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Sources of the Encyclical *Ut unum sint*

Abstract: John Paul II's encyclical *Ut unum sint* on commitment to ecumenism was published 30 years after the ground-breaking ecumenism decree of Vatican II *Unitatis redintegratio*. It was meant to present a summary of everything the Catholic Church and its partners achieved in the field of ecumenical efforts. However, the article does not list these achievements but discusses the very fundamentals of Catholic identity, namely, how the Catholic Church is to remain faithful to itself in developing ecumenical dialogue with other churches and ecclesial communities. The article thus provides a detailed analysis of the way the encyclical uses the basic sources of faith, that is, the *logia* of the Sacred Scripture, Church Fathers and the Magisterium. As one might expect, the documents of the Magisterium that are quoted are the documents of Vatican II because this council represents a real turning point in the relations of the Catholic Church towards ecumenism. The article also considers the role of the canon law for ecumenism because both codices of canon law as well as the ecumenical directory represent major tools for the realisation of ecumenical efforts.

Keywords: Holy Scripture, ecumenical dialogue, Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches, Protestant Reformation, Code of Canon Law, encyclical, papacy, magisterium, Tradition, Catholic faith

1. The testimony of the Scripture

Ecumenism amongst Christian churches is lived and practiced as a dynamic process; therefore primarily it is not a matter of building institutions, but participation in a living movement. This reality would not necessarily suggest normative regulation but the establishment of maximum space for immediate inspiration and spontaneous vitality. This, how-

ever, is not the case. In fact, this is also clear from John Paul II's encyclical *Ut unum sint* on the commitment to ecumenism,[1] which reviews three decades of the development of ecumenical relations, that is, from the period in which the Church declared its commitment to a progressing ecumenical movement with the ecumenical decree *Unitatis redintegratio* of Vatican II.[2] Of course, the encyclical is imbued with the spirit of idealism and optimism, however, its text shows also firm normative grounds upon which ecumenism practiced in the Catholic Church should be founded, if it is to really correspond to what the Church considers obligatory and to what defines its identity.

Clearly, the basic source, recognised by all participants in the ecumenical dialogue are the Sacred Scriptures. As regards the 27 writings of the New Testament, almost all the churches share the canon, or the differences in dealing with the canon do not present an insurmountable obstacle.[3] The "deuterocanonical" or "non-canonical" books (in the terminology used by the Eastern Orthodox) do not really present a major problem in terms of the contents. The issue at stake here is rather the concept of church authority, which according to the Catholic concept is authorised to make a legitimate decision about the extent of the biblical canon.[4] This can be contrasted with a certain indecisiveness and vagueness on the side of the Eastern Orthodox, as well as a unanimous preference for just 39 books of the Hebrew canon in the churches of the Protestant Reformation.

The decree of the Council appreciates the high concern of the reformed churches for the Bible, and states that it represents the reason for recognising them as well as a promise for a greater mutual understanding: "A love and reverence of Sacred Scripture which might be described as devotion, leads our brethren to a constant meditative study of the sacred text. […] But while the Christians who are separated from us hold the divine authority of the Sacred Books, they differ from ours — some in one way, some in another — regarding the relationship between Scripture and the Church. For, according to Catholic belief, the authentic teaching authority of the Church has a special place in the interpretation and preaching

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[1] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 87 (1995), pp. 921—982 (hereafter: UUS).

[2] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 57 (1965), pp. 90—112 (hereafter: UR).

[3] "The Syrian church, however, never fully accepted the other Catholic Epistles or Revelation. Coptic New Testament lists contained 1—2 Clem.; and the Ethiopian church seems to have had a canon of 35 books, the additional eight including decrees, called the Synodus, and some Clementine writings." R.F. Brown, R.E. Collins: "Canonicity." In: *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Eds. R.F. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, R.E. Murphy. London 1990, pp. 1034—1054, p. 1051.

[4] *Concilium Tridentinum*, *Decretum primum: recipiuntur libri sacri et traditiones apostolorum*. In: Eds. G. Alberigo et al. *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*. Bologna 2013, pp. 663—664.

of the written word of God. But Sacred Scriptures provide for the work of dialogue an instrument of the highest value in the mighty hand of God for the attainment of that unity which the Saviour holds out to all."[5]

For a correct interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the tradition of the Church, represented especially by the writings of the Eastern Orthodox Church Fathers and the doctrines of the first seven ecumenical councils plays a greater role than the teaching authority of the Church. However, the Reformation, for which the Sacred Scriptures are the *norma normans*, that is, the rule, to which everything else must be subordinated, reads the Bible through the lenses of the confessional documents (confessions)[6] or the key writings of the reformers, as may be illustrated by the crucial meaning of the Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.[7]

2. The biblical passages in the Encyclical

As regards the encyclical of Pope John Paul II on commitment to ecumenism, its very title is biblical: *Ut unum sint*. It is part of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer reported in the Gospel of St. John: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."[8] The actual Johannine writings witness that this urgent prayer of Christ was not completely materialised even in the early period of the Church. In fact, even in the Johannine communities, there were painful and dramatic schisms: "They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us […]."[9]

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[5] Cf. UR 21.

[6] Cf. R. Říčan: *Čtyři vyznání. Vyznání augsburské, bratrské, helvetské a české. Se čtyřmi vyznáními staré církve a se čtyřmi články pražskými*. Praha 1951.

[7] "The institution provided a clear, lucid summary of the Reformation-based doctrine, as it was elaborated by the first generation of the second Reformation. It was going to become armoury of the evangelicals, a handbook used as their introduction to the Sacred Scriptures. 'Although the Sacred Scriptures,' wrote Calvin, 'contain perfect doctrine which needs no addition, the one who is not thoroughly trained in it, needs an introduction and instructions regarding what to seek in it'." A. Molnár: *Pohyb teologického myšlení. Přehledné dějiny dogmatu*. Praha 1982, p. 343.

[8] John 17:20—21.

[9] 1 John 2:19.

Indeed, Christian disunity is not a persuasive testimony to those who are distant from Christ and who "are not of this sheep pen."[10] It is thus no wonder that the need for ecumenical relations amongst the churches became urgent in connection with the development of their missionary activities.[11] In a direct connection to Christ's prayer for unity, John Paul II talks about the witness of Christian martyrdom in the course of the 20th century: "The courageous witness of so many martyrs of our century, including members of Churches and Ecclesial Communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church, gives new vigour to the Council's call and reminds us of our duty to listen to and put into practice its exhortation. These brothers and sisters of ours, united in the selfless offering of their lives for the Kingdom of God, are the most powerful proof that every factor of division can be transcended and overcome in the total gift of self for the sake of the Gospel."[12]

Such a unanimous recognition of martyrs who neither lived, nor died in full communion with the Catholic Church, was something the Church had not known before. In fact, even those who might have died for the Christian faith, but were also seen as "heretics or schismatics," could not have been *stricto sensu* considered equal to those martyrs who participated in the full Catholic doctrinal and disciplinary unity.[13] In fact, John Paul II's encyclical understands the idea of unity manifested in the witness of martyrdom eschatologically in relation to the community of the saints (*communio sanctorum*): "While for all Christian communities the martyrs are the proof of the power of grace, they are not the only ones to bear witness to that power. Albeit in an invisible way, the communion between our Communities, even if still incomplete, is truly and solidly grounded in the full communion of the Saints — those who, at the end of a life faithful to grace, are in communion with Christ in glory. These Saints come from all the Churches and

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[10] Cf. John 10:16.

[11] "The division of churches, especially in missionary areas, was experienced as painful. The division resulted in undermining the credibility of the missionaries, mutual competition in some places led to animosities. Nevertheless, it was necessary to coordinate the activities and join the forces." J. R. Tretera: *Konfesní právo a církevní právo* [Confessional and Church Law]. Praha 1997, p. 20.

[12] Cf. UUS 1.

[13] "Not all of those who died during the persecution of Christians could become martyrs. According to Catholic authors, what would make them martyrs proper is not the very suffering, but the reason why they underwent it. Only those who endured pain for justice (*iustitia*) and love (*caritas*), can claim the crown of martyrdom. Because of that, as Augustine says, martyrdom in a pagan or heretical community is impossible." In: *Příběhy raně křesťanských mučedníků II*. Ed. P. Kitzler. Praha 2011, p. 43.

Ecclesial Communities which gave them entrance into the communion of salvation."[14]

The pope insists that the unity, as described by Christ in the High Priestly Prayer, is not just a fond hope: "This unity, which the Lord has bestowed on his Church and in which he wishes to embrace all people, is not something added on, but stands at the very heart of Christ's mission. Nor is it some secondary attribute of the community of his disciples. Rather, it belongs to the very essence of this community. God wills the Church, because he wills unity, and unity is an expression of the whole depth of his *agape*."[15] This concept of ontologically given unity is also the subject matter of theological reflection in the Eastern Orthodox churches.[16] These churches have a special predilection for the theological and spiritual message of the Fourth Gospel. The pope himself in the encyclical quotes John's edited interpretation of the high priestly *logion* on the significance of Jesus' death: "He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one."[17] As the Evangelist suggests, the high priest expressed more than he could have thought and predicted the universal efficacy of Christ's salvific sacrifice.[18]

Apart from the High Priestly Prayer, quoted several times in the encyclical,[19] unity is also a major issue in the epistle to the Ephesians. If Paul's letter to the Galatians is sometimes nicknamed Magna Charta of Christian freedom, it may not sound inappropriate to call the letter to the Ephesians the "great charter" of Christian unity. John Paul II quotes from

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[14] Cf. UUS 84.

[15] Cf. UUS 9.

[16] "A major factor in ecumenism is, above all, *unity*. Without unity the very existence of the Church is impossible. It stems from its very essence and it is built up on the model of the Holy Trinity. From the beginning, the Church had to struggle with various heretical and schismatic tendencies which disturbed the doctrinal, moral, and organisational unity of its life. The great Fathers had to constantly heal the crack in the seamless dress of the Church by the Arians, Pneumatochians, Nestorians, Sabelians, Manicheans, Monophysites, Monothelitits and others. The most important works of the great Fathers were written precisely in a polemic with these heresies." Š. Pružinský: *Aby všetci jedno boli. Pravoslávie a ekumenizmus*. Prešov 1997, p. 15.

[17] Cf. John 11:51—52. In: UUS 5.

[18] "This is an important remark, in which the stance of the evangelist is made clear. It is based on a universal belief that the High Priest carried a prophetic charisma due to his supreme position. Caiphas's unconscious prophecy thus achieves extraordinary apologetic importance. In fact, it is the supreme High Priest who proclaims the universal scope of Jesus's sacrifice." A. Poppi: *Sinossi dei quattro Vangeli. Introduzione e commento, Volume II*. Padova 1995, p. 493.

[19] Cf. UUS 9, 23, 26, 27, 96, 98.

this letter in the encyclical, in the passage on the unity of the Jews and pagans in Christ: "[He] has destroyed the barrier […] through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."[20] The unification of humanity, which used to be divided into two irreconcilable factions, was made possible through Christ's sacrifice which completed the plan of the Father, who may thus clearly see "what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things."[21] Alongside Christ's High Priestly Prayer, the letter to the Ephesians represents an extraordinary supportive text for the ecumenical movement.[22]

A great means to achieve unity is a sincere conversion of all Christians because the very disunity of the Christian is a consequence of sin. From the plethora of biblical passages dealing with this issue, the encyclical chooses the formula from the Gospel of Mark, in which the contents and the meaning of Jesus' public activity is summed up: "'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'"[23]

Another indispensable tool for ecumenical effort is prayer. In relation to prayer, the pope in the encyclical focuses mainly on the following promise of Christ: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."[24] One may not fail to notice that Jesus' *logion* has a clear ecclesiological charge, which makes a very fitting and illustrative for the needs of the text of the encyclical dealing ecumenism.[25] By using the quotation from the letter to the Romans, John Paul II also stresses the prayerful mission of the Holy Spirit as the real animator of the ecumenical efforts: "How is she to obtain this grace? Through *giving thanks*, so that we do not present ourselves empty-handed at the appointed time: 'Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness […] 'intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words' (Rom 8:26), disposing us to ask God for what we

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[20] Cf. Eph 2:14—16. In: UUS 5.

[21] Cf. Eph 3:9. In: UUS 9.

[22] "In the New Testament, the letter to the Ephesians has the highest profile in terms of ecclesiology: its very theme is the *unity of the church*. No other biblical book has been quoted so frequently in the ecumenical documents. Usually, the references focus on the distance from the situation, over-regional perspective and a generally valid character." P. Pokorný, U. Heckel: *Úvod do Nového zákona. Přehled literatury a teologie.* Praha 2013, p. 680.

[23] Cf. Mk 1:15. In: UUS 15.

[24] Mt 18:20. In: UUS 21.

[25] "This *logion* is a promise; at the same time it is at least a minimalistic definition of the Church: wherever there are two or three in my name. Thirdly, it is also an interesting alternative to the *logia* on the Holy Spirit. One would expect the promise of the Holy Spirit — but instead it talks about (spiritual?) presence of Christ." J. Mrázek: *Evangelium podle Matouše.* Praha 2011, pp. 314—315.

need. How is she to obtain this grace? Through *hope* in the Spirit, who can banish from us the painful memories of our separation. The Spirit is able to grant us clear-sightedness, strength and courage to take whatever steps are necessary, that our commitment may be ever more authentic."[26]

Finally, another major demonstration of ecumenical cooperation and togetherness of Christians are their joint participation on the works of charity. Here the encyclical refers to the parable about the Last Judgment found in the Gospel of Matthew: "For Christians, this cooperation, which draws its inspiration from the Gospel itself, is never mere humanitarian action. It has its reason for being in the Lord's words: 'For I was hungry and you gave me food'."[27] The pope refers only to the first of the "works of corporal mercy" as an *incipit* which introduces the whole passage with an extraordinary urgent message.[28]

3. The New Testament and the Papacy

The first biblical reference in the encyclical about the papal office, which is otherwise seen as an obstacle in the ecumenical movement,[29] is taken from the conversation on the way to Gethsemane in the Gospel of Luke: "This is a specific duty of the Bishop of Rome as the Successor of the Apostle Peter. I carry out this duty with the profound conviction that I am obeying the Lord, and with a clear sense of my own human frailty. Indeed, if Christ himself gave Peter this special mission in the Church and exhorted him to strengthen his brethren, he also made clear to him his human weakness and his special need of conversion: 'And when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren' (Lk 22:32). It is precisely in Peter's human weakness that it becomes fully clear that the Pope, in order to carry out this special ministry in the Church, depends totally on the Lord's grace and prayer: 'I have prayed for you that your faith may not

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[26] Cf. UUS 102, Rom 8:26.

[27] Cf. UUS 75, Mt 25:35.

[28] "Jesus uses the utmost, extremely troubling tool, if he says: hereby I declare unconditional solidarity with every failed existence. No one before him can feel safe. In fact, people on every corner of the street have the opportunity to encounter the very judge of the world: whatever one does for someone else in need is done to Jesus himself." K. BERGER: *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*. Gütersloh 2011, p. 117.

[29] This self-reflection — today see as memorable — was uttered by Paul VI in French: "Le Pape, Nous le savons bien, est sans doute l'obstacle le plus grave sur la route de l'oecuménisme." In: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 498.

fail' (Lk 22:32)."[30] There is also Jesus' famous promise from the scene of Peter's confession in Caesarea Philippi. The pope characterises Peter's role in the church not as "jurisdictional", but as "pastoral": "The Gospel of Matthew gives a clear outline of the pastoral mission of Peter in the Church: 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (16:17—19)."[31]

The encyclical provides a kind of synopsis of Christ's *logia* as well as the individual places in the New Testament which concern Peter the Apostle: the focus is Peter's weakness, unworthy of such a role, if he had not been authorised by the Lord himself: "It is just as though, against the backdrop of Peter's human weakness, it were made fully evident that his particular ministry in the Church derives altogether from grace. It is as though the Master especially concerned himself with Peter's conversion as a way of preparing him for the task he was about to give him in his Church, and for this reason was very strict with him. This same role of Peter, similarly linked with a realistic affirmation of his weakness, appears again in the Fourth Gospel: 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? … Feed my sheep' […] Peter, immediately after receiving his mission, is rebuked with unusual severity by Christ, who tells him: 'You are a hindrance to me' (Mt 16:23)."[32] This grace for a sinful individual, who is authorised with such a major role, is, however, incomprehensible to the ecclesiological emphases of the Protestant Reformation, which, paradoxically, stresses the action of grace very much.[33] Nevertheless, pope's reflections in their entirety are also in accordance with reliable exegetical findings.[34]

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[30] Cf. UUS 4, Lc 22:32.

[31] Cf. UUS 91, Mt 16:17—19.

[32] Cf. UUS 91, J 21:15—19; Mt 16:23.

[33] "One, however, cannot get away with the objection that the papal office, when linked to a single person, is an excessive load for a sinful person. Even the Catholic teaching does not suggest sinlessness of the pope: even the pope needs a confessor. However, the supreme authority granted to the office (and his clerks), as is it seems, cannot attain the proclaimed goal. In the 'ecumenical' argument, it becomes very clear: historically speaking, it was beyond the means of the papal office to protect the unity of the church of Christ." P. Filipi: *Křesťanstvo. Historie, statistika, charakteristika křesťanských církví.* Brno 2012, p. 74.

[34] "Not all of the evangelists talk about 'granting the primacy', however, nobody omits to remind us of Peter's activities in the moments of suffering. Pastoral and educative function of the event has a wider range than any other text dealing with the apos-

Because the Roman Church is not just linked to Peter's role as the Primate, but equally also to Paul's Apostleship, the encyclical focuses also on Paul, while using the same lenses of the apostle's weakness: "As for Paul, he is able to end the description of his ministry with the amazing words which he had heard from the Lord himself: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'; consequently, he can exclaim: 'When I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Cor 12: 9—10). This is a basic characteristic of the Christian experience. As the heir to the mission of Peter in the Church, which has been made fruitful by the blood of the Princes of the Apostles, the Bishop of Rome exercises a ministry originating in the manifold mercy of God."[35]

4. The Fathers of the Church and Catholic Tradition

The tradition of the church, which is another normative source of the doctrine and discipline of the Church in the encyclical, is represented with selected passages from the writings of the Fathers. The unanimous consensus of the Fathers (*consensus unanimis partum*) has always been considered as one of the manifestations of authentic, normative tradition of the Church. In quoting the homily of Pope Gregory the Great, John Paul II explicitly endorses the tradition of the Church: "In accordance with the great Tradition, attested to by the Fathers of the East and of the West, the Catholic Church believes that in the Pentecost Event God has already manifested the Church in her eschatological reality, which he had prepared 'from the time of Abel, the just one'. This reality is something already given."[36] It is thus clear that while the biblical studies draw the Catholic church nearer to the churches coming from the Protestant Reformation, the Tradition is the key topic of the Orthodoxy, as it is clear from the given extract in the encyclical, which explicitly refers to the Fathers of the East and of the West."[37]

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tle's personality or his faith. Clearly, he has become one of the most frequently read and commented extracts at penitential services." O. da Spinetoli: *Luca. Il Vangelo dei poveri.* Assisi 1994, p. 680.

[35] Cf. UUS 92, 2 Cor 12:9—10.

[36] Cf. UUS 14, Gregory the Great: *Homiliae in Evangelia* 19,1. In: *Patrologia latina* 76, p. 1154, quoted from: *Lumen gentium* 2.

[37] An Orthodox author says the following: "The tradition is a living memory of the Church which contains true doctrine and reveals it in history. The tradition is not an archaeological museum or a dead 'deposit' of the faith. The tradition if a living force,

The encyclical also contains a reference to the famous *Commonitorium* of Vincent of Lérins which gives an extraordinary apt expression of the balance between stability of the Church's doctrine and its legitimate development. Although the encyclical does not quote any particular passage of the text (it only gives bibliographical references),[38] clearly the principles that need to be emphasised are the following: "The intelligence, then, the knowledge, the wisdom, as well of individuals as of all, as well of one man as of the whole Church, ought, in the course of ages and centuries, to increase and make much and vigorous progress; but yet only in its own kind; that is to say, in the same doctrine, in the same sense, and in the same meaning. […] Our forefathers in the old time sowed wheat in the Church's field. It would be most unmet and iniquitous if we, their descendants, instead of the genuine truth of grain, should reap the counterfeit error of tares. This rather should be the result — there should be no discrepancy between the first and the last. From doctrine which was sown as wheat, we should reap, in the increase, doctrine of the same kind — wheat also; so that when in process of time any of the original seed is developed, and now flourishes under cultivation, no change may ensue in the character of the plant."[39]

Vincent's *Commonitorium* has a lasting significance for determining the criteria of the doctrinal development in the Church.[40] In his encyclical on ecumenism, John Paul II uses his idea of developing the formulations of the dogma and states the following: "Because by its nature the content of faith is meant for all humanity, it must be translated into all cultures. Indeed, the element which determines communion in truth is *the meaning of truth*. The expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning."[41]

Apart from doctrinal identity, which may be adapted through the development of doctrine and terminology, John Paul II in his encycli-

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characteristic for every living organism. Christ's church is not dead Christ, but living, resurrected Christ." I. Belejkanič: *Pravoslávne dogmatické bohoslovie I*. [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology I]. Prešov 1995, p. 30.

[38] Cf. UUS 19, Vincentius de Lérins: *Commonitorium primum* 23. In: *Patrologia latina* 50, pp. 667—668.

[39] In: *Patrologia latina* 50, pp. 667—668.

[40] "*Commonitorium*, which is a follow up on Tertulian's *De praescriptione haereticorum*, is not a mere handbook, but rather a theological 'discourse on method' , making it possible to distinguish the Catholic faith from heresy: *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus* (cap. 2). There exist thus three criteria: universality, antiquity and unanimity." A. Di Bernardino: *Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane. Volume II*. Casale Monferrato 1984, p. 3595.

[41] Cf. UUS 19.

cal also articulates a Christologically founded need of a unitary pastoral leadership in the church, using again a major patristic authority, namely St. Augustine: "Saint Augustine, after showing that Christ is 'the one Shepherd, in whose unity all are one', goes on to exhort: 'May all shepherds thus be one in the one Shepherd; may they let the one voice of the Shepherd be heard; may the sheep hear this voice and follow their Shepherd, not this shepherd or that, but the only one; in him may they all let one voice be heard and not a babble of voices …'"[42] John Paul understands the papacy as the guarantee of the desire expressed so impressively by St. Augustine: "The mission of the Bishop of Rome within the College of all the Pastors consists precisely in 'keeping watch' (*episkopein*), like a sentinel, so that, through the efforts of the Pastors, the true voice of Christ the Shepherd may be heard in all the particular Churches. In this way, in each of the particular Churches entrusted to those Pastors, the *una, sancta, catholica et apostolica Ecclesia* is made present. All the Churches are in full and visible communion, because all the Pastors are in communion with Peter and therefore united in Christ."[43]

5. The Magisterium of the Church in the encyclical

Alongside the Sacred Scripture and the tradition of the Church, the magisterium, that is, the living teaching office of the Church, has a key normative significance for the doctrine and discipline of the Church.[44] In the first place, we need to point out that the very papal encyclicals represent manifestations of the ordinary teaching office of the church. This is

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[42] Cf. UUS 94; Augustinus: *Sermo* XLVI, 30. In: *Corpus Christianorum. Series latina* 41, p. 557.

[43] Cf. UUS 94.

[44] Standard Catholic apologetics expressed the magisterium with three characteristics: "1. *Magisterium vivum* — i.e. living — refers to those living persons who are entrusted with the ministry of teaching, who are to preach Christ's living word, and not just the dead letters of the Sacred Scriptures. 2. *Magisterium externum* — the external, i.e. the Christian truths are not attained on the basis of an intimate religious experience, but revealed truths were given *ab extra* by God himself. The third characteristics of the church magisterium 3. *Magisterium traditionale* follows from there — i.e. the revealed truths were given and handed on by Jesus Christ to be proclaimed and infallibly interpreted in the teaching office of the apostles and their successors. Of course, in handing on and interpreting the truths revealed by God, the Magisterium of the Church cannot err. That is why it is *magisterium Ecclesiae infallibile*, i.e. infallible." J. Kubalík: *Theologia fundamentalis. II. díl: Eklesiologie — O církvi*. Litoměřice 1983, pp. 87—88.

also the case with the encyclical on ecumenism. The encyclical emphasises the fact that alongside the Scripture and the tradition, the magisterium is indispensable for the Catholic Church: "Finally, dialogue puts before the participants real and genuine disagreements in matters of faith. Above all, these disagreements should be faced in a sincere spirit of fraternal charity, of respect for the demands of one's own conscience and of the conscience of the other party, with profound humility and love for the truth. The examination of such disagreements has two essential points of reference: Sacred Scripture and the great Tradition of the Church. Catholics have the help of the Church's living Magisterium."[45]

For the purposes of this encyclical the documents were predominantly those of Vatican II and of the post-conciliar popes, namely Pope Paul VI and John Paul II himself. The only exception was a reference to Vatican I in the passage about the necessity of the papal ministry in the Church: "It is the responsibility of the Successor of Peter to recall the requirements of the common good of the Church, should anyone be tempted to over-look it in the pursuit of personal interests. He has the duty to admonish, to caution and to declare at times that this or that opinion being circu-lated is irreconcilable with the unity of faith. When circumstances require it, he speaks in the name of all the Pastors in communion with him. He can also — under very specific conditions clearly laid down by the First Vatican Council — declare *ex cathedra* that a certain doctrine belongs to the deposit of faith."[46] Characteristically, the pope avoided using the term infallibility (*infallibilitas*) and instead talks about the deposit of faith (*depositum fidei*), that is, uses the formulation which seems more accept-able for the ecumenical partners, since it draws on the Pauline letters.[47]

The attitude of the Church's Magisterium towards the ecumenical movement used to be very reserved and certain progress was achieved only during the pontificate of Pius XII in the period after WWII.[48] As for the documents of the actual Vatican II, the encyclical most frequently quotes

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[45] UUS 39.

[46] Cf. UUS 94; Vatican I: *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ "Pastor aeternus"*. In: *Denzinger — Schönmetzer* 3074.

[47] Cf. 2 Cor 4:7; 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14.

[48] "On the side of the Catholics, already in the period of WWI there arose indi-vidual groups, especially lay groups, which strongly felt the need for ecumenism, how-ever, they were received in the Catholic hierarchy. This came about only after WWII in the instruction *Ecclesia catholica* of the Roman congregation of the Holy Office from 20th December 1949, in which the numerous private pro-ecumenic initiatives were rec-ognised and the bishops were called not only to supervise this spiritual movement, but also to support it." H. Müller: *Der ökumenische Auftrag*. In: *Handbuch des katholischen Kirchenrechts*, Eds. J. Listl, H. Müller, H. Schmitz. Regensburg 1983, pp. 553—561, pp. 553—554.

the dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*,[49] the declaration on religious freedom *Dignitatis humanae*,[50] and obviously the decree on ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*. Vatican II was positively received by the ecumenical partners of the Catholic Church and represents a serious beginning of the ecumenical dialogue on the side of the Catholic Church.[51] The mutual relation of the ecumenically relevant conciliar documents in the encyclical is summed up as follows: "In indicating the Catholic principles of ecumenism, the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* recalls above all the teaching on the Church set forth in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* in its chapter on the People of God. At the same time, it takes into account everything affirmed in the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*."[52]

In the Catholic teaching (formulated in the atmosphere Counter-Reformation), the outer, visible unity of the Church consists in the interplay of three elements: doctrine, sacraments and a common leadership. These are the *tria vincula*, three bond binding Catholic to their church, as formulated by Cardinal Bellarmin.[53] However, even Vatican II could not do without this Catholic definition in the constitution *Lumen gentium*, which in this matter is also recalled in the encyclical on ecumenism: "God wills the Church, because he wills unity, and unity is an expression of the whole depth of his *agape*. In effect, this unity bestowed by the Holy Spirit does not merely consist in the gathering of people as a collection of individuals. It is a unity constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith,

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[49] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 57 (1965), pp. 5—71 [hereafter: LG].

[50] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 929—946.

[51] "The decree on ecumenism and the major constitution on the church represent a new beginning in terms of the dialogue between the Catholic church and the churches of the reformation,, with Orthodox churches and world religions. The cornerstone was the constitution on the church. [...] The decree on ecumenism develops all that the church says about the relation to other Christian churches. As far as the relation between Christianity and world religions, this is expounded by the declaration *Nostra aetate*." P. WALTER: *Unitatis redintegratio. Das Ökumenismusdekret und die daraus erwachsene Ökumenediskussion*. In: *Geist in Form. Facetten des Konzils*. Eds. T. DIETRICH, T. HERKERT, P. SCHMITT. Freiburg im Breisgau 2015, pp. 196—210, p. 197.

[52] Cf. UUS 8.

[53] "In the tradition of pre-Tridentine controversial theology and the Council of Trent, Cardinal *Robert Bellarmin* (1542—1621) articulated a definition of the church, which impacted Catholic ecclesiology well into the 20th century. There was no positive evaluation of the Reformation critique. In strict opposition to the Reformation, it defines the church not from its invisible, but its visible form: 'The church is a community of people united by confessing the same faith, participation on the same sacraments under the leadership of legitimate pastors and, above all, Christ's vicar on earth, the Roman pontiff (*Controv.* 4, 3, 2)'." G. L. MÜLLER: *Katholische Dogmatik für Studium und Praxis der Theologie*. Freiburg im Breisgau 1996, pp. 608—609.

the sacraments and hierarchical communion."[54] For defining the outer, visible form of the Catholic church and its unity, the church also refers to the crucial and continuously discussed passage in the constitution *Lumen gentium*, where the term used for the relation between the visible Catholic church and the church of Christ is *subsistere*, a word which is difficult to translate into other languages: "The Council states that the Church of Christ 'subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him', and at the same time acknowledges that 'many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside her visible structure. These elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism towards Catholic unity'."[55] Moreover, the encyclical adds: "Full unity will come about when all share in the fullness (*plenitudo*) of the means of salvation entrusted by Christ to his Church."[56] On the other hand, Vatican II abandoned the term *sole beatific*, which used to be very frequent in the pre-conciliar period. In spite of this Christologically, ecclesiologically and sacramentally founded identity of the Catholic Church, in the decree on ecumenism the self-same church accepts the principle *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, which expresses the need for a constant reform of the Church. This is a principle adopted mainly by the Protestant Reformation, however, the idea is inherent also in an authentic Catholic reform.[57] The encyclical of Pope John Paul II contextualises this challenge: "In the teaching of the Second Vatican Council there is a clear connection between renewal, conversion and reform. The Council states that 'Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of human beings here on earth. Therefore, if the influence of events or of the times has led to deficiencies … these should be appropriately rectified at the proper moment'. No Christian Community can exempt itself from this call."[58]

The conciliar documents did not accept the earlier conception whereby the Catholic church is *societas (iuridice) perfecta*, that is, legally perfect

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[54] Cf. UUS 9, LG 14.

[55] Cf. UUS 10, LG 8.

[56] Cf. UUS 86, UR 3.

[57] "The Catholic Church is constantly looking for new, adequate means which would attract people of every historical period. New rites, new methods, and new means. The Church articulates which truths are to be reminded of and interpreted in a particular period and this or that need or in different dangers. This guarantees constant renewal and reform within the Church. Every period has its saints who awaken people to holiness, even in the most tragic moments for the Church." S.M. Braito: *Církev. Studie apologeticko-dogmatická*. Olomouc 1946, p. 406.

[58] Cf. UUS 16, UR 6.

society, which needs neither helping, nor being completed from the out-side.[59] This is true from that respect that it in relation to the execution of power given to the apostles and their successors, the Catholic Church lacks nothing. Nevertheless, the existence of churches outside the com-munion with the Catholic Church does not exclude their participation on that which is present in fullness in the Catholic Church: "With reference to the many positive elements present in the other Churches and Eccle-sial Communities, the Decree adds: 'All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to him, belong by right to the one Church of Christ. The separated brethren also carry out many of the sacred actions of the Chris-tian religion. Undoubtedly, in many ways that vary according to the con-dition of each Church or Community, these actions can truly engender a life of grace, and can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation'."[60] The means of further convergence of churches is above all mutual dialogue whose parameters in the encyclical are quoted from the conciliar document: "For this reason, the Council's Decree on Ecumenism also emphasizes the importance of 'every effort to eliminate words, judgements, and actions which do not respond to the condition of separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations between them more difficult'. The Decree approaches the question from the standpoint of the Catholic Church and refers to the criteria which she must apply in relation to other Christians. In all this, however, reciprocity is required. To follow these criteria is a commitment of each of the parties which desire to enter into dialogue and it is a pre-condition for starting such dialogue. It is necessary to pass from antago-nism and conflict to a situation where each party recognizes the other as a *partner*."[61] Dialogue is a great topic of the first encyclical letter of Paul VI *Ecclesiam suam*.[62] In fact, this is one of the major incentives for John Paul II's encyclical on the commitment to ecumenism: "In the Document, ecu-menical dialogue takes on a specific characteristic; it becomes a 'dialogue of conversion', and thus, in the words of Pope Paul VI, an authentic 'dia-logue of salvation'. Dialogue cannot take place merely on a horizontal level, being restricted to meetings, exchanges of points of view or even the

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[59] This concept evolved in comparing the church with the state: "The reflection basi-cally went this way: if the state is *societas iuridice perfecta* in the natural order, then the church represents the same society in the spiritual order […] It is thus possible, or even inevitable to establish legally defined relations between these two societies which are to be found at the hierarchical organisational climax of the entire human family." G. Dalla Torre: *La città sul monte. Contributo ad una teoria canonistica sulle relazioni fra la Chiesa e Comunità politica*. Roma 1996, p. 62.

[60] Cf. UUS 13, UR 3.

[61] Cf. UUS 29, UR 7.

[62] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), pp. 609—659.

sharing of gifts proper to each Community. It has also a primarily vertical thrust, directed towards the One who, as the Redeemer of the world and the Lord of history, is himself our Reconciliation. This vertical aspect of dialogue lies in our acknowledgment, jointly and to each other, that we are men and women who have sinned. It is precisely this acknowledgment which creates in brothers and sisters living in Communities not in full communion with one another that interior space where Christ, the source of the Church's unity, can effectively act, with all the power of his Spirit, the Paraclete."[63]

A major alleviation of the dialogue came with the concept of the "hierarchy of truths," newly formulated by the Council: "The Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* also indicates a criterion to be followed when Catholics are presenting or comparing doctrines: 'They 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. Thus the way will be opened for this kind of fraternal rivalry to incite all to a deeper realization and a clearer expression of the unfathomable riches of Christ'."[64] The Catholic Church long opposed this concept because a variant of this teaching had already existed in the thought of Reformed churches.[65] Also the term "hierarchy," taken from Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita,[66] had traditionally been reserved for a treatise on the inner differentiation of the people of God.

The encyclical also reminds us that ecumenical dialogue with the churches coming from the Reformation is going to be more challenging than the dialogue with Eastern Orthodox churches. Too many problems have piled up, since the Reformation in its time meant not just a frontal attack on some of the disciplinary excesses in the Catholic Church, but

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[63] Cf. UUS 35, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 642.

[64] Cf. UUS 37, UR 11.

[65] "A specific case of the classification of dogmas is the art of discernment, which developed in Protestantism since the 17th century: i.e. a distinction between whose articles of faith that are necessary for faith *articuli fundamentales* and those that are not necessary, *articuli non fundamentales*. According to this concept, only rejecting the former is to be understood as undermining the foundations of faith and salvation, while the latter can easily be refused without any harm to the salvation of souls. This distinction was introduced to prevent a complete breakdown of the unity of faith in Protestantism and to set at least some boundaries of unity." F. DIEKAMP, K. JÜSSEN: *Katholische Dogmatik*. Wil 2013, p. 33.

[66] "*Corpus Dionysiacum* consists of four treatises of the one unknown author: 1) *De divinis nominibus* (On Divine Names), 2) *De mystica theologia* (On Mystical Theology), 3) *De coelesti hierarchia* (On Celestial Hierarchy), 4) *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* (On Church Hierarchy) and also of ten theological documents." H. DROBNER: *Lehrbuch der Patrologie*. Frankfurt am Main 2011, p. 488.

also on the very sacramental structure of the Church and its ecclesiological anchoring. In this respect, the encyclical again refers to the decree on ecumenism: "Doctrinal and historical disagreements at the time of the Reformation emerged with regard to the Church, the sacraments and the ordained ministry. The Council therefore calls for 'dialogue to be undertaken concerning the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, the other sacraments and the Church's worship and ministry'."[67]

Concerning the churches of the Christian East, the pope reflects on the exercise of the Petrine ministry using the argumentation found in the decree on ecumenism. The question is whether, for example, the Orthodox churches would be willing to accept the papal powers that were fixed in the second Christian millennium: "As Bishop of Rome I am fully aware, as I have reaffirmed in the present Encyclical Letter, that Christ ardently desires the full and visible communion of all those Communities in which, by virtue of God's faithfulness, his Spirit dwells. I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard, above all in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian Communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation. For a whole millennium Christians were united in 'a brotherly fraternal communion of faith and sacramental life … If disagreements in belief and discipline arose among them, the Roman See acted by common consent as moderator'."[68]

6. The role of the canon law

The canon law with its normative regulations may seem to present the single biggest hindrance of the ecumenical movement, especially on the side of the Catholic Church. Ecumenical partners tend to understand law as a kind of redundant disciplinary "appendix" to the doctrine of the church, which may be removed without any harm to the doctrine.[69]

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[67] Cf. UUS 67, UR 22.
[68] Cf. UUS 95, UR 14.
[69] "However, one cannot conceal that a joint participation at the Table of the Lord with the Roman Catholics does not just — and in the first place — clash with doctrinal issues, but also problems of canon law on the side of the Romanists. The attitude of the separated brethren — Evangelical/Protestant — to the Roman Eucharist falls under the category of limited — very limited! — admission." P. FILIPI: *Hostina chudých*. Praha 1991, p. 109.

According to the Catholic concept, however, the law must follow the achieved degree of the theological dialogue, and thus may neither be an impediment, nor anticipation of what has not yet been achieved.[70] John Paul II in the encyclical on the commitment to ecumenism refers to the codices of canon law which he promulgated,[71] and in no way does he consider them obstacles in the development of ecumenical relations: "The two *Codes of Canon Law* include among the responsibilities of the Bishop that of promoting the unity of all Christians by supporting all activities or initiatives undertaken for this purpose, in the awareness that the Church has this obligation from the will of Christ himself."[72]

The summary of the implementing regulations for the realisation of ecumenical relations can be found in the ecumenical directory. The first two-volume one, was issued at a time in which the first Code of Canon Law of 1917, completely hostile to ecumenical relations from 1917 was still in force.[73] For non-Catholic Christians, the code used the neutral term *acatholici* (non-Catholics), or a rather derogatory term *haeretici vel schismatici* (heretics and schimatics); their churches were seen as *sectae haereticae vel schismaticae* (heretical or schismatical sects). The two-volume ecumenical directory from 1967 and 1970 is thus a typical illustration of post-conciliar legislature, which gradually derogated those norms, which in the existing canon law were not in accordance with the new impulses of the Second Vatican Council.[74]

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[70] "Nevertheless, the Church law cannot create an ecumenical community differently than through the reception of ecumenical declarations on the consensus and convergence of individual churches and ecclesial communities. For further legal development of the Catholic Church, significant is not just the reception of results of the ecumenical dialogue, but also ecumenism lived and practiced on the local level." F. Bernard: *Der ökumenische Auftrag — Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des katholischen Kirchenrechts*. In: Eds. U. Beykirch, G. Bier: *Kirchliches Recht als Freiheitsordnung. Gedenkschrift für Hubert Müller*. Würzburg 1997, pp. 39—65, pp. 62—63.

[71] For the Church of the Latin rite CIC: *Codex iuris canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus. Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 75, Pars II (1983), pp. 1—317; for the Catholic churches of the Eastern rites CCEO: *Codex canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus. Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 82 (1990), pp. 1033—1363.

[72] Cf. UUS 101; CIC, can. 755; CCEO, can. 902.

[73] *Directorium ad ea quae a Concilio Vaticano Secundo de re oecumenica promulgata sunt exsequenda. Pars prima*. In: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 574—592; *Directorium ad ea quae a Concilio Vaticano Secundo de re oecumenica promulgata sunt exsequenda. Pars altera: de re oecumenica in institutione superiore*. In: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 62 (1970), pp. 705—724.

[74] "Vatican II ordered to create new legal norms that are in accordance with the conclusions of the Council and thus transform the conciliar statements into applicable law." J. Listl, H. Müller, H. Schmitz: *Grundriß des nachkonziliaren Kirchenrechts*. Regensburg 1979, p. 25.

However, once the Code of Canon Law and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches were issued, a new situation came about, in which the new codification was at odds with the existing ecumenical directory. It was thus necessary to prepare a completely new ecumenical directory, which was issued in 1993, two years before the promulgation of the encyclical letter *Ut unum sint*.[75] In fact, the encyclical refers to it, the first mention being the abandonment of the term "separated brethren" (*fratres seiuncti*), that is, a term used by the documents of Vatican II in relation to non-Catholics: "The *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* refers to the Communities to which these Christians belong as 'Churches and Ecclesial Communities that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church.' This broadening of vocabulary is indicative of a significant change in attitudes. There is an increased awareness that we all belong to Christ."[76] Further in the encyclical, John Paul II emphasises the practical need for the directory in creating contractual law amongst the churches: "It needs be reaffirmed in this regard that acknowledging our brotherhood is not the consequence of a large-hearted philanthropy or a vague family spirit. It is rooted in recognition of the oneness of Baptism and the subsequent duty to glorify God in his work. The *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* expresses the hope that Baptisms will be mutually and officially recognized. This is something much more than an act of ecumenical courtesy; it constitutes a basic ecclesiological statement."[77]

7. Conclusions

Indeed, the encyclical *Ut unum sint* does not just contain John Paul II's enthusiastic memories of various ecumenical meetings at the top level. It is clearly delivered in a personal tone and with references to various important ecumenical activities in his pontificate up to that point. However, the crucial point is that the encyclical develops the impulses of Vatican II not only in relation to ecumenical activities, but also in terms of their necessary doctrinal anchoring. In this way the encyclical also contains many references to the Sacred Scriptures and the tradition of the

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[75] *Directorium oecumenicum noviter compositum. Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 85 (1993), pp. 1039—1119.

[76] Cf. UUS 42, *Directorium oecumenicum* 5.

[77] Cf. UUS 42, *Directorium oecumenicum* 94.

Church, as well as a plethora of references to the doctrine expounded by Vatican II without putting aside the opportunities given by canon law. Without these normative foundations and sources, exercising ecumenical relations would dissolve into sheer sentimentalism or politeness, or the church would abandon a number of those issues, which the Catholic Church considers crucial, that is, which were entrusted to it by Christ Himself.

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Les sources de l'encyclique *Ut unum sint*

Résumé

L'encyclique de Jean Paul II *Ut unum sint* sur l'œcuménisme a été publiée 30 ans après le Concile Vatican II *Unitatis redintegratio*, soit le decret crucial pour l'œcuménisme. Elle a été censée faire le point sur tout ce que l'Église catholique et ses partenaires ont réussi à faire dans le domaine œcuménique. Pourtant, l'article n'énumère pas de succès, mais décrit les fondements mêmes de l'identité catholique, à savoir en décrivant comment l'Église catholique devrait être fidèle en elle-même dans le développement du dialogue œcuménique avec d'autres Églises et communautés ecclesiales. L'article propose donc une analyse détaillée de la manière dont l'encyclique utilise les logia des Saintes Écritures, des Pères de l'Église ou du Magistère. Comme on peut se douter, les documents du Magistère cités ce sont les documents du Concile Vatican II, étant donné que celui-ci constitue un véritable tournant dans l'approche de l'Église catholique envers l'œcuménisme. L'article considère aussi le rôle du droit canonique dans l'œcuménisme car aussi bien les Codes de droit canonique que le catalogue œcuménique constituent de principaux outils dans la réalisation des efforts œcuméniques.

Mots-clés : Saintes Écritures, dialogue œcuménique, Église catholique, Églises orthodoxes, Réforme protestante, Code de droit canonique, Encyclique, papauté, Magistère, tradition, foi catholique

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Fonti dell'enciclica *Ut unum sint*

Sommario

L'enciclica *Ut unum sint* di Giovanni Paolo II sull'impegno ecumenico è stata pubblicata a 30 anni dal decreto del Concilio Vaticano II *Unitatis redintegratio*, che è stato rivoluzionario per ecumenismo. Aveva lo scopo di fornire una sintesi di tutto ciò che la Chiesa cattolica e i suoi partner avevano realizzato nel campo degli sforzi ecumenici. Tuttavia, l'articolo non enumera questi risultati, ma discute i fondamenti stessi dell'identità cattolica, vale a dire come la Chiesa cattolica deve rimanere fedele a se stessa nello sviluppo del dialogo ecumenico con le altre Chiese e comunità ecclesiali. L'articolo contiene pertanto un'analisi dettagliata del modo in cui l'enciclica utilizza le fonti fondamentali della fede, ossia i logia della Sacra Bibbia, dei Padri della Chiesa e del Magistero. Non a caso, i documenti del Magistero citati sono quelli del Concilio Vaticano II, perché quel Concilio rappresenta una vera e propria svolta nell'approccio della Chiesa cattolica all'ecumenismo. L'articolo considera anche il ruolo del diritto canonico per l'ecumenismo, poiché sia i codici del diritto canonico che il catalogo ecumenico costituiscono i principali strumenti per realizzare gli sforzi ecumenici.

Parole chiave: Sacra Bibbia, dialogo ecumenico, Chiesa cattolica, Chiese ortodosse, riforma protestante, Codice del Diritto Canonico, enciclica, papato, magistero, Tradizione, fede cattolica.