

has broken up into individual groups and almost into an agglomeration of single individuals. The crying need for an integral society may well be the starting point for the recovery by our world of the wholeness of reality in God.

Whether human life as it is can be subsumed under sociology, psychology, politics, economics, aesthetics, morals or religion, theology is relevant to all of it. Here lies open a wide field for the future. May BLACKFRIARS take its place there even more fully and effectively than it has done in the past.

A graceful and enduring tribute by all of us of congratulation on its five hundredth number would be to support it and its work to the utmost, by reading it and making it known to others.

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The Laity and the Council

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In this article I wish to show first, how the laity is involved in the Council and secondly, how the entire life of the Church is marked by what is called her 'collegiality', the co-operation of all in the acts of a few.

In preparation for the Second Vatican Council a great number of theologians and other specialists are examining the problems of the Church's life in the areas of doctrine and discipline. This work is not confined to the relatively few bishops and priests who have been appointed to the preparatory commissions at Rome. Theologians in general, in many parts of the world, are concentrating on matters dealing with the council and studying the problems that are likely to be discussed during the sessions.

This work is of utmost importance. It must not be forgotten, however, that the ecumenical council itself is the business of the apostolic hierarchy. Theologians may propose themes and elaborate plans for a council, but during the actual sessions responsibility lies entirely with the bishops acting as judges of faith and rulers of the Church.

According to Catholic faith, the Holy Spirit is present in a special way in the assembled college of bishops. Taken singly a bishop cannot speak in the name of the entire Church, but together, united in council, the bishops possess the charism of the Church's infallibility.

The promised assistance of the Holy Spirit, however, does not guarantee positive inspiration granted to single bishops or to the assembly as a whole. Trusting that the Spirit will guide them, the bishops must make decisions in regard to the life of the universal Church in the light of their own and their people's faith. This poses great problems.

A bishop who has spent his life in one country, serving people in their own particular situation, may be called upon to judge matters which are important and significant only in a quite different situation in another part of the Catholic world. It may happen that theological or liturgical tendencies which have existed for a whole generation in one country and are thoroughly familiar to the bishops of that area, sound startling, new, and unconvincing to bishops from regions where theology and liturgy have not had the same development. The more universal the Church, the more varied its problems and the proposed solutions, and the more difficult the task of the individual bishop to make decisions affecting the entire Catholic community.

Let us consider a concrete example taken from the First Vatican Council. A theological document dealing with the nature and the properties of the Church, the draft *De Ecclesia Christi*, was distributed to the bishops at the council in January 1870. The responsible editor of this draft was Father Schrader, an Austrian theologian. The first chapter defined the Catholic Church as the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. From the minutes of the council we know that many of the bishops regarded this definition as obscure, too abstract or too mystical, unsuited for a weighty theological document.

Father Schrader, strongly influenced by the contemporary patristic revival, was ahead of his time. The average opinion of the council was opposed to this definition of the Church, and in the amended draft the Mystical Body is only mentioned implicitly and incidentally. Even though this new draft was never submitted to the assembly of bishops—political circumstances interrupted the First Vatican Council rather suddenly—the episode illustrates well that it is the bishops, and not professional theologians, who determine the matter and scope of an ecumenical council.

If we sought the conviction of the Catholic hierarchy to-day, ninety years later, on the Mystical Body of Christ, we would find that the

concept is part of the ordinary teaching of bishops in all parts of the world, that it is preached and explained in pastoral letters without the slightest hesitation.

What has happened in these years? Is the doctrinal advance in the teaching of the bishops simply due to the Holy Ghost working in their hearts, or is it the outcome of a development in which the entire Church, led by the Spirit, is properly involved? This question is not difficult to answer.

We know how the concept of the Mystical Body found its way back into recognized and standard Catholic theology. There were, first of all, the great theological seers of the last century: Moehler in Germany and Cardinal Newman in England. There was, a little later, the liturgical movement with its emphasis on the Church as the community of saints incorporated into Christ, and a patristic revival with the same theological tendency. Then we had the biblical movement bringing to light the Pauline teaching on the Church and its mystery. Last but not least, we witnessed the growth of a new spirituality (represented, for instance, by the writings of St Thérèse of Lisieux) in which the individual Christian experiences himself as a living member of the organic community of men in Christ, conscious that personal holiness and sacrifice advance, by a vital and supernatural exchange, the total life of the Church.

These various tendencies in which priests as well as laymen were involved brought the doctrine of the Mystical Body to the foreground of attention. Theologians devoted studies to the subject. They expressed the ancient doctrine by means of newer and more refined concepts choosing a terminology which was sometimes happy, and sometimes less so. Even Protestant writers contributed to the theological development. There was life, preoccupation, controversy. The Mystical Body emerged again in the consciousness of the Catholic people.

To settle the matter and to correct certain deviations, Pope Pius XII wrote a special encyclical on the Church as Christ's Mystical Body. To-day the apostolic hierarchy is unanimous in accepting the concept which caused hesitation and criticism in 1870.

These practical considerations lead us to a deeper understanding of the way in which ecclesiastical doctrines develop and grow in the Catholic Church.

The Spirit of God is not confined to the hierarchy. The Holy Ghost operates in all members of the Church and may lead any of them to make a contribution to the evolution of doctrine. From the above

example it appears that even Protestants may be involved in this process. It is certainly the function of the ecclesiastical magisterium to speak to the people and announce the authentic doctrine, but in the consequent development of this doctrine the people as a whole are engaged.

An example even more obvious than the above is the evolution of Marian doctrines. Both Pius IX and Pius XII have justified their definitions of Marian dogmas by appealing to the faith of the whole Church, of hierarchy *and* people. The magisterium of the Church, we must conclude, not only speaks to the people, it also listens to the people. It is in this connection that theologians speak of the prophetic office of the laity.

People occasionally ask the question: Why don't we hear of laymen taking part in the ecumenical council? While we may regret the almost complete absence of lay people in the present preparations for the event, the answer to the question is quite simply: the laity are fully represented at the council—through their bishops.

The bishop is the representative of his people. This must not be understood in a democratic sense according to which one thinks of a representative delegated and authorized to act for a body of people. It must be understood in a scriptural and patristic sense: the bishop represents his people; he embodies them; he gives voice to their faith.

In the Scriptures we constantly find that a head, a leader, is identified with his people; he stands for the people, sums them up and represents them—so much so that often it is not easy to know whether the sacred author refers to a single person or to a community of which that person is the head. When the Bible says Pharaoh, it may mean Egypt; and when it says Jacob, all of Israel may be meant. Is the Servant of God in the Book of Isaias a single person or a whole people? Is the angel to whom the letters of the Apocalypse are addressed the local bishop or rather the Church to which he belongs? This kind of writing is continued by the Fathers of the Church. St Cyprian says: 'The bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop'.

The whole diocese, then, is in the bishop. He represents his diocese, knows it, listens to it, suffers with it and is sensitive to its insights, virtues, weaknesses, visions and aspirations. The bishop not only speaks to his people, he also listens to them.

These theological considerations lead us to a mysterious quality of the Church, the quality that has been called her 'collegiality'. The collegiality of the Church, deeply rooted in her unity and catholicity, mysteriously and supernaturally modifies her life so that the act of one

person, on any level whatever, involves all other persons in some sense.

There are people who believe that all Catholic initiative comes from the apostolic hierarchy, or that all new ideas come to us from Rome, or that we must not think or move until our bishops have commissioned us. Such views, however, are not based on a profound ecclesiology.

The Spirit permeates the whole Church. It would be wrong to say that the only fruit of the Spirit in the souls of the people is obedience to their bishops. No, the Spirit works many fruits: insight and fervour and prophecy, the urge to help and to build up the Church, the need to pray and suffer with the Church.

Have not most of the great movements in the Church begun in obscure corners, by a few people with vision, slowly making their way through one region after another, then expanding more rapidly, gaining access to all levels of ecclesiastical life, until they become approved, confirmed and stabilized by the apostolic hierarchy?

This is how the reform movement of Cluny developed into the more universal Gregorian reform of the eleventh century, how the movement of itinerant preachers led to the creation of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century, and how the various reform movements in different European countries prepared for the radical renewal of the Council of Trent.

The same law holds for our day. The emergence of the doctrine of the Mystical Body in Catholic consciousness, and the movements mentioned above associated with this development, all these are cases in point. Usually, though by no means always, the encyclicals of popes and the pastorals of bishops take into account, and presuppose, a vital spiritual movement which the Holy Ghost has produced in the life of the people.

It follows that we are all involved in the life of the Church, even in its rôle of teacher. Our voice of faith counts. This brings with it the obligation—and this is especially true for priests—to follow the various spiritual and theological movements in the Church, to study, to distinguish, and to become engaged in them. We must support the movements in the Church which correspond to our deepest convictions. We must subscribe to the reviews and journals which represent these viewpoints. We must articulate our thoughts.

It is certainly true that the Church is not a democracy and that doctrines are never determined by the vote of the people; but in an organic, vital, and supernatural way the spiritual currents in the Church, if led

by the Holy Ghost and carried forward by obedient men, will eventually find expression through the voice of the hierarchy and enter the official forms and ways of Catholic life. Again, the doctrine of the Mystical Body is a case in point.

Priests in particular should feel drawn to study the areas of theology which are of consequence to-day; they should occupy themselves with contemporary problems; they should write and publish to lead people to a deeper understanding of our present situation. Our bishops sitting in council will not speak as private individuals; they will speak as representatives of their people's faith and convictions. If there is no spiritual vibration, no melody, in our midst, the bishops listening to us will hear no song.

If we try to describe the government of the Catholic Church, we discover that it is not an easy undertaking. The accepted terms of political history are not adequate; the Church is not a monarchy, nor an oligarchy, nor a democracy, though its government does have elements of all these forms of political organization.

The Church resembles a monarchy because the Bishop of Rome exercises universal jurisdiction over the entire community. The Church resembles an oligarchy because she is ruled by bishops who, together, are responsible for all Catholic life. And the Church resembles a democracy too, because her hierarchical leaders are not heirs of a privileged class but are chosen from among the people and because there is a principle of co-responsibility working in the Church which will be discussed here.

The Christian community possesses a sacred unity that reflects the unity within the triune God; the life of the Church, including her government, is a mysterious reality for which there is no adequate equivalent in secular terms.

As the Second Vatican Council is being prepared, the question of Church government has come into the foreground of theological studies. The First Vatican Council had defined certain elements of ecclesiastical life, but due to the sudden interruption of its work, many other elements were left undetermined.

In particular that council defined that the supreme jurisdiction of the pope was *episcopal*, *immediate*, and *ordinary* over the whole Church—over other bishops and over the people. This means that the pope has governing power touching every single Catholic directly, not through his local bishop, and that this power is not one of extraordinary intervention, but belongs to the normal exercise of his office.

At the same time the First Vatican Council declared, though quite briefly, that bishops are true pastors. They are not simply legates of the pope; they are successors of the apostles set over their flock. Their power in their proper area is also episcopal, immediate, and ordinary.

The difficulty which arises immediately is that now there are apparently two episcopal, immediate, and ordinary powers in each diocese, one of the pope, the other of the local bishop. How do these two guarantee the unity of the Church? Must not one power be limited by the other? The First Vatican Council did not give a clear answer to this question.

Perhaps a clear definition is here not desirable, or even possible. The harmonious working of the twofold exercise of jurisdiction is left to the ingenuity of charity and the inspiration of the Spirit. It was said in the council that the pope must use his power for the building up, not for the destruction of the Church. If he interfered daily in the episcopal government of a diocese, he would hinder healthy Church life, rather than foster it. The principle of harmony then is simply love of the community.

This duality of power in the diocese is most significant. We find a similar duality when we consider the supreme jurisdiction in the Church universal. The First Vatican Council defined that the pope possesses full and supreme power in the Church, independently of the consent of the bishops. The pope is, of course, always united to the Church and her bishops. He is in the Church, in the collegium of the bishops, and therefore his decisions will always be in organic relation to the life of the entire Christian community. But in the exercise of his supreme authority he is not dependent on the approval of his fellow bishops.

At the same time the pope is not the unique subject of full and supreme jurisdiction in the Church. There is a second subject, the entire episcopate in union with the pope gathered in council. A general or ecumenical council has as much power, the same full and supreme jurisdiction, as the pope possesses by himself. There are then in the Church two subjects of supreme authority; but this power is not thereby multiplied. A real conflict is impossible. It is impossible, for example, for a council to depose a pope, since the pope is part of the council. An assembly from which the pope is excluded is not a council and has no jurisdiction whatever.

This doctrine of the *subjectum duplex* was not defined at the First Vatican Council. It came up however many times in the discussions

surrounding the definition of papal power. The commission which had prepared the text for the Vatican definition made it clear that the supreme power of the pope to be defined by the council was not in contradiction to the ancient theology of the *subjectum duplex*. This doctrine may be upheld to-day, and it may possibly be defined at the Second Vatican Council.

Looking at the governing power in the Church, then, on the level of the diocese and of the universal community, we discover a certain duality. This is the reason why we said that the Church is not a monarchy. The power of the pope is not limited or conditioned and yet it is not the only power in the Church. In the diocese it is paralleled by the power of the bishop, and in the universal Church supreme power is also possessed by the episcopate including the pope.

This sacred duality is firmly rooted in the New Testament.

The governing body of the Church in the New Testament is the collegium of the apostles. They are simply called The Twelve. They receive the mission to carry the faith to the nations. They are gathered in the upper room when the Spirit comes to establish the Church in power. They decide the important issues in the community. To be in agreement with their teaching was the ultimate criterion for all teachers and prophets in the Church. Even St Paul, who was chosen to be an apostle by Christ directly, appealed to the apostles at Jerusalem with whom he conferred and was completely at one.

Ecclesiastical unity in the early days of the Church consisted in the dependence of every Christian on an apostle, an apostle who in turn belonged to the closely knit apostolic collegium.

At the same time it is made clear that there was a first apostle among the Twelve, a principle of unity, one who is to confirm the others in their faith. We find that in several practical situations Peter takes a leading part. He is singled out by special promises made to him. He exercises a special position within the body of the Twelve.

As we read the New Testament we notice that much that is said of Peter is also said of the Twelve including Peter. Peter is called the rock on which the Church is built; but the apostles, the Twelve, are also called the foundation of the Church. Peter receives the power to forgive sins; and the same power is given to the Twelve as a group. Peter is the pillar of truth confirming the faith of his brethren; and the apostles are the pillars of truth in the life of the Church universal. Whatever is said of Peter alone is also said of the Twelve as a group, with one exception: Peter's singular place *within* the Twelve. We are

told that Peter has primacy in the Church, and that the apostolic collegium has primacy in the Church. But this introduces no division in the Christian community, since Peter himself belongs to the Twelve.

Peter is the prince of the apostles. According to the promises made to him, he has supreme authority over the entire Church and over the other apostles. But Peter is also a member of the collegium of the Twelve, and according to the promises made to them, they exercise supreme jurisdiction in the Church. We have a duality here, but no separation. It is Peter acting alone, or Peter acting in union with the apostles. He is the principle of unity.

This duality in the exercise of ecclesiastical power reveals a quality of the Church which has been called her 'collegiality'. The Church being the mystery of charity in the world, incarnate in a community, embraces her members in such a way that in all significant actions all members are in some sense involved. All Christians are active in the growth of the Church through the centuries. No one can act in isolation. In the exercise of her life, all members are present to one another. In the acts and decisions of one person in the Church, all the brethren in some sense collaborate.

The Christian community is not divided into an active part of men giving orders, and a passive one of men being led. The common charity lays down a rule of life, of interrelation, for which there is no parallel in secular society. The mysterious sharing of all in the acts of each one is the result of our close union in Christ, the Head of the body.

This collegiality is apparent on every level of Church life. We see it in the liturgy, in prayer, in holiness. This is what we mean by the communion of saints. But it is also found in the exercise of authority in the Church. The gospels insist that all authority in the Church is a service to others. Jesus said: 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. Not so is it among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant'. Authority in the Church is a service to the community, it recognizes the dignity of each person and the co-responsibility of those who must obey.

This inter-relationship in charity is clearly brought out by the duality within unity between Peter and the Twelve, and between the Pope and the collegium of bishops. This duality becomes the symbol of collegiality in the Church, a sign announcing how all authority in the

Church is qualified by the special co-operation of those who are under it. Though the bishop has complete ecclesiastical power in his diocese, he acts according to the law of collegiality, conscious of the responsibility of the Christians surrounding him. This is expressed in the Church of Europe by a chapter of canons acting as counsellors of the bishop. Canons have no jurisdiction in the proper sense, and hence there is no strict analogy to the collegium of the apostles, but they set a pattern in which it is natural and easy to be faithful to the collegiality in the Church.

The same collegiality is observed in the relationship between the apostolic hierarchy and the people. According to Catholic doctrine, jurisdiction and the office to teach belong only to bishops; but in the exercise of their authority the bishops take into account their own mission to serve the community and also the co-responsibility of the laity. I have shown above that the Catholic hierarchy not only teaches the people; in the development of doctrine in the Church, the hierarchy also listens to the people.

The ecumenical council is a magnificent and inspiring manifestation of the Church's collegiality. The whole Church is present, brought to unanimity through the Spirit. Each bishop is called upon to exercise a certain power in regard to the universal Church. Even though he is ordinary pastor only in his diocese, by virtue of the Church's collegiality he is able to have a real share in ruling the universal Church. This happens at a council. The council is a magnificent concelebration of the offices, priestly, prophetic and royal, which the Lord has entrusted to his Church. All are responsible for the whole community, and all for each part.

The council is not simply an assembly of bishops in union with the pope. It is the presence of the whole Church. Bishops are called to the council not as private persons, but as representatives of their people. In each bishop the voice of the whole diocese becomes audible, in each bishop the faith of his people enters actively into the council.

The Dutch hierarchy in their pastoral letter of Christmas, 1960, wrote: 'We, your bishops, have a real need for all your co-operation in these months of preparation'. They said: 'The council seeks alignment with the Church's general consciousness of faith and with the public opinion that is dominant among the faithful with respect to problems of modern life'. And hence they seek to learn what their people think.

Through such an interaction in charity, the collegiality of the Church

becomes more visible and convincing. The council will then be, in the words of Pope John, 'the presence and participation of the bishops who are the living representation of the catholic, world-wide Church'.

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A Letter to Pablo Antonio Cuadra concerning Giants

THOMAS MERTON

At a moment when all the discordant voices of modern society attempt to exorcize the vertigo of man with scientific clichés or prophetic curses I come to share with you reflections that are neither tragic nor, I hope, fatuous. They are simply the thoughts of one civilized man to another, dictated by a spirit of sobriety and concern, and with no pretensions to exorcize anything. The vertigo of the twentieth century needs no permission of yours or mine to continue. The tornado has not consulted any of us, and will not do so. This does not mean that we are helpless. It only means that our salvation lies in understanding our exact position, not in flattering ourselves that we have brought the whirlwind into being by ourselves, or that we can calm it with a wave of the hand.

It is certainly true that the storm of history has arisen out of our own hearts. It has sprung unbidden out of the emptiness of technological man. It is the genii he has summoned out of the depths of his own confusion, this complacent sorcerer's apprentice who spends billions on weapons of destruction and space rockets when he cannot provide decent meals, shelter and clothing for two thirds of the human race. Is it improper to doubt the intelligence and sincerity of modern man? I know it is not accepted as a sign of progressive thinking to question the enlightenment of the twentieth century barbarian. But I no longer have any desire to be considered enlightened by the standards of the stool pigeons and torturers whose most signal claim to success is that