revelation is always received and interpreted anew in communities of those who believe in Christ and guided by his Spirit. Consequently, Haight states that the method of correlation or the attempt to understand revelation

> rests on the necessary fusion of past and present in the [subject's] reception of revelation. It consists in distinguishing and then bringing together original revelation as mediated through its traditional symbols and the situation of human consciousness in which it is received at any given time. What are correlated are the meaning of original revelation and present-day human experience.[194]

Applying this understanding of the method of correlation to ecclesiology, Haight attempts to join together the theological, the social, and the historical studies of the church. He claims that

[193] Ibid., 191.

[194] Ibid.

"The method of ecclesiology should not differ substantially from the method of theology generally."[195] Because the church is simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality, Haight argues that theologians have to use two different languages to interpret and explore the church: "Theological language describes the church in its relation to God; critical, historical, sociological language accounts for the church insofar as it is continuous with other historical institution."[196] To combine these languages in ecclesiology, Haight states that "We need a theological method that respects these two dimensions of the one church, which does not hold them in balance over against each other, but integrates them into a single understanding."[197] Thus, the method of correlation, which distinguishes between the theological and the socio-historical dimension of the church, studies these dimensions separately through different languages, and then brings together these languages in ecclesiology, allows Haight to integrate historical and sociological findings with the theological analysis of the church to present a comprehensive account of the church in history.

Despite the sociological relevance of Haight's approach to ecclesiology, Neil Ormerod, in an important critique, objects to the two-language approach to ecclesiology.[198] He argues that Haight's approach is in danger of splitting the church into the theological and the socio-historical realities before combining them to understand the church. The church, for Ormerod, is one subject manifested through the relationship between Christ and those who believe in him.

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[195] Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. I, 44.

[196] Ibid., 39.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 24-6.

Accordingly, one cannot separate the church into different realities and study them independently.[199] Moreover, Ormerod argues that Haight's idea of historical and sociological language is unnecessary in one's theological reflection of the church. In the words of Ormerod,

> If one of these languages is already theological, why do we need a further theological method to bring these two dimensions into some further integration? If we already have a theological language to describe the relationship of the church to God, then what does the critical historical, sociological language add to that? Is not the church that is in relationship to God the same as the historical church? Certainly, we need a single understanding of the church, but it will not be achieved in the fashion that Haight spells out.[200]

According to Ormerod, to integrate insights from sociology into ecclesiology and address the issue of different dimensions of the church, one has to examine the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology within a larger context of the relationship between nature and grace. Taking into account John Milbank's theological critique of sociology,[201] Ormerod claims that "The significant insight in Milbank's work is that the question of the relationship between ecclesiology and the social sciences maps onto one's more general understanding of the

[199] Ibid.

[200] Neil Ormerod, "Ecclesiology and the Sociology," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York: Routledge, 2008), 648.

[201] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

relationship between grace and nature."[202] In Ormerod's view, Milbank points out that Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastics introduced a distinction between nature and grace to theology. This distinction paved the way for the modern secular state and the coming of natural and social sciences that use reason as the means to investigate natural and social worlds.[203] Prior to the distinction that Aquinas and the Scholastics made between nature and grace, "an Augustinian theology operated on the basis of the grace-sin dialectic that allowed for no clear 'middle ground' such as the category of nature."[204]

Ormerod claims that an Augustinian perssimism about human nature tends to lead to a certain skepticism about the potential contribution of the social sciences to ecclesiology.[205] In Ormerod's view, theologians such as Milbank, who adopt the Augustinian grace-sin dialectic, are suspicious of the outcome of sociology and its contribution to ecclesiology.[206] Milbank argues that theories and concepts of sociology are the fruits of human reason, which was tainted by original sin and corruption of the human race after the Fall. Consequently, these theories and concepts cannot offer genuine insights into the human condition and the social world, and one should not use them to study the social dimension of the church. By contrast, for Ormerod, the

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[202] Neil Ormerod, "Social Science and Ideological Critiques of Ecclesiology," 560, in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, ed. Paul Avis, https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.proxy.bc.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199645831.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199645831-e-16

[203] Neil Ormerod, "A Dialectic Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesiological Context," *Theological Studies* 66 (2005), 837.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ormerod, "Social Science and Ideological Critiques of Ecclesiology," 560.

[206] Ibid., 561.

more optimistic one's understanding of human persons and their nature (Thomistic), the more likely one is to integrate sociological insights as the fruits of grace into ecclesiology.[207]

The question of the relationship between ecclesiology and sociology is thus located within the broader framework of the correlation between nature and grace. Building on Ormerod's distinction between the Augustinian and the Thomistic approach to sociology and ecclesiology, one can conclude that to comprehend whether and how sociology can be integrated into ecclesiology, one has to clarify the meaning of grace and its relationship with human nature. This is the task that I shall articulate in the next section of the chapter.

Ormerod adopts Bernard Lonergan's theology of grace and states that to integrate sociological insights into ecclesiology, theologians can consider sociology as the fruit of grace.[208] In other words, if one views sociological knowledge which comes from inductive reasoning as the fruit of grace given by God to humankind through works of social scientists, then one would not separate the knowledge of sociology from the knowledge of revelation. Ormerod's point can be further explained by referring to Lonergan's theology of grace.

According to Lonergan, "Grace perfects nature, both in the sense that it adds a perfection beyond nature and in the sense that it confers on nature the effective freedom to attain its perfection. But grace is not a substitute for nature, and theology is not a substitute for empirical

[207] Ibid., 560.

[208] Ibid.

human science."[209] For Lonergan and Ormerod, just as grace completes nature but is not a substitute for nature, ecclesiology completes sociology, but cannot substitute for it. Theologians can use sociologists' studies and consider sociological theories and concepts as a source of knowledge along with theories and concepts derived from Scriptures, patristic theology, church history, and church teaching to examine the church as a theological and socio-historical reality.

In light of Ormerod's use of Lonergan's view on nature and grace in his critique of Haight, one can now recognize a fundamental issue that complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology: the relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church. Haight's two-language approach to ecclesiology is in danger of separating the socio-historical dimension of the church from its theological dimension because he examines these dimensions independently through the application of different languages, and then joins these languages together to form a single understanding of the church. Theological language studies the church as a theological reality or the relationship between God and the church, while socio-historical languages explore the church as a socio-historical reality or the relationship between different members of the church, who are called by God through Christ and the Spirit in history. The church in history and the church in relation to God, however, are one single subject. It is a theological and socio-historical reality at the same time, and one dimension of the church cannot be separated from the other in ecclesiology.

For Ormerod, theologians can combine knowledge of revelation with knowledge of social sciences to study the church by viewing this integration within the context of a prior articulation

[209] Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Vol. III, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 767.

of the relationship between nature and grace. He considers sociological and historical knowledge as the products of grace given by God to humanity to bring together knowledge of human reasoning and knowledge of revelation in ecclesiology. Building on Ormerod's critique of Haight's two-language approach to ecclesiology and Ormerod's idea of the relationship between nature and grace to address the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology, I shall now examine Rahner's theology of grace and argue that his idea of grace as God's self-communication can allow theologians to integrate socio-historical knowledge into ecclesiology to interpret the church as a simultaneously theological and socio-historical reality. To grasp Rahner's theology of grace, we can begin with his view of the relationship between theology and philosophy. As we shall see, this relationship can offer a lens or rather a context to understand not only the relationship between nature and grace but also the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology.

Rahner's Theology of Grace as the Key to Address the Relationship between Sociology and Ecclesiology

In an article written in September 1961 for a symposium on "The Significance of European Culture for Universal History" in Salzburg, Austria, Rahner explains his thought on the relationship between philosophy and theology.[210] For Rahner, theology and philosophy are intimately linked. Theologians need philosophy because theology or the study of God and divine revelation in history cannot take place without the prior existence of languages, theories, and concepts of human subjects, who can receive and question the message of revelation.[211] Rahner

[210] Rahner, "Philosophy and Theology," *Theological Investigations* VI, 71-81.

[211] Ibid., 73.

defines philosophy as "the methodically exact, reflected and most expediently controlled representation and articulation of this original and never quite attained self-understanding."[212] In other words, for Rahner, philosophy is a critical reflection by human beings or their capacity to reason through the means of concepts, theories, and languages. In their acts of thinking and reasoning, human beings come to know themselves and enter into relationship with God whether or not they are aware of the presence of God. Philosophy is thus the necessary condition for the possibility of theology.[213] In doing theology, one takes into account one's experience, one's knowledge, and one's capacity to think to express and communicate one's understanding of God and God's self-manifestation to oneself and to others.

To shed light on the relationship between philosophy and theology, Rahner locates this relationship within a broader framework of his understanding of nature and grace.[214] He states that just as nature is an inner moment of grace, philosophy is an inner moment of theology.[215] As we shall see, Rahner's understanding of grace and its relationship with human nature is the key to address the complex relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church and to enable one to combine theological knowledge with sociological and historical insights to interpret the church as a theological and socio-historical reality.

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[212] Ibid., 74.

[213] Ibid., 76.

[214] For studies on Rahner's theology of grace, see J. A. Colombo, "Rahner and His Critics: Lindbeck and Metz," *The Thomist* 56 (1992), 71-96; David Coffey, "The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential," *Theological Studies* 65 (2004), 95-118; Stephen J. Duffy, "Experience of Grace," in D. Marmion and M. E. Hines, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43-62; and Salvador G. Agualada, "Karl Rahner's Theology of Grace: The Supernatural Existential," *Landas* 25 (2011), 207-36.

[215] Rahner, "Philosophy and Theology," *Theological Investigations* VI, 72.

Along with theologians of the *Nouvelle Théologie*, Rahner argues against the separation of nature from grace or the extrinsic account of grace promoted by the Neo-Scholastic theologies.[216] The Neo-Scholastic theologians such as Thomas de Vio Cajetan separate human nature from grace to protect the mediation of grace through the church and the transcendence of God against Protestants' appeal to individual experience of God.[217] This extrinsic account of grace, unfortunately, divides the whole structure of reality into two distinct orders as if they were unrelated: the order of nature and the order of grace. As a result, Rahner states, grace "appears there as a mere superstructure, very fine in itself certainly, which is imposed upon nature by God's free decree, and in such a way that the relationship between the two is no more intense than that of a freedom from contradiction."[218]

Rahner points out two problems that face the extrinsic account of grace. First, as creatures living in the order of nature, human persons experience themselves as "pure nature," a nature untouched by grace. They think that they know quite clearly what human nature is and view themselves as a self-contained and self-sufficient whole.[219] Second, if a person experiences himself as living in the state of pure nature, then "he will find God's call to him out of this

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[216] The major discussions of Rahner about nature and grace can be found in "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* I, 297-317; "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," *Theological Investigations* I, 319-46; "Reflections on the Experience of Grace," *Theological Investigations* III, 86-90; "Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* IV, 165-88; "Questions of Controversial Theology on Justification," *Theological Investigations* IV, 189-218; and *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 116-37.

[217] See Neil Ormerod, "The Grace-Nature Distinction and the Construction of a Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 75 (3), 523-4. For a study of Neo-Scholastic theologies, see Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 41-6.

[218] Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* I, 298-9.

[219] Ibid.

human plane merely a disturbance, which is trying to force something upon him for which he is not made."[220] In other words, human persons will not consider grace as a free and loving gift from God which enables them to transcend themselves, but a burden imposed on them by God, a burden that they do not want to undertake.

Rahner agrees with theologians of the *Nouvelle Théologie* in their objections to the extrinsic account of grace. However, he disagrees with them regarding the idea of the "gratuitousness" (*Ungeschuldetheit*) of grace. Rahner presents a critique of the *Nouvelle Théologie*'s theology of grace in his article "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace" when he refers to an article written by the anonymous author "D."[221] To make clear Rahner's theology of grace, I shall examine D's understanding of grace.

According to D, all created spirits have an insatiable striving to go beyond themselves and to unite with God.[222] The human desire for God is a gift freely given by God to all created spirits, and God cannot refuse this gift when God makes human beings.[223] To reconcile God's freedom to bring into existence a human nature which is always orientated to God and human freedom to seek God, D writes, "We cannot say: if God creates such a nature, he will have to

[220] Ibid., 300.

[221] According to David Coffey, D is the French Jesuit Émile Delaye who defended Henri de Lubac against the criticism that de Lubac incurred over the theology of grace presented in his book *Surnaturel*. See David Coffey, "Some Resources for Students of *la nouvelle théologie*," *Philosophy and Theology* 11/2 (1999), 399.

[222] The translation of D's article that I cited in this chapter comes from Coffey, "Some Resources for Students of *la nouvelle theologie*," 382-93. The German version of D's article entitled "*Ein Weg zur Bestimmung des Verhaltnisses von Natur und Gnade*" can be found in *Orientierung* 14 (1950), 138-41.

[223] Coffey, "Some Resources for Students of *la nouvelle théologie*," 382-3.

give it this goal [union with God], and then he is no longer free. Rather we must say: if God wills such a goal, he will create the creature as ordered to it."[224] The point here is that for D, human longing for God and human capacity to transcend themselves belong to human nature as a result of the divine act of creation. This desire is already intrinsic in human nature because God makes human persons in a way that God wants them to be. Consequently, one cannot separate human longing for God and human capacity to transcend from human nature considered as a gift from God.

Rahner shares with D the conviction that every created spirit has an insatiable desire for God and a capacity to go beyond themselves when Rahner presents his idea of the *Vorgriff auf esse*, "a pre-apprehension of being."[225] Put simply, the *Vorgriff* is the condition for the possibility of all human knowing and willing. Whenever one tries to understand some particular objects, one never merely wants and chooses these objects; one always at the same time reaches beyond the objects toward the whole of being, and so toward God. It is because of this desire to reach beyond that one can recognize and comprehend the particular objects. Accordingly, Rahner agrees with D that human persons have a desire for God and a capacity for transcendence. However, for Rahner, D's understanding of grace or God's act of creation emphasizes human nature, its capacity, and its orientation to God to the point that one's union with God in the beatific vision becomes something due to human beings because of the unique way that they

[224] Ibid., 389.

[225] This concept originally appears in Rahner's *Spirit in the World*. He then further articulates it *in Hearer of the Word* to establish the conditions for the possibility of the reception of revelation. Subsequently, Rahner uses the *Vorgriff* as one of the basic concepts to explain his theology of grace, Incarnation, and anonymous Christians. See Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans. W. Dych (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968) and *Hearer of the Word*, trans. J. Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994).

were created.[226] David Coffey explains Rahner's objection against D's theology of grace as follows:

> For if God assigns an end to everyone he creates, and the "desire" of this end belongs to the nature of the person in question, then God owes to that person the possibility of attaining the assigned end either from the unaided resources of his or her nature, or, in the case of the beatific vision, with the help of grace, which would mean that both grace and beatific vision would lose their essentially gratuitous character.[227]

Rahner argues against the extrinsic account of grace and D's view of grace to safeguard both God's freedom to give and human freedom to receive grace as a free gift from God. To articulate his theology of grace, he defines grace as God's self-communication (*Selbstmitteilung Gottes*), and employs two distinctions drawn from Scholastic theologies.[228] The first is the distinction between efficient and formal causality. The second is the distinction between created and uncreated grace. In Scholastic theologies, uncreated grace refers to God or the living presence of God in human hearts, while created grace refers to gifts endowed by God which transform those who receive these gifts and make their hearts a dwelling place for God.[229] For Rahner, the Scholastic theologies prioritize created grace over uncreated grace, and thus

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[226] Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* I, 302-3.

[227] David Coffey, "The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential," *Theological Studies* 65 (2004), 102.

[228] Rahner, "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," *Theological Investigations* I, 320-346; "Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* IV, 165-88; and *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 116-37.

[229] Rahner, "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," *Theological Investigations* I, 324-5.

mistakenly consider the former as the condition for the possibility of the latter.[230] This interpretation of grace does not do justice to Scripture and church tradition because for St. Paul, St. John the Evangelist, and Fathers of the church such as Irenaeus of Lyon, grace is primarily the indwelling of God in human hearts, which then provides a basis for a new relation between human persons and God.[231]

For Rahner, uncreated grace or God's self-communication to humanity should not be interpreted in terms of efficient causality promoted by the Scholastic theologies.[232] Their views of grace depict God as a skilled artisan, who produces a statue by combining a material cause such as bronze and the shape or form of a statue. Rahner argues that God does not create and communicate God's self to human persons in the same manner as an artisan who uses bronze and the art of bronze-casting to make a statue. His creative act requires no material or tools apart from God's will to give freely God's being manifested through all things.[233] In other words, God's self-communication to human persons should be understood as a "quasi-formal cause" rather than an efficient cause. God reveals God's self to humanity by becoming both the gift and the giver through which all things existed and will come into existence.[234]

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[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid., 320-4.

[232] Ibid., 324-5.

[233] Ibid., 329-33; *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 117-22.

[234] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 120-2.

Among these created beings, God makes human persons in a unique way and discloses God's very self to them by being present in their hearts as uncreated grace. Rahner writes, "God makes a creature whom he can love: he creates man. He creates him in such a way that he *can* receive this Love, which is God himself, and that he can and must at the same time accept it for what it is: the ever astounding wonder, the unexpected, gratuitous gift."[235] Because God forms human persons in a unique way that enables them to enter into communion with God, human nature is never a "pure nature," a nature untouched by grace as viewed by the extrinsic account of grace, but a graced nature since the first moments of its existence.[236] Consequently, grace cannot be considered as separated from human nature, nor is it utterly identical with nature. Simply put, grace is the self-manifestation of God as God is in God's self freely given to humanity not merely through all created beings, but also in human nature itself.[237] As a result, all things could become sources through which God reveals God's self to the world and through which a person can come to know God. To be a human person, for Rahner, is to open oneself to God and to be "a reality absolutely opened upwards," a reality that finds its fulfillment only in relation to God.[238]

Given Rahner's theology of grace, one can now recognize that, for Rahner, grace is not something outside human persons or something that imposes on human nature against its will. Grace is God in God's self who wishes to communicates to human persons through all things and

[235] Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," 310 (emphasis original).

[236] Ibid., 311-2.

[237] Rahner, "Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations* IV, 177.

[238] Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology," *Theological Investigations* I, 183.

becomes a constitutive part of who the human persons are, whether or not they open themselves to receive the gift of grace. If a person accepts grace or uses the gifts of God's self-giving to express one's self, then one actualizes oneself and comes closer to God who is the gift, the giver, and the source of all things.[239]

To understand how Rahner's theology of grace relates to the correlation between philosophy and theology presented above and addresses the question of the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology, one must explore his theology of symbol.[240] As we shall see, Rahner's idea of symbol is necessary for him to interpret Vatican II's teaching on the church as the sacrament of salvation. The idea of symbol, moreover, enables Rahner to bring together his view of quasi-formal causality and uncreated grace: because God is the creator of all things that exist and God is already present in all created beings, everything can become a symbol of God's self-communication and love to humanity.

The basic principle of Rahner's theology of symbol is his conviction that "all beings are by their nature symbolic, because they necessarily 'express' themselves in order to attain their own nature."[241] In other words, for Rahner, all beings, including God, naturally communicate themselves through various symbols to realize themselves. To make clear the meaning of symbol, Rahner distinguishes between *Realsymbols* or symbolic realities and signs. While signs

[239] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 120-2.

[240] For studies of Rahner's theology of the symbol, see James J. Buckley, "On Being a Symbol: An Appraisal of Karl Rahner," *Theological Studies*, 1979, 40 (3), 453-73; C. Annice Callahan, "Karl Rahner's Theology of Symbol: Basis for his Theology of the Church and the Sacrament," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* 1982, 49 (3), 195-205.

[241] Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," *Theological Investigations* IV, 224.

point to something other than themselves, *Realsymbols* are the means through which one being comes to know another being.[242]

To illustrate his theology of symbol, Rahner employs two symbols par excellence: the Logos and the humanity of Jesus. While the Logos is the symbol or "the 'word' of the Father, his perfect 'image', his 'imprint', his radiance, his self-expression,"[243] the humanity of Jesus is the symbol or the self-manifestation of the Logos. In Rahner's words, "the humanity of Jesus is not to be considered as something in which God dresses up and masquerades … The humanity is the self-disclosure of the Logos itself, so that when God, expressing himself, exteriorizes himself, that very thing appears which we call the humanity of the Logos."[244] Through the Logos and the humanity of Jesus as the symbolic realities or the *Realsymbols* of the Son, one comes to know God, the Father, and enters into communion with God.

Rahner's theology of grace and symbol enables one to comprehend the God of Jesus Christ and to enter into communion with God, who constantly expresses and communicates Himself through every symbolic reality in the world. Because God continues to reveal God's self freely through the creation of all things and is already present in human hearts as the condition for the possibility of all human knowledge and experience, works of art that one makes and scientific theories that one constructs can be considered as the gifts from God or the symbols of God's grace. As a result, knowledge of philosophy, history, sociology, and other sciences can be

[242] Ibid., 230.

[243] Ibid., 236.

[244] Ibid., 239.

viewed as expressions of grace through the use of human reason. To experience God, explain, and communicate one's understanding of God and God's love to others, one can turn not merely to Scripture as the primary source of God's self-communication, but also to works of art, philosophy, sociology, human experience, and other forms of knowledge as the symbols of God's self-communication to humanity.[245]

One can now understand how Rahner's theology of grace as God's self-communication allows him to address the relationship between philosophy and theology and combine sociological insights with Scripture, patristic theology, and church teaching to interpret and communicate his understanding of the church. For Rahner, just as nature is an inner moment of grace, knowledge of philosophy, sociology, history, and other sciences are the fruits of grace or the symbolic realities of God's self-communication through the works of philosophers, sociologists, historians, and other scientists.[246] Accordingly, theology does not build on knowledge of philosophy, history, and sociology as if these disciplines were distinct realities and separate from theology. In doing theology, for Rahner, theologians can use knowledge derived from philosophy, history, and sociology as the means of grace along with knowledge that comes from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teaching to explore, explain, and present a comprehensive and reasonable account of God's self-communication to humanity.

[245] Rahner, "Theology and Anthropology," *Theological Investigations* IX, 28; "Poetry and the Christian," *Theological Investigations* IV, 357-67; "Art against the Horizon of Theology and Piety," *Theological Investigations* XXIII, 162-68.

[246] Rahner, "Philosophy and Theology," *Theological Investigations* VI, 72.

Given Rahner's theology of grace and symbol and his understanding of the relationship between theology and other sciences, I shall address the issue that complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology, as identified above by Ormerod: the relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church. Unlike Haight's approach to ecclesiology that adopts two languages to describe different dimensions of the church, and then combines these languages to form a single understanding of the church, Rahner uses one language in ecclesiology: the language of grace. This language takes into account knowledge of revelation that come from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teachings and knowledge of human reasoning derived from philosophy, history, and sociology to interpret the church as a theological and socio-historical reality. Rahner's approach to the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology through his view of nature and grace does not separate the theological dimension of the church from the church's socio-historical dimension, as Haight's application of two languages does. Because God has revealed God's self through all symbolic realities in the world and created the human subjects in a way that they can receive God, one can employ theological sources along with experience, knowledge of sociology, history, and philosophy considered as the gifts of grace to understand, explain, and communicate one's interpretations of God, the church, and other theological realities to recipients of the Gospel today.

Rahner's expansive view of grace helps account for his distinctive engagement with the conventional sources of theology. Reading Rahner's ecclesiological writings, however, one realizes that he rarely makes direct use of Scripture and patristic theology to interpret the church. Rahner is aware of the importance of these sources in the ecclesiologies of his contemporaries such as Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac. He reminds his readers that "genuine Catholic

theology must always proceed on the basis of both exegesis and the history of dogma and theology."[247] Nevertheless, Rahner believes that God expresses God's self to humanity through the whole of creation and not merely through the privileged means of the Scriptures and patristic theology. Consequently, one can encounter God through all created beings considered as the symbolic realities of God's self-communication, and then use these gifts to describe one's experience of God and communicate these experiences to those who trust in God. In his last public address, which took place at a celebration of his eightieth birthday in 1984, Rahner shared his experiences as a Catholic theologian:

> If as a theologian I inquire not about an abstract concept of God, but wish to approach God directly, then absolutely nothing of what God has revealed as Creator of the world, as Lord of history, should be uninteresting to me. Naturally, it could be piously claimed that everything that is necessary for my salvation is contained in Holy Scripture and that one needs to know nothing beyond this. But if I wish to love God for God's own sake and not only for the sake of my personal salvation, then in order to find God I cannot restrict my interest to Scripture alone. Rather, everything through which God permits God's very self to be perceived in this creaturely world will be of interest to me. This is especially the case for the theologian whose task it is to intellectually oppose every kind of false egoism relating to salvation.[248]

[247] Rahner, "Preface," *Theological Investigations* XV, viii.

[248] Rahner, "Experiences of a Catholic Theologian," *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner,* ed. Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 306-7.

Rahner believes that all created realities, especially the church, are gifts from God or the symbols of God's self-expression and love to humanity.[249] His theology of grace and symbol enables theologians to justify the use of sociological insights in ecclesiology because these insights are the manifestation of grace. To explore his ecclesiology or how he views God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to the church and the world, we are aided by attention to key concepts of his thought: Christ, the Spirit, and sacrament. Combining these concepts with Rahner's theology of grace, symbol, and human persons presented above, one can grasp Rahner's interpretation of Vatican II's teachings on the church. I do not claim that the notions articulated below allow one to comprehend all of Rahner's ecclesiological writings. Nevertheless, I shall argue that they provide a framework for understanding Rahner's interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church as the sacrament of salvation.[250] Having shown Rahner's description of the church, I explain how the sociological idea of the "open system" deployed by Rahner helps him to describe the relationships in the church.

Part II: Rahner's Interpretation of Vatican II's Teaching on the Church

While Kasper and Ratzinger promote the notion of communion to present Vatican II's teaching on the church in their debate, Rahner is committed to the idea of sacrament to explain his theology of the church and communicate it to his readers. The idea of the church as

[249] Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," *Theological Investigations* IV, 240-1.

[250] Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* X, 12.

sacrament had appeared in Rahner's writings before the council.[251] As already indicated in the previous chapter, in the summer of 1963, Rahner, Semmelroth, and Grillmeier proposed the use of sacrament as an organizing idea to interpret the mystery of the church. The sub-commission of the Theological Commission received this idea and integrated it into *Lumen Gentium*. In the post-conciliar writings on the church, Rahner, together with Semelroth and Edward Schillebeeckx, continued to employ the idea of sacrament to describe the church.[252] There is a continuity in his ecclesiology before, during, and after the council.[253] To provide a comprehensive understanding of Rahner's interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church, I shall first turn to his view of the church as sacrament.

Rahner's View of the Church as Sacrament

Like the conciliar bishops who describe the church as sacrament by referring the church to Christ in the first article of *Lumen Gentium*, Rahner interprets the church as sacrament by linking the church to Christ, who "is both reality and sign, *sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*, of

[251] See Rahner, "Membership of the Church according to the Teaching of Pius XII's Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*," *Theological Investigations* II, 1-88; "The Theology of the Symbol," *Theological Investigations* IV, 221-252; *The Church and the Sacraments* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 18. For a study of Rahner's writings on the church before the council, see Richard Lennan, "The Theology of Karl Rahner: An Alternative of the *Ressourcement*," in *Ressorcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 405-22.

[252] See Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* X, 3-29; "What is a Sacrament?" *Theological Investigations* XV, 135-48; Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 81-97; "Theology and Spirituality of Pastoral Work in the Parish," *Theological Investigations* XIX, 87-102; "The Church and Atheism," *Theological Investigations* XXI, 137-50; "Understanding the Priestly Office," *Theological Investigations* XXII, 208-13.

[253] For comprehensive studies of Rahner's ecclesiology, see Richard Lennan, *The Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Leo O' Donovan, John Galvin, and Michael Fahey, "A Changing Ecclesiology in a Changing Church: A Symposium on Development in the Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner," *Theological Studies*, 38 (1977), 736-62.

the redemptive grace of God."[254] As the sacrament of Christ, the church is both a visible sign of Christ's presence in the local communities of the faithful and the manifestation of grace or the gift of God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to all peoples in the world. Accordingly, for Rahner, the church is more than the seven sacraments established by Christ and performed by church ministers to confer grace. One should not consider the church as merely "the dispenser of grace" or "the supplier of heavenly treasures," where believers come to receive grace and salvation through the sacraments.[255] The church is the fundamental sacrament of Christ or "the abiding presence of that primal sacramental word of definitive grace, which Christ is in the world, effecting what is uttered by uttering it in sign."[256]

Rahner's understanding of the church as the visible "sign" of Christ's presence differs from the sense of the term that is found in expressions such as "the image of the heart is the sign of love." While the image of the heart points to the idea and feeling of love in the minds and hearts of those who look at the image, the church as the sacrament of Christ makes Christ truly active in the local communities of believers, who unite with Christ and with one another through his representatives and the sacraments. Consequently, for Rahner, the church is not merely the visible sign of Christ's presence in the local communities of the faithful, but fundamentally the *Realsymbol* of Christ or the effective instrument of grace through which Christ and the Spirit work to bring about salvation for all peoples in the world.[257]

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[254] Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 15.

[255] Ibid., 9.

[256] Ibid., 18.

[257] Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," *Theological Investigations* IV, 240.

Because the church is the sacrament of Christ or his *Realsymbol*, the church for Rahner is a theological reality. In other words, the church is not only a socio-historical reality composed of a group of people, who come together to celebrate the sacraments and participate in a common mission. The church is a product of grace or the symbolic reality of God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to those who believe in Christ, and then to the rest of humanity.[258] Consequently, the church depends entirely on Christ and the Spirit to exist and to carry out the mission in different times and contexts of the world. Rahner states that "God has not left it to the free choice of human beings to decide for themselves in what concrete form and historically verifiable reality they wish to find Christ's salvation and the grace of God."[259] He would agree with Ratzinger and Kasper that God is the One who willed the church before the beginning of time, and brought the church into being through Christ and the Spirit to continue the mission of God in the world.

As the *Realsymbol* of Christ, the church, for Rahner, is also the expression of Christ's living presence in the local communities of believers. In his interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church, Rahner attempts to address both the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church. He reminds his readers that the church "is neither an idea nor a principle … She is a 'visible' church, the 'people of God' in the concrete, a social entity, a formal group, and an institution in the world."[260] Rahner's application of the idea of symbol thus

[258] Rahner, "On the Presence of Christ in the Diaspora Community according to the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council," *Theological Investigations* X, 93.

[259] Rahner, "Membership of the Church according to the Teaching of Pius XII's Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*," *Theological Investigations* II, 34.

[260] Rahner, "On the Structure of the People of the Church Today," *Theological Investigations* XII, 218.

allows him to take into account the idea of the church as sacrament and the idea of the church as people of God to interpret the church as the sacrament of Christ manifested in the new people of God, who come together to worship God and proclaim the Gospel. In the concrete, Rahner emphasizes the presence of Christ in the local communities of the faithful to interpret not only the relationship between the local and the universal church, but also the relationship between various members of the church.[261] He finds particular support for his views on these relationships in the teaching of Vatican II and draws on sociological insights to articulate the relationships in the church.[262]

According to Rahner, the first trait in the new image of the church promoted by Vatican II is the manifestation of the universal church in the local communities and regional churches.[263] On the one hand, Rahner acknowledges the universal dimension of the church when the bishops interpret the church as the sacrament of Christ and the people of God in Chapters One and Two of *Lumen Gentium*. In his words, "The Constitution on the Church viewed as a whole regards the church primarily as the universal church, the church that is worldwide, as the union of all believers in the community governed by pope and bishops."[264] On the other hand, Rahner points to the council's teaching on the local dimension of the church in article 26 of *Lumen Gentium* to describe the existence of the church in the local communities of the faithful. To justify this

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[261] Rahner, "The Presence of the Lord in the Christian Community at Worship," *Theological Investigations* X, 71-83; "On the Presence of Christ in the Diaspora Community according to the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council," *Theological Investigations* X, 84-101.

[262] Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 81-97.

[263] Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* X, 8.

[264] Ibid.

teaching, Rahner returns to the history of the council and mentions the interventions of Elias Zoghby, Melkite patriarchial vicar for Egypt, and Eduard Schick, the auxiliary bishop of Fulda, Germany, who promote an understanding of the church as it exists in different contexts of the world. For Rahner, the majority of the conciliar bishops welcome and receive these interventions because they want to interpret the church not merely as a universal and theological reality but also as a concrete and socio-historical reality in the world.[265] This teaching of the council, Rahner states, "never became the subject of any serious debate or opposition either in the Theological Commission or in the plenary session of the council."[266]

Rahner emphasizes the local dimension of the church because it is in the context of the local churches that Christ works through those who believe in him to carry out his mission.[267] For Rahner, Christ is present in the church through the power of his Spirit, who enables church members to teach, pray, believe, hope, love, and confer the sacraments.[268] In other words, the Spirit of Christ is the source of salvation and the condition for the possibility of all actions in the local churches. Through the Spirit as the "medium" of the encounter between Christ and the church, Christ is active in the midst of the faithful, confers grace to them, and makes them his sacrament of salvation for the world.[269]

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[265] Ibid., 9.

[266] Ibid.

[267] Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* X, 11.

[268] Rahner, "The Presence of the Lord in the Christian Community at Worship," 75.

[269] Ibid., 73-5.

Combining Rahner's interpretation of the church as the sacrament of Christ and the Spirit with his theology of grace, symbol, and human persons presented above, one can understand Rahner's interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church as the sacrament of Christ for the salvation of the world.[270] Rahner describes the church as the sacrament of salvation to bring together two teachings of the council which seem to be irreconcilably opposed. The first states that Christ alone is the source of salvation and those who want to be saved have to become members of the Roman Catholic Church (LG 14). The second teaches that God's self-communication and salvation offered through Christ and the Spirit are possible to be received even outside the Roman Catholic Church. Those who belong to other Christian groups and those have not yet known the Gospel, but tried to lead a good life in accordance with their conscience can obtain salvation given freely by God as the gift of grace (LG 16).

Rahner reconciles these teachings of the council when he relates the relationship between the church and the salvation of the world to the relationship between the sacraments and the experience of grace that takes place in the life of an individual.[271] As we have seen above, for Rahner, grace as God's self-communication in history has been given to all human beings whether or not they open themselves to accept God and receive divine gifts. Although non-Christians do not know Christ and his Gospel in the same way as those who receive Baptism and become a member of the Roman Catholic Church, the God of Christ proclaimed by the church has already been presented in their hearts as the condition for the possibility of their knowledge

[270] Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* X, 12; Idem, "What is a Sacrament?" *Theological Investigations*, XIV, 142-4.

[271] Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," *Theological Investigations* X, 14.

and experience of God.[272] In proclaiming the Gospel and celebrating the sacraments in different contexts of the world, the local churches make Christ present and become his sacrament of salvation not only for those who believe in Christ and unite with him through the sacraments, but also for those who have not yet received the sacraments to become a member of the church. In other words, as the sacrament of Christ the church "appears to the Christian as the fundamental sacrament of a grace which, precisely because it is offered to all, presses forward to express its sacramental significance in history even where the individual sacrament (Baptism) has not yet been conferred."[273]

Despite its obvious support in the teaching of Vatican II, Rahner's interpretation of the church as the sacrament of salvation has met some criticisms. In his assessment of Semmelroth's and Rahner's use of the idea of sacrament to express the church, Jerome Hamer writes that "sacramental language, if employed indiscriminately, runs the risk of reducing ecclesiology to the study of outward elements."[274] In Hamer's view, the church is not merely the visible sign of Christ but also the authentic reality which brings about salvation for those who believe in Christ. Hamer argues for an interpretation of the church as body of Christ or a mystery of communion between Christ and the people of God. In his words, "The church is the mystical body of Christ, that is to say, a communion which is at once inward and external, the life of union with Christ, and established (caused) by the economy of Christ's mediation."[275]

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[272] Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological Investigations* V, 115-34; "Anonymous Christians," *Theological Investigations* VI, 390-8; "Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary Task of the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 161-78.

[273] Ibid., 23.

[274] Jerome Hamer, *The Church is a Communion* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964), 88.

[275] Ibid., 92.

Another critic, Nicholas M. Healy, argues that Rahner's emphasis on the idea of sacrament to describe the church represents a particular form of the "blueprint approach to ecclesiology."[276] According to Healy, theologians such as Rahner, Karl Barth and Jean-Marie Tillard, who promote "blueprint ecclesiologies," select terms such as sacrament, body of Christ, and communion to interpret the church. They consider these terms as the blueprints of the church or what the church ought to be. Having done so, they employ the terms to synthesize the community's knowledge about the church and explore new insights about the church.[277]

Healy points out two issues that challenge the blueprint approach to ecclesiology. First, no single idea is suitable for expressing the identity of the church and appealing to all members of the church. Theologians thus should not choose one idea to interpret the church, and then consider it as the blueprint of the church to reform church structure, design church practices, and plan missionary works.[278] Second, this approach can lead theologians to a reductively abstract and theoretical interpretation of the church. For Healy, promoters of blueprint ecclesiologies fail to acknowledge the concrete reality of local churches manifested through histories of the churches, background belief of church members, their social statuses, and styles of worship.[279] In other words, theologians whom Healy judges to adopt the blueprint approach to ecclesiology are

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[276] Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World, and the Christian life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27-9, 31-2. For an evaluation of Healy's approach to ecclesiology, see Sjoerd Mulder, "Practical Ecclesiology for a Pilgrim Church: The Theological Motives behind Healy's Ethnographic Turn," *Ecclesiology* 14 (2018), 164-84.

[277] Healy, *Church, World, and the Christian life*, 27-9, 31-2.

[278] Ibid., 11, 30-2.

[279] Ibid., 38-9.

in danger of ignoring the complexities of ecclesial life in its pilgrim state. While there is an ontological relation between the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church, the church as the people of God always exists in a particular time and place in history. They face specific issues shaped by social, political, and cultural contexts where they are living and working.

Although Hamer's and Healy's criticism of Rahner call attention to important issues in his ecclesiology, they do not really do justice to Rahner's interpretation of the church. While Hamer believes that Rahner ignores the authentic reality of the church in favor of outward elements, as I explained above, for Rahner, the church is more than the visible sign of Christ's presence in the local communities of the faithful.[280] The church is fundamentally the *Realsymbol* of Christ, his authentic symbol or a theological and socio-historical reality through which Christ and the Spirit work to confer grace and salvation to church members and to all those who believe in God.

Moreover, Rahner does not consider the idea of sacrament as a "blueprint" to interpret the church in a sense described above by Healy. Rahner uses the idea of sacrament to view the church as the mystery or the sacrament of Christ, who is in turn the mystery or the sacrament of God, the Father. He would agree with Healy that one term or one image cannot capture the whole of the church. As presented above, Rahner employs different concepts such as the sacrament of salvation, the *Realsymbol* of Christ, and the people of God to explain Vatican II's

[280] For a response to Hamer's critique of Rahner's ecclesiology, see Richard Lennan, '"Narcissistic Aestheticism'?: An Assessment of Karl Rahner's Sacramental Ecclesiology," *Philosophy and Theology* 25 (2013): 249-70.

teaching on the church. For Rahner, the church is the sacrament of Christ manifested concretely in small and poor communities scattered throughout the world. These communities possess no blueprint on their journey to the reign of God; they must count on the guidance of the Spirit revealed divine will through all of its members to discern what to do and how to act in different moments and contexts of the world.[281]

Rahner's interpretation of the church as the sacrament of salvation, especially his understanding of the relationship between grace and the church, makes two significant contributions to the interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church.[282] First, Rahner broadens one's understanding of church structure beyond a narrow view of structure composed of merely institutional factors established by the historical Jesus. Second, he shows how sociological concepts considered as the gifts of grace provide theologians with insights to interpret the presence of the Spirit in the church, and so clarify the mission of the church and relationships within the church. It is here that one can explore Rahner's integration of sociological ideas into conciliar ecclesiology to describe the church as an open system.

[281] Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 81-97.

[282] For other studies of Rahner's contributions to conciliar ecclesiology, see Richard Lennan, "Eclesiology and Ecumenism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*, 128-43; "Karl Rahner," in *The Oxford Hanbook of Ecclesiology*, https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.proxy.bc.edu/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199645831.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199645831-e-8?print=pdf

The Church as an Open System

According to Rahner, the church as the sacrament of salvation is more than a combination of institutional factors such as Scripture, the sacraments, and the hierarchical structure of government composed of church officials. These factors are necessary for the life of the church because they are objective means of holiness established by Christ and members of the early church under the direction of the Spirit to guide church members, sanctify the faithful, and unite them under the leadership of popes and bishops to carry out the mission of God.[283] The institutional factors, however, cannot capture the whole of the church. For Rahner, the church includes also charismatic factors or various gifts given by the Spirit, who always exists in the church and works not merely through the institutional factors but also through all of its members to make the church the means of salvation.[284]

Rahner's interpretation of the Spirit as the One who bestows on church members diverse gifts can find support in the teaching of Vatican II.[285] In the words of *Lumen Gentium*, article 4

> The Spirit dwells in the church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple (see 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19), prays and bears witness in them that they are his adopted children (see Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15-16 and 26). He guides the church in the way of all truth (see Jn. 16:13) and, uniting it in fellowship and ministry, bestows upon it

[283] Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 81-2.

[284] Ibid., 81-4.

[285] For a study of Vatican II's teaching on the Spirit, see Richard Gaillardetz and Catherine Clifford, *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 57-65.

different hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs it and adorns it with his fruits (see Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:4; gal. 5:22).

To explain how the Spirit is active in all members of the church and how they should work together under the guidance of the Spirit, Rahner adopts an idea from sociology, namely, the "open system." The idea of open system helps Rahner to interpret both the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church as a group of people who unite with Christ and with one another through the Spirit to carry out the mission in the world.

According to the sociologists Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, scientists use the idea of an open system to characterize various structures such as living cells, human bodies, and social organizations.[286] These structures obtain some forms of energy and materials from the external environment, and then convert the energy and materials that they receive into products. Having done so, they export these products into the environment in exchange for other sources of energy and materials necessary for their continuing function. For example, the human body receives oxygen from the air, sugar, and starch from different types of foods. It then turns these elements into heat, action, and thoughts to keep the body alive. Likewise, a social organization draws supplies of energy, cash, and materials from other institutions and investors. Using these supplies, the organization creates new products, trains peoples, or provides services. The cycle of input, transformation of energy and materials, and output is essential to the life of any open

[286] Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1978), 23-30.

system if it wants to survive and develop in its environment. If an existing structure or a living system closes itself from the environment, then it ceases to exist.[287]

Most sociologists who employ the idea of open systems to study social structures view the social world through the assumptions of the functionalist approach to sociology.[288] They presume that different elements of open systems work together to form an organized whole. This cooperation makes open systems capable of behaving in ways that are greater than merely the sum of the behaviors of their parts. For example, managers of a software design company would divide the work of their company into sub-tasks such as design, development, sales, and services, and then assign these tasks to different groups of workers. To ensure that the company grows and flourishes in its environment, these workers have to collaborate with their managers to produce computer programs, and then communicate with customers to sell these products. The money or the input that the company receives from the environment or its customers will be used to purchase new materials and pay for the services of the community's members. If the company closes itself to the environment or no longer develops programs that serve the need of its clients, then it cannot continue to function.

Rahner adapts and transforms the idea of open system to interpret the conciliar teaching on the presence of the Spirit in the church and the relationship between its members. He describes the church as an open system and identifies the Spirit as "the charismatic factor," who

[287] Ibid.

[288] For studies of the use of open systems to explore social structures, see James D. Thompson, *Organizations in Action* (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1967); Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch, *Organization and Environment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); and W. Richard Scott and Gerald F. Davis, *Organizations and Organizing* (New Jersey: Prencice Hall, 2007).

presides over the church and guides all of its members to carry out the mission of Christ.[289] In the concrete, for Rahner, the church like open systems must open itself to the counsel of the Spirit to become the sacrament of salvation. One should not view the church as a closed system which separates itself from the Spirit, who cannot be controlled by anyone and who works through both institutional factors and all members of the church. In the words of Rahner,

> The church is not a closed, but rather an open system, i.e. a system such that the definitive condition in which it actually stands and should stand neither can nor should be defined in any adequate sense in terms of any one point immanent without the system itself. On the contrary, its definitive state can only be defined in terms of a point outside the system, i.e. in terms of the dominion of God, so that to do justice to the state in which the system exists at any given stage we must say that its operations are charismatic rather than institutional in character.[290]

To understand Rahner's interpretation of the church as an open system guided by the Spirit, one has to contrast the idea of the church as an open system with the idea of the church as a closed system. According to Rahner, in the course of church history which lasted from Pius IX (1846-1878) to Pius XII (1939-1958), the church considered its constitutional structures and laws as unchanging, given to it from the beginning of Christianity by Jesus himself.[291] In particular,

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[289] Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 97.

[290] Ibid., 89.

[291] Ibid. and Rahner, "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," *Theological Investigations* XX, 115-32. For a study of the church during this period, see John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 53-92.

the church "insisted that its papal and episcopal constitutional structure was of divine law, coming from 'above,' from Jesus Christ, and had not been set up 'democratically' from below."[292] This understanding of divine will for the formation of church structure, in Rahner's view, is a reason that contributed to the interpretation of the church as a closed system.[293]

In addition, Rahner points out other two reasons to explain why the church closed itself to the world and refused to accept changes during the "Pian epoch."[294] First, facing a modern world which had become increasingly secularized since the Enlightenment, the church felt threatened by militant anticlericalism and developments of new ideas as a result of the intellectual life of secular society. Second, influenced by a Neo-Scholastic theology which "was and remains oriented *a priori* more or less unhistorically to the eternal essences of things," the church considered itself as a "perfect society" in the sense that it lacks nothing required for its existence and was subordinate to no other societies.[295] In other words, the church was interpreted primarily as an unified institution, organized and directed by the official hierarchy.[296] As the supreme pastor of the church, the popes throughout this period viewed themselves as the ones who held absolute power. They could not be judged by any member of the church and could act alone with their sacramental power to govern and determine everything that happens in the church. In

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[292] Rahner, "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," *Theological Investigations* XX, 116.

[293] Ibid.

[294] Ibid., 117-8.

[295] Rahner, "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," *Theological Investigations* XX, 117.

[296] For a study of the church as perfect society, see Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 31-42.

Rahner's words, "The church is conceived of as an absolute monarchy or totalitarian system in which in principle the only measures having any force in the dimension of the social are those decreed, ordained, or at least approved in a positive manner by him [the Pope] who stands at the supereme point within the system."[297]

Vatican II redresses this inadequate understanding of the ministry of the Pope when the council's fathers locate the teaching on papal primacy within the context of the teaching on the episcopal college in *Lumen Gentium*. As explained in the previous chapter, for the conciliar bishops, the Pope and the bishops form one episcopal college which holds the supreme power in the church (LG 22, 23). As pastor of the entire church, the Pope is the successor of Peter, the bishop of Rome, and the head of the college. In communion with all bishops who are members of the college, the Pope governs the church in the name of Christ. The Pope and the bishops both receive the fullness of the sacrament of Orders conferred on them through episcopal consecration to teach, sanctify, and govern the faithful. Accordingly, the Pope and the college of bishops cannot be considered as the two distinct subjects vested with full and supreme power in the church. They have to work together to serve the people of God and the church's mission.

Rahner employs the idea of open system to interpret not only the relationship between the church and the Spirit but also the relationship between church officials and other members of the church entrusted to the care of the Pope and the bishops. He argues that as an open system guided by the Spirit, the church must open itself to learn from the Spirit, who acts through all

[297] Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 89.

members of the church and not merely through the Pope and the bishops.[298] In other words, one cannot consider the church as a closed system or a perfect society in the sense that the Pope decides everything and listens to no one who wishes to offer advice to him. For Rahner, "the Pope is not merely the pilot who guides the history of the church, but he who is himself guided as well in a history by the true pilot [the Spirit] of which does not belong to this history."[299]

According to Rahner, the bearer of the highest and supreme power in the church is not the Pope alone but the episcopal college united with the Pope as its head.[300] The hierarchical structure of the church, however, constitutes only one institutional factor in the church considered as an open system.[301] The Pope and the bishops as chuch officials receive from God through the sacrament of Orders their hierarchical gifts to serve the people of God, to unite them, and to ensure that the work of evangelization is fully supported. They must respect the charismatic gifts bestowed by the same Spirit upon other members of the church, examine whether these gifts are genuine, and cultivate these gifts to carry out the mission of Christ and the Spirit.[302] As the people of God in history, the church must remain open to the Spirit, who manifests divine will through all of its members because it is "only in this way can she be true to

[298] Ibid., 88-91.

[299] Ibid., 93.

[300] Rahner, "On the Relationship between the Pope and the College of Bishops," *Theological Investigations* X, 55. For other studies of Rahner on the relationship between pope and bishops, see *The Episcopate and the Primacy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), 11-36; "On the Theology of the Council," *Theological Investigations* V, 244-67; "The Episcopal Office," *Theological Investigations* VI, 313-60.

[301] Rahner, "Observations of the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 90-1.

[302] Ibid., 87-8.

her own nature as the exodus, the people on pilgrimage towards the inconceivable mystery of God."[303]

Rahner's use of the idea of open system to describe the conciliar teaching on the church complements the idea of the church as the sacrament of salvation or the gift of God's self-communication to the socio-historical community of those who believe in Christ. Conceiving the church an open system, Rahner can explain the relationship between the Spirit and the people of God, who must learn from the Spirit to carry out the mission of Christ. Furthermore, this understanding of the church as an open system enables Rahner to interpret the relationship between church officials and other members of the church. Rahner writes, "The official functionaries must recognize, and in practice act upon, the truth that the impulses of the Spirit on the church's behalf do not always or necessarity have to manifest themselves in and through the official institutions … The officials must have the courage to allow fresh and hitherto unknown forms of the charismatic factor in the church to appear."[304] In other words, for Rahner, all members of the church receive gifts from the Spirit to undertake various ministries in the church. The task of church officials, who receive hierarchical gifts, is to examine and cultivate charismatic gifts bestowed by the Spirit upon other members of the church, while those who receive charismatic gifts collaborate with church officials and use their gifts to contribute to the mission of the church in different contexts of the world.[305]

[303] Ibid., 93.

[304] Ibid., 88.

[305] Ibid., 87-8.

Rahner's understanding of the Spirit as the charismatic factor in the church has implications for the interpretation of Vatican II, especially the council's teaching on episcopal conferences that I shall present in the next chapter. As we shall see, the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II interpret an episcopal conference as a permanent institution or a grouping of bishops of a given country established by the permission of the Apostolic See.[306] This view of episcopal conferences gives an inadequate understanding of episcopal conferences as something other than a work of grace, as simply a social structure, because one cannot find direct justification for the existence of these conferences in the words of Jesus. By highlighting the connection between the church and the Spirit as the charismatic factor in the church, Rahner broadens one's view of church structure and enables theologians to justify the working of Christ and the Spirit not merely through institutional structures such as the episcopal college and the papal ministry, which claim a link to divine revelation, to being products of God's will for the church, but also through church organizations such as synods of bishops and episcopal conferences initiated by church members in history under the guidance of the Spirit.

Having examined Rahner's theology of grace to justify the integration of sociology into ecclesiology, his view of the church as the sacrament of salvation, and his application of the idea of open system to describe the relationships in the church, I shall now offer an evaluation of Rahner's interpretation of Vatican II's teaching on the church.

An Evaluation of Rahner's Ecclesiology

[306] The Congregation for the Bishops, "Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences," *Origins* 17 (April 7, 1988), 731-7; John Paul II, *Apostolos Suos*, at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_22071998_apostolos-suos.html

Distinctive in Rahner's ecclesiology is his emphasis on the relationship between the church and grace as the self-communication of God, who is always at work in all aspects of human experience and knowledge. The experience of human subjects or their encounter with God which takes place in all kinds of experience enables Rahner to use experience as a source to interpret and communicate the idea of the church. For example, to explain why Catholics should accept church teaching and believe in the presence of Christ in the church as it exists in the concrete, Rahner puts himself in the minds of Catholics to grasp problems that challenge their assent to the church.[307] He agrees with his readers that church teaching demands obligations from them, and they cannot choose some teachings while ignoring others if they are to remain faithful to Christ and listen to his voice speaking through his representatives.[308] On the other hand, Rahner compares the faithful's relationship with the church to a loving relationship with their parents, with whom they are familiar enough to love and trust without comprehending all there is about the parents. Adopting the experience of love and trust as the foundation for his argument, Rahner invites church members to consent to church teaching and place reliance on the presence of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit in the church's teaching authority. For Rahner, it is only the spirit of love and trust that frees one from personal opinions and enables one to believe in the church. By doing so, one comes to understand the church as the sacrament of salvation and the will of God manifested through the church's statements of faith.[309]

[307] Rahner, "Concerning Our Assent to the Church as She Exists in the Concrete," *Theological Investigations* XII, 142-60.

[308] Ibid. 143-4.

[309] Ibid. 153-4.

Using human experience and knowledge as the sources of God's self-communication, Rahner interprets and communicates Vatican II's teaching on the church to the people in his time. In various writings after the council, Rahner attempts to present the idea of the church to believers through terms and concepts that they can receive, understand, and accept.[310] For example, in the article "On the Structure of the People in the Church Today," Rahner describes the church not merely as the means of salvation, but also as a social entity, a formal group, a visible community of those who genuinely believe, hope, and love.[311] As I mentioned above, he rarely makes direct use of Scripture and patristic theology to express the church, but appeals to experience and knowledge of his readers to articulate the message of faith. In other words, Rahner prioritizes *aggiornamento* and the pastoral character of doctrine to explain and communicate the teaching of Vatican II to recipients of the council. He states that the church as a socio-historical reality in this world "needs an *aggiornamento*, an adaptation, to the world in which it must live and grow; it must become involved in new, unforeseen situations, not brought about by itself but by which it is itself necessarily changed."[312]

To engage with the world and reform the church, Rahner takes into account the relationship between the church and grace. As already indicated, grace is at the center of Rahner's thinking through which he sheds light on the relationships between philosophy and theology, between sociology and ecclesiology, and between the theological and the socio-

[310] Rahner, "On the Presence of Christ in the Diaspora Community according to the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council," *Theological Investigations* X, 84-101; "On the Structure of the People in the Church Today," *Theological Investigations* XII, 218-28; "The Function of the Church as a Critic of the Society," *Theological Investigations* XII, 229-49, "Courage for an Ecclesial Christianity," *Theological Investigations* XX, 3-12.

[311] Rahner, "On the Structure of the People in the Church Today," *Theological Investigations* XII, 218-20.

[312] Rahner, "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," *Theological Investigations* XX, 118.

historical dimensions of the church. Rahner's theology of grace enables him to justify the use of sociological insights in ecclesiology and to unify the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church. Accordingly, one can interpret the church by combining knowledge from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teachings with knowledge derived from history, philosophy, sociology, and other sciences. All of these sources of knowledge are the symbolic realities of God's love and expression to humanity in history through human reasoning and divine revelation.

As we have seen above, Rahner integrates the idea of open system into conciliar ecclesiology to explain the presence of the Spirit in the church and show how church members should work together if they are to carry out the mission of Christ. He later develops this idea in *The Shape of the Church to Come* to describe an open church which enters into dialogue with people of other faiths.[313] In addition to the notion of open system, Rahner uses the sociological concept of "structure" to argue that structural change in the church is theologically possible.[314] Apart from these concepts, however, one does not frequently find Rahner integrating sociological insights into other ecclesiological writings, even though his theology of grace and symbol allows him to combine knowledge of sociology with concepts from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teaching to study the church. One reason to account for this limitation in Rahner's thought is an inevitable pluralism of philosophies, theologies, and sciences that every

[313] Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 71-5, 93-101. For an exploration of Rahner's idea of the open church, see Lennan, *The Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner*, 212-57.

[314] Rahner, "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," *Theological Investigations* XX, 115-32. For a study of Rahner's understanding of the structural change in the church, see James Kevin Voiss, "A Comparison and Analysis of Karl Rahner and Hans urs von Balthasar on Structural Change in the Church" (PhD Dissertation., University of Notre Dame, 1999).

thinker must face in the academic world.[315] In his reflection on the experiences of a Catholic theologian, Rahner refers to the lack of congruence between theology and the other sciences and acknowledges that he knows little about modern science.

> As a theologian, every time I open a book on modern science, I become quite panic-stricken. Most of what is written in these books is quite foreign to me. Moreover, I am more likely not capable of understanding their content. Hence, as a theologian, I feel somewhat compromised faced with this reality. Then the pale abstraction and hollowness of my own theological concepts hits me with a shock.[316]

Rahner recognizes that because of the pluralism of knowledge, no one, including himself, can master all questions, methods, and knowledge of every science.[317] Experts in one field can understand various issues in their field and present solutions to those who are not familiar with the issues. Nevertheless, these experts can hardly comprehend other fields of knowledge, questions, and problems that other researchers concern.[318] Alert to this pluralism, Rahner states

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[315] Rahner writes a number of articles on pluralism, see "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological Investigations* V, 115-34; "A Small Question regarding the Contemporary Pluralism in the Intellectual Situation of Catholics and the Church," *Theological Investigations* VI, 21-30; "On the Situation of the Catholic Intellectual," *Theological Investigations* VIII, 94-111; "Philosophy and Philosophising in Theology," *Theological Investigations* IX, 46-63; "Theology as Engaged in an Interdisciplinary Dialogue with the Sciences," *Theological Investigations* XIII, 80-93; and "On the Relationship between Theology and the Contemporary Sciences," *Theological Investigations* XIII, 94-102.

[316] Rahner, "Experiences of a Catholic Theologian," *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*, 307.

[317] Rahner, "A Small Question regarding the Contemporary Pluralism in the Intellectual Situation of Catholics and the Church," *Theological Investigations* VI, 22.

[318] Ibid., 24-5.

that theologians should not consider philosophy as the only partner in dialogue. They should take into account natural and social sciences to interpret and communicate their understandings of God, the church, and other theological realities.[319]

Rahner's theology of grace and his idea of the church as the sacrament of salvation enable theologians to integrate sociological insights into conciliar ecclesiology to study the church. The pluralism of knowledge and different approaches to sociology presented in first half of this chapter, however, challenge Rahner and theologians to explore various manners through which God manifests God's self in the church and the world. In other words, the use of diverse sources proposed by Rahner to interpret the conciliar teaching on the church offers both opportunities and challenges to theologians, who take his approach to the relationship between theology and other sciences to engage the task of ecclesiology. Facing the radical and inevitable pluralism of knowledge in the world of today, on the one hand, one realizes that one must open oneself to learn from others and enter into dialogue with scientists to express and communicate the truths of faith about the church to present-day recipients of the council. On the other hand, one feels humble before a transcendental God, who is always greater and reveals Himself to the world as the gift, the giver, and the source of all things.

[319] Rahner, "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," *Theological Investigations* XI, 74.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to explain issues that face the integration of sociology into conciliar ecclesiology and show theologians how to employ sociological insights to interpret the conciliar teaching on the church. Because most theologians are not sociologists, the first issue that they have to engage if they are to use sociology in theological reflection is to explore diverse concepts, theories, and approaches adopted by social scientists to study the social world. Having done so, theologians can combine insights from sociology with theological knowledge derived from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teaching to examine the presence of Christ and the Spirit in church structures such as the episcopal college, episcopal conferences, and diocesan pastoral councils.

Rahner's theology of grace and his view of the church as the sacrament of salvation enable theologians to address the second issue that complicates the integration of sociology into conciliar ecclesiology, namely, the relationship between the theological and the socio-historical dimensions of the church. The key to grasping Rahner's interpretation of the church and his integration of sociological insights into ecclesiology is his idea of grace as the self-communication of God to humanity through all kinds of human experience. Because God loves the world and creates human beings in a unique way that allows them to receive, experience,

understand, and respond to God, one can employ everything given by God through divine revelation and human reason, including sociological insights, to describe and communicate Vatican II's teaching to present-day recipients of the council. Building on Rahner's understanding of the church and his theology of grace, I turn now to the council's teaching on episcopal conferences to explain why the sociology of organizations is a vital source to interpret and implement the idea of episcopal conferences.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS AS A SOURCE TO RECEIVE VATICAN II'S TEACHING ON EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES

Introduction

In Chapter Three, we have seen that Rahner's theology of grace and the church enables him to integrate sociological insights into ecclesiology, and so to interpret the church as an open system. Rahner's thought is most helpful in laying out the foundation for a fruitful exchange between ecclesiology and sociology; however, he does not engage in that exchange in a substantive way. While Rahner draws on sociological concepts such as open systems and structural change to describe the church and explain why the church should be open to change and to adapt to the world,[320] he neither provides an account of approaches to sociology nor clarifies the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology, the tasks I identified in the previous chapter.

In this chapter, I address this limitation of Rahner's thought by offering an account of the sociology of organizations and adopting his theology of grace to study Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences. As already indicated in Chapter Two, because the church is present in different contexts of the world, the council promotes the idea of episcopal conferences to provide coordination and mutual support for the bishops' service of the church's mission. The question

[320] Karl Rahner, "Observations on the Factor of the Charismatic in the Church," *Theological Investigations* XII, 81-97; "Structural Change in the Church of the Future," *Theological Investigations* XX, 115-32.

for the church after the council is how to explain, implement the teaching on the conferences, and communicate the teaching to present-day recipients of the council.

Within the purview of the chapter, I examine the reception of the council's teaching on episcopal conferences and extend the argument made in the earlier chapters: theological sources alone are not sufficient to interpret and implement Vatican II. My concern in the present chapter is to offer an account of the sociology of organizations and to show how sociological concepts can contribute to the reception of episcopal conferences. As we shall see, Scripture, church teaching, and canon law provide the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II with concepts to deepen and explain the meaning and function of episcopal conferences. These sources, however, do not in themselves show the Vatican and diocesan bishops how to put the teaching into effect. Because episcopal conferences are organizations or groupings of diocesan bishops who unite with one another to carry out their ministries, one has to use both sociological insights and theological concepts to describe the conferences and design their structures, which enable the bishops to serve the church's mission in different contexts of the world.

To develop the argument, the first part of the chapter offers an account of three approaches to the sociology of organizations to provide theories and concepts for the study of organizations. The second part of the chapter adopts Rahner's theology of grace and combines concepts from sociology with ideas from Scripture, canon law, and church teaching to examine the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences. Having done so, I apply the hermeneutical principles proposed in Chapter One to evaluate the Vatican's reception. The final part of the chapter shows how Asian bishops integrate sociological insights into their reception of episcopal

conferences. This part takes into account the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences as a case study to describe the Asian bishops' use of the sociology of organizations in their interpretation and implementation of the conferences. I shall argue that the bishops interpret and design the Federation as a voluntary association, which allows them to foster a communion with one another, to study ways and means of promoting the apostolate for the church in Asia. The functional structure of this association, however, does not support the collaboration among the offices of the FABC. The Asian bishops thus can emphasize the role of the central secretariat to render better service to the member conferences and to the mission of the church in Asia.

Part I. Approaches to the Sociology of Organizations

The sociology of organizations begins with the studies of Max Weber (1864 - 1920), Frederick Taylor (1856 - 1915) and Henri Fayol (1841 - 1925).[321] These studies appeared when the factory system began to emerge and commerce became an important force of the society. Reflecting these developments, many theorists consider order and rationality as ways of controlling and managing an ever-changing world. Within the context of this modern world, Weber, Taylor, and Fayol laid the foundation for the sociology of organizations and applied theories and concepts such as bureaucracy and the division of labor to study organizations.[322] Building on the works of these founders, sociologists develop other theories and concepts such as informal structure and open systems to view organizations. According to W. Richard Scott

[321] For introductions to the sociology of organizations, see Michael J. Handel, *The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 5-16; Richard A. Colignon, "The Sociology of Organizations," in *21st Century Sociology*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Peck (London, UK: Sage Publications, 2007) http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412939645.n17; and Stewart R. Clegg, "The Sociology of Organizations," *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (Malden, MA: John Wiley, 2012), 164-81.

[322] For a study of fundamental concepts in sociology, see Peter Braham, *Key Concepts in Sociology* (London: Sage Publications, 2013).

and Gerald Davis, sociologists adopt three theories or approaches that interpret organizations as rational, human, and open systems.[323] As I shall argue, these approaches can illuminate our understanding of church organizations, such as episcopal conferences.

Organizations as Rational Systems

The rational systems approach to organizations began in the first half of the 20th century, notably in scientific management and management theory based on the works of Taylor, Fayol, and Weber's idea of bureaucracy.[324] The term "rational" refers to the most efficient way in which works of organizations should be organized to obtain goals set by the managers of the organizations. Viewing organizations through the rational systems approach, Scott and Davis describe them as "collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized social structure."[325] Three concepts underlining this theory of organizations should be clarified: collectivity, goal, and hierarchical structure.

Organizations are collectivities of individuals, who consciously coordinate their works to attain goals decided in advance by managers of organizations. These goals are the outcomes that members of organizations try to achieve when they combine their effort and resources such as

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[323] W. Richard Scott and Gerald Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2007), 27-33.

[324] For studies of the rational systems approach to organizations, see Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural, and Open System Perspectives*, 35-58; James March and Herbert Simon, *Organizations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 31-52; and John McAuley, Joanne Duberley, and Phil Johnson, *Organization Theory: Challenges and Perspectives* (Harlow, England: Prentice Hall, 2007), 54-99.

[325] Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives*, 29.

energy, materials, and knowledge.[326] Because the reason for the existence of organizations as interpreted by the rational systems approach is to obtain goals, Weber, Fayol, and Taylor propose rational rules and scientific principles that for them effectively guide the actions of managers and employees. In the viewpoint of these theorists, managers must know the goals of their organizations and how they should cooperate with other members to accomplish these goals. The goals specify which personnel to hire, which resources to be allocated among members, and which concrete tasks that various members should perform.

Having established goals to pursue, managers of an organization design a hierarchical structure that enables the organization to achieve its goals. To understand the structure of an organization, outsiders can look at its organizational chart. This chart explains not only how diverse functions performed by offices or departments within an organization are linked together, but also the authority relations and patterns of communication among the members of the organization.[327] The concept of hierarchical structure is built on two concepts that form the backbone of the rational systems approach to organizations: bureaucracy and the division of labor.

The concept of bureaucracy refers to the structure of an organization and builds on the premise that "organizations can operate *effectively* and *efficiently* through a clear sense of

[326] For a study of organizational goals, see Charles B. Perrow, *Organizational Analysis: A Sociological View* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 133-74.

[327] For studies of organizational structure, see Richard Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2008), 33-50, Richard Hall, *Organizations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972), 48-198.

hierarchy and authority in organizations."[328] According to Weber, the structure of a bureaucratic organization has the following characteristics: (1) clearly defined works among offices of the organization, (2) clear vertical chain of command or a hierarchy of offices, (3) formal written rules, policies, and regulations that govern the performance of the organization's members.[329] Weber believes that bureaucracy is the most efficient form to organize the work of an organization. A bureaucratic organization is rationally designed so that every office and department of the organization must be filled by those who are well-trained in the work that they perform.[330] In other words, for Weber, only those who demonstrate an adequate technical training are selected and appointed to official positions of a bureaucratic organization. Furthermore, "The organization of offices follow the principle of hierarchy, that is, each lower office is under the control and supervision of a higher one."[331] This hierarchical structure ensures that possible conflicts between different members and offices of organizations can be settled in accordance with administrative rules. These rules are formulated and recorded in written policies, which apply to the offices or departments to which members of organizations belong.

The concept of the division of labor or departmentation comes from Adam Smith (1723 - 1790), who famously argues for the advantage of highly divided labor in the modern society.[332] Smith observes that while an untrained worker in a pin factory scarcely makes one pin in a day,

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[328] McAuley, Duberley, and Johnson, *Organization Theory: Challenges and Perspectives*, 66 (emphasis original).

[329] Max Weber, "The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization: An Ideal-Type Construction," *Reader in Bureaucracy*, ed. Robert Merton and Ailsa Gray (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1952), 19-20.

[330] Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," *Classics of Organization Theory*, ed. Jay M. Shafritz, J. Steven Ott, and Yong Suk Jang (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2014), 80-3.

[331] Weber, "The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization: An Ideal-Type Construction," 19.

[332] Adam Smith, "Of the Division of Labor," *Classics of Organization Theory*, 42-6.

vastly greater numbers can be obtained if the work of producing a pin is divided into a number of activities. According to Smith, the manager of this factory can divide the process of making a pin into eighteen distinct activities.[333] Each worker performs one of these activities, and then passes his or her products to other workers. By working together in the single process of making the pins, these workers will dramatically increase the daily output of the factory.

Combining the idea of the division of labor with his "principles of scientific management," Taylor argues that these principles would help managers to increase productivity within an organization.[334] For Taylor, the first principle of management relates to the work of managers, who deliberately gather all traditional knowledge, which has been possessed by workers in the past.[335] Having done so, the managers classify, formulate, and reduce this body of knowledge to scientific laws and rational rules. Taylor names the second principle "the selection of the workers."[336] The managers choose the workers, who have capacity to carry out the work, and teach rational rules to them. The trained workers then cooperate with the managers to ensure that the works of their organization are performed in accordance with those rules set by the managers. Taylor believes that the cooperation between the managers and the workers would significantly improve the productivity of organizations.[337]

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[333] Ibid., 42.

[334] Frederick Taylor, "The Principles of Scientific Management," in *The Sociology of Organizations,* ed. Michael Handel (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 24-31.

[335] Ibid., 27.

[336] Ibid.

[337] There are two challenges that face managers who adopt Taylor's principles of scientific management. First, they have to learn a great mass of knowledge which belong to workers, and then partition the work of their organization into the smaller tasks of the sub-units or departments. Second, they have to explain how these sub-unit tasks can be coordinated to achieve the goals of the organization.

While Taylor focuses on the partition and cooperation of works in organizations, Fayol explores "the general principles of management" that lead to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Planning, command, cooperation, and control are the focus of his interest.[338] Fayol proposes the following principles to guide managers in their task of coordinating the work of the organizations: the division of labor, authority and responsibility, the unity of command, centralization, order, equity, initiative, and the scalar chain or principle.[339]

In addition to the concepts of the division of labor and bureaucracy presented above, Fayol's ideas of the unity of command, centralization, and the "scalar chain" are the keys to understanding the rational systems approach to organizations. Fayol defines the unity of command as follows: "For any action whatsoever, an employee should receive orders from one superior only."[340] In his view, as soon as a worker receives two orders from two managers, conflicts arise in organizations. The unity of command closely relates to the principle of centralization. Fayol states that the degree of centralization must vary in accordance with the complexity of the structure of the organization.[341] For example, in a small firm where only a manager and a group of workers cooperate to perform their works, there should be an absolute centralization and no decentralization. The orders of the manager should go directly to his/her subordinates, who should be responsible for carrying out these orders. In the case of a complex organization, managers must delegate their power to their subordinates to ensure that the

[338] Henri Fayol, "General Principles of Management," in *Classics of Organization Theory*, 48-60.

[339] Ibid.

[340] Ibid., 50.

[341] Ibid., 55.

organization works efficiently. The greater participation by a greater number of people in various decisions of an organization, the less the centralization of that organization will be.

Having explained the principles of the unity of command and centralization, Fayol defines the scalar principle as "the chain of superiors ranging from the ultimate authority to the lowest ranks."[342] To understand this principle, one can break it up into parts and link it to other principles. First, the scalar principle relates to the process "through which this [ultimate] coordinating authority operates from the top through the entire structure of the organized body … In organizations, it means the graduation of duties … according to the degrees of authority and corresponding responsibility."[343] In other words, for Fayol, there is always a chain of command in organizations or the hierarchical structure of power that moves from superiors to their subordinates. This principle assumes that managers always have the power and knowledge to coordinate the various works of their subordinates. All conflicts between subordinates are referred to their managers for solutions. Second, the scalar principle suggests that each role in the hierarchical structure of organizations should be clearly defined. Such a definition of roles is important for the work of organizations because the definition helps to formulate a clear line of authority and control that runs from the top of the pyramid to the bottom. This line of authority and control relates to the concept of delegation or the conferring of a certain authority by a higher authority to its subordinates. The one to whom the authority is delegated becomes responsible to his or her superiors for carrying out the assigned work. However, the superiors remain responsible for guiding and helping subordinates to accomplish the work.

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[342] Ibid., 56.

[343] James D. Mooney and Alan C. Reiley, *Onward Industry! The Principles of Organization and their Significance to Modern Industry* (Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Press, 2001), 31.

In summary, the rational systems approach to organizations attempts to find the most effective way to achieve the purpose of an organization by designing the organization's hierarchical structure in accordance with Weber's idea of bureaucracy, as well as Taylor's and Fayol's principles of management. This approach emphasizes the bureaucratic structure of authority, using this structure as an efficient means to guide the works of the members of organizations. In other words, rationality resides not in the individual members of the organizations, but in the hiearchical structure, scientific principles and rational rules established by managers of the organizations. The structure of these organizations and their rules ensure that participating members behave in a most efficient way to achieve the organizational goals. James Thompson provides a fine summary of the rational systems approach to organizations when he draws attention to the significance of the hierarchical structure and states that: "structure is a fundamental vehicle by which organizations achieve bounded rationality."[344]

Although the rational systems approach to organizations has contributed significantly to the sociology of organizations, it has two limitations. First, because managers want to build up a hierarchical structure of communication and control over the works performed by their subordinates, one recognizes that this approach focuses on the issue of power and control. In concrete, the managers who promote the rational systems approach divide the work of the organizations into various functions and assign these functions to different departments. Having done so, they coordinate the works of the sub-units, directing human activities within these units to obtain organizational goals. This attempt to control, Harry Braverman points out, can

[344] James Thompson, *Organizations in Action* (New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 1967), 54.

dehumanize the labor process and the dignity of the workers, turning the employees into means or instruments to be managed by rational rules established by the managers.[345]

People in organizations, however, are more than mere instruments to be governed by rational rules. They have freedom and emotions and partake in the work of organizations for a variety of reasons – economic reward, individual satisfaction, and membership of a social group. As a result, managers cannot organize and control the behaviors of the persons in the same way that natural scientists can control and predict the movements of material objects in experiments. This concern for the persons and their roles in organizations points to the second limitation that faces the rational systems approach to organizations: This approach does not consider "needs" and "motivations" of individuals when they participate in the work of organizations. The human persons, Abraham Maslow points out, have a hierarchy of needs that underlie their motivational structure such as the needs for foods and water, the safety needs, the needs for love, esteem, and self-actualization.[346] As lower levels of needs are satisfied, they no longer motivate or drive behaviors of the persons. These persons are then motivated by the desire to achieve higher-order needs to actualize themselves and become who they are.[347] The rational systems approach's inadequate consideration of personal needs and motivations provides a natural transition into the human systems approach to organizations.

[345] See Harry Braverman, "The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century," in *The Sociology of Organizations,* 32-37.

[346] Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," in *Classics of Organization Theory*, 142-53.

[347] Ibid., 146-7.

Organizations as Human Systems

Sociologists who consider organizations as human systems agree with proponents of organizations as rational systems that the concept of system can be applied to study various structures of the social world. The central idea of the human systems approach, however, is that an organization is more than a set of rules and a hierarchical structure designed by managers to achieve organizational goals. If managers want to increase the productivity of organizations, they should take into account the role of workers and their motivations. Viewing organizations through the human systems approach, Scott and Davis define organizations as "collectivities whose participants are pursuing multiple interests, both disparate and common, but who recognize the value of perpetuating the organization as an important resource."[348] The theorists who promote this approach to organizations include Charles Barnard,[349] Douglas McGregor,[350] and Herbert Simon.[351] To understand the human systems approach to organizations, one can compare and contrast it with the rational systems approach.

The human systems approach does not reject the key concepts that form the foundation of the rational systems approach such as the need for goals, the division of labor, bureaucracy, hierarchical structure, the unity of command, centralization, and the scalar principle. The theorists of the human systems approach, however, question the significance and impact of goals on the behaviors of members of organizations. As we have seen above, the managers of an

[348] Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives*, 30.

[349] Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 142-9.

[350] Douglas McGregor, "The Human Side of Enterprise," in *The Sociology of Organizations,* 108-13.

[351] Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1997).

organization are responsible for setting the goals of the organization, forming rational rules to guide the actions of members of the organization, and designing a hierarchical structure to achieve these goals. An assumption of the rational systems approach is that every member of an organization would agree about the same goals decided by their managers. In reality, Scott and Davis point out, "there is frequently a disparity between the stated and the 'real' goals pursued by organizations."[352] Although the official or professed goals are being aimed for in organizations, these goals are not the only ones that motivate the actions and decisions of all members of organizations.

To explain why there are different goals pursued in an organization, Barnard proposes the idea of incentives.[353] According to Barnard, members of an organization contribute to the work of their organization only if they receive incentives or inducements provided by the organization. Barnard divides incentives into direct and indirect kinds. The direct and personal incentives include material inducements such as money and material goods, personal non-material opportunities such as prestige and power, desirable physical conditions of work, and ideal benefactions such as pride of workmanship and altruistic service for family or country.[354] The indirect incentives consist of associational attractiveness or social compatibility between members of the organization who hold the same point of view, the opportunity of participation in large and effective organizations, and the condition of communion, as will be clarified below.[355]

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[352] Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives*, 60.

[353] Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, 139-60.

[354] Ibid., 142.

[355] Ibid., 142-9.

Barnard recognizes the importance of economic incentives such as money to reward contributions and to encourage collaborations among members of an organization.

At the same time, Barnard stresses that the most important inducements offered by organizations to their members are those of "non-materialistic character." In his words,

> The most intangible and subtle of [these] incentives is that which I have called the condition of communion. It is related to social compatibility but is essentially different. It is the feeling of personal comfort in social relations that is sometimes called solidarity, social integration, the gregarious instinct, or social security. It is the opportunity for comradeship, for mutual support in personal attitudes. The need for communion is a basis of the informal organization that is essential to the operation of every formal organization.[356]

Barnard states that the real goals that join members of an organization together are not merely official goals set by managers of the organization.[357] There are varieties of inducements that motivate members of the organization and invite them to participate in its work. Some members of the organization may want to receive material rewards as the inducement for their time and labor. Others do not consider material inducement as the primary goal of their actions and engagement. What they want is to belong to a social group, which provides them with a sense of communion, cooperation, and solidarity. For Barnard, this need for communion,

[356] Ibid., 146-8.

[357] Ibid., 140-53.

cooperation, and solidarity between members of an organization forms an "informal structure" within the formal structure of organizations. He describes the informal structure as the aggregate of personal contacts and interactions,[358] and argues for an interdependence between the formal structure and the informal structure within organizations. In his words, "formal [structures of] organizations arise out of and are necessary to informal organizations; but when formal organizations come into operation, they create and require informal organizations."[359]

To clarify the relationship between the formal structure and the informal structure of an organization, one has to make clear the idea of social relations. This idea involves not only patterns of social interaction between members of a social group such as the frequency and duration of the contacts and the tendency to initiate these contacts, but also people's sentiments to one another manifested through the feelings of attraction, respect, and hostility.[360] In the course of social relations between members of an organization, common values, practices, and expectations are developed to guide their actions and behaviors. These elements form the informal structure of the organization through which members of the organization interact with one another. One cannot see the elements of the informal structure in the organizational chart, which explains the hierarchical structure and the relationship among various offices or departments within the organization. These elements of the informal structure, however, are always present in the organization and are expressed through the interactions among members of

[358] Ibid., 115.

[359] Ibid., 120.

[360] Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott, "The Concept of Formal Organization," in *Classics of Organization Theory*, 174.

the organization when they cooperate through their work in various offices and departments of the organization to achieve organizational goals.

The human systems approach to organizations, which puts persons and their motivation at the heart of the organization, can create a certain pressure on managers, who tend to view their organizations through the lens of the rational systems approach. According to McGregor, these managers are invited to adapt their understandings of organizational structure and to integrate human needs into their interpretation of organizations.[361] In the concrete, because organizations are systems of consciously coordinated activities of a group of people, managers must take into account the responsibility, commitment, motivation, and thoughts of their workers if the managers want to increase productivity and to solve problems that may arise in organizations. Mcgregor writes, "The essential task of management is to arrange organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals *best* by directing their *own* efforts toward organizational objectives."[362] In other words, managers of organizations should not use a set of rules and strict regulations to control the actions of workers and to modify their behavior.[363] Rather, managers should foster more openness and trust among individuals and groups in the organizations, granting workers "a degree of freedom to direct their own activities, to assume responsibility, and, importantly, to satisfy their egoistic needs."[364]

[361] McGregor, "The Human Side of Enterprise," 108-13.

[362] Ibid., 112 (emphasis original).

[363] Ibid., 108-9.

[364] Ibid., 112.

To further comprehend the distinctive features of the human systems approach to organizations, one can consider the priority that the rational and the human systems assign to goals and the structure of organizations. While the rational systems approach stresses the importance of a hierarchical structure and official goals over interests and motivations of members of organizations, the human systems approach reverses these priorities and draws attention to the importance of people and their motivation over organizational goals and formalized structure. While the rational systems approach focuses on structure and goal that distinguish organizations from other social groups such as family and voluntary associations, the human systems approach emphasizes commonalities between organizations and other social groups such as informal structure and the needs of individual members to be rewarded, respected, and loved.

Despite the above differences, social scientists who promote the rational systems and the human systems approaches to organizations hold one thing in common: They tend to isolate organizations from their environment and external influences on the work of organizations. In reality, organizations unavoidably exist in a particular environment from which they receive various resources to survive, develop, and produce their output. Hence, organizations are unable to sustain themselves and to progress in the social world if they do not open to and import some forms of energy and input from the external environment. To understand the limitations of the rational systems and the human systems approaches to the study of organizations, I compare and contrast them with the open systems approach.

Organizations as Open Systems

According to Davis and Scott, "the open system perspective emerged as a part of the intellectual ferment following World War II, although its roots are much older."[365] As we have seen in the previous chapter, sociologists such as Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn use the idea of open systems to characterize structures such as living cells, human bodies, and social organizations.[366] This idea comes from Kenneth Boulding, who coined the term "General Systems Theory" to bring different disciplines of science such as physics, biology, and sociology into dialogue.[367] He classifies the natural and the social world into nine systems to describe a hierarchy of complexity of systems. These systems are (1) frameworks, (2) clockworks, (3) cybernetic systems, (4) open systems, (5) blueprinted-growth systems, (6) internal-image systems, (7) symbol-processing systems, (8) social systems, and (9) transcendental systems. Levels 1 to 3 encompass physical systems; levels 4 to 6 biological systems; levels 7 to 8 human and social systems. These systems are not mutually exclusive. Each higher-level system is more complex than the previous one and can incorporate the features of those systems below it into its structure. Boulding adds level 9, transcendental systems, to his understanding of the structure of systems because these systems consist of the "absolutes and the inescapable unknowables,"[368] which invite the human persons to open themselves to new possiblities not yet envisioned.

[365] Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives*, 87.

[366] Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (New York: John Wiley, 1978), 23-30.

[367] See Kenneth E. Boulding, "General Systems Theory – The Skeleton of Science," *Management Science* (1956, 2), 197-208.

[368] Ibid., 205.

Since the 1960s, Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch,[369] Robert Kahn and Daniel Katz,[370] and W. Richard Scott[371] have employed Boulding's idea of open systems to study organizations. These scientists do not reject the essential elements of organizations promoted by the rational and the human systems approaches such as the hierarchical structure, the division of labor, the unity of command, organizational goals, informal structure, and human motivations. Unlike the rational systems and the human systems approaches, however, the proponents of the open systems approach to organizations emphasize the idea of process and adaptation over other elements of organizations. Their thesis is that no organization is completely self-sufficient and self-contained. For organizations to survive and develop, they must open themselves to the outside world and go through a process of exchange and adaptation.[372] In the concrete, business organizations must obtain resources such as labor force, information, knowledge, and materials from their environment, converting these resources into products such as cars, books, and computers. The organizations then export or sell these products to their customers to acquire resources such as money, energy, and materials, which are necessary for the repetition of their cycle of activites.[373] Environment is thus the key for those who view organizations as open systems, and how this approach differs from the rational and the human sytems approaches.

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[369] Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch, *Organization and Environment* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1967).

[370] Robert Kahn and Daniel Katz, *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (New York: John Wiley, 1966).

[371] Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives*, 87-106.

[372] Kahn and Katz, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, 23-30.

[373] Ibid., 23-4.

According to Richard Daft, the organizational environment can be divided into "task environment" and "general environment."[374] The task environment, Daft explains, consists of elements that directly impact on the ability of the organization to achieve its goals, while the general environment involves elements that may not directly impact on the daily operations of the organization, but will indirectly influence it. The general enviroment includes the government, technology, other organizations, and the socio-cultural and economic conditions of communities where an organization operates.[375] The task environment consists of elements such as raw materials, customers, human and financial resources.[376] These elements of the task environment significantly influence the daily operation of organizations because the organizations need raw materials, information, human and financial resources to function. As a result, Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik point out, the more dependent an organization is on its environment, the more vulnerable it is. When an organization is vulnerable because of various changes caused by the environment, it reacts by adapting and changing its hierarchical structure and official goals to cope with impacts from the environment.[377]

Recognizing various influences of the task and the general environment on the work of organizations, Lawrence and Lorsch propose "a contingency theory of organization" to study organizations. As they state, "Different external conditions might require different organizational

[374] Richard Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2008), 53-7.

[375] Ibid., 55-6.

[376] Ibid., 54-5.

[377] Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerarld Salancik, "The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective," in *The Sociology of Organizations*, 233-42.

characteristics and behavior patterns within the effective organizations."[378] In other words, for Lawrence and Lorsch, an effective organization must be flexible to adapt its hierarchical structure to the demands of the environment. Depending on the changing environment where an organization is present, managers of that organization should design its structure accordingly. For example, the structure of an electronics firm (A), which is operating in a stable environment, should not be employed to coordinate the operation of another electronics firm (B) in its changing and competitive environment. Located in its stable environment, A possesses plenty of human and financial resources and faces no competition by other firms. The structure of A thus should be designed in accordance with a centralized decision-making, clearly defined jobs, and rational rules to guide actions and decision of their members. These elements of A, however, cannot be applied to B, which is facing a highly dynamic, innovative, and changeable demand of its consumers. Consequently, the structure of B should be less bureaucratic. Its job definitions should be more flexible; rules should be less formalized; and workers should be able to exercise more discretion when they carry out their tasks.

The above example shows the significant impact of the changing environment on the design of the hierarchical structure of organizations. This example enables managers to grasp the thesis of the contingency theory: "There is no one best organizational form but many, and their suitability is determined by the goodness of fit between organizational form and the diverse environments to which they relate."[379] In other words, there is no single form of organizational structure which is optimal for all types of organizations in their various environments. An

[378] Lawrence and Lorsch, *Organization and Environment*, 14.

[379] Scott and Davis, *Organizations and Organizing*: *Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives*, 108.

effective structure for an organization is the one that fits the contingency factors of the organization such as size, task uncertainty, and diversification of that organization.

Given the approaches to organizations, one can now recognize essential concepts of the sociology of organizations: goals, the division of labor, bureaucracy, hierarchical structure, centralization, decentralization, incentives, resources, task and general environment, informal structure or values and expectations formed between members of the organization when they work together. These concepts relate to one another and influence the work of an organization when its members employ them to cooperate and to achieve organizational goals. The task of managers in an organization is to set goals and to design the structure of the organization, adapting this hierarchical structure to the changing environment to enable members of the organization to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently.

Different approaches to the study of organizations diverge in their interpretations of the task of managers. The rational systems approach attempts to identify the most effective way to organize the work of the organization through the use of a hierarchical structure and the principles of management such as the unity of command, centralization, and the scalar principle. By contrast, the human systems approach argues for a more decentralized and bottom-up structure. This approach takes into account human motivations and informal structure to promote the right of the workers, their responsibility, and their creative participation in the work of the organization. The open systems approach offers a solution to reconcile the rational systems and the human systems approach. It maintains that each approach to the structure of the organization is optimal in its particular environment. The bureaucratic and top-down structure of hierarchy is

appropriate for the organization that functions in its stable environment, while the bottom-up structure is suitable for the organization in a changing and unstable environment.

Having explained the approaches to the sociology of organizations, I shall now adopt Rahner's theology of grace and combine concepts from these approaches with ideas from church teaching, Scripture, and canon law to study the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences.

Part II. The Vatican's Reception of Episcopal Conferences as Organizations

The reception of Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences launched a striking organizational innovation in the Catholic Church. In Chapter Three of *Christus Dominus*, the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, the council defines an episcopal conference as "a form of assembly (*coetus*) in which the bishops of a certain country or region exercise their pastoral office jointly, in order to enhance the church's beneficial influence on all women and men, especially by devising forms of the apostolate and apostolic methods suitably adapted to the circumstances of the times" (CD 38, 1). Having defined episcopal conferences, the council describes their membership and explains how decisions of the conferences can be legitimately approved and have the force of law (CD 38, 2, 3, 4). The council, however, neither makes clear the theological status of the conferences nor states whether their members can issue doctrinal statements.

According to Klaus Mörsdorf, *Christus Dominus* develops from two schemata: "On Bishops and the Government of Dioceses" and "On the Care of Souls."[380] The conciliar fathers debated the first schema between November 5 and November 10, 1963, but they could not examine the second schema because of lack of time. The first schema consists of five chapters, and the idea of episcopal conferences can be found in Chapter Three of the schema,

Chapter One: The Relationship between the Bishops and the Sacred Congregations of the Roman Curia

Chapter Two: The Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops

Chapter Three: The National Episcopal Conferences

I. The Establishment of Episcopal Conferences

II. The Direction of Episcopal Conferences

III. The Decisions of Episcopal Conferences

IV. The Relationship between Episcopal Conferences of Several Nations

Chapter 4: The Suitable Boundaries of the Dioceses and Ecclesiastical Provinces

Chapter 5: The Erection of Parishes and their Suitable Boundaries

Comparing the schema with the final text of *Christus Dominus*, one sees that in Chapter One of *Christus Dominus*, the council broadens the content of the schema's first chapter to explain not only the relationship between bishops and the Roman Curia (CD 8-9), but also the relationship between bishops and the universal church. The council views bishops as the members of the episcopal college who cooperate with the Pope to govern the church (CD 4-7).

[380] See Klaus Mörsdorf, "Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church," *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. II, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1968), 165.

This relationship between the Pope and the bishops in the one college of bishops is the subject of *Lumen Gentium*'s third chapter. In Chapter Two of *Christus Dominus*, the council does not consider merely the teachings on coadjutor and auxiliary bishops, but also offers a detailed description of the pastoral functions of bishops and diocesan boundaries before presenting its teaching on the relationship between bishops as pastors of local churches and other members of the churches, including coadjutor and auxiliary bishops (CD 11-35). Accordingly, to interpret Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences found in Chapter Three of *Christus Dominus*, one has to relate it to both the teaching on the ministry of the bishop in Chapter Two of the Decree and the teaching on the episcopal college developed by the council in Chapter One of *Christus Dominus* and Chapter Three of *Lumen Gentium*.

Eighteen years after Vatican II, canon 447 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law clarifies the council's teaching on episcopal conferences and interprets a conference as "a permanent institution, a group of bishops of some nations or certain territory, who jointly exercise certain pastoral functions for the Christian faithful of their territory in order to promote the greater good which the church offers to humanity."[381] According to John Johnson, "During the revision process [of the 1983 Code of Canon Law], there arose a question regarding how an institute that exists only when its members are meeting could be called *permanent*. The secretary of the drafting committee replied that a conference is permanent because it has a permanent secretariat and standing commissions."[382] Johnson's interpretation of canon 447 shows that, for the Vatican,

[381] See *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, ed. John Beal, James Coriden, and Thomas Green (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 590.

[382] John Johnson, "Conferences of Bishops," in *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 590 (emphasis original).

the hierarchical structure of episcopal conferences consists of standing committee and secretariat, which are responsible for conducting daily functions of the conferences when bishops, the official members of these conferences, are not in session.

Canon 447 states that episcopal conferences are organizations and offers a few insights into the structure of these conferences. This law, however, neither explains how the conference's standing committee and secretariat relate to each other nor states whether these organizations have a theological foundation and whether they can issue doctrinal statements. To further understand the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences, I turn now to the questions of the theological status and the teaching authority of episcopal conferences found in the Congregation for Bishops' "Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences" (hereafter Draft Statement)[383] and Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter "The Theological and Juridical Nature of Episcopal Conferences."[384] These documents enable one to see which approach to organizations the Vatican employs to interpret and implement the council's teaching on episcopal conferences.

The Congregation for Bishops' Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences

The Draft Statement was inspired by a suggestion of the delegates to the 1985 Synod of Bishops, who gathered around Pope John Paul II to evaluate, interpret, and implement the teaching of Vatican II. As explained in Chapter One, the synodal bishops promoted an interpretation of the church as communion to redress what they perceived as a flawed

[383] The English translations of these documents can be found in "Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences," *Origins* 17 (April 7, 1988), 731-7.

[384] See John Paul II, *Apostolos Suos*, at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_22071998_apostolos-suos.html

understanding of the church as institution. Building on the idea of the church as communion, the bishops offered their understanding of collegiality and proposed a study of the theological status and the teaching authority of episcopal conferences.[385] They recognized the importance of episcopal conferences to the mission of the church and stated that "No one can doubt their utility, indeed their necessity, in the present situation."[386]

Pope John Paul II accepted the request of the 1985 Synod for a study of episcopal conferences and assigned the task to the Congregation for Bishops. In 1988, Cardinal Bernard Gantin, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, mailed the Draft Statement to episcopal conferences around the world. At the beginning of this document, its authors stated that they prepared the text in collaboration with the Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the Eastern Churches, and for the Evangelization of Peoples, as well as with the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.[387] The Draft Statement was not intended to be definitive in its interpretation of episcopal conferences. At the end of the document, the Congregation for Bishops offered eleven questions and requested episcopal conferences to respond to these questions.[388]

The following three questions are relevant to the study of the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences: Is it sufficiently clear that doctrinal statements issued in the name of

[385] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), II, C, 4, 5.

[386] Ibid, II, C, 5.

[387] "Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences," 731.

[388] Ibid., 736-7.

episcopal conferences have the consent given to them by individual bishops? Does the individual bishop feel that episcopal conferences help him in his ministry and in his freedom to make decisions? How might it be possible to reduce the danger of an excessive bureaucracy of episcopal conferences through the creation of too many and complex structures (commissions, sub-commissions, offices, etc.) harmful to the proper autonomy of diocesan bishops?[389]

Viewing these questions through the lens of the theories of organizations, one can realize that the Vatican combines the rational and human systems approach to interpret episcopal conferences. The Draft Statement does not reject the necessity of a hierarchical structure and the use of this structure to administer the work of episcopal conferences. Nevertheless, the Draft Statement argues against a bureaucratic decision-making structure as being "restrictive of the possibility of individual bishops expressing their own thought and making dialogue with their conferees."[390] In other words, like proponents of the human systems approach to organizations, the Vatican puts individual bishops and their needs at the heart of its interpretation of episcopal conferences. Accordingly, the hierarchical structures of these conferences have to serve individual bishops and help them to carry out their ministry.

The authors of the Draft Statement divide their text into two parts. The first part consists of five sections which aim to address the theological status of episcopal conferences, while the second part expands on the first and presents the juridical status of episcopal conferences. In the first part of the Draft Statement, the Congregation for Bishops interprets the church as

[389] Ibid.

[390] Ibid., 735.

communion and develops this idea of the church to argue for its understanding of collegiality and episcopal conferences. The Congregation for Bishops returns to the sources of faith, Scripture and patristic theology, to explain the meaning of communion in the church and state that this communion contains both an external and an internal dimension. The internal dimension of ecclesial communion derives from the communion in the Trinity, while the external dimension of communion in the church is manifested through:

> the episcopal college with its head, the Roman Pontiff (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 8), and is expressed concretely in the unity of the faith, in the sacraments, and in community life under the authority of the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him. The invisible communion [in the Trinity] produces, conserves, and strengthens the visible communion in the church, be it at the level of the individual believer or at the level of the particular churches.[391]

Building on the idea of the church as communion, the Congregation for Bishops explains Vatican II's teaching on collegiality and episcopal conferences. As we shall see throughout this part of the chapter, the Vatican examines the teaching on collegiality before considering the teaching on episcopal conferences to interpret the college of bishops as a reality willed by God and to distinguish the college from mere organizations such as episcopal conferences. The Draft Statement, indeed, describes collegiality as "the ecclesial communion expressed at the level of the pastors," who are sacramentally bonded into the unity of the triple office of teaching,

[391] Ibid., 732.

sanctifying, and ruling the church.[392] In the view of the Congregation for Bishops, this communion among bishops as the members of the episcopal college is the work of the Spirit, and one should consider the college as a theological reality established by Christ and guided by the Spirit to serve the church.[393] The relationship between the episcopal college and divine revelation separates the college of bishops from episcopal conferences. If the conferences are not part of revealed truth, then they are "human" organizations, albeit graced ones, so that one can use the sociology of organizations to describe how they function and how to design effective organizations to promote the mission of the church.

To explain the theological foundation of collegiality, the Congregation for Bishops takes into account Vatican II's teaching on episcopal consecration. Citing article 22 of *Lumen Gentium* and article 4 of *Christus Dominus*, the Draft Statement argues that a person becomes a bishop and a member of the college by virtue of episcopal consecration and through hierarchical communion with the Pope and other members of the college. The Draft Statement refers to these teachings of the council and asserts that episcopal consecration is "the root which, in a certain sense, both the collegiality of the pastors and unity of the universal church are unified."[394] As members of the episcopal college, bishops can participate in the work of the college and jointly exercise their governance over the universal church together with the Pope.

[392] Ibid.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Ibid., 733.

Having interpreted the theological foundation of collegiality, the Draft Statement employs a distinction between affective and effective exercise of collegiality to distinguish between the collegial acts of the episcopal college and the collective acts of episcopal conferences.[395] This distinction, Patrick Granfield comments, had its root in the 1969 Synod of Bishops and was promoted by the International Theological Commission,[396] Pope John Paul II, and the 1985 Synod of Bishops.[397] According to the Final Report of the 1985 Synod,

> The ecclesiology of communion provides the sacramental foundation of collegiality. Therefore, the theology of collegiality is much more extensive than its mere juridical aspect. The collegial spirit is broader than effective collegiality understood in an exclusively juridical way. The collegial spirit is the soul of the collaboration between the bishops on the regional, national, and international levels. Collegial action, in the strict sense, implies the activity of the whole college, together with its head, over the entire church. Its maximum expression is found in an ecumenical council … From this first collegiality, understood in the strict sense, one must distinguish the diverse partial realizations, which are

[395] Ibid.

[396] See International Theological Commission, "Select Themes of Ecclesiology on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Closing of the Second Vatican Council," V. 3, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1984_ecclesiologia_en.html

[397] See Patrick Granfield, "The Collegiality Debate," in *Church and Theology: Essays in Memory of Carl J. Peter*, ed. Peter Phan (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 94. For a few examples of John Paul II's use of the distinction between effective and affective exercise of collegiality, see "Address to German Bishops (November 17, 1980)," *Origins* 10 (1980), 387; "Address to Bishops of the United States (September 16, 1987)," *Origins* 17 (1987), 258.

authentically sign and instrument of the collegial spirit: The Synod of Bishops, episcopal conferences, the Roman Curia, the *ad limina* visits, etc.[398]

For the Congregation for Bishops and the delegates of the 1985 Synod of Bishops, the spirit of collegiality is present at the heart of every gathering of bishops when they come together to undertake the ministries entrusted to them by Christ and the Spirit. There are two concrete manifestations of the collegial spirit: affective and effective collegiality. The effective exercise of collegiality, the Draft Statement explains, involves the teachings and decisions of all members of the episcopal college when they gather around the Pope in ecumenical councils to reach agreement on church teachings.[399] As a result, one cannot describe the teachings and decisions of episcopal conferences as effective exercises of collegiality because members of the conferences cannot represent the Pope and other members of the college. The Draft Statement asserts that "Those acts carried out within episcopal structures such as the synod and the national conferences have a certain partial character of collegiality."[400] In other words, for the authors of the Draft Statement, the teachings and decisions of episcopal conferences cannot be considered as collegial acts, but rather as collective acts or affective exercises of collegiality among bishops on the national, regional, and international levels.

This distinction between affective and effective collegiality underlines the Congregation for Bishops' interpretation of episcopal conferences. Because members of these conferences

[398] *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops*, II, C, 4.

[399] "Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences," 733.

[400] Ibid., 734.

neither stand for all members of the episcopal college nor act on behalf of the whole college, episcopal conferences have no teaching authority given by Christ and the Spirit to the college and individual bishops through the sacrament of Orders. They cannot substitute for diocesan bishops, who receive their sacramental power through episcopal ordination to become the authentic representatives of Christ in local churches. Indeed, the Draft Statement asserts that episcopal conferences are instruments of affective exercise of collegiality and contingent structures regulated by canon laws.[401] They possess no teaching authority and cannot replace diocesan bishops in their governance of local churches.[402] The teachings and decisions of episcopal conferences "are only resolutions and provisions proceeding from the authority of the component bishops, who jointly exercise the power which each of them has received in consecration for his diocese."[403] The function of episcopal conferences is to deal with practical matters such as form, tools, and agents of evangelization and catechesis.[404]

As regards the structure of episcopal conferences, the Draft Statement mentions four components: plenary assembly, standing commission, secretariat, and offices. The Draft Statement neither defines the functions of the offices nor explains how the offices relate to secretariat, standing commission, and plenary assembly. Nevertheless, this document describes the plenary assembly as "the constitutive, essential, and deliberative organ which exercises all the powers and faculties belonging to the episcopal conference."[405] The task of the secretariat

[401] Ibid.

[402] Ibid., 735.

[403] Ibid.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Ibid., 736.

and the standing committee is to prepare for the plenary assembly and to implement decisions approved by members of the conferences.[406]

In summary, the Congregation for Bishops views episcopal conferences through the lens of the rational and human systems approaches to organizations. It treats the conferences without reference to the world or the environment to which they belong. The rules and structure of these conferences are rational and they must serve the needs and motivations of diocesan bishops. At the same time, the conferences are constructed as human systems insofar as they should not obstruct the bishops' freedom to express their views nor consider the bishops as their brand managers, who are responsible for carrying out resolutions decided by a majority of the conferences' members. The Draft Statement's interpretation of episcopal conferences, on the one hand, protects the right and freedom of individual bishops from the possibility of the excessive power of the conferences' bureaucratic structure. On the other hand, the Congregation for Bishops uses the distinction between effective and affective collegiality which functions as a theological principle to reject the teaching authority of all members of episcopal conferences. Accordingly, these conferences are considered as merely organizations established by the Apostolic See to promote the pastoral functions of diocesan bishops. The effect of the Congregation for Bishops' interpretation of episcopal conferences, Joseph Komonchak comments, "is a very reductionist view of the nature and the function of episcopal conferences … At the end of the document, one is left wondering how it is that the Pope [John Paul II] could

[406] Ibid.

have ever called them 'very necessary, useful, and sometimes absolutely indispensable.'"[407] To understand how Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter builds on and revises the Draft Statement's interpretation of episcopal conferences, I turn now to his teaching in the text of *Apostolos Suos*.

John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Apostolos Suos* on Episcopal Conferences

After receiving responses from episcopal conferences around the world to the questions proposed by the Congregation for Bishops in the Draft Statement, the Vatican composed a new text in 1990.[408] This text became the subject of discussion within the Vatican between 1990 and 1996. In March 1996, Pope John Paul II asked the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to study and refine the text. In May 1998, the Pope approved the text and promulgated an Apostolic Letter entitled "The Theological and Juridical Nature of Episcopal Conferences," *Apostolos Suos*. Comparing the Draft Statement and the Apostolic Letter, one can recognize a development in the Vatican's understanding of the teaching authority of episcopal conferences.

The Apostolic Letter strengthens the Draft Statement's interpretation of collegiality and explains Vatican II's teaching on collegiality by appealing not merely to episcopal ordination that each bishop receives through the sacrament of Orders to govern his local church, but also to the ontological communion between the Pope and bishops in one college to serve the universal church. For John Paul II, this communion is a constitutive element of the church which exists

[407] Joseph Komonchak, "The Roman Working Paper on Episcopal Conference," in *Episcopal Conferences: Historical, Canonical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Thomas J. Reese (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 201-2.

[408] See Joseph Komonchak, "On the Authority of Bishops' Conferences," *America* (September 12, 1988), 7.

prior to the participation of individual bishops into the college.[409] In the words of *Apostolos Suos*,

> The collegiality of the actions of the body of Bishops is linked to the fact that "the universal church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular churches, or as a federation of particular churches." "It [the universal church] is not the result of the communion of the churches, but, in its essential mystery, it is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular church." Likewise, the college of bishops is not to be understood as the aggregate of the bishops who govern the particular churches, nor as the result of their communion; rather, as an essential element of the universal church, it [the college of bishops] is a reality which precedes the office of being the head of a particular Church. In fact, the power of the college of bishops over the whole church is not the result of the sum of the powers of the individual bishops over their particular churches; it [the episcopal college] is a pre-existing reality in which individual bishops participate.[410]

Reviewing this paragraph through the lens of the CDF 1992 "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion" presented in Chapter Two, one sees the contribution of the CDF's view of the universal church to Pope John Paul II's interpretation of collegiality and episcopal conferences. The Pope, indeed, quotes article

[409] Ibid., 8, 12.

[410] Ibid., 12.

9 of the CDF Letter to maintain that the universal church is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to the local churches.[411] For John Paul II, the episcopal college, like the universal church, is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to the participation of each bishop into the college. In other words, the college of bishops is more than an organization composed of the Pope and other bishops. It cannot be considered as the result of collective power given by individual bishops in virtue of their episcopal ordination. The power and union among the members of the college are the gift of the Spirit given to all members of the college as a whole.

Building on Canon 447 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the above interpretation of collegiality, *Apostolos Suos* describes an episcopal conference as "a permanent institution" or the grouping of bishops of a given country or territory, who jointly exercise certain pastoral functions.[412] Because members of episcopal conferences cannot represent the Pope and other members of the college, the teachings and decisions of episcopal conferences are affective, not effective, exercises of collegiality. For Pope John Paul II, these conferences are merely organizations established by the Apostolic See. *Apostolos Suos* quotes canon 449 to state that as the one who holds the supreme authority in the church, the Pope and the Apostolic See have the power to erect episcopal conferences and entrust to them specific areas of competence.[413] In addition, the Pope can suppress or change the rules composed by members of episcopal conferences in their statutes.[414]

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[411] Ibid.

[412] Ibid., 14.

[413] Ibid., 13, 16.

[414] Ibid., 16.

Apostolos Suos's quotation of canon 449 shows that, for the Vatican, it is the Pope as supreme pastor of the church, not the members of episcopal conferences, who has the absolute authority in the church and in episcopal conferences. The Vatican's application of canon 449 to interpret the council's teaching on episcopal conferences displays its use of the rational systems approach to organizations. As explained above, this approach pays attention to the issue of power and control and tends to turn members of the organizations into means to be governed by rational rules established by top managers of the organizations. For the Vatican, the Pope holds a supreme authority in the church and in episcopal conferences. He alone can "erect, suppress or change the conferences of bishops."[415]

One can see more clearly the issue of power and control in the Vatican's interpretation of episcopal conferences when viewing conditions demanded by Pope John Paul II concerning the teaching authority of the conferences. The Pope revises the teaching of the Draft Statement and asserts that the conferences can issue doctrinal statements. However, he specifies that these statements must be approved unanimously by members of episcopal conferences when they gather in the plenary assembly.[416] Members of the local churches are then obliged to adhere with a sense of religious assent to the statements issued by their bishops. In the case that a majority of members of episcopal conferences approves doctrinal statements, episcopal conferences must "obtain the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See, which will not give it if the majority requesting it is not substantial."[417]

[415] Ibid. and *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 449.

[416] Ibid., 22, 23.

[417] Ibid.

Francis Sullivan offers two reasons to explain why the Pope requires the above conditions if certain teachings are to be issued in the name of episcopal conferences.[418] First, teachings of the conferences approved by a unanimous vote would have the authority that each individual bishop gave to it. Consequently, these teachings "would call for the response of *obsequium religiosum* not only from the faithful of the region, but also from the bishops."[419] Second, in the case that a majority of the conference's members accept certain teachings, "*Recognitio* by Rome would supply the authority which a two-thirds majority of the conference would otherwise not have to impose an obligation on the bishops of the minority."[420] In other words, when the Apostolic See validates teachings approved by a majority of the members of episcopal conferences, these teachings should be received with a religious assent by all members of the local churches, including the bishops of the minority who have not agreed to the teachings before they are sent to the Apostolic See.

These conditions show that Pope John Paul II does not reject entirely the teaching authority of episcopal conferences. Nevertheless, he restricts their authority and makes it difficult for bishops of a country or a region to implement certain teachings affirmed by a majority of members of episcopal conferences as stated in article 38, section 4 of *Christus Dominus*. In this article, Vatican II asserts that "Decisions of the episcopal conference, provided they have been legitimately approved by at least two thirds of the votes in the conference, and provided they

[418] Francis Sullivan, "The Teaching Authority of Episcopal Conferences," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002), 485-7.

[419] Ibid., 486.

[420] Ibid., 486-7.

have been confirmed by the Apostolic See, shall have the force of law." Pope John Paul II, however, demands that teachings and decisions of the conferences must be approved unanimously by all of its members in plenary session to have the force of law. Otherwise, the bishops must submit their teachings to the Pope and the Apostolic See. The task of reviewing these teachings would presumably fall mainly on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. One can imagine how long episcopal conferences would have to wait until they receive the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See to issue the teachings in the name of episcopal conferences. As a result, Ladislas Orsy comments, "the lively and timely proclamation of the Gospel with the collective authority of the successors of the apostles becomes nearly impossible."[421]

In summary, in the Draft Statement and *Apostolos Suos*, the Vatican views episcopal conferences through the lens of the rational and human systems approach to organizations. The Vatican, however, prioritizes the rational over the human systems approach when it uses canon 449 and theological principles such as the distinction between effective and affective collegiality to emphasize the power of the Pope and the college of bishops over the power of episcopal conferences. The Vatican does not interpret the conferences of bishops as realities willed by God through Christ and the Spirit in the same manner as the apostolic college and the episcopal college, but as organizations established by the Pope and the Apostolic See to promote the greater good that local churches offer to people in their region. Because members of these conferences cannot represent the college of bishops, episcopal conferences cannot partake in the

[421] Ladislas Orsy, *Receiving the Council: Theological and Canonical Insights and Debates* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 22. For other studies on the teaching authority of episcopal conferences, see Julio Manzanares, "The Teaching Authority of Episcopal Conferences," in *The Nature and Future of Episcopal Conferences*, ed. Hervé Legrand, Julio Manzanares, and Antonio García y García (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 234-63; and Avery Dulles, "Doctrinal Authority of Episcopal Conferences," in *Episcopal Conferences: Historical, Canonical, and Theological Studies*, 207-31.

effective exercise of collegiality reserved for the Pope and other members of the college. Episcopal conferences cannot be considered as intermediate structures of hierarchy between the papacy and the ministry of the bishop. They cannot replace individual bishops in their governance of the local churches nor coerce the bishop's freedom to accept decisions and teachings promoted by a majority of the conference's members. Unless doctrinal statements of the conferences are approved unanimously or unless they obtain approval from the Apostolic See, statements and decisions of episcopal conferences are merely an affective exercise of collegiality and have no force of law. Given this analysis of the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences, I turn now to the hermeneutical principles proposed in Chapter One to evaluate the Vatican's interpretation and implementation of episcopal conferences.

An Evaluation of the Vatican's Reception of Episcopal Conferences

In Chapter One, I proposed that to interpret and implement Vatican II one can employ three hermeneutical principles. The first principle pays attention to the relationship between the documents and the historical context of Vatican II to understand how the context or various events during the years of the council shape conciliar teachings. The second principle takes into account the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*. In other words, one needs to return to the sources of faith, Scripture and patristic theology, to deepen one's understanding of conciliar teachings, and then to employ theories, concepts, and experiences of present-day believers to explain, implement, and communicate the truths of faith to them. The third principle examines a teaching of Vatican II through the relationship between elements of continuity and elements of discontinuity.

Reviewing the Vatican's interpretation of episcopal conferences through the third principle, one sees that the author of *Apostolos Suos* combines the teaching on papal ministry, an element of continuity, with the teaching on episcopal collegiality, an element of reform or discontinuity, to explain the idea of episcopal conferences. As shown in Chapter One, for Pope Benedict XVI who promotes the combination of continuity and discontinuity to study Vatican II, elements of discontinuity are not those elements which break with or separate themselves from Scripture and Tradition, but rather retrieve a deep understanding of church teachings manifested in Scripture and the tradition of the church.

Pope John Paul II returns to Scripture and cites biblical passages such as Matthew 10:1-4; 16:18; 26:14 and Mark 3:13-19; 14:10 to justify the role of Peter and papal ministry as the visible source and foundation of communion in the church.[422] Building on the foundation of Peter and the Apostles, *Apostolos Suos* interprets collegiality as the authority of the whole college of bishops who continue the work of the apostolic college to govern the church and proclaim the Gospel in the name of Christ. The combination of the teaching on the ministry of the Pope and the teaching on collegiality enables the Vatican, on the one hand, to maintain the right and power of the Pope as supreme pastor of the church taught by Vatican I and Vatican II. On the other hand, this combination allows the Vatican to explain how bishops should cooperate with the Pope to lead the mission of Christ manifested differently in various contexts of local churches.

[422] John Paul II, *Apostolos Suos*, 1-2.

Applying the first hermeneutical principle, that is, attending to the relationship between the documents and the historical context of Vatican II, to evaluate the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences, one realizes that the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II cite teachings from two documents of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus*. As already indicated, the authors of the Draft Statement argue for the theological foundation of collegiality by refering to article 22 of *Lumen Gentium* and article 4 of *Christus Dominus*, which assert that by virtue of episcopal ordination and hierarchical communion with the Pope, a person becomes a member of the episcopal college and participates in the power given by Christ to the whole college of bishops. In *Apostolos Suos*, Pope John Paul II strengthens this line of reasoning by quoting these teachings of the council and stating that the power of the college cannot be considered as the aggregate of the power of individual bishops.[423] Like the universal church which comes into being prior to the local churches both ontologically and temporally, the college of bishops is a reality which precedes the episcopal office and the power received by each bishop through the sacrament of Orders.[424]

The Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II refer to the texts of *Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus* to explain the teaching of collegiality and episcopal conferences. However, they take little account of the historical context of Vatican II or the various events that occurred during the course of the council to shed light on the interpretation of these teachings. In the following, I offer three events in the history of the council to show that the teachings on collegiality and episcopal conferences are intimately linked. The conciliar bishops truly

[423] Ibid., 9, 12.

[424] Ibid., 12.

experienced the spirit of collegiality when they worked together to lead and govern the church together with the bishop of Rome. To understand, explain, and implement these teachings of Vatican II properly, one has to view them through the following events.

The first event occurred on October 13, 1962, two days after the council had opened. The bishops received the names of all bishops who were present at the council, from which each participant was to choose members of the ten commissions.[425] Each commission consisted of sixteen bishops who would be responsible for the preparation, the presentation, and the revision of the major documents of the council. Along with the list of the names of all bishops, the bishops also received the list of the members of the Preparatory Commissions prepared in advance by the Roman Curia. Because each bishop would have known a small number of bishops in their episcopal conferences, it was expected that he would simply reinstate the names of the bishops who were members of the Preparatory Commissions. These members were already approved by Pope John XXIII and their task was to produce documents to be submitted to the council for discussion.

After the opening Mass on October 13, the bishops were requested to fill their ballots with 160 names. Confusion occurred among the conciliar fathers because they were not sure which candidates should be elected. To resolve this issue, Cardinal Achille Liénart of Lille

[425] Before the council began, Pope John XXIII set up ten Preparatory Commissions to compose documents on subjects which emerged from the opinions of bishops around the world concerning issues to be discussed in the council. The ten commission of the council continued the work of these Preparatory Commissions. Each commission was in charge of a subject to be discussed in the council. The commissions were: (1) Doctrine (Holy Office); (2) Bishops; (3) Oriental Churches; (4) Sacraments; (5) Discipline of Clergy and Laity; (6) Religious Orders; (7) Missions; (8) Liturgy; (9) Seminaries and Catholic Schools; and (10) Lay Apostolate. See John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 101, 168.

suggested that the voting to be postponsed for a few days to allow the bishops a chance to know one another and to give episcopal conferences time to propose the names of their candidates. The ten presidents of the council, who were apppointed by Pope John XXIII to direct the council's discussion, agreed with Liénart's proposal.[426] This event was a key moment of Vatican II which showed the spirit of collegiality and the right of all bishops to participate in the mission of the universal church together with the bishop of Rome. The bishops did not want to accept the names proposed to them by the Roman Curia; they claimed their right and responsibility to lead and govern the church as its legitimate pastors.

The second event took place between October 15, 1963, and October 30, 1963 concerning the bishops' understanding of episcopal ordination and episcopal collegiality. As already examined in Chapter One, after the debate on the church on November 30, 1962, the sub-commission of the Theological Commission revised the draft document *De Ecclesia* and composed a second schema entitled *Lumen Gentium*. This schema consisted of four chapters: (1) the mystery of the church; (2) the hierarchical constitution of the church and the episcopate in particular; (3) the people of God and especially the laity; and (4) the call to holiness. Chapter Two of the schema became the subject of discussion among the bishops because they wanted to make clear whether the sacrament of Orders conferred on bishops the office of governing their flocks. Although *De Ecclesia* insisted that episcopal ordination gave bishops the power to teach, sanctify, and govern the faithful, the draft document claimed that bishops received their exercise of jurisdiction not from episcopal ordination but from the Pope, who held the supreme governing

[426] O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 168.

authority over the whole church.[427] The majority of the conciliar bishops disagreed with this statement by the Theological Commission in the text of *De Ecclesia*. As a result, with the permission of Pope Paul VI, the bishops voted on five crucial questions on October 30, 1963 to reveal more clearly the mind of the bishops and provide direction to the Theological Commission in its revision of the second schema on the ministry of the bishop.

Among these five questions, the ones that show most clearly the bishops' understanding of episcopal ordination and collegiality are the following: Should the schema assert that in its task of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, the episcopal college succeeds the apostolic college and in communion with the Pope, enjoys full and supreme power over the universal church? Should the schema assert that the aforementioned power of the episcopal college, united with their head, belongs to individual bishops by episcopal ordination?[428] According to John O'Malley, the majority of bishops gave affirmative answers to these questions (2,148 affirmative, 336 negative to the first question; 2,138 affirmative, 408 negative to the second question).[429] The votes were a turning point in Vatican II, which disclosed the mind of the bishops, who wanted to return to a traditional and biblical understanding of the episcopal office. For the bishops, the Pope governs the church together with the other members of the episcopal college, who receive their power to lead and administer the church not from the Pope but from the sacrament of Orders given to them by the Spirit of Christ.

[427] *De Ecclesia*, 14.

[428] To see all of the questions and the result of the bishops' voting, see O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 184.

[429] Ibid.

The third event took place between November 5, 1963 and November 8, 1963 after Cardinal Paolo Marella, president of the Commission on Bishops, and Bishop Luigi Carli, the secretary of the Commission, presented the schema on the bishops. As shown above, the schema has five chapters which address the questions of the relationship between the bishops and the Roman Curia, the coadjutor and auxiliary bishops, and the national episcopal conferences.[430] One of the significant interventions of the conciliar fathers to the schema came from Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh, who proposed an important change in the structure of the church.[431] He argued that the church should be governed not by the Pope and the members of the Roman Curia, but by the Pope as the sucessor of Peter and the bishops as the successors of the Apostles. Together they constitute one episcopal college whose head is the Pope, united to serve and to lead the universal church.

Although these events cannot offer a comprehensive understanding of the whole of the historical context of Vatican II that shapes the teachings on collegiality and episcopal conferences, they are important moments in the council which show that to interpret these teachings, one has to view them through the historical context of the council. For the fathers of Vatican II, bishops are legitimate pastors of the church and the representatives of Christ. They are not the delegates of the Pope, who merely act in his name to govern the faithful in local churches. Bishops receive their power from the Spirit through episcopal consecration to serve not only a portion of God's people entrusted to their care in the local churches but also the mission of the universal church. Together with the Pope and other members of the episcopal college,

[430] See Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 27-37.

[431] *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, II/4 (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970-1991), 516-9.

bishops are the subject of supreme and full authority over the universal church. Accordingly, the departments of the Apostolic See or the Roman Curia have to support the work of the Pope and the bishops who are members of both the episcopal college and episcopal conferences (CD 9).

Reviewing the teaching on episcopal conferences through the relationship between the conciliar documents and the historical context of the council, one can now understand the reason why the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II examine the idea of episcopal conferences in relation to the idea of collegiality. In the concrete, collegiality or the authority of bishops working together with the Pope to govern the universal church is the theological foundation for the idea of episcopal conferences. For the conciliar bishops, the ideas of collegiality and episcopal conferences reflect their desire to cooperate and to direct the mission of the church together with the Pope. The bishops want to carry out this task not merely when they gather around the Pope in ecumenical councils, but also when they assemble in episcopal conferences to exercise their pastoral function and to serve the faithful in local churches. These gatherings unite bishops and enable them to lead the mission of the church in the different contexts of the world.

Viewing the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences through the second hermeneutical principle, the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, one can identify three sources used by the Vatican in the Draft Statement and *Apostolos Suos*: Scripture, church teaching, and canon law. As we have seen above, these sources provide the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II with concepts such as communion, the apostolic college, collegiality, and papal primacy to justify the theological foundation of the episcopal college and

to argue for the effective exercise of collegiality which belongs to the bishops as a whole. Consequently, for the Pope, episcopal conferences can issue doctrinal statements if their members approve these statements unanimously in the plenary assembly or the conferences receive a "*recognitio*" from the Apostolic See. Other joint exercises of the conferences are manifestations of affective collegiality and they include:

> The promotion and safeguarding of faith and morals, the translation of liturgical books, the promotion and formation of priestly vocations, the preparation of catechetical aids, the promotion and safeguarding of Catholic universities and other educational centers, the ecumenical task, relations with civil authorities, the defense of human life, of peace, and of human rights, also in order to ensure their protection in civil legislation, the promotion of social justice, the use of the means of social communication, etc.[432]

To carry out these works effectively, bishops have to design a structure that enables them to work together, to study common issues facing their local churches, and to execute pastoral plans after the conference's members approve these plans. Here one recognizes that the theological sources employed by the Vatican are not entirely sufficient to help diocesan bishops to implement the teaching on episcopal conferences. In other words, the teaching on episcopal conferences is more than an idea to be debated by theologians and church leaders, these conferences are concrete organizations composed of groupings of bishops, who consciously join their time, knowledge, and other resources to undertake the ministry of teaching and governing

[432] John Paul II, *Apostolos Suos*, 15.

the church entrusted to them by Christ and the Spirit. As a result, to interpret and implement the idea of episcopal conferences, one has to take into account not merely Scripture, canon law, and church teaching to explain the theological foundation and teaching authority of the conferences, but also sociological insights to show how members of these conferences should design their structures, divide the labor and work of the conferences into various tasks, and assign these tasks to specialized offices.

To pay attention to the *aggiornamento* in the study of episcopal conferences, I apply, in the following part, concepts from the theories of organizations to explore the Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences. As we shall see, the members of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (hereafter FABC) neither address the question of collegiality nor use Scripture, church history, and church teaching as sources to interpret the idea of episcopal conferences. Instead, they employ sociological concepts and theories to design a structure that enables them to achieve the purpose of episcopal conferences as stated in *Christus Dominus*: to promote the greater good which the church offers humankind, especially through the forms and methods of the apostolate suitably adapted to the circumstances of the times (CD 38, 1). The Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences can complement the Vatican's reception, showing how insights from the sociology of organizations help to implement and communicate the idea of episcopal conferences to present-day recipients of the council. Before studying the structure of the FABC, it is necessary to present a brief history of this organization, and then describe its nature and purpose.

Part III: Asian Bishops' Reception of Episcopal Conferences as Organizations

A Brief History of the FABC

According to Vimal Tirimanna, the foundation of the FABC goes back to Vatican II, when many Asian bishops who participated in the council met one another for the first time.[433] Their meetings in Rome during the years of the council allowed them to develop a network of personal contacts, interactions, and friendships among those who belonged to the same region, shared the same interests, and received the same ministry from Christ and the Spirit. These contacts and interactions helped the Asian bishops realize that they were more familiar with bishops from Europe, especially from Rome, than with their fellow bishops from Asia. As a result, the bishops began to "talk about the need for a structure which would enable them to have more interactions and cooperation among themselves across Asia."[434]

Five years after Vatican II, Pope Paul VI visited the Philippines in November, 1970. It was at this visitation that one hundred and eighty Asian bishops gathered around the Pope to express their communion with the successor of Peter. "Never before," Felix Wilfred writes, "had Asian bishops come together to exchange experiences and to deliberate jointly on common questions and problems facing the continent. The meeting marked the beginning of a new consciousness of the many traditional links that united the various peoples of this part of the

[433] For a more complete account of the history of the FABC, see Vimal Tirimanna, "A Brief History of the FABC," *The FABC Paper* 139 (2013), 5-21, http://www.fabc.org/fabcpapers/FABCPapers139.pdf

[434] Ibid., 5.

globe."[435] The bishops present at the Asian Bishops' Meeting (ABM) proposed the idea of a joint conference and stated that "the episcopal conferences here represented are urged to authorize and support a permanent structure for the effective implementation of the decisions of this meeting."[436]

To carry out the resolution of the ABM, eleven presidents of Asian episcopal conferences met in Hong Kong in March 1971.[437] They were Valerian Cardinal Gracias of Bombay, India, Stephen Cardinal Kim of South Korea, Thomas Cardinal Cooray of Sri Lanka, Justinus Cardinal Darmojuwono of Indonesia, Archbishop Paul Y. Taguchi of Japan, Archbishop Teopisto V. Alberto of the Philippines, Archbishop Joseph Kuo of Taiwan, Archbishop Paul Nguyen Van Binh of Vietnam, Bishop E. Loosdregt of Laos and Cambodia, Bishop Anthony D. Galvin of Malaysia, and Bishop Robert R. Bamrungtrankul of Thailand. The presidents named the permanent structure the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, and established a Follow-up Committee to draft its statutes. These presidents assembled again in Hong Kong in August 1972 to discuss and approve the draft of the statutes. After this meeting, Cardinal Kim and the two other Asian Cardinals met Pope Paul VI in Rome, where they submitted to him the statutes of the FABC. On November 16, 1972, the Pope approved the statutes *ad experimentum* for two years.[438] This day was significant for the church and the history of Christianity in Asia because

[435] Felix Wilfred, "The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences: Orientations, Challenges, and Impact," *FABC Papers* 69 (1995), 2, http://www.fabc.org/fabcpapers/FABCPapers69.pdf

[436] Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, "Resolutions of the Meeting," *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. I, ed. Gaudencio Rosales and C. G. Arevalo (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 8.

[437] Tirimanna, "A Brief History of the FABC," *The FABC Papers* 139, 6.

[438] For the original version of the FABC's Statutes approved by Pope Paul VI, see *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (Hong Kong: Central Secretariat FABC, 1973).

Pope Paul VI and the Apostolic See officially authorized the establishment of an organization which brings together various local churches in Asia.

The Nature and Purpose of the FABC

According to the 1972 Statutes, the FABC "is a voluntary association of episcopal conferences in South and East Asia, established with the approval of the Holy See."[439] The current Statutes of the FABC, which were amended at the Tenth Plenary Assembly in 2012, continue to describe the FABC as a "voluntary association," and add the episcopal conferences of South-East and Central Asia as participating members of the FABC.[440] Despite many changes in the church and the world between 1972 and 2020, the Asian bishops hold firmly to the idea of voluntary association to interpret and implement Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences. Indeed, they avoid the term "permanent institution" used by canon 447 and Pope John Paul II in *Apostolos Suos*. To understand why the Asian bishops consider the FABC as a voluntary association, one can draw from sociological theories of organizations.

According to sociologists, a voluntary associations is "a special kind of organization in which members have united voluntarily in order to promote some shared non-profit goals. To

[439] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (Hong Kong: FABC Central Secretariat, 1972), 1. The 1972 Statutes were amended in the First Plenary Assembly of the FABC, held in Taipei, Taiwan in April, 1974. These Statutes were then revised by the Fifth Plenary Assembly, held in Bandung, Indonesia in August, 1990. The Sixth Plenary Assembly, held in Manila in January, 1995, made additional revisions. Further changes were made at the Ninth Plenary Assembly, held in Manila, Philippines in August 2009, and at the Tenth Plenary Assembly, held in Xuan Loc and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in December, 2012. These amendments were subsequently ratified by the Apostolic See.

[440] *The 2012 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (Hong Kong: FABC Central Secretariat, 2012), 1.

safeguard this [goal], members have two kinds of instruments at their disposal: the dependency of the organization on member resources, and democratic decision-making processes."[441] This definition of an association reflects how the Asian bishops have interpreted and implemented Vatican II's teaching episcopal conferences. The Asian bishops prioritize the freedom and needs of the member conferences over the rules and structures promoted by proponents of the rational systems approaches to organizations. In other words, they do not consider the FABC as a for-profit organization like a manufacturing firm, which applies rational rules and mechanistic bureaucracy to control its members, to manage the functions of its departments, and to obtain goals set by managers of the organization. The FABC as a voluntary association is established to serve the needs of Asian conferences and Asian bishops, who have similar interests, come together voluntarily, and combine resources to achieve shared non-profit goals.

Like other voluntary organizations, the FABC is dependent on factors such as financial resources. The 1972 Statutes state that "Each member conference on the basis of its ecclesiastical jurisdictions and each associate member shall contribute an annual sum of money to be fixed by the central committee to meet the expenses of the FABC."[442] In the case of the FABC, Asian conferences and Asian bishops who are its members provide human and financial resources for

[441] Heinz-Dieter Horch, "The Intermediary Organizational Structure of Voluntary Associations," *Voluntary Sector Review* 9 (2018), 59. For other studies of voluntary associations, see David Knoke and David Prensky, "What Relevance Do Organization Theories Have for Voluntary Associations?" *Social Science Quarterly*, 3-20; David E. Mason, *Voluntary Nonprofit Enterprise Management* (New York: Plenum Press, 1984); David Knoke and James Wood, *Organized for Action: Commitment in Voluntary Organizations* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1981); and Bart Bonikowski & Miller McPherson, "The Sociology of Voluntary Associations," in *21st Century Sociology*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Peck (London, UK: Sage Publications, 2007) http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412939645.n19

[442] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*, 31, A.

the association to function. They do so as the association is effective in achieving the goals determined by these conferences and their bishops.

The above comparison between for-profit organizations and the FABC as a voluntary association enables one to understand why the Asian bishops interpret the FABC as "a voluntary association of episcopal conferences." First, the idea of voluntary association allows the bishops to address the Vatican's concern about the nature and functions of episcopal conferences. As already indicated, Pope John Paul II legislated that episcopal conferences are permanent institutions established by the Apostolic See. For John Paul II, one cannot consider a conference as an intermediate structure of hierarchy between papal ministry and the ministry of bishops. This interpretation can endanger the power of bishops in their governance of local churches and leads to an understanding that bishops are the conference's branch managers, who are responsible for implementing decisions of the conference decided by a majority of its members. As a voluntary association, the FABC does not manage and control the Asian bishops, who voluntarily partake in meetings and workshops organized by the FABC's central secretariat and offices. These organs of the FABC serve the needs of the Asian bishops, devise forms of the apostolate, and address common issues facing Asian churches as shall be explained below.[443]

Second, the idea of voluntary association enables the FABC to receive support not merely from those member conferences which have engaged in its activities from the beginning, but also

[443] For evaluations of the FABC's works and impacts on Asian bishops and local churches in Asia, see Felix Wilfred, "The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences: Orientations, Challenges, and Impact," in *FABC Papers* 69 (1995), 2-10; Joseph Ti-Kang, Stephen Hamao, et al., "FABC Sharings: A Collection by the Union of Catholic News," *FABC Papers* 69 (1995), 11-44.

from other Asian conferences. As a voluntary association, the decisions of the FABC "are without juridical binding force; their acceptance is an expression of collegial responsibility."[444] Here we see that the FABC's members address the question of their teaching authority, stating that the decisions and statements of the Federation have no force of law and do not impose on Asian bishops, who are free to accept these decisions or simply disregard them. This agreement encourages the cooperation and participation of Asian bishops from various conferences into the activities of the Federation because the FABC's decisions would not demand the response of *obsequium religiosum* from the bishops. Indeed, the voluntary nature of the FABC and the voluntary acceptance of its resolutions may help to account for its growth. In 1972, the FABC had twelve members.[445] At present, the association is composed of nineteen members and nine associate members.[446] This increase in membership suggests that the Asian bishops' interpretation of the FABC has gained support from conferences across Asia and achieved the purpose set by the founding members of the association.

The Asian bishops state in the 1972 Statutes of the association that it is established "to foster among its members solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of church and society

[444] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*, 1, B.

[445] According to Tirimanna, episcopal conferences from the following countries approved the 1972 Statutes of the FABC and became its members from the beginning: Bangladesh, Burma, India, Indonesia, Laos-Khmer, Korea, Malaysia-Singapore, Pakistan, Philippines, the Regional Bishops' Conference of China, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. See Tirimanna, "A Brief History of the FABC," 10-1.

[446] According to the FABC's website, the FABC has nineteen bishops' conferences from the following countries: (1) Bangladesh; (2) India – CBCI; (3) India - Syro-Malabar; (4) India - Syro-Malankara; (5) India - Latin Rite; (6) Indonesia; (7) Japan; (8) Kazakhstan; (9) Korea; (10) Laos-Cambodia; (11) Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei; (12) Myanmar; (13) Pakistan; (14) Philippines; (15) Sri Lanka; (16) Taiwan; (17) Thailand; (18) Timor Leste; and (19) Vietnam. In addition, the Federation has nine associate members: (1) Hong Kong; (2) Macau; (3) Mongolia; (4) Nepal; (5) Kyrgyzstan; (6) Tajikistan; (7) Turkmenistan; and (8) Uzbekistan. See http://www.fabc.org/mem.html.

in Asia."[447] This statement makes it possible for one to understand the needs of Asian bishops, who want to promote a spirit of collegiality and cooperation among those who receive the same ministries from Christ to govern local churches and to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples of Asia. The Asian bishops are aware that to undertake these ministries in their vast continent, a hierarchical structure must be formed to bring together their resources and help them achieve their purpose. To clarify the FABC's purpose, the Asian bishops apply the idea of the division of labor and divide the work of the Federation into six functions:

1. To study ways and means of promoting the apostolate, especially in the light of Vatican II and post-conciliar official documents, and according to the needs of Asia;
2. To work for and to intensify the dynamic presence of the church in the total development of the peoples of Asia;
3. To help in the study of problems of common interest to the church in Asia, and to investigate possibilities of solutions and coordinated actions;
4. To promote inter-communication and cooperation among local churches and bishops of Asia;
5. To render service to episcopal conferences of Asia in order to help them to meet better the needs of the people of God;
6. To foster a more ordered development of organization and movements in the church at the international level.[448]

[447] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*, 1, A.

[448] Ibid., 2.

These functions show the official goals identified by the FABC's members to serve Asian episcopal conferences and the local churches in Asia. The 1995 Statutes, amended by the Sixth Plenary Assembly, broaden the above understanding of the association's goals and purpose. This version of the Statutes takes into account article 38 of *Christus Dominus* and states that the FABC is established not merely to foster solidarity among its members and their co-responsibility for the welfare of the church and the society in Asia, but also "to promote and defend whatever is for the greater good."[449] In accordance with this revised statement of purpose, the Asian bishops add one more goal to the above list: "To foster ecumenical and interreligious communications and collaboration."[450] Here one realizes that the Asian bishops extend their understanding of the purpose of the FABC to address various needs of member conferences and to consider ecumenical and interreligious dialogues as a major goal of the Federation. Given the purpose and functions of the Federation, I shall now examine the structure of the FABC to explain how the rational, the human, and the open systems approach to organizations influence the Asian bishops' design of the hierarchical structure of the FABC.

The Hierarchical Structure of the FABC

Article 4 of the 1972 Statutes of the FABC makes clear that the Asian bishops use the concept of hierarchical structure, a key concept of the rational systems approach, to describe the Federation: "The FABC functions through a hierarchy of structures consisting of the plenary assembly, the central committee, the standing committee, and the central secretariat."[451] In line

[449] *The 1995 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 1.

[450] Ibid., 2, G.

[451] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 4.

with the Draft Statement and *Apostolos Suos*, the Asian bishops place the plenary assembly at the top of their understanding of the association's structure and state that the plenary assembly "is the supreme body of the FABC; all committees and offices are answerable to it."[452] In other words, voting members of the plenary assembly are the managers of the FABC, who have "the right to make or ratify constitutional modifications and to approve major policies or structural changes."[453] The assembly's members consist of all presidents of member conferences or their officially designated episcopal alternates, bishop-delegates elected by member conferences, associate members of the FABC, and members of the standing committee.[454]

The 1972 Statutes explain that the plenary assembly "shall meet in ordinary session every four years."[455] As a result, members of the central committee, the standing committee, the central secretariat, and the offices of FABC are responsible for carrying out the work of the association when its voting members are not in session. Of these organs of the association, the central committee oversees not only the implementation of the plenary assembly's resolutions but also administers the work of the standing committee and the central secretariat.[456] The members of this committee come together every two years, and they "comprise presidents of member

[452] Ibid., 5, A.

[453] Ibid., 5, B.

[454] Ibid., 6-7.

[455] Ibid., 8, A.

[456] Ibid., 10.

conferences or their officially designated bishop alternates, who will act always in consultation with the standing committee."[457]

Because all members of the FABC, not merely the members of the central committee, have the right to express their views, to vote, and to make decisions when they gather in the plenary assembly,[458] the hierarchical structure of the association is decentralized. The decentralization of the FABC displays the Asian bishops' use of the human and open systems approach to interpret and implement their organization. For the Asian bishops, the structure and rules of the Federation must serve the needs of its members, who can amend the rules and refine the structure if they consider changes necessary to respond to different needs of the times and to achieve the purpose of the FABC. For example, the Asian bishops revised the 1972 Statutes of their association and stated in the 2012 Statutes that its structure includes not only the aforementioned organs, but also the FABC's offices and desks.[459] This structural change allows the standing committee and the central secretariat to coordinate the work of the offices and desks of the FABC. In addition, the change of structure helps Asian bishops to address various requests and teachings from the Synod of Bishops, pontificial organizations, and member conferences such as the teachings on the church as communion, the church's response to the climate change, the role of women in the church, and the new way of being church in Asia.

[457] Ibid., 9.

[458] Ibid., 7.

[459] *The 2012 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 6.

As a concrete example, the central committee established the Office of Laity and Family in 1982 to respond to the felt needs of the times from the member conferences and the Pontifical Council for Laity.[460] One of the office's initial tasks was to assist the Pontifical Council for Laity in organizing the first Laity Meeting for Asia in 1982. This office is composed of three desks: Youth Desk, Women's Desk, and AsIPA (Asian Integral Pastoral Approach) Desk, which was established to help member conferences realize their vision of the church in Asia for the third millennium, as a participatory church and a communion of communities.[461]

According to the 1972 Statutes, the standing committee is composed of five bishops elected from among the members of the central committee.[462] These bishops meet at least once a year "to implement the resolution and instructions of the central committee and to provide direct guidance and support to the central secretariat and other organs of the FABC."[463] The functions of the standing committee include the following:

1. To deal with all ordinary matters of the FABC when the central committee is not in session, to prepare the agenda of meetings of the central committee and the plenary assembly, and to make recommendations to these bodies concerning the issuance of statements in the name of the FABC.

[460] For a brief review of the history and work of the Office of Laity and Family, see http://www.fabc.org/offices/olaity/olaity.html

[461] For a study of the FABC's vision of the church as a communion of communities, see Jonathan Yun-Ka Tan, "A New Way of Being Church in Asia: The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) at the Service of Life in Pluralistic Asia," *Missiology: An International Review* (January 2005), 72-94.

[462] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*, 14.

[463] Ibid., 17.

2. To examine questions submitted specially by member conferences and associate members and to refer these questions to competent bodies of the FABC.
3. To present annual reports on the progress of the FABC to the Holy See and to all member conferences and associate members.[464]

The above description of the responsility and functions of the standing committee can be used as an example to explain the Asian bishops' application of Weber's concept of bureaucracy and Fayol's concept of scalar chain to design the FABC's structure. This structure has clearly defined responsibilities and functions between its components such as the central committee and the standing committee. The functions of these organs are formulated in the statutes of the Federation. There is a vertical chain of command or a structure of power that moves from the central committee to the standing committee, and then to the central secretariat. As stated in the 1972 Statutes, "In exercising its functions, the central secretariat is immediately responsible to the standing committee."[465] The standing committee, in turn, is responsible for implementing the instructions of the central committee and for providing direct guidance and support to the FABC's central secretariat and offices.[466]

As already indicated, the members of the plenary assembly, the central committee, and the standing committee do not meet one another on a daily basis to administer the work of the FABC. Consequently, the central secretariat is the principal service agency of the FABC, which

[464] Ibid., 18.

[465] Ibid., 21.

[466] Ibid., 17.

is in charge of coordinating works within the association and with external offices and agencies.[467] The members of the central secretariat include the secretarial staff and the secretary general, who is appointed by the central committee to direct various functions of the central secretariat.[468] The secretariat serves as an organ which fosters continuing contact and collaboration among the member conferences, and promotes studies on problems common to member conferences, such as evangelization and inculturation. In addition, this organ liaises with related pontifical organizations and international agencies. It also sponsors conferences, seminars, and dialogue with other Christians, followers of other religions of Asia, and all people of good will to pursue mutual understanding in relation to the common problems of Asia.[469]

Viewing the functions of the central secretariat through the theories of organizations, one can recognize a difference between the Vatican's and the Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences. While the Vatican does not mention the relationship between the conferences and their environment, the Asian bishops take into account various influences of their environment, such as other organizations, on the work of the FABC. The organizations referred to in the association's statutes are the pontifical organizations of the Holy See, such as the Roman Curia: "Whenever the actions or programs entered into by the conferences take on an international aspect, it is necessary to consult [the organizations of] the Holy See."[470] Moreover, the offices of the FABC "shall maintain contact and coordinate their work with related organs of the Holy

[467] Ibid., 21.

[468] Ibid., 23, A.

[469] Ibid., 22.

[470] *The 2012 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 4.

See."[471] These rules show the Asian bishops' use of the open systems approach to interpret the FABC because they consider the pontificial organizations of the Holy See and other church organizations such as the Synod of Bishops as important factors of their organizational environment, which can influence the decisions and teachings of the FABC.

One can see the influences of the Synod of Bishops on the work of the FABC when reviewing the Federation's statements on the church as communion. As explained in Chapter Two, the delegates of the 1985 Synod promote an interpretation of the church as communion in their Final Report. After this synod, the Asian bishops present their understanding of the church as follows: "The Church in Asia will have to be a communion of communities, where laity, religious, and clergy recognize and accept each other as sisters and brothers. They are called together by the word of God which, regarded as a quasi-sacramental presence of the Risen Lord, leads them to form small Christian communities."[472] This interpretation of the church as a communion of communities has shaped the FABC's teaching on communion in the church and the formation of its pastoral programs. These programs and teachings on the church as communion can be founded in the FABC's documents such as "Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees: A New Way of Being Church" and "Towards a Church of Communion," issued by the Office of Human Development and the Office of Laity and Family, respectively.[473]

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[471] Ibid., 32, C.

[472] "Journeying Together Toward the Third Millennium: V Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Plenary Assembly," in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 1, ed. Gaudencio Rosales and C. G. Arévalo (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1992), 287.

[473] See *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 4, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon City, Philippines, Claretian Publications, 2007), 89-135; 179-85.

To coordinate the work of the FABC's offices and establish liaison between these offices and related pontifical organizations, the secretary general, with the help of his secretarial staff, manages the work of the FABC's central secretariat and offices.[474] According to the 1972 Statutes, the offices are "specialized service agencies of the FABC functioning through the central secretariat."[475] The 2012 Statues revise this statement and state that "Offices are specialized agencies of the FABC functioning under the guidance of the central committee and standing committee with the assistance of the central secretariat."[476] In other words, the central committee and the standing committee, not the central secretariat, have the power to direct the work of the FABC's offices. The central committee establishes specialized offices of the FABC when the need arises, and has the power to close these offices when it is considered necessary to do so.[477] The standing committee delegates its authority to the central secretariat to coordinate various functions of the FABC when the members of the committee are not in session. However, the members of the standing committee are responsible for guiding and helping the central secretariat and offices accomplish their works.

The above revision of the rules displays the Asian bishops' application of the human systems approach to organizations and their use of Fayol's principle of the unity of command to interpret the structure of the FABC. This principle states that for any action, a worker or an office should receive orders from one superior only. In accordance with Fayol's principle, the

[474] *The 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 24, C.

[475] Ibid., 28.

[476] *The 2012 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 32.

[477] Ibid., 14, C and 32, B.

offices of the FABC do not receive their orders directly from the secretary general and the central secretariat, but from the members of the standing committee.[478] Consequently, the secretary general cannot manage and control the members of the offices, but supports them and coordinates their works to carry out common projects when needs arise.[479] The Asian bishops' application of Fayol's principle to explain the function of the central secretariat and the secretary general shows their attempt to prevent the issue of centralization or the concentration of power on the secretary general. All members of the plenary assembly, not the secretary general, manage the work of the offices through their delegates, the members of the central committee and the standing committee. The members of the FABC's offices thus cannot be controlled and managed by the secretary general and his staff. They carry out the work assigned to them by the central and the standing committee with the assistance of the central secretariat.

According to the 1972 Statutes of the FABC, the central committee planned to establish five offices: the Offices of Evangelization, of Social Communications, of Human Development, of Ecumenism and Inter-religious Affairs, and of Education and Students' Chaplains.[480] Since 1995, the central committee has created four more offices: the Office of Theological Concerns, of Clergy, of Laity, and of Consecrated Life.[481] The increase in the number of offices is a clear sign of the Asian bishops' application of the human and open systems approach to interpreting and implementing Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences. In other words, the FABC

[478] Ibid., 21, A, II.

[479] Ibid., 28, F.

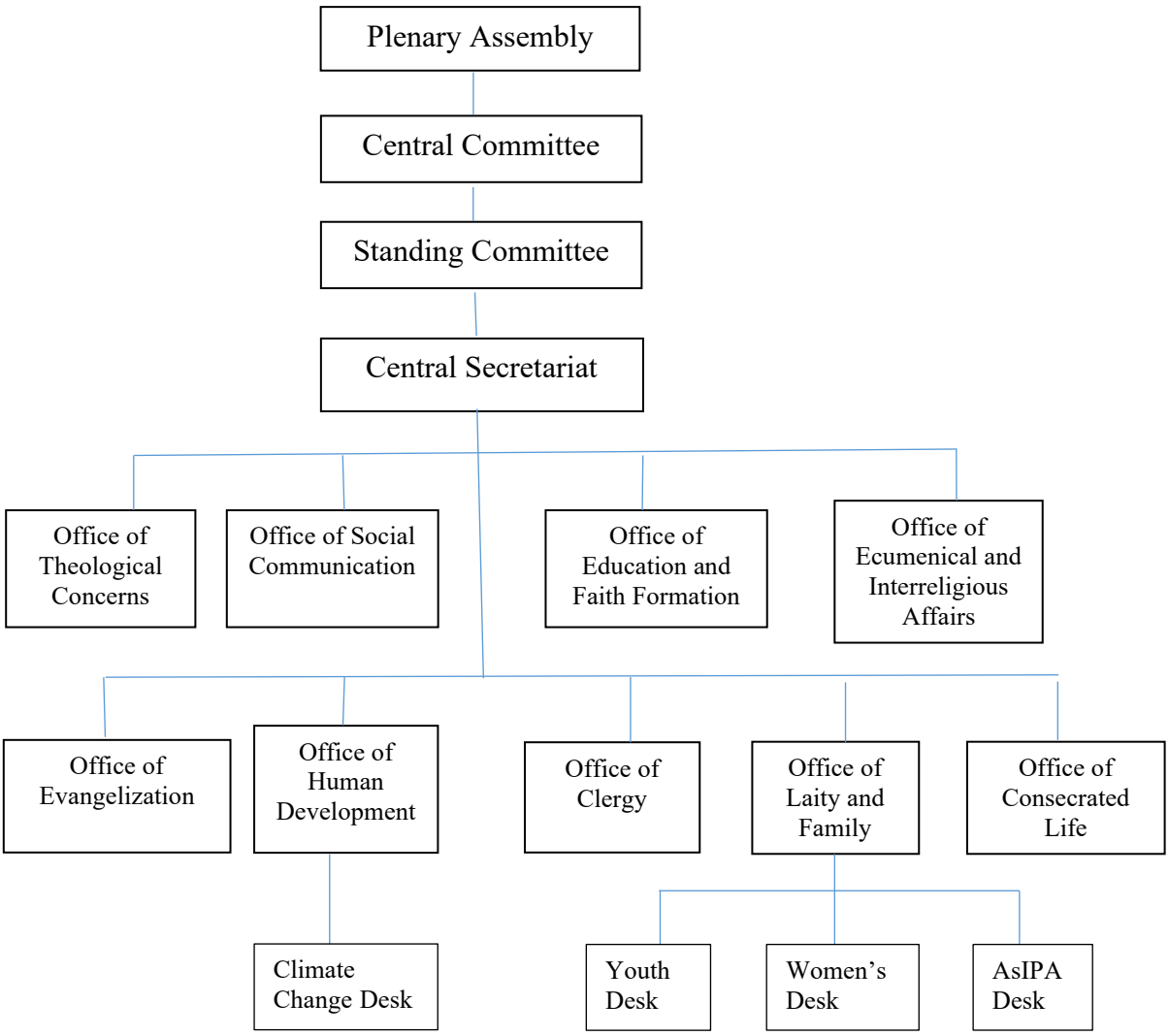
[480] Appendix of *the 1972 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences*, By - Law II, 1, B.

[481] *The 1995 Statutes of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences,* 22.

attempts to promote the greater good which the church offers to the peoples of Asia and to support various needs of Asian bishops, laity, clergy, and religious. For example, to show how the church in Asia should respond to the challenge of climate change, the central committee has established the Climate Desk. Through the work of this Desk, member conferences can understand the pastoral situation of climate change and how they should cooperate with other members of the church and the society to address this issue.[482]

Having reviewed the Asian bishops' application of sociological concepts to design the structure of the FABC, I can now present its organizational chart as follows:

[482] See "Church Response to the Challenge of Climate Change in Asia: Towards a New Creation," and "Climate Change: Asian Impacts and Response," in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 6, ed. Vimal Tirimanna (Quezon City, Philippines, Claretian Publications, 2017), 187-201.



The above chart displays the Asian bishops' application of the rational systems approach in designing the structure of the FABC. The chart enables one to see not only how the plenary assembly, the committees, and the offices are linked together, but also the authority and patterns of communication among the members of the Federation. A clear line of authority runs from the plenary assembly to the central committee, then to the standing committee, and to the central secretariat. Underlying this interpretation of the FABC's hierarchical structure, however, is the thesis of the human and open systems approach to organizations, which puts the Asian bishops and their needs at the heart of their association. Indeed, the 1972 Statutes of the Federation state

that all members of the plenary assembly, who act through the central and the standing committee, have power and influence on the work of the central secretariat and the offices. These members compose the supreme body of the FABC, and thus the Federation's committees, offices, and desks are answerable to them.[483] In other words, the rules of the Federation and its organs serve the needs of Asian bishops, helping them to address common issues such as interreligious dialogues, new evangelization, pastoral care to migrants, refugees, the role of women and young people in the church and the society.

The chart of the FABC clearly shows that the Federation's offices and desks are designed in accordance with a functional structure. According to Richard Daft, "In a functional structure, activities are grouped together by common function from the bottom to the top of the organization. All engineers are located in the engineering department, and the vice president of engineering is responsible for all engineering activities."[484] The focus of this structural design is not so much on the internal relationships among different departments and offices of organizations. The managers, who adopt the functional structure to design their organizations, are more concerned about the products and services that each office and department can produce.

Relating the functional structure to the organizational chart of the FABC, one sees that the Asian bishops employ this view of structural design to divide the work of the Federation into nine offices. Each office is in charge of a particular goal set by the members of the FABC. For example, the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligous Affairs seeks to foster ecumenical and inter-

[483] Ibid., 7.

[484] Richard Daft, *Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2010), 104.

religious collaboration between members of local churches in Asia, other Christians, and followers of other religions,[485] while the Office of Theological Concerns studies problems of common interests to Asian bishops such as new evangelization and inter-faith marriages in the pluralistic contexts of Asia.[486] The Office of Social Communication coordinates the activities of Catholic media organizations in Asia, and supports national and regional conferences in the establishment and operation of communication offices.[487]

The functional structure, Daft explains, is best used when an organization has a few products. It "is most effective when in-depth expertise is critical to meeting organizational goals, when the organization needs to be controlled and coordinated through the vertical hierarchy and when efficiency is important."[488] In other words, the functional structure of the FABC enables members of its offices, who are experts in their fields of research such as interreligious dialogues, youth ministry, and social media, to accomplish specific goals assigned by the central committee and the standing committee to the Offices of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, of Laity and Family, and of Social Communication, respectively. This functional structure, however, may cause issues such as poor horizontal coordination between the offices because the offices are independent of one another. In addition, decisions which cannot be decided by

[485] "Statement of the Conference of Muslim-Christian Religious Leaders of Asia: Striving Together in Love" Towards Common Action," in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 6, 97-101.

[486] "Inter-Faith Marriages in the Pluralistic Context of Asia," *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 4, 289-90; "Give Me A Drink (John 4:7): The Challenges of New Evangelization and Creative Pastoral Responses" in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 6, 151-3.

[487] To list some works organized by members of the Office of Social Communication: "Communication Formation for Priestly Ministry in Asia" and "Social Networking for Pastoral Ministry," in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. 5, 205-12.

[488] Richard Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2008), 40-1.

members of the offices can overload the work of the standing committee, whose members meet at least one a year and may not respond fast enough to these decisions.

The functional design of the FABC's offices is clearly manifested in the Office of Theological Concerns (OTC) when we examine its members, objectives, and works.[489] The OTC is composed of three bishops, who function as its executive board and a team of theologians from each of the FABC's member conferences. Their objectives are to foster Asian theological reflection on issues relevant to the universal church and to the local churches in Asia, to assist the FABC in the thinking, policy-making, missionary and pastoral action of episcopal conferences in Asia, and to bring relevant contemporary work to the theological reflection of the FABC, as well as to mediate theological thought in Asia to the universal church. Viewing the OTC's publications since its establishment by the central committee in 1994,[490] one does not see much coordination between the OTC's members and members of other offices such as the Office of Evangelization (OE), which can address the same issue of common interest to Asian bishops such as evangelization and the church's mission in the context of secularization.

Using the above structure to foster solidarity among its members and to carry out the goals of the association, the FABC has produced a significant amount of publications. Among the documents issued in the name of the FABC, the final statements of its plenary assemblies are

[489] To understand the background and objectives of the Office of Theological Concerns, see http://www.fabc.org/offices/otc/otc.html

[490] Apart from papers written by the OTC members and published in the FABC website, other works of the OTC can be found in the following books: *Asian Faces of Christ,* ed. Vimal Tirimanna (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2005); *Sprouts of Theology from the Asian Soil*, ed. Vimal Tirimanna, (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2007); and *Harvesting from the Asian Soil: Towards an Asian Theology*, ed. Vimal Tirimanna, (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2011).

the most important ones that form the backbone of the FABC's theology. The statements of these assemblies can be found in the six-volume work entitled *For All the People of Asia*.[491] Apart from these statements, there have also been the messages and statements of various bishops' institutes and workshops, produced by the FABC's offices.[492] In addition to these works, one can find papers on different aspects of the FABC known as the FABC Papers published by the central secretariat on the website of the FABC.[493]

The productivity of the FABC notwithstanding could significantly increase if its members addressed one major issue associated with the functional design of its structure. Wilfred points out the issue when he states that "The resources at the disposal of the bishops in Asia are so limited that they feel helpless in implementing the grand vision of the FABC."[494] In other words, the FABC lacks the human resources, theologians and specialists, who can carry out various ministries requested by member conferences. Because the FABC does not have enough human resources and its work is divided into nine offices, this functional structure cannot help the FABC to achieve all of its goals. In addition, because each office produces its own works and serves the needs of a particular group of peoples, the works of one office are independent of other offices as illustrated above between the OTC and the OE. Consequently, the FABC's functional structure is not effective in achieving coordination among the offices when they are invited to address a specific concern of the members conferences. Reviewing seminars and

[491] *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vols. 1-6 (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1992-2017).

[492] These statements and messages can also be found in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vols. 1-6.

[493] http://www.fabc.org/offices/csec/ocsec_fabc_papers.html

[494] Wilfred, "The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences: Orientations, Challenges, and Impact," in *FABC Papers* 69, 9-10.

workshops organized by the central secretariat and the FABC's offices between 1972 and 2015, one hardly sees much coordination among these offices to carry out common projects.

The FABC has attempted to overcome the above issue when members of its offices invite different specialists to address issues of concern to Asian bishops, such as "Catholic Schools in Asia" and "Business Sector's Reponse to *Laudato Si*."[495] In 2016 and 2017, for example, the Office of Human and Development (OHD) organized two conferences to explore the question of business in the context of *Laudato Si*. The members of the OHD worked together with other experts, scientists, and lay faithful to help Asian bishops and those who particiated in these conferences understand the challenges of climate change and how they could implement Pope Francis' teaching in his encyclical *Laudato Si*.

To address the issue of horizontal coordination among the offices of the FABC, one can use some ideas proposed by organization theorists. According to Daft, managers who adopt the functional structure to design their organizations can employ the following ideas to improve collaboration between offices of the organizations: information systems, direct contacts between offices, full-time integrators or project managers, and cross-functional teams.[496] Of these ideas, project managers and cross-functional teams are the most effective ones which could provide strong horizontal coordination among the offices of the FABC.

[495] "Business in the Context of Asia," *FABC Paper* 156 (2016 - 2017), http://www.fabc.org/fabcpapers/FABCPapers156.pdf and "Catholic Schools in Asia," *FABC Paper* 160 (2018), http://www.fabc.org/fabcpapers/FABCPapers160.pdf

[496] Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, 96-101.

Project managers are not members of any office. They are responsible for coordinating the work of several offices, which come together to undertake major innovations or common projects. These managers "help the team members get the work completed, to 'run interference' for them, to get scarce resources that they need, and to buffer them from outside forces that would disrupt the work."[497] Cross-functional teams need project managers to lead them and to accomplish the works assigned to them by top managers of organizations. Members of these teams are representatives or experts from their offices, which are affected by the same problem or are invited to join the same project. They represent the interest of their offices and can carry information from the teams to the offices. The teams' members are responsible for solving problems concerned by managers of organizations and performing works under the guidance and direction of project managers.

Recently, the central secretariat of the FABC has begun coordinating between offices charged with similar works. The secretary general and his assistant have acted as project managers, who are responsible for communicating and achieving coordination between the offices of the FABC. In 2106, for example, the central secretariat convened members of the Office of Clergy and the Office of Laity and Family to organize a seminar on "Shephering Families in Asia," in order to provide information to Asian bishops, religious sisters, and lay leaders, who were involved in family ministry.[498] In 2018, the central secretariat invited the Office of Consecrated Life and the Office of Education and Faith Formation to share their

[497] James Lewis, *Fundamentals of Project Management* (New York: Amacom, 2002), 4.

[498] "Shephering Families in Asia: Contemporary Challenges and Responses for Bishops, Priests and Lay Leaders," *FABC Paper* 157 (2016), http://www.fabc.org/fabcpapers/FABCPapers157.pdf

common experiences and challenges in youth ministry.[499] Through the horizontal linkages such as project managers and cross-functional teams, members of the FABC's offices can overcome the issue of horizontal coordination and recognize that their works contribute to the same goals of the association.

Conclusion

Viewing the Vatican's and the Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences through the theories of organizations, one can see that the Vatican and the Asian bishops employ different approaches to organizations to interpret and implement the council's teaching on episcopal conferences. While the Vatican prioritizes the rational systems over the human systems approach and pays attention to canon laws and theological principles to control and manage the functions and the teaching authority of episcopal conferences, the Asian bishops emphasize the human and open systems approaches and adopt concepts of organization theories to design a structure which serves their needs and various ministries in their local churches. The Asian bishops apply the human and open systems approach to organizations when they consider the relationships between the offices of the FABC, other organizations, and the needs of member conferences and Asian bishops, who have the same interests and receive the same ministry entrusted to them by Christ and the Spirit to govern the local churches, proclaim the Gospel, and care for all the peoples of God in Asia. The comparison between the Vatican's and the Asian

[499] "Catholic Schools in Asia: A Shared Mission among Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful in the Light of Recent Papal Documents," *FABC Paper* 160 (2018), http://www.fabc.org/fabcpapers/FABCPapers160.pdf

bishops' reception of episcopal conferences shows that neither of these approaches and the sources used by each of them can offer a comprehensive understanding of episcopal conferences.

As we have seen throughout the chapter, to receive the teaching on episcopal conferences, one cannot use merely theological sources such as Scripture, canon law, and church teaching, as employed by the Congregation for Bishops and Pope John Paul II. Nor can one understand and explain the teaching on episcopal conferences by appealing to sociological concepts to describe a conference and design its hierarchical structure, as presented by the Asian bishops. To explore, interpret, and implement the idea of episcopal conferences, one has to combine concepts from the sociology of organizations with ideas from Scripture, canon law, and church teaching, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of episcopal conferences. In the following conclusion of the dissertation, I shall join together sociological insights and theological concepts from the present chapter to offer a model of episcopal conferences. This conclusion will help to justify the thesis that I have attempted to argue: theological sources alone are not sufficient to receive Vatican II. To offer a comprehensive interpretation of the council and put its teaching into effect, one has to take into account Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, church history, as well as sociological theories and concepts. These sources are gifts of God's self-expression to help the church interpret and communicate the truths of the faith to present-day recipients of the council.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II, proposed hermeneutical principles to engage these issues, and argued that to receive the council's teaching on the church and episcopal conferences one has to combine sociology with the traditional sources of theology such as Scripture, patristic theology, church teaching, and church history. To conclude my thesis, I summarize the line of reasoning that runs through the chapters of the thesis, comment briefly on a model of episcopal conferences, and propose some questions for further research.

The reception of Vatican II is a challenging task not merely because of the complexity of conciliar documents and the history of their composition but also because of different interpretations of conciliar teachings in the post-conciliar church. To explain issues that complicate the reception of Vatican II, Chapter One of the thesis drew on Walter Kasper's analysis of the hermeneutic of the reception of Vatican II and the magisterium's approach to the interpretation of the council in the Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops and Pope Benedict XVI's address to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2005. The approaches of Kasper, the synodal bishops, and Pope Benedict XVI to the hermeneutic of the council point to two issues that involve the reception of Vatican II. The first is the variety of interpretations of conciliar teachings in the history of reception of the council. The second is the task of communicating these teachings through the language, theories, and concepts of present-day receivers.

In his analysis of the hermeneutic of the reception of Vatican II, Kasper considers the juxtaposition of "conservative" and "progressive" statements in conciliar documents as a cause

of the variety of interpretations of the council. He argues that these statements complicate the reception of Vatican II because one group of receivers chooses statements that express its understanding of a teaching, while another group cites other statements to support its arguments. This variety of interpretations of a conciliar teaching found in different statements of the council prevents the church from receiving Vatican II.

The Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops offers an example to illustrate the issue of the variety of interpretations when the synodal bishops move from the idea of the church as institution to the idea of the church as "communion." For the bishops, the church can deepen its understanding of the council when church members consider the church as communion and employ the hermeneutical principles proposed in the Final Report to interpret the council. These principles include the interrelationship among conciliar documents, attention to the four constitutions, the relationship between conciliar teachings and their pastoral character, the relationship between the spirit and letter of the conciliar documents, and the continuity between the council's teachings and the teachings of other councils in the history of the church.

Pope Benedict XVI would agree with Kasper and the synodal bishops that the variety of interpretations is an issue that complicates the reception of Vatican II. Pope Benedict in fact pointed out two interpretations that come into conflict in the history of reception of the council: "the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture" and "the hermeneutic of reform." He rejected the former and argued against a dichotomy between the teachings of the pre-conciliar church and those of the council. In his view, the post-conciliar church is faithful to the council when its

members combine elements of continuity with elements of discontinuity in the teaching of Vatican II to reform the church's understanding of its nature, structure, and mission.

In addition to the variety of interpretations of conciliar teachings, I drew on Kasper's emphasis on Pope John XXIII's concern for the pastoral character of doctrine, John O'Malley's understanding of the style of the council and Christoph Theobald's explanation of the pastoral character of conciliar teachings to point out the second issue that makes it difficult to receive Vatican II: the task of communicating its teachings through the languages, theories, and concepts of present-day recipients. This task has its root in Pope John XXIII's opening address to the council when he invited the bishops not merely to defend the truths of faith that they had received from Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers, but also to explain these truths through a pastoral language. Because the bishops accepted the Pope's concern for the pastoral character of doctrine and integrated this character into the formulation of conciliar documents, the post-conciliar church receives Vatican II's teachings formulated in a pastoral language. To interpret the council, one has to acknowledge the pastoral character of its teachings and communicate the teachings to present-day recipients through the use of their experiences, theories, and concepts.

Having explained the issues that involve the reception of Vatican II, I proposed three hermeneutical principles to interpret and implement the council. The first principle pays attention to the relationship between the sixteen documents of the council and the historical context of Vatican II. More concretely, to understand a teaching of the council, one has to examine it not only within the context of a document where one finds the teaching under investigation but also that document's interrelationship with other documents. In addition, one has to review that

teaching within the historical context of the council that offers the teaching. I employed this principle to examine the teaching on the church in Chapter Two and to evaluate the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences in Chapter Four. The relationship between the documents of Vatican II and the council's historical context enables one to understand why the bishops chose the term "sacrament" to describe the church in the first article of *Lumen Gentium*. This relationship also clarifies the meaning of the church as the sacrament of Christ when one relates the idea of the church as sacrament in *Lumen Gentium* to the idea of the sacraments in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

The second principle involves Pope John XXIII's teaching on the principal duty of Vatican II in his opening address to the council: the double task of guarding church teachings and of communicating these teachings to present-day recipients of the council through a pastoral language. I used the two terms "*ressourcement*" and "*aggiornamento*" to capture this teaching of the Pope. Simply put, to interpret and implement Vatican II, one has to return to the sources of faith, Scripture and patristic theology, to deepen one's understanding of conciliar teachings in continuity with Scripture and church tradition. Then, one employs the languages, theories and concepts of present-day receivers to express and communicate these teachings. I applied this principle to explain the teaching on the church as the sacrament of Christ in the text of *Lumen Gentium*. Just as Christ is the sacrament or mystery of God the Father in accordance with the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and John, the church is the sacrament or mystery of Christ through which those who believe in him can encounter God and receive salvation.

The third principle adopts Pope Benedict XVI's understanding of the hermeneutic of reform to combine elements of continuity with elements of discontinuity found in the teaching of Vatican II. For Benedict XVI, elements of continuity are the truths of faith revealed by God through Christ and the Spirit to the church. One can find these truths in Scripture, the teachings of the Fathers and ecumenical councils, while elements of discontinuity are the conciliar teachings that aim to reform the church's understanding of its nature, structure, and mission. These teachings do not break from Scripture and church tradition, but retrieve a deeper understanding of the faith.

To show how the hermeneutical principles enable theologians to engage the variety of interpretations of the council, Chapter Two of the thesis reviewed the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on the church. This debate provides the context to explore Vatican II's teaching on the church and to address a fundamental question that I attempted to answer in the thesis: Why does one need sociology to receive the conciliar teaching on the church?

Applying the hermeneutical principles to interpret the meaning of "church" in the conciliar documents, especially in the text of *Lumen Gentium*, I argued that the church is the sacrament of Christ or the visible sign of his living presence in the new people of God. Put differently, the church is simultaneously a theological and a socio-historical reality manifested not merely through the relationship between Christ and all members of the church as a whole, but also through legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, who unite with Christ and with diocesan bishops as his representatives in the diverse contexts of the world to celebrate the sacraments and to carry out the mission of Christ and the Spirit. In these local gatherings of

God's people, Christ is present in their midst through the Holy Spirit, through whose power and influence the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church exists.

Given this understanding of Vatican II's teaching on the church, I examined the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on the church. As the then-Cardinal Prefect of the CDF, Ratzinger defends the CDF's interpretation of the church as communion in the 1992 "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion." For Ratzinger, the church is a mystery of communion manifested through the communion between the local and the universal church. To explain this communion, Ratzinger takes into account biblical texts such as Galatians 4:26 and Acts 2 and the teachings of St. Clement of Rome and the author of the Shepherd of Hermas. He argues that like the Torah and the people of Israel, the universal church is a reality which takes precedence, ontologically and temporally, over the local churches. As a reality that exists ontologically in the will of God before the creation of all things and then comes into being temporally on the day of Pentecost, the church cannot be considered as merely an institution or a social structure formed by the will of a group of people, who came together after the resurrection of Christ in the first century of the church.

As the bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart at the time of the debate, Kasper objects to Ratzinger's justification of the CDF's understanding of communion between the local and the universal church. Kasper does not refute Ratzinger's use of biblical texts and the teachings of the Fathers to account for the pre-existence of the church in the will of God. However, he disagrees with Ratzinger's use of the formation of the church at Pentecost as an argument for the temporal priority of the universal church over the local churches. For Kasper, the universal and the local

churches exist simultaneously in the will of God and on the day of Pentecost. As a result, the universal church cannot be considered as a reality that takes precedence, ontologically and temporally, over the local churches. In other words, the local churches are not the provinces of the universal church under the governance of the Pope and the Apostolic See. As pastors of the local churches, diocesan bishops are not the Pope's delegates, who receive their power from the Pope to govern the local churches in the Pope's name. The bishops are Christ's representatives, who are given their power from Christ and the Spirit through the sacrament of Orders to serve a portion of God's people entrusted to their care. Together with the Pope, the bishops are the members of the episcopal college, which is the subject of supreme and full authority over the whole church.

To explain why Kasper and Ratzinger diverge in their interpretation of communion between the local and the universal church, I examined the sources that they use to justify their arguments. Ratzinger and Kasper employ Scripture and patristic theology to interpret the church as communion. In addition, Kasper takes into account church history and pastoral experience to argue for the simultaneous existence of the universal and the local church, while Ratzinger prioritizes the theological dimension of the foundation of the church and shows less concern for church history and pastoral experience to explain the social and historical dimensions of the church. As a result, for Kasper, the universal and the local church always exist simultaneously in the will of God and on the day of Pentecost. Put differently, the two dimensions of the one church of Christ, universal and local, are not to be separated from each other. Kasper's interpretation of communion between the local and the universal church is in contrast to Ratzinger's, who argues that the universal church is a reality which is prior ontologically and

temporally to the local churches. This church is the mystical body of Christ present in the local churches around the world. These local churches are constituted after the model of the universal church, and thus they are not identical with the universal church, but portions of God's people entrusted to the care of diocesan bishops with assistance of their clergy.

Viewing the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on communion between the local and the universal church and the sources used by Ratzinger and Kasper through the lens of conciliar ecclesiology, I attempted to show that for the conciliar bishops the church as the sacrament of Christ is more than a mystery of communion, as debated by Ratzinger and Kasper. The church is also a community of Christ's disciples in society and history, who unite with Christ and with one another through his representatives to proclaim the Gospel in different contexts of the world. To offer a proper understanding of the church as a sacramental reality, one has to employ not merely Scripture, patristic theology, church history, and pastoral experience as Ratzinger and Kasper had done to interpret the theological and historical dimension of the church, but also theories and concepts of sociology to explain the church's social dimension. Sociological theories and concepts can provide theologians with insights to explore the relationship between members of the church or how they are organized into social structures to carry out the mission of Christ and the Spirit in diverse contexts of the world.

The need to integrate sociology into conciliar ecclesiology addresses another fundamental question that Chapter Three of the thesis tried to answer: How can sociological insights be integrated into ecclesiology to help theologians receive Vatican II? To anticipate objections made by those who argue against the dialogue between sociology and ecclesiology, I presented

Roger Haight's two-language approach to ecclesiology and Neil Ormerod's critique of Haight's method of ecclesiology.

To study the church as a sacramental reality, Haight applies the method of correlation that he developed in his early work, *Dynamics of Theology*. This method distinguishes and examines the historical, the sociological, and the theological dimension of the church separately through the use of historical, sociological, and theological language. Theologians then combine the socio-historical language with the theological language of the church to offer a comprehensive account of the church as a theological and a socio-historical reality.

Ormerod objects to Haight's approach to ecclesiology and points out two limitations facing Haight's method. First, this method tends to split the church into the theological and the socio-historical reality before combining these realities to view the church as a whole. Second, Haight's idea of historical and sociological language is unnecessary in one's theological reflection of the church. More precisely, if one already has a theological language to describe the relationship between God and the church as a theological and a socio-historical reality, then one does not need historical and sociological language to describe the church. In Ormerod's view, the church which is in relationship to God is at the same time a socio-historical reality. Accordingly, theological language includes not merely concepts from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teachings, but also ideas from history, philosophy, sociology, and other sciences.

The most important insight that I learned from Ormerod is his claim that to integrate sociological knowledge into ecclesiology or to address the relationship between the theological

and socio-historical dimensions of the church, one has to view this relationship within a larger context of the relationship between nature and grace. In light of Ormerod's critique of Haight's method of correlation and his proposal to build the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology on the foundation of the relationship between nature and grace, I explore Karl Rahner's theology of grace and argue that Rahner's understanding of grace as God's self-communication can resolve the issue facing Haight's method and enable theologians to justify the application of sociological insights in ecclesiology.

Along with theologians of the *Nouvelle Théologie*, Rahner argues against the separation of nature from grace or the extrinsic account of grace promoted by the Neo-Scholastic theologies. However, he disagrees with D, a representative of the *Nouvelle Théologie*, about the idea of the "gratuitousness" of grace. For Rahner, D's understanding of grace prioritizes human nature, its capacity, and its orientation to God to the point that one's union with God in the beatific vision becomes something due to human beings because of the unique way that they were created by God. As a result, human longing for God or human transcendence cannot be considered as a gift of grace freely given by God to humankind.

To safeguard both God's freedom to give and human freedom to receive grace as a free gift from God, Rahner defines grace as God's self-communication and argues that grace is primarily the indwelling of God in human hearts, which then provides a foundation for a new relation between human persons and God. Because God creates human persons in the image of God and discloses God's very self to them by being present in their hearts, human nature is never a "pure nature," a nature untouched by grace as viewed by the extrinsic account of grace, but a

graced nature since the first moments of its existence. Consequently, grace cannot be considered as separated from human nature, nor is it utterly identical with human nature. Simply put, for Rahner, grace is the self-manifestation of God as God is in himself freely given to humanity not merely through all created beings, but also in human nature itself. As a result, all things could become sources through which God discloses God's self to the world and through which human persons can come to know God.

Building on Rahner's theology of grace, I addressed the issue that complicates the integration of sociology into ecclesiology, namely, the application of sociological theories and concepts to interpret the church as a theological and a socio-historical reality. Unlike Haight's use of the two-language method to study the church, Rahner's theology of grace enables theologians to justify the dialogue of ecclesiology and sociology through the use of one language: the language of grace. This language combines knowledge of revelation from Scripture, patristic theology, and church teaching with knowledge of human reasoning from philosophy, history, and sociology to examine the church as a sacramental reality. Rahner's approach to the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology does not separate the theological dimension of the church from the church's socio-historical dimension, as Haight's application of the two-language method does. For Rahner, because God has created human subjects in a unique way that enables them to experience God and receive God's self-communication through all realities as the symbols of God's love and presence in the world, one can employ every kind of experiences manifested through the knowledge of revelation and the knowledge of sciences considered as gifts of grace to understand, explain, and communicate one's understanding of God, the church, and other realities to recipients of the Gospel today.

Having examined the relationship between ecclesiology and sociology through Rahner's theology of grace, I explored his interpretation of the conciliar teaching on the church to show how he integrates sociological insights into conciliar ecclesiology. Distinctive in Rahner's interpretation of the church is his use of the theology of symbol to account for the theological and the socio-historical dimension of the church. For Rahner, the church is the sacrament of Christ or his *Realsymbol* in the world. As the *Realsymbol* of Christ, the church is primarily a theological reality, a product of grace, or the symbolic reality of God's self-communication through Christ and the Spirit to those who believe in Christ, and then to the rest of humanity. As the *Realsymbol* of Christ, the church is also the expression of Christ's living presence in the local communities of believers. Accordingly, Rahner's application of the idea of symbol to interpret the church allows him to emphasize both the idea of the church as sacrament and the idea of the church as people of God to view the church as the sacrament of Christ manifested in the new people of God, who come together to worship God and proclaim the Gospel.

For Rahner, the church as the sacrament of Christ is more than a combination of institutional factors such as Scripture, the sacraments, and the hierarchical structure of government composed of church officials. It includes also charismatic factors or various gifts given by the Spirit, who works through the institutional factors and all members of the church to make the church the *Realsymbol* of Christ. To account for all of these factors in his interpretation of the conciliar teaching on church, Rahner uses sociological ideas such as "open systems." This idea enables him to explain the role of the Spirit as "the charismatic factor" in the church and to show how church members should relate to one another. For Rahner, the church must open itself

to the guidance of the Spirit, who acts through all of its members and not merely through church officials. Church members receive hierarchical and charismatic gifts from the Spirit to undertake different ministries in the church. The task of church officials, who receive hierarchical gifts, is to examine and cultivate charismatic gifts bestowed by the Spirit upon other members of the church, while those who receive charismatic gifts collaborate with church officials and use their gifts to contribute to the mission of the church in the different contexts of the world.

Rahner's theology of grace and the church enables him to integrate sociological insights into ecclesiology, and so to interpret the church as an open system. However, Rahner neither clarifies the relationship between sociology and ecclesiology, the task I identified in Chapter Three, nor does he provide an account of approaches to sociology. To address this limitation in Rahner's thought, Chapter Four offered an account of approaches to the sociology of organizations and adopted Rahner's theology of grace to study Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences.

Sociologists employ three distinct theories to interpret organizations as rational, human, and open systems. The rational systems approach attempts to identify the most effective way to organize the work of organizations through the application of Weber's idea of bureaucracy, as well as Fayol's and Taylor's principles of scientific management. This approach emphasizes the bureaucratic structure of authority, using this hierarchical structure as an efficient means to guide the works of members of organizations. The rational systems approach to organizations has contributed significantly to the sociology of organizations. Nevertheless, it has two limitations: it

focuses exclusively on the issue of power and control and it does not consider the "needs" and "motivations" of individuals when they participate in the work of organizations.

In contrast to the rational system approach to organizations, the human systems approach pays attention to the role of human subjects and the informal structures, or the values and expectations shared between members of the organization when they work together. This approach prioritizes the importance of people, their relationships, and their motivation over goals, rules, and hierarchical structures. Despite of these differences, sociologists who promote the rational and human systems approach to organizations hold one thing in common: They tend to isolate organizations from their environment or external influences on the work of organizations.

The proponents of the open systems approach build on concepts promoted by the rational and the human systems approach to organizations, namely, goals, bureaucracy, hierarchical structure, centralization, human needs, and informal structure. The distinctive feature of this approach, however, is its emphasis on the significance of envionment over other elements of organizations such as goals and structures. Put differently, for the theorists of the open systems approach, organizations must adapt and change in the course of their development to address various influences from the environment. These influences include resources, the government, technology, other organizations, and the socio-cultural and economic conditions of communities where organizations operate. The environment is thus the key for those who interpret organizations as open systems, and how this approach differs from the rational and the human sytems approach.

Having offered an account of the approaches to the sociology of organizations, I adopted Rahner's theology of grace and combined concepts from these approaches with ideas from church teaching, Scripture, and canon law to analyze and evaluate the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences. Reviewing the Congregation for Bishops' Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences and Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Apostolos Suos*, through the theories of organizations, I argued that the Vatican prioritizes the rational systems over the human systems approach to organizations when it applies canon 449 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and theological principles such as the distinction between effective and affective collegiality to emphasize the power of the Pope and the college of bishops over the power of episcopal conferences. As a result, for the Vatican, episcopal conferences are merely organizations established by the Pope and the Apostolic See to promote the greater good that local churches offer to people in their region. These conferences cannot partake in the effective exercise of collegiality reserved for the Pope and other members of the college, nor can they act as intermediate structures of hierarchy between the papacy and the ministry of the bishop. Unless doctrinal statements of the conferences are approved unanimously or unless they obtain approval from the Apostolic See, decisions of episcopal conferences are merely an affective exercise of collegiality and have no force of law.

In comparison to the Vatican's approach to episcopal conferences, the Asian bishops adopt the human and open systems approach to organizations to interpret the FABC as a voluntary association of Asian episcopal conferences in the Statutes of the Federation. They prioritize sociological insights over theological concepts to design a hierarchical structure, which

fosters solidarity and co-responsibility among the Asian bishops for the welfare of the church and society in Asia. This structure of the FABC helps its member conferences devise forms of the apostolate, support Asian bishops in their ministries, and respond to environmental factors such as other organizations and various needs of the people of God in Asia.

Reviewing the Vatican's and the Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences through the second hermeneutical principle, the relationship between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, it is clear that the Vatican and the Asian bishops use different sources to approach the teaching on episcopal conferences. While the Vatican pays attention to Scripture, church teaching, and canon law to justify the theological foundation of collegiality and restrict the teaching authority of conferences, the Asian bishops emphasize the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to all the peoples of Asia. They apply sociological concepts to design the structure of the FABC and put the idea of episcopal confences into effect. Neither of these approaches alone and the sources used by them can provide a comprehensive reception of episcopal conferences in accordance with Pope John XXIII's teaching on the principal duty of Vatican II: the defense of the truths of faith and the communication of these truths to present-day believers. This statement justifies the thesis that I attempted to argue throughout the chapters: to interpret and implement Vatican II's teaching on the church and episcopal conferences, one has to combine sociological concepts with ideas from the traditional sources of theology.

In light of the Ratzinger/Kasper debate on communion between the local and the universal church, Rahner's interpretation of the church as an open system, and the Vatican's and the Asian bishops' reception of the conciliar teaching on episcopal conferences, I join together

here insights from the sociology of organizations with theological concepts to offer a model of episcopal conferences and to call for more research.

Episcopal conferences are permanent institutions in which bishops of a country or a region exercise their pastoral office jointly to promote the greater good that the church offers humankind (CD 38, Canon 447). Because the church is the sacrament of Christ manifested not merely through the relationship between Christ and all members of the church as a whole, but also through all legitimately local groups of the faithful governed by diocesan bishops in their local churches (LG 1, 26), episcopal conferences are established by the Pope and the Apostolic See to foster solidarity among the bishops and support communion among local churches.

To encourage communion among local churches and unite diocesan bishops to carry out the mission of Christ in a particular context of the world, episcopal conferences should be considered as rational, human, and open systems. The conferences are rational systems in the sense that their structures are designed in accordance with Weber's theory of bureaucracy, as well as Fayol's and Taylor's principles of scientific management. More concretely, there are clearly defined responsiblities and functions among committees and offices of the conferences, and a clear vertical chain of command that moves from the plenary assembly to the standing committee, and then to the central secretariat. Each organ of an episcopal conference should have its formal written rules and policies that govern its work and its cooperation with other organs. The rules and policies of the conference should be approved by all of its members. These rules and policies ensure that possible conflicts between different members, committees, and offices of the conference can be settled in accordance with its Statutes.

Episcopal conferences are human systems in the sense that the conferences help diocesan bishops understand various problems facing their local churches, enable them to meet better the needs of the people of God, and propose possibilities of solutions and coordinated actions between bishops and various members of their local churches. Put differently, episcopal conferences support diocesan bishops and respect their authority as pastors of local churches and members of the episcopal college (LG 22, 23). These conferences cannot restrain the authority of individual bishops nor consider them as branch managers of the conferences, who are responsible for implementing decisions of the conferences. Nevertheless, when two thirds of members of the conferences approve certain decisions and these decisions have been confirmed by the Apostolic See, these decisions shall have the force of law that would call for the response of *obsequium religiosum* not merely from the faithful of the country and the region, but also from the bishops (CD 38, 4).

Episcopal conferences are open systems in the sense that their members are responsive to the environment and adapt their understanding of goals and structures in response to different influences from the environment. The FABC offers a good example to illustrate the idea of episcopal conferences as open systems when the conference's members extend their interpretation of the FABC's purpose to include not merely the statement established by their founding members in the 1972 Statutes, that is, "to foster among its members solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of church and society in Asia," but also the teaching of *Christus Dominus*, that is, "to promote and defend whatever is for the greater good" (CD 38). This revision of the FABC's statement of purpose enables one to realize that the Asian bishops

interpret their organization as an open system and broaden their understanding of the Federation's purpose to address environmental factors such as the needs of its member conferences and to consider ecumenical and interreligious dialogues as a major goal of the FABC.

Relating the FABC's reception of episcopal conferences as open systems to Rahner's interpretation of the church as an open system, one can receive an idea from him and apply it to the study of a model of episcopal conferences. For Rahner, the church as an open system must learn from the Spirit, who works through both Pope, bishops, and other members of the church. Rahner's understanding of the Spirit as the charismatic factor in the church can receive support from *Lumen Gentium*: The Spirit "distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the church" (LG 12). Integrating Rahner's interpretation of the church and the role of Spirit in the church into the study of episcopal conferences, one can see a model of episcopal conferences as open systems. This model of episcopal conferences can promote Pope Francis's vision of a synodal church when he invites all members of the church to listen to one another and to the Spirit to know what the Spirit says to the church.[500] To actualize this vision of Pope Francis, members of episcopal conferences should include not merely voting members who are bishops of local churches but also non-voting members, who are representatives of local churches. Each of them has received different hierarchical and charismatic gifts from the Spirit, and they are invited to share their gifts and contribute to the work of episcopal conferences.

[500] For studies of Pope Francis's vision of a synodal church, see Ormond Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid: The *Sensus Fidelium* in a Synodal Church," *Theological Studies* 78 (2017), 299-325, and Amanda C. Osheim, "Stepping toward a Synodal Church," *Theological Studies* 80 (2019), 370-92.

In summary, episcopal conferences are permanent institutions established by the Pope and the Apostolic See to foster solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of the church and the society in the different contexts of the world. The rules and structures of episcopal conferences are designed in accordance with the rational systems approach to organizations to serve the needs and ministries of diocesan bishops. Members of these conferences can change these rules and redesign structures of their conferences if they consider these changes necessary to adapt to various needs of members conferences and to address different environmental factors that affect the work of their organizations. By listening to the Spirit of Christ that manifests through all members of the conferences, bishops can carry out the ministries that they receive from Christ to serve God's people entrusted to their care in local churches.

As a result of this study, I propose three issues that require further research: (1) the relationship between episcopal conferences and the conciliar teaching on the mission of the church: (2) the application of the sociology of organizations to study other organizations of the church such as the Roman Curia; and (3) the integration of the critical approach and the symbolic interactionist into the functionalist approach to study the church.

The relationship between episcopal conferences and the mission of local churches is a topic in need of research. This research would help diocesan bishops and all members of the faithful in local churches to understand the strengths and limitations of their conferences. For Vatican II, the purpose of episcopal conferences is to promote the greater good that local churches offer all peoples in their countries or regions. One can question how diocesan bishops

receive this teaching of the council and how the conferences enable bishops and other members of their churches to actualize Vatican II's teaching on mission. More concretely, it would be illuminating to take the FABC as a case study and ask how the Asian bishops' reception of episcopal conferences has contributed to the FABC's members and helped them and the faithful in their churches to implement Vatican II's teaching on the church's mission in the social context of countries such as India, Vietnam, and Korea. What could the episcopal conferences of these countries learn from the FABC to refine and redesign the structure of their conferences to better serve the people of God in their local churches?

In Chapter Four of this thesis, I combined theories and concepts from the sociology of organizations with theological ideas from Scripture, canon law, and church teaching to study the Vatican's reception of episcopal conferences. One can use the sociology of organizations and the method that I drew from Rahner's theology of grace to interpret and implement Vatican II's teaching on the Roman Curia. The conciliar bishops wanted to reform the Roman Curia and considered this structure as an organization to serve not merely the bishop of Rome but also all bishops as pastors of the church. As they stated in article 9 of *Christus Dominus*: "It is very much the desire of the Fathers of the sacred council that these departments, which have rendered excellent service to the Roman Pontiff and to the pastors of the church, should be reorganized in a manner more appropriate to the needs of the time" (CD 9). Recently, theologians such as

Massimo Faggioli,[501] Kurt Marten,[502] Gerard O'Collins,[503] and the Roman Curia itself have received this teaching of the council and offered their proposals for the reform of the Roman Curia. The sociology of organizations can surely become a vital source to study this teaching of the council and contribute to the reform the Roman Curia.

The final point that I would like to propose for further research is to integrate different approaches to sociology into the study of church organizations. As we have seen, Chapter Three offered three approaches to sociology: functionalist, critical, and symbolic interactionist. In this dissertation, I applied primarily the functionalist approach to interpret and implement Vatican II's teaching on episcopal conferences in Chapter Four. The functionalist approach to sociology emphasizes the way in which diverse components of a social structure are linked together to maintain the structure's stability, order, and development. By contrast, the critical approach to sociology assumes that a human society is characterized by inequality and conflict among its members that generate changes. This approach can complement the functionalist approach by highlighting not integration and harmony among members of a social structure, but division and conflict based on social inequality. The symbolic interactionist approach assumes that society is the product of countless everyday relations between individual members of social structures. It looks for patterns of interaction among these members to understand how social structures function and how they should change to better adapt to a new context of society.

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[501] Massimo Faggioli, "The Roman Curia at and after Vatican II: Legal-Rational or Theological Reform," *Theological Studies* 76 (2015), 550-71.

[502] Kurt Martens, "The Reform of the Roman Curia at the Service of the New Evangelization," *Jurist* 75 (2015), 197-228.

[503] Gerald O'Collins, "Collaborators of the Apostles and the Reform of the Roman Curia," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 82 (2017), 185-96.

Applying these approaches to the study of the FABC, one can comprehend not merely how the organs of the FABC's hierarchical structure work together to achieve the goal of the Federation, but also possiblities of conflicts and disagreements among the FABC's members, who belong to different organs such as the standing committee, the central secretariat, and the offices. In addition, one can understand patterns of communication, common values, unspoken rules, and expectations among individual members of the Federation. The combination of the various sociological approaches can provide the Asian bishops with insights and solutions to further the work of the Federation, to anticipate conflicts, and to refine the Statutes of the FABC to help its members cooperate in carrying out the ministries entrusted to them by Christ and the Spirit in the context of society and the church in Asia.

The teaching on episcopal conferences is a significant innovation of Vatican II that aims to help diocesan bishops promote the apostolate in light of the council and post-concliar official documents in accordance with the various needs of local churches. Nevertheless, there has not been great clarity on the nature, purpose, structure, and teaching authority of episcopal conferences. As leaders of the church and members of these conferences, bishops are responsible for leading the mission of the church. They are invited by the council to cooperate with sociologists, theologians, and other members of the church to re-receive this teaching of Vatican II and deploy it as an effective means for implementing the council and carrying out the mission of Christ in today's world. By doing so, the church becomes the sacrament of salvation through which Christ and the Spirit work to bring about the reign of God to those who believe in Christ.

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