

# Ecumeny & Law

Vol. 10 (1)

*Ut Unum Sint (I)*



UNIWERSYTET ŚLĄSKI  
WYDAWNICTWO

# Ecumeny and Law

Vol. 10(1)

Ut Unum Sint (I)

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# Table of contents

## Part One

### Ecumenical Theological Thought

ANDRZEJ CHOROMAŃSKI	
<i>Quanta est nobis via?</i> Re-reading <i>Ut unum sint</i> Twenty-Five Years Later . . .	7
PAWEŁ PIELKA	
Yves Congar as a Precursor to Catholic Principles of Ecumenism . . . . .	33
LUCJAN KLIMSZA	
From Pilgrim to Local. The Problem of Unity in Postmodern Philosophy . . .	45
PRZEMYSŁAW SAWA	
<i>Ut unum sint</i> : New Areas of Spiritual and Pastoral Ecumenism . . . . .	59
ONDREJ ŠTEFAŇAK	
Perception of the Encyclical <i>Ut unum sint</i> amongst Slovak Youth . . . . .	87
JÓZEF BUDNIAK	
Reception of John Paul II's Encyclical <i>Ut unum sint</i> in Cieszyn Silesia . . . .	99

## Part Two

### Reviews

Marek MARCZEWSKI: <i>Leiturgia — Martyria — Diakonia. Koinonia</i> . Lublin 2021. 311 pp. — Bogdan Jerzy BIELA . . . . .	115
Bishara EBEID: <i>La Tunica di al-Masīh. La Cristologia delle grandi confessioni cristiane dell'Oriente nel X e XI secolo</i> . Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale — Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, Valore Italiano, 2019. 741 pp. — Lukáš de la Vega NOSEK . . . . .	119

Michał SADOWSKI: <i>The Trinitarian Analogies in the Christian Arab Apologetic Texts (750—1050)</i> . Series Syro-Arabica. Vol. 7. Cordoba: CNERU / Beyrouth: CEDRAC, 2019. 307 pp. — Lukáš de la Vega NOSEK . . . . .	123
Notes on Contributors . . . . .	127

Part One

Ecumenical  
Theological Thought





ANDRZEJ CHOROMAŃSKI

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## *Quanta est nobis via?* Re-reading *Ut unum sint* Twenty-Five Years Later

**Abstract:** Published on 25 May 1995, *Ut unum sint* was the first ever and remains to the date the only papal encyclical entirely dedicated to ecumenism. Written thirty years after the Second Vatican Council, it was an important step on the way in the reception in the life of the Church of the principles and norms on ecumenism outlined in the conciliar decree *Unitatis redintegratio*. The article proposes a re-reading of the encyclical twenty-five years after its publication. It begins with an overview of the ecumenical engagement of John Paul II, for whom the search for Christian unity was one of the pastoral priorities of his pontificate. The article continues with a presentation of the ecumenical situation at the time of the publication of *Ut unum sint* marked by a growing skepticism towards ecumenism within denominations and a certain stagnation within the ecumenical movement. It then presents the vision of the Church and its unity which animates the encyclical, namely the concept of communion (*communio/koinonia*). The article then presents some characteristics of the ecumenical situation today and delineates the important challenges such as lack of a common vision of the goal of the ecumenical movement and a shift in the ecumenical paradigm from full visible unity to mutual recognition. It concludes with arguing that explored anew in the ecumenical dialogue against the background of the current condition of world Christianity, *Ut unum sint* may be a source of inspiration for the search for a fresh vision for the ecumenical movement in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** ecumenism, communion (*communio/koinonia*), John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*



## *Ut unum sint* and the ecumenical engagement of Saint John Paul II

John Paul II affirms in *Ut unum sint* that the ecumenical task is one of the “pastoral priorities” of his pontificate because the lack of unity is a “grave obstacle” for the proclamation of the Gospel (cf. UUS 99). He considers ecumenism not as an intra-Christian endeavour but primarily as a common Christian responsibility towards all of humanity. More than for the internal life of the Church, unity is needed for the credibility and efficiency of its mission to the world. Only when really one, can the Church be a radiant sign and an effective instrument of God’s love for the whole of humanity. Throughout his pontificate, John Paul II strongly supported and promoted an active participation of the Catholic Church in ecumenical initiatives of all kinds. He often repeated that the commitment of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement is “irrevocable” and “irreversible”.<sup>1</sup> For him ecumenism was not one of the programmes of the Church or “some sort of ‘appendix’ which is added to the Church’s traditional activity [but] an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does” (UUS 20).<sup>2</sup> For John Paul II the way of ecumenism is “the way of the Church,” as affirms one of the subtitles of the first chapter of the encyclical. This ecumenical option was included in the paramount documents of his pontificate such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§§ 813–822), the Code of Canon Law for Latin Catholics (cf. can. 755 § 2) and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (cann. 902–908).

In order to grasp correctly the particular ecumenical attitude of John Paul II and his outstanding contribution to the cause of Christian unity of which the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* is a salient feature, it is crucial to look at his person and his ministry of bishop of Rome from the perspective of the Second Vatican Council. In his ecclesial sensitivity, theological thinking and pastoral action John Paul II was entirely a “child of the Council”. Through his personal participation in its work, he gained an unshaken conviction that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Council was a providential event for the Church at a time when, after the atrocities of the two world wars, it was looking for fresh energies and new direction while approaching the threshold of the new millennium,

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<sup>1</sup> JOHN PAUL II: Address to the Cardinals and the Roman Curia (28 June 1985). AAS 77, n. 4 (1985), p. 1151.

<sup>2</sup> P. CROSS: “John Paul II and Ecumenism.” In: *John Paul II: Legacy and Witness*. Ed. R. GASCOIGNE. Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2007, p. 121.

a “threshold of hope,” as he calls it in one of his books.<sup>3</sup> His twenty-seven year-long ministry of Bishop of Rome was guided by the spirit of the Council and focused on implementing its documents, including the Conciliar Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*. Published thirty years after the Council, *Ut unum sint* was a significant step forward in receiving the conciliar teachings in the life of the Catholic Church. It was the ever first and still is today the only encyclical ever written by a pope on the subject of ecumenism, and as such it has provided significant inspiration for the engagement of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement at the threshold of the third millennium of Christianity. It both connects back and at the same time continues the journey forward. It makes an assessment of the ecumenical situation at the end of the 20th century, and building on what had been achieved proposes some concrete ways for future progress.

Both Catholics and Christians from other ecclesial traditions generally agree that *Ut unum sint* was a landmark document which made a vital contribution to the modern ecumenical movement. Written in a tone of humility and not triumphalism, *Ut unum sint* rejects the so-called ecumenism of return and promotes an ecumenism of conversion, prayer, dialogue, practical cooperation, common service to the world, mutual learning and exchange of gifts among Christian traditions. Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) at the time of the publication of the encyclical, qualified it as one of the “key texts of the twentieth-century ecumenical movement” which challenged all churches<sup>4</sup> to recover their ecumenical zeal at a time when there were many factors distracting Christians from the quest for visible unity, and when questions were being asked about the condition of the ecumenical movement.<sup>5</sup> In the same spirit, Cardinal Walter Kasper, who in 2001 succeeded Cardinal Cassidy as the President of the PCPCU, acknowledged *Ut unum sint* to be a “great, important and even prophetic ecumenical encyclical.”<sup>6</sup> William Henn, a renowned Catholic ecumenist, a deputy moderator of the Faith and Order Commission

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<sup>3</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994). New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> For reasons of brevity and simplicity in this article I apply indistinctly the appellation “church” to Churches from the East and Churches and Ecclesial Communities from the West, following their own self-understanding and without making any judgment regarding their “ecclesiality”.

<sup>5</sup> E. I. CASSIDY: “*Ut Unum Sint* in Ecumenical Perspective.” In: *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II’s Encyclical Ut Unum Sint*. Eds. C. E. BRAATEN, R. W. JENSON. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 2001, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> W. KASPER: *That They May All Be One*. London—New York: Burns & Oates, 2004, p. 34.

of the WCC and member of several international ecumenical dialogues considers that it “is a historical encyclical with important implications for the Catholic Church’s involvement in the ecumenical movement.”<sup>7</sup> He argues that its importance is even better apprehended when comparing it to other papal encyclicals from the past addressing the issue of Christian unity such as *Satis Cognitum* of Leo XIII (1896) and *Mortalium Animos* of Pius XI (1928). Both condemned the ecumenical movement, seeing in it a thread of relativising Catholic faith and compromising the claim of the Catholic Church to be the only true Church of Jesus Christ on earth. Only the initiative of John XXIII to convoke an ecumenical council and what followed brought a real shift in the attitude of the Catholic Church from an utter rejection of the ecumenical movement towards an irrevocable engagement. The teachings of the Second Vatican Council that inspired the entire ministry of John Paul II provide a theological perspective for the encyclical.

### *Ut unum sint* and the ecumenical option of Vatican II

It is a commonly shared conviction, not only within the Catholic Church but within the wider ecumenical community, that “[f]or the ecumenical movement, the Second Vatican Council was a turning point that fundamentally changed the conditions for relationships between the churches.”<sup>8</sup> This epochal shift was made possible due to the promulgation of the first conciliar document, in the Catholic Church’s history, endorsing and promoting ecumenism. On 21 November 1964, in Saint Peter’s Basilica, the Fathers of the Council adopted the Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio* with an overwhelming majority of 2,137 “Yes” votes against only 11 “No” votes. One of those who voted “Yes” was forty-four year old Archbishop of Cracow Karol Wojtyła, who just a few months earlier had made his solemn ingress to the royal cathedral at Wawel, a historic hill of the first capital of Poland. The document was then promulgated by Pope Paul VI as an expression of a deep conviction of the conciliar Fathers that the ecumenical movement was an impulse of the Holy

<sup>7</sup> W. HENN: “*Ut Unum Sint* and the Catholic Involvement in Ecumenism.” *The Ecumenical Review* 52(2) (2000), p. 234.

<sup>8</sup> K. RAISER: “Fifty Years after the Second Vatican Council. Assessing Ecumenical Relations from the Perspective of the World Council of Churches.” *The Ecumenical Review* 67(2), July 2015, p. 285, at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/erev.12161>

Spirit at work in the Church who aroused in divided Christians remorse over their divisions and sparked in their midst a longing for unity. With the Council and its Decree the Catholic Church made the fundamental cause of the ecumenical movement its own, joining it officially and irrevocably.

In the opening sentence, the Decree affirms that, “[t]he restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council” (UR 1).<sup>9</sup> The ecumenical orientation of the Council was intimately connected with its original inspiration, namely the overall renewal — *aggiornamento*, as it was called during the Council — of the Catholic Church. In his speech at the promulgation of the Decree Pope Paul VI stated that it explained and completed the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, probably the conciliar text which had the most significant impact on the teaching and the life of the Catholic Church in the post-conciliar era.<sup>10</sup> The Decree for its part formulated the ecumenical consequences of the new articulation of the ecclesiological self-understanding of the Catholic Church as developed in *Lumen gentium*. The Constitution reaffirms that unity belongs to the nature of the Church and must always be an essential aspect of the Church’s life. However, in discontinuity with the previous Catholic Magisterium it offers a different understanding of this unity. The most significant change for the ecumenical movement has been a formal recognition that the Church of Jesus Christ on earth is a reality that transcends the visible limits of the Catholic Church.

As a result of conciliar ecclesiology, the Catholic Church radically changed its perception of other churches. This has opened the way to numerous encounters, reciprocal visits, theological dialogues, and practical cooperation which have made it possible to establish a network of ecumenical relations.<sup>11</sup> Through all these gestures and actions those who for

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<sup>9</sup> W. KASPER: “Lasting significance and urgency of *Unitatis Redintegratio*. The Decree on Ecumenism Read Anew After Forty Years,” at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20041111\\_kasper-ecumenism\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20041111_kasper-ecumenism_en.html)

<sup>10</sup> It is worthy of mention that during the same session was also promulgated the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* which constitutes the ecclesiological foundation of the Decree. See: PAOLO VI: Allocuzione per la conclusione della III sessione del Concilio Vaticano II (21 novembre 1964), in particular n. 17 which speaks about the Decree, at: [http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1964/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19641121\\_conclusions-iii-sessions.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/speeches/1964/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19641121_conclusions-iii-sessions.html)

<sup>11</sup> K. KOCH: “Towards Full Communion: Hopes, Achievements, Obstacles and Challenges”. Lecture at the Major Catholic Speaker series at Aquinas Centre of Theology and Candler School of Theology at the Emory University in Atlanta. 4 September 2018, n.1, at: <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/cardinal-koch/2018/conferenze/lecture-at-the-major-catholic-speaker-series-at-aquinas-center-o.html>

centuries had qualified each other as “schismatics” or “heretics” started to acknowledge each other as “divided brothers,” still “divided,” but already “brothers”. As noted by John Paul II, the first and most important fruit of the ecumenical movement has been the “rediscovered brotherhood” among Christians and Christian communities (UUS 41 and 51). Without this rediscovery no progress of the ecumenical way could have been possible. As justly noted by Catholicos Aram I, a foremost Christian leader and ecumenist, the ecumenical movement has been from the beginning a “journey of confidence-building” among divided brothers belonging to different traditions that had decided to establish reciprocal relations despite ages’ long antagonisms and doctrinal controversies.<sup>12</sup>

Since the Council, the Catholic Church has conducted theological dialogues with almost all Christian world communions representing practically all traditions in the East and the West.<sup>13</sup> All these dialogues have produced an impressive number of texts, both bilateral and multilateral. They have given tangible fruits: many prejudices and misunderstandings of the past have been overcome, in some cases convergences and even consensus have been found, while the remaining differences have been better identified.<sup>14</sup> These dialogues have given and continue to give witness to the joint effort of Christians from all traditions to overcome the painful separations of the past, and have paved the way for the achievement of full visible unity.

In order to grasp the contribution of *Ut unum sint* to the ecumenical movement, the document needs to be considered in the light of the conciliar option for ecumenism and all the results that have been achieved since the publication of *Unitatis redintegratio*. The encyclical builds upon the conciliar teachings as well as upon the theological rapprochements, convergences and sometimes even consensus achieved in all bilateral and multilateral dialogues. John Paul II offered an updated re-reading of the conciliar documents against the background of the ecumenical achieve-

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<sup>12</sup> ARAM I, CATHOLICOS of Cilicia: “From Reflection to Reception: Challenges Facing the Roman Catholic Church — WCC Collaboration.” *The Ecumenical Review* 57(4) (2005), p. 498.

<sup>13</sup> These have included the Orthodox Churches of the Byzantine and Slavic tradition, the Assyrian Church of the East and the Oriental Orthodox Churches such as the Armenians, Syrians and Copts, as well as Christian communions that emerged from the Reformation such as the Lutherans and the Reformed, the Anglican Communion and the Methodists, the Old Catholics, as well as Evangelical and Pentecostal communities that have been growing considerably during the first decades of the 21st century.

<sup>14</sup> In 2009, Cardinal Walter Kasper summarised the results of the Catholic Church’s official dialogues with main Western partners — Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans, and Methodists — in his book *Harvesting the Fruits*. London—New York: Continuum Publishing, 2009.

ments of thirty years of continuing dialogue. From this perspective, the encyclical is an important step on the way of the ongoing reception of the conciliar teachings. By its publication John Paul II intended to reinvigorate and strengthen the ecumenical zeal not only within the Catholic community but in all churches which were approaching together the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

### *Ut unum sint* in the context of its time

In 1995, when *Ut unum sint* was published, there was a broadly shared conviction that the ecumenical movement was stagnating and turning around without achieving expected results. It is true that there were well established relations among Christian leaders, and in many parts of the world there was a growing cooperation between Christians in the areas of promoting social justice, human rights and care for creation, and sometimes in mission and evangelism. However, despite many ongoing theological dialogues there were persisting divergences on traditional doctrinal matters and new ethical questions which together with controversial pastoral practices had begun to create new tensions and even divisions not only between but also within churches. Many ecumenists who remembered the rapid ecumenical advancements of the two first decades after Vatican II were mourning the fact that progress had slowed down and new problems had surfaced. In a lecture delivered in 1992, Emilio Castro, then the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches (WCC), was asking whether after the decades of an “ecumenical spring” the churches were not entering into a time of an “ecumenical winter”.<sup>15</sup> This situation was sometimes attributed, at least partially, to John Paul II himself. At the beginning of the 1990s, he was accused of provoking a new crisis in the relations of the Catholic Church with the Orthodox Churches in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe which were opposed to the erection of Catholic dioceses in what they called their “canonical territories”. Furthermore, some leaders of the ecumenical movement as well as non-Catholic and Catholic theologians criticised John Paul II for adopting a restrictive line of conduct regarding Christian ethics, which was considered to be impeding dialogue with the churches of the West, the majority of which generally followed a more liberal approach.

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<sup>15</sup> E. CASTRO: “ ‘The Ecumenical Winter?’. Peter Ainslie Lecture on Christian Unity — San Diego 1992.” *Mid-Stream* 32(2) (1993), pp. 1—13.



In the Catholic Church of that time there was a growing polarisation, especially among the clergy, regarding ecumenical engagement. Many bishops were losing interest in ecumenism, arguing that it proved to be ineffective in achieving its goal due to the fact that global Christianity was undergoing an accelerating process of division. This new partitioning of global Christianity was primarily due to the rapid proliferation of Evangelical and Pentecostal movements often accused of practising what was called “sheep-stealing” from historical churches, the Catholic Church included. Others continued to be fundamentally opposed to the conciliar option for ecumenism, regarding it as contrary to Catholic faith. The founder of the traditionalist Society of Saint Pius X, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, together with his followers finally split from the Catholic Church, openly rejecting many teachings of Vatican II, including the acceptance by the Church of religious freedom, the ecumenical movement, interreligious dialogue and openness towards the modern world. They considered the Council to be the reason underlying the Church’s gradual decay marked by the reduction of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, as well as by a considerable decline in religious practices among the faithful in many parts of the world especially in the northern hemisphere.<sup>16</sup>

In this historical context many were surprised by the publication of an encyclical on ecumenism, by its tone and content. The decision of John Paul II to publish it at a difficult time for global Christianity was due to his unshaken conviction that the search for Christian unity must continue in order to respond to the Lord’s prayer “that they may all be one” (John 17: 21). The text was a plea not to be discouraged in the face of results that were not meeting the expectations of the first years of dialogue, but to continue the ecumenical pilgrimage together at the dawn of a new millennium. In the face of new challenges, the encyclical confirmed a clear commitment of the Catholic Church to move forward together on the path of growing communion. It was a papal appeal first to the Catholic faithful and then to all Christians not to give way to despair but rather to intensify joint efforts on the way to full visible unity, in an awareness that only when walking together towards this goal can churches be able to grow in communion of faith, sacramental life, common witness and service to the world, as well as in mutually recognised ministry and shared church structures.

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<sup>16</sup> The Archbishop and some other bishops uncanonically consecrated by him were excommunicated in 2009.

## The Church and its unity according to *Ut unum sint*

*Ut unum sint* is animated by a vision of the Church understood as communion (*communio/koinonia*). As noted by John Paul II, this concept lies “at the heart of the Church’s self-understanding.”<sup>17</sup> According to the letter *Communio notio* published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the concept of communion is “very suitable for expressing the core of the Mystery of the Church.”<sup>18</sup> As argued in the *Relatio finalis* of the Second Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, communion is the central idea of the Council’s understanding of the Church and its unity (cf. LG 4, 8, 13–15, 18, 21, 24–25; DV 10; GS 32; UR 2–4, 14–15, 17–19, 22).<sup>19</sup>

The Church as communion is the mystery of the union of all the faithful with the divine Trinity and with each other initiated in faith and sacramentally rooted in Baptism. Such communion “always involves a double dimension: vertical and horizontal.”<sup>20</sup> In its vertical aspect it is fundamentally a communion with God through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. In its horizontal aspect it is an “intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church (1 Cor 10:16).”<sup>21</sup> The concept of communion expresses the idea of the unity of the baptised which is rooted in their common sharing of the life of God and expressed in their communal life. The church as communion is a spiritual union of the baptised which in this world takes the visible form of a structured community (*societas*). All the faithful are parts of the single Body of Christ in which each member contributes to the good of all and shares in the welfare of the whole. There are many links that assure the ecclesial communion, but they may be summarised under three headings: the profession of faith, the celebration of worship and sacraments, and structural communion under the guidance of ordained ministers (cf. Acts 2:42; LG 14; UR 2).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> JOHN PAUL II: Address to the Bishops of the United States of America, 16.09.1987, n.1, in: “Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II” X, 3 (1987) p. 553.

<sup>18</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH: *Communio notio*. Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion (28 May 1992), n 1, at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_28051992\\_communio-notio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communio-notio_en.html)

<sup>19</sup> SYNOD OF BISHOPS: Second Extraordinary Assembly (1985), *Relatio finalis*, II, C, 1, at: <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/final-report-of-the-1985-extraordinary-synod-2561>

<sup>20</sup> *Communio notio*, n. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Relatio finalis*, II, C, 1.

<sup>22</sup> W. HENN: “*Ut Unum Sint* and Catholic Involvement in Ecumenism.” *The Ecumenical Review* 52(2) (2000), p. 246.



This communion also includes various charisms and ministries that serve the life and mission of any particular community. The Church's communion culminates in the common celebration of the Eucharist, the source and the summit of all Christian life (cf. LG 11). It is the foretaste of the eschatological communion of the whole of humanity of which the Church is called to be on earth an evocative sign and an efficient instrument (cf. LG 1). Understood this way, "the ecclesiology of communion cannot be reduced to purely organisational questions or to problems which simply relate to powers. Still, the ecclesiology of communion is also the foundation for ecclesial order, and especially for a correct relationship between unity and pluriformity in the Church."<sup>23</sup>

Considering the Church as a mystery of communion also sheds new light on the understanding of its limits and leads to a new perception of the relation of the Catholic Church to other churches and ecclesial communities. In the Catholic Magisterium until Vatican II the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church on earth was fully identified with the Roman Catholic institution governed by the Bishop of Rome and the bishops in communion with him. The belonging to this community was of the order of "everything" or "nothing": if one professed the same Catholic faith, celebrated the seven Catholic sacraments and accepted the Catholic structure of hierarchical government with the pope at its summit, one was considered to be belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. If just one of these elements was missing one was considered to be outside the Church either as a schismatic (deliberate breach of communion) or heretic (doctrinal error). This vision was corrected by Vatican II.

The conciliar dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* affirms that the Church of Christ with the fullness (*plenitudo*) of its divine and earthly elements "constituted and organised in the world as a society (*societas*), subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity" (LG 8). This formulation, that purposely avoided the direct identification of the Catholic Church with the Church of Jesus Christ, opened the way to recognising the ecclesial consistency of non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities. According to this vision, our common Christian discipleship is based in baptism which incorporates all believers, no matter which denomination, to the *koinonia* of the one and unique Body of Christ on earth, His Church. On this basis the Council recognises the existence of a real,

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<sup>23</sup> *Relatio finalis*, II, C, 1.

though imperfect communion between the Catholic Church and other churches and ecclesial communities. “The real ecumenical breakthrough at the Council was the effect of this communion ecclesiology on the traditional Catholic understanding of Christian divisions.”<sup>24</sup>

*Ut unum sint* is permeated by the idea of communion. The first section of the chapter I (UUS 5—14) offers an exposition of the Catholic understanding of the ecclesiology of communion in continuity with conciliar teaching. One of the two main convictions of this chapter is that unity is God’s will for the Church and is intertwined with God’s plan of salvation for all of humanity. This will of the Lord as explicitly testified in the message of the New Testament is the deepest and innermost foundation of the quest for unity among Christians. The wrongness of the division within the Church’s communion can only be judged against this will of God. The same criterion helps to seize the importance of the ecumenical commitment of the churches. This commitment flows directly from their faithfulness to the Lord’s will. The second conviction that is emphasised in the first chapter is that the Church’s unity takes the visible form of a living communion of faith, sacraments and communal life under the guidance of ordained ministers.<sup>25</sup> Visible unity is described in the encyclical as “a living communion” (UUS 6). Not just “communion” but “living communion”. This implicates the existence of a network of relations between individuals and particular communities which enables all members to feel integrated into the same community of faith and life. Unity “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, sacraments and hierarchical communion” (UUS 9). In God’s aspiration, this living communion is intended for the whole of humanity. The encyclical states that the Church “is sent to the world to announce and witness, to make present and spread the mystery of communion which is essential to her, and to gather all people and all things into Christ, so as to be for all an inseparable sacrament of unity” (UUS 5).

The “living communion” of the Church is organised in the world as a visible community (*societas*). The organic unity of this community is at the same time spiritual and visible. Such unity “can be attained only by the adherence of all to the content of revealed faith in its entirety. In matters of faith, compromise is in contradiction with God who is Truth” (UUS 18). This visible unity, however, does not entail the global uniformity of all Christian communities spread across the world and living in different cultural contexts. A legitimate diversity is an essential aspect of

<sup>24</sup> W. HENN: “*Ut Unum Sint* and Catholic Involvement...,” p. 246.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 245.

the Church's unity. The aim of ecumenism is described in the encyclical as "the visible unity which is required and sufficient" (UUS 78). This is a clear endorsement of a legitimate diversity in the one Church. Ecclesial communion exists alongside cultural diversity, different liturgical rites, different forms of piety, different doctrinal perspectives, different customs and laws. But in the same way as unity should not be confused with uniformity, so plurality should not be identified with contradictory pluralism or indifferentism in faith or practice. "Indifferentism can never be a solid basis to build upon."<sup>26</sup> All diversity must be complementary and not contradictory. The ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is not a peaceful coexistence in division but full visible unity in faith, sacramental life, ministry, mission and Christian life. Unity in all these aspects is a necessary condition of the ecclesial *communio/koinonia* to be real and not only apparent.

For Catholics this unity also includes the recognition by all the faithful of the unique ministry of the Bishop of Rome in his capacity as the successor of Peter. Willed by Christ himself the Petrine ministry is "a perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity" (UUS 88). The main role of the pope is to be at the service of the whole Church which is expressed in the traditional title of *servus servorum Dei* attributed to Pope Gregory the Great (d.604), and cited by John Paul II in his encyclical (UUS 88). However, to be effective this service implicates also an appropriate authority and power, "without which such an office would be illusory" (UUS 94). At the end of the discussion on the ministry of Bishop of Rome, John Paul II asks "Church leaders and their theologians to engage with [him] in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church" (UUS 96). A specific aim of this dialogue is to seek together "the forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognised by all concerned" (UUS 95). He suggests that a breakthrough in the ecumenical search for a suitable and efficient form of the papal ministry could be found in the life of the Church of the first millennium (cf. UUS 55). During that period the Church still undivided incorporated various liturgical rites for the celebration of worship, customs and uses, disciplines and laws, ministries, and theological formulations of doctrine, while still recognising the primacy of the Bishop of Rome.

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<sup>26</sup> W. KASPER: "The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century." *The Ecumenical Review* 57(4) (2005), p. 511.

## Ecumenical situation today

Those actively involved will agree in saying that since its beginnings, symbolically placed at the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh 1910, the ecumenical movement has achieved great results in promoting mutual understanding, discovering common ground, transforming attitudes, stimulating cooperation, and sometimes even establishing structural unions. These results have been assimilated into the life of the churches and it is only by looking back critically that one can appreciate the great progress that has been made. However, according to many experts, the ecumenical movement seems to have reached a critical moment today. In a book published in 2004, when referring to the state of the ecumenical dialogue at the beginning of the 21st century, Cardinal Walter Kasper, used such expressions as “ecumenical aporia” and “ecumenical crisis”.<sup>27</sup> While there is no reason to be discouraged, in the firm belief that the Holy Spirit who initiated the ecumenical movement still accompanies it, it is important nonetheless to discern its current state twenty-five years after the publication of *Ut unum sint*. According to Cardinal Kasper, since the last decade of the 20th century we have been observing a progressive reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement which in many respects “is today clearly in a transitional period.”<sup>28</sup> A critical outlook is needed on the current situation because without an honest self-evaluation churches will not be able to move forward constructively.

Some depict the present juncture of ecumenism as ambiguous, uncertain, and stagnant, accusing it of standing still and going nowhere. But not all share those convictions. In 2018, in a lecture at the Emory University in Atlanta, Cardinal Koch argued that the ecumenical movement was alive and moving ahead although facing new obstacles and challenges.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> W. KASPER: *That They May All Be One...* He also pointed out that for many Protestants one of the signs and also reasons of this situation was the publication on 6 August 2000 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the declaration *Dominus Iesus* on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church. In line with conciliar teaching (cf. LG 8) the document affirms that the Church of Jesus Christ subsists fully only in the Roman Catholic Church and that the post-Reformation communities cannot be called “churches” in a proper theological sense of this appellation because they lack a central element of the Church’s identity, namely, the valid sacramental Eucharist.

<sup>28</sup> W. KASPER: “The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century...,” p. 508.

<sup>29</sup> K. KOCH: “Towards Full Communion. Hopes, Achievements, Obstacles and Challenges.” Lecture at the Major Catholic Speaker series at Aquinas Centre of Theology and Candler School of Theology at the Emory University in Atlanta, 18 September 2018,

It is clear that the original enthusiasm has given way to a more realistic sobriety about the possibility of celebrating together Eucharist in the near future. Discouraged by the slowness of ecumenical progress a number of church leaders and theologians have lost interest in it. For others “ecumenism has become a negative term, equivalent to syncretism, doctrinal relativism and indifferentism.”<sup>30</sup> This is also true for the Catholic Church. After an initial enthusiasm that followed Vatican II, many, including clergy and theologians, are either indifferent to it or focused rather on protecting the Catholic identity in opposition to other traditions. Conservative tendencies with traditionalist and counter-ecumenical approaches to faith are to be found in the Catholic Church across the world.

There are those who believe that after the initial phase during which the theological dialogue was at the centre, the ecumenical movement has been acquiring new forms that are more focused on practical cooperation. During the last decades there has been a progressive evolution toward an ecumenism of praxis at the expense of theological dialogue. More and more churches, especially those gathered in global ecumenical bodies such as the WCC or Global Christian Forum, opt for building friendly relationships among the church leaders and promoting practical cooperation in the service of the human family rather than for promoting the theological dialogue. Especially a new generation of ecumenists seems to be more interested in a “life and work” type ecumenism than in a “faith and order” type ecumenism. They believe that doing things together can bring Christians closer to one another in a more effective way than by endlessly discussing doctrinal controversies which persist in spite of decades of dialogues and an increasing number of ecumenical documents. Ecumenical leaders in their public statements emphasise the necessary accountability of the churches to the world which seems to be experiencing an unprecedented peril due to ecological degradation and economic inequities rather than to the need for theological agreement. Without relinquishing theological dialogue, Pope Francis has also constantly encouraged an ecumenism of “walking, praying and working together” as a way of effectively meeting the challenges of the present time to which Christians should respond by rendering service together. Non-governmental church-based organisations, such as World Vision International<sup>31</sup> or ACT Alliance,<sup>32</sup> are

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n.1, at: <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/cardinal-koch/2018/conferenze/lecture-at-the-major-catholic-speaker-series-at-aquinas-center-o.html>

<sup>30</sup> W. KASPER: “The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century...,” p. 508.

<sup>31</sup> World Vision International is an interdenominational Christian humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy organisation founded in 1950.

<sup>32</sup> ACT Alliance is a global alliance of more than 145 churches and related organisations working together in over 120 countries to create positive and sustainable change in

becoming increasingly ecumenically diversified by employing staff from the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions. There is also growing ecumenical collaboration on regional and local levels. The national and regional councils of churches have been gaining more importance in stimulating ecumenical relations. The Catholic Church also promotes this form of ecumenical involvement. Out of a total of 120 councils of churches around the world, the Catholic Church is member in at least 70 of these bodies.<sup>33</sup> “More and more we notice the tendency to concentrate on a more pragmatic approach that would limit the aims of those engaged in ecumenical searching to intermediate or short-term goals, leaving aside, if not renouncing, any attempt to aim at the ultimate goal of full visible unity.”<sup>34</sup> All this indicates that the ecumenical movement is really alive but it is looking for fresh inspiration as it is passing through a new phase of its maturation.

## Challenge of a common vision

Any significant progress on the way towards full visible unity cannot be achieved without a commonly shared agreement on the goal of ecumenism. This issue has been continually raised and it seems that in the course of time this goal has become increasingly unclear. Although the churches acknowledge that the ecumenical movement is one, they have different ways of doing ecumenism, different priorities and expectations and at the end of the day, different understandings of the goal they want to achieve. To know whether the partners involved together in the ecumenical dialogue look for the same objective is crucial for identifying common challenges and designing next steps to take. Without having a common goal we cannot join our efforts towards this goal and consequently we risk growing even further apart.

Generally, since the beginnings of the ecumenical movement till the recent decades the churches were in agreement that what they were aiming for together was a full visible unity. This vision is maintained in *Ut unum sint*, which states clearly that “[t]he ultimate goal of the ecumeni-

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the lives of poor and marginalised people.

<sup>33</sup> *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (25 March 1993), allows the Bishop’s Conferences to join these councils whenever they judge it profitable for promoting Christian unity in their context (Directory, n. 166—171).

<sup>34</sup> E. I. CASSIDY: “*Ut Unum Sint* in Ecumenical Perspective...,” p. 12.



cal movement is to re-establish full visible unity among all the baptised” (UUS 77). From the Catholic perspective, full visible unity constitutes thus the *raison d’être* of the ecumenical movement as such. In the same paragraph John Paul II observes that “this demanding concept of the unity” which is “willed by God” is held not only by the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches but also by other churches within the ecumenical community. In particular, it is shared by the member churches of the World Council of Churches. The *Constitution and Rules* of the WCC includes the following statement: “The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.”<sup>35</sup> However, as observed by Cardinal Cassidy, the encyclical came “at a time when, within the ecumenical movement, doubts have been expressed about the possibility of such a goal ever being reached.”<sup>36</sup> In fact, the vision of unity is always based on a particular ecclesiological self-understanding and for decades churches have carried on their ecumenical endeavour on the basis of different ecclesiological assumptions. Having different understandings of the Church they also have different understandings of visible unity, its necessary conditions and possible forms. Therefore, the ecumenical situation today is marked by two contrasting components. On the one hand, several important convergences and sometimes even consensus have been achieved through bilateral and multilateral dialogues. On the other hand, the churches have not yet arrived at formulating a shared definition of the unity they have been looking for. In fact, not only have they not changed their respective visions of the church’s unity but rather precisely and incongruously through ecumenical dialogue itself they have instead consolidated them, continuing to differ on what kind of “visible unity” they want to achieve. There is a fundamental paradox at the very heart of the ecumenical movement: all participants agree that they want unity, but they continue to disagree on what this unity means. The most significant challenge for ecumenism in the 21st century is to develop a shared vision of the Church’s unity able to integrate in a coherent way diversities of various denominational conceptions. As voiced by Cardinal Koch, “If the various partners in ecumenism understand very differently what constitutes the unity of the church, there is an imminent danger that the ecumenical partners stride ahead in different directions, only to discover

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<sup>35</sup> Constitution and Rules, III: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/wcc-constitution-and-rules>

<sup>36</sup> E. I. CASSIDY: “*Ut Unum Sint* in Ecumenical Perspective...,” p. 12.

later that they have possibly distanced themselves from one another even more than they were before.”<sup>37</sup>

The danger of progressive estrangement between denominations is further reinforced by the fact that the search for unity takes place in a radically altered context in philosophical thinking. We live today in a world of general exaltation of the plural and the suspicion of anything singular. In the postmodern culture characterised by the dominant relativist spirit and the post-truth philosophical environment, plurality is seen as the only way in which the whole can be apprehended. This fundamental option for pluralism, with the priority given to personal emotion and belief over a communal consensus, has been highly influencing Christianity of our time and the ecumenical movement itself. We observe a “widespread ecclesiological pluralism, according to which the multiplicity and diversity of churches is considered a positive reality and any search for unity of the church seems suspicious.”<sup>38</sup> Many consider that the multiformity of global Christianity, even though it is the result of division, is an enrichment rather than a deterioration of the Church.

Those who advocate for multiformity rather than unity postulate also for a new method in ecumenical theological dialogue. The consensus-oriented method that has produced good results during the last decades is criticised as inadequate to the situation of global Christianity today and opposed to the dominant mentality of the faithful. These advocates want it to be replaced by a difference-oriented method. In this vision not only diversity but even divergent or opposed doctrinal conceptions should be recognised in principle as suitable differences in understanding of the Apostolic Faith that may legitimately coexist within a global multiform Christianity.

## “Mutual recognition” as a new ecumenical paradigm

More and more church leaders and theologians now call for a revision of the goal of the ecumenical movement in response to this new mentality and new situation of Christianity today. A call for a change of the ecumenical paradigm was expressed in several responses<sup>39</sup> from churches to

<sup>37</sup> K. KOCH: “Towards Full Communion...,” n. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, n. 2a.

<sup>39</sup> As many as 78 responses from the churches, theology faculties, ecumenical groups and individuals had been sent to the Faith and Order Office in Geneva, Switzerland. They were published by the WCC Publications in 2021 in two volumes entitled *Churches*



the Faith and Order document published in 2013, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (hereafter: *TCTCV*).<sup>40</sup> According to these voices instead of looking for a common vision of the Church we should actively engage in a process of “mutual recognition” of existing confessional identities acknowledging them to be legitimate ways of being church.

The concept of “recognition”, accompanied by such qualifiers as “partial”, “full”, “mutual” has been part of the vocabulary of the modern ecumenical movement since its beginning.<sup>41</sup> It received some attention within the Faith and Order movement. The report of the first Faith and Order Conference held in Lausanne in 1927 states that “complete unity will require that the Churches be so transformed that there may be full recognition of one another by members of all communions.”<sup>42</sup> According to this vision, a deep transformation within each denomination was a necessary condition of mutual recognition. This requirement was stressed even more in the report of the Commission to the WCC Assembly in New Delhi 1961, which states, “[t]he achievement of unity will involve nothing less than a death and rebirth for many forms of church life as we have

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*Respond to the Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Volume 1: Faith and Order Paper No. 231 (2021), at: [https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Churches\\_Respond\\_Church\\_vol1\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Churches_Respond_Church_vol1_WEB.pdf), and Volume 2: Faith and Order Paper No.232 (2021) at: [https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Churches\\_Respond\\_Church\\_vol2\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Churches_Respond_Church_vol2_WEB.pdf). Between 2015 and 2020, an ecumenical group of experts appointed by the Commission met often to read and analyse them. The results of this work were published in a report entitled *What Are the Churches Saying About the Church?*, Faith and Order Paper no. 236, WCC Publications, Geneva 2021. Published at: [https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/What\\_Are\\_Churches\\_Saying\\_Web.pdf](https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/What_Are_Churches_Saying_Web.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> *The Church: Towards a Common Vision (TCTCV)*. Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (2013). Published as a “convergence text”, the statement expresses what the Christian denominations of various traditions can say together about the church in order to grow in communion and to overcome persisting divisions. Produced by theologians from the widest range of traditions and cultures, *TCTCV* addresses such topics as the church’s nature, mission, unity, and its origin in the Trinitarian life of God. It also addresses the growth in communion among the denominations in apostolic faith, sacramental life, ministry and service to the world. Published at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision>

On 18 October 2019, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) presented the official Catholic Response to *TCTCV* statement. To be found at: <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/news/notizie-2019/2019-10-23-tctcv-catholic-response.html>

<sup>41</sup> On the development of this concept within the ecumenical movement see: M. HIETAMÄKI: “‘Ecumenical Recognition’ in the Faith and Order Movement.” *Open Theology* (1) 2015, pp. 204—219, at: <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2015-0008>

<sup>42</sup> G. K. A. BELL: *The Unity of the Christendom*. Geneva 1927, p. 179.

known them. We believe that nothing less costly can finally suffice.”<sup>43</sup> What was the focus there was a deep self-critical examination of one’s own way of being church in order to make recognition possible for the others. An important role belonged to the ecumenical dialogues which were intended to define what in each church’s doctrine and practice could be accepted as a legitimate diversity and what would have to be abandoned as incompatible with the Apostolic Faith. In this discussion the idea of recognition was intrinsically linked with the necessity of profound transformations that each church had to undergo in order to make unity possible. Faith and Order has strongly emphasised the relevance of the mutual recognition of baptism for the full mutual recognition between churches as institutions. However, although most of the churches involved in the ecumenical movement would explicitly or implicitly recognise each other’s baptism, this would not immediately lead them to full mutual recognition as equal “expressions” of what each of them believed to be the true Church of Jesus Christ. As the churches involved in the dialogue were not much inclined to lose their identities in favour of mutual recognition, the concept had not received much attention in the theological debate until recently.

The responses to the *TCTCV* show that today the concept of recognition has resurfaced but with a new approach.<sup>44</sup> Several of them postulate to make of it a new ecumenical paradigm, an overall concept able to bring together in one community various ways of being church. No change in faith, practice or order seems any longer to be required for such recognition. Such recognition does not create the reality of “being a church” but only formally voices its presence in an already existing form of Christianity. While engaging together in the ecumenical movement, churches are called to recognise their respective traditions and ethos as expressions of a legitimate diversity. In this perspective, they should not focus on searching for consensus in doctrine, ethics or church structure but on a mutual acceptance of different beliefs, practices and structures of government as being legitimate expressions of the Church’s faith and order. Such oriented ecumenism could lead the churches to the recognition of legitimate difference in “models” or “types” of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. According to several responses, churches today are growing in conviction that mutual recognition in love is a more

<sup>43</sup> L. VISCHER (ed.): *A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963*. St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany Press, 1963, p. 209.

<sup>44</sup> S. DURBER: “Visible Unity and Mutual Recognition.” In: *Common Threads*, Faith and Order Paper No. 233 (2013), Eds. E. EWONDRA, S. DIETRICH. WCC Publications, Geneva 2021, pp. 1—16, at: [https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/CommonThreads\\_web.pdf](https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/CommonThreads_web.pdf)

productive goal of ecumenism than the search for full visible unity based on doctrinal, moral, and structural criteria. While some responses retain that the unity of the Church calls for some kind of structural unity, others privilege rather a spiritual unity based on mutual recognition which considers various organisational patterns of churches as expressions of the legitimate multiformity of the Church.

There is a growing tendency in the ecumenical movement to reduce the goal of ecumenism from that of full visible unity to just a mutual recognition within a kind of a conciliar fellowship of global Christianity without the need for an organic unity in faith, worship, and structure. Those who promote this idea project that in the course of time a progressive mutual recognition among denominations would lead to a dissolution of their institutional boundaries and eventually culminate in their melting together in a kind of a non-denominational form of global Christianity.<sup>45</sup> No one knows, however, what would be the ecclesial reality if such a project were to be materialised. Would it still be possible to profess faith in the Church which is “one”? For John Paul II “[t]he ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is to re-establish full visible unity among all the baptised” (UUS 77), and not an indiscriminate mutual recognition which would simply signify the definitive failure of the whole ecumenical project.

## Conclusions

Written at a time of the fast transformation of global Christianity, including the ecumenical movement itself, *Ut unum sint* reaffirms the fundamental convictions of the Second Vatican Council regarding the modern quest for Christian unity and the Catholic involvement in it. Approaching the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, John Paul II wanted to reassure the Catholic faithful and ecumenical partners that the conciliar option

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<sup>45</sup> Under full control of the state the project of a non-denominational Christianity has been successively implemented within the Protestantism in China. Traditional Protestant denominations, such as the Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian, were abolished in the 1950s. “Three Self Patriotic Movement” (TSPM) and the “China Christian Council” (CCC), the two organisations which lead the official Protestant Church in China, are officially “post-denominational”, meaning that they purposely seek to eliminate differences in belief and practice among the various traditions. Cf. AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT: “Protestants in China. Background Paper...,” p. 9, at: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/51f27dcd4.pdf>

for ecumenism was irrevocable and that the ecumenical way would continue to be the way of the Church entering the third millennium. Drawing from the conciliar documents and the post-conciliar Magisterium as well as from the experience of three decades of the Catholic involvement in the ecumenical movement, the encyclical enhances the fundamental convictions and principles developed in the Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*. It harvests with appreciation many fruits already obtained which are the “seeds” sown in the soil of Christianity for growth in communion. It also puts forward for a common consideration some issues essential for the future of the ecumenical movement, in particular that of identifying together new ways of exercising the Petrine ministry that could be acceptable for all Christians. Written in a respectful tone and presenting an empathetic attitude towards other church traditions, it encourages the continuation of the dialogue.

Twenty-five years from its publication, *Ut unum sint* deserves to be explored anew in the ecumenical dialogue against the background of the current condition of world Christianity marked by the ecumenical aspiration for unity on the one hand and a progressive fragmentation on the other hand. Still read and discussed by church leaders, ecumenical practitioners and theologians, it may be a surprising source of inspiration for the search for a fresh vision for the ecumenical movement at the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity.

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ANDRZEJ CHOROMAŃSKI

*Quanta est nobis via?*  
Lire *Ut unum sint* vingt-cinq ans après

Résumé

Publiée le 25 mai 1995, *Ut unum sint* est la première et la seule encyclique papale entièrement consacrée à la question de l'œcuménisme. Rédigée trente ans après le Concile Vatican II, elle constituait une étape importante sur la voie de la mise en œuvre des principes et des normes sur l'œcuménisme contenus dans le décret conciliaire *Unitatis Redintegratio* dans la vie de l'Église. Le présent article propose une relecture de l'encyclique vingt-cinq ans après sa publication. L'article commence par une présentation de l'engagement œcuménique de Jean-Paul II qui avait fait de la recherche de l'unité des chrétiens l'une des priorités pastorale de tout son pontificat. L'article présente ensuite la situation œcuménique au moment de la publication d'*Ut unum sint*, marquée par un scepticisme croissant à l'égard de l'œcuménisme au sein des Églises et une certaine stagnation du mouvement œcuménique lui-même. Dans ce contexte, l'article parle de la vision de l'Église et de son unité, une vision qui imprègne toute l'encyclique et qui s'exprime dans le concept de communion (*communio/koinonia*). L'article dévoile ensuite les traits caractéristiques de la situation œcuménique actuelle et formule les principaux défis auxquels est confronté le mouvement œcuménique, à savoir l'absence d'une vision commune d'un objectif ultime et l'absence de propositions pour changer le paradigme œcuménique: de la recherche de la pleine unité visible à l'acceptation mutuelle malgré des différences fondamentales persistantes dans la manière d'être une église. En conclusion, l'article soutient que, lue à nouveau dans le contexte de la situation actuelle du christianisme, l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* peut être une source d'inspiration dans la recherche d'une nouvelle vision du mouvement œcuménique au XXIe siècle.

**Mots-clés:** œcuménisme, communion (*communio/koinonia*), Jean-Paul II, *Ut unum sint*

ANDRZEJ CHOROMAŃSKI

*Quanta est nobis via?*  
Leggere *Ut unum sint* venticinque anni dopo

Abstract

Publicata il 25 maggio 1995, *Ut unum sint* è stata la prima e l'unica enciclica papale interamente dedicata alla questione dell'ecumenismo. Scritta trent'anni dopo il Concilio Vaticano II è diventata, nella vita della Chiesa, una tappa importante nel cammino verso l'attuazione dei principi e delle norme sull'ecumenismo contenuti nel decreto conciliare *Unitatis Redintegratio*. Il presente articolo propone una rilettura dell'enciclica venticinque anni dopo la sua pubblicazione. Si inizia con una presentazione dell'impegno ecumenico di Giovanni Paolo II, per il quale la ricerca dell'unità dei cristiani è stata una delle priorità pastorali di tutto il suo pontificato. Si passa poi a presentare la situazione ecumenica al momento della pubblicazione di *Ut unum sint*, segnata da un crescente scetti-

cismo nei confronti dell'ecumenismo all'interno delle Chiese e da una certa stagnazione dello stesso movimento ecumenico. Su questo sfondo, si presenta la visione della Chiesa e della sua unità, che pervade l'intera enciclica, e che si esprime nel concetto di comunione (*communio/koinonia*). Si mostrano poi i tratti caratteristici della situazione ecumenica odierna e si formulano le principali sfide che il movimento ecumenico deve affrontare, vale a dire la mancanza di una visione comune del suo fine ultimo e delle proposte per cambiare il paradigma ecumenico: dalla ricerca della piena unità visibile fino all'accettazione reciproca nonostante la permanenza di differenze fondamentali nel modo di essere una chiesa. In conclusione, si sostiene che, riletta nel contesto della situazione attuale del cristianesimo, l'enciclica *Ut unum sint* può essere fonte di ispirazione nella ricerca di una nuova visione del movimento ecumenico nel XXI secolo.

**Parole chiave:** ecumenismo, comunione (*communio/koinonia*), Giovanni Paolo II, *Ut unum sint*







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## Yves Congar as a Precursor to Catholic Principles of Ecumenism

**Abstract:** The author analyzes the work *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un «œcuménisme» catholique* by Yves Congar (1937) and shows why the French Dominican can be considered a precursor of ecumenism in the Roman Catholic Church. The argument is based on defining the nature of the reunification process, its starting point, the goal of the reunification, and the way in which the relationship between Catholicism and ecumenism is framed. In lieu of the then valid concept of conversion on the basis of the Catholic Church, or the simple absorption of individuals by the fully formed Church, the French theologian proposes a complement or integration into the unity of the Church. As a result of this process, the united Church would be no other body than the present Catholic Church but it would be richer and more complete.

**Keywords:** Yves Congar, ecumenism, Catholicism, precursor, principles

### Introduction

As Yves M. Congar remarks, the publication of *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un «œcuménisme» catholique*<sup>1</sup> was the first effort to theologically define (or at least situate) the problem of “ecumenism” in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> It naturally assumed a distinctive and external viewpoint on ecumenism. Indeed, it was perceived by the Roman Catholics in that era as a new and hence suspicious phenomenon, whereas in

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<sup>1</sup> Paris 1961. This edition is identical to the first publication of the work in 1937.

<sup>2</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Une passion: l'unité. Réflexions et souvenirs 1929—1973*. Paris 1974, p. 50.

Protestant communities, it has been officially developed since the 1910 Edinburgh Conference.<sup>3</sup>

The subtitle of *Chrétiens désunis* speaks of the principles of Catholic “ecumenism.” The French Dominican asks what this ecumenism should be like. He does it nearly a quarter of a century before the Second Vatican Council, anticipating the encyclical of John Paul II *Ut unum sint*. He may therefore be considered its precursor. In this article, I will introduce Congar’s definition of the nature of Christian reunification by describing its starting point and the goal towards which this process is headed. Then I will try to take a closer look at the relation of Catholicism-ecumenism and to specify how Congar, as a Catholic, explains the problems of reunification posed by our separated brethren.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. The nature of the reunification process

While considering the goals of the unification movement, Congar strongly emphasizes that unity already exists. “The Church of Jesus Christ is presently really catholic.”<sup>5</sup> As he writes in his later, post-conciliar work, “we do not want [...] to make a new Church, or even, strictly speaking, to make the Church: for although we should work to build it, we are not to make it: it is given to us and we build ourselves up in it. We are to discover it, not to invent it. It is even wonderful to see how, in this matter, the more we conform to what exists, the more we discover, the more we obey, and the more we learn.”<sup>6</sup> The Church Congar speaks of is Fullness. Indeed, she is “the body of him who, having fullness in him, can also ‘fill everything in every way’.”<sup>7</sup> Then it is the presence of Christ in the Church

<sup>3</sup> Most ecumenists (including S. Nagy, K. Karski, and S. C. Napiórkowski) consider this conference, and therefore the date of 1910, to be the birth of ecumenism. L. Górka and J. Budniak shift this date of birth to 1907, because it was then that the first unification congress took place in Welehrad. For, unlike Edinburgh, where only representatives of Protestant communities participated, Welehrad also hosted Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church representatives. Cf. J. BUDNIAK: *Jednoczenie w różnorodności. Tradycja cyrylo-metodiańska jako paradygmat procesu pojednania Kościołów, kultur i narodów*. Katowice 2009, passim.

<sup>4</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Sainte Église. Études et approches ecclésiologiques*. Paris 1963, p. 516.

<sup>5</sup> IDEM: *Chrétiens désunis...*, p. 315: “l’Église de Jésus Christ est, présentement, réellement catholique.”

<sup>6</sup> IDEM: “Je crois en la Sainte Église.” In: *Sainte Église...*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> IDEM: *Chrétiens désunis...*, p. 314: “[...] le corps de Celui qui, ayant en lui la plénitude, peut aussi ‘remplir tout en tous’.”

that determines her fullness. Christ's power brings about this unity. We encounter a mystery here. It is, as Congar states, "the proper secret of this perfect unity [...] which can take up diversity without divisions."<sup>8</sup> The Church needs special powers for this fulfillment of everything to happen in everyone. "These energies of the Second Adam, this grace of Christ the Head [...] rest in the Church."<sup>9</sup> Congar speaks here of "the fullness of God's energies capable of sanctifying, bringing God in unity, and finally incorporating all that is of living humanity in man."<sup>10</sup>

As we can see, there is a unifying power or, we should say, a power of reconciliation in the Church. This power, the ability to reconcile, is what Congar considers to be the catholicism of the Church. It makes her a living being whose form of life represents wholeness. The presence of the above-mentioned fullness of divine energies in the Church is followed by what Congar describes as the possibility of universal expansion.

The Dominican is aware of the painful fact of a split in the Church. The existence of divided Christian communities is determined by their specific values, which are positive and for the most part genuinely Christian and Catholic. To support this thesis, the author points to a large number of people who remain outside the Church.

Nevertheless, not only the exclusion of multitudes around the world makes the Church incompletely catholic. It is also about the consequences of this state of affairs. Namely, some authentically human values "found their Christian form and expressed themselves religiously outside the Church."<sup>11</sup> Congar specifically indicates the absence of the Russian-speaking and Scandinavian world in the area of the Catholic Church.

For here "what is pure in Protestant or Orthodox piety, or in *Pietas Anglicana*, which gives Anglicanism its real continuity, is what the Church lacks,"<sup>12</sup> says Congar. He will develop this idea in a text published shortly after the release of *Chrétiens désunis*. The author was delighted with what he had discovered in separated communities: "Russian mysticality, Anglo-Saxon respect for freedom, vital and personal intimacy with the Bible

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem: "le mystère propre de cette unité parfaite [...] qui peut ainsi assumer sans division la diversité."

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 314: "Ces énergies du Second Adam, cette grâce du Christ-chef [...] reposent dans l'Église."

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem: "la plénitude des énergies divines capables de sanctifier, de ramener à Dieu dans l'unité, et finalement de s'incorporer tout ce qu'il y a d'humanité vivante dans l'homme."

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 316: "[...] ont trouvé leur forme de christianisme et se sont exprimées religieusement, en dehors de l'Église."

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 319: "Ce qu'il y a de pur dans la piété protestante ou orthodoxe, ou dans cette *Pietas anglicana* qui donne à l'anglicanisme sa continuité réelle, manque à l'Église catholique."

which we find in many Protestant communities — let us think about the what the real presence and cooperation of these values in one Church would bring to the improvement [...] of Catholicism.”<sup>13</sup>

“So many ideas and points of view which have developed in detached theologies and which, while not being completely absent from us, constitute a certain lack of the real fullness and total catholicity of our Church.”<sup>14</sup> As you can see, Congar directs his admiration not only towards the well-known religious features of individual groups of separated brethren, such as mysticality or attitude to the Scriptures, but also points to the ideas and theological points of view that have developed in separated communities.

In such a way Congar acknowledges the real presence and importance of the values guarded and fostered by the separated brethren. As J. Famerée observes, “when a Dominican theologian finds that non-Catholics (individuals and groups of people) also have the truth [...] he clearly makes a certain opening.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, these otherwise authentic qualities existing in the communities of separated brethren could contribute with an improvement in “our” Catholicism. Catholicism can be improved — that is a novelty resulting from the Congar’s concept. This approach developed, let us add, in the context of distrust towards any attempts to undermine the status of wholeness that belongs to the Catholic Church.

Congar’s bold thesis concerning the values present in the separated communities is accompanied by an extremely important remark. In the Catholic Church, values exist and develop in communion with all others, whereas the development of values constituting the deposit of separated communities is *isolated*. Congar emphasizes that such a development of values, which are genuinely catholic in their original positive inspiration, has become “the real principle of the persistence of numerous, distorted forms of Christianity.”<sup>16</sup> Naturally, this development was also influenced by “contradictions, exclusivities, political, racial, and ethnic factors.”<sup>17</sup>

Congar thus arrives at a great paradox. It emerges that “the affirmation of these values is at the very root of the division.”<sup>18</sup> Their improper development, the development of certain values in isolation from oth-

<sup>13</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Chronique...*, p. 517.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> J. FAMERÉE: “*Chrétiens désunis* du P. Congar 50 ans après.” *Nouvelle revue théologique*, vol. 110 (1988), p. 678.

<sup>16</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Chrétiens désunis...*, p. 312: “le principe réel de consistance de multiples formes aberrantes de christianisme.”

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*: “des oppositions, des exclusivismes, des facteurs politiques, raciaux, ethniques.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 311: “l’affirmation de ces valeurs est à l’origine même de la séparation.”

ers, may be the basis of the later schism.<sup>19</sup> For here “the separated Christians, although genuinely incorporated through Baptism into the Catholic Church, the Body that contains the fullness of Christ, [...] in order to develop the seed of Christian life deposited in them through Baptism, found only a smaller or larger, more or less distorted part of the goods of the New Covenant, which are Christ’s inheritance and a dowry to His Church.”<sup>20</sup> Hence, the life of separated communities offers the chance to find only a part of Christ’s inheritance.

As a result, “the seed of faith living in them, even if they preserved it, could meet only some of its objects, most of them deformed.”<sup>21</sup> Likewise, “the seed of love living in them [...] could meet only a small part of the mysteries where it feeds and [...] is deprived of Catholic communion and that internal regulation dependent on the hierarchy, which is the last principle of typically ecclesial unity.”<sup>22</sup>

The significance of these shortcomings lies in the fact that the values and realities guarded by the separated brethren are by nature destined to develop in communion with all other values and realities in full unity. Meanwhile, as a result of divisions, this development proceeds in detachment and isolation. As a result, these values “are isolated and therefore always incomplete, often distorted and wounded, temporary and imperfect.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Congar explains the mechanism of the heresy in an interesting way. Namely, heresy is “exactly the fruit of the mind which has betrayed the law of fraternal communion and which, taking up the selfish freedom of its movement, has developed the elements of Christianity on a purely intellectual plane and in purely logical ways. In this way we come to the philosophy of Christ, which is no longer true faith in Christ, to an ecclesiological system which is no longer the true meaning of the Church” — in original French: “L’hérésie est précisément le fruit d’un esprit qui a trahi la loi de la communion fraternelle, et qui, reprenant la liberté égoïste de son mouvement, développe à un plan purement intellectuel, et par des voies purement logiques, les éléments du christianisme. On aboutit ainsi à une philosophie du Christ qui n’est plus la vraie foi au Christ, à un système ecclésiologique qui n’est plus le vrai sens de l’Église” (*Je crois en la Sainte Église...*, p. 13).

<sup>20</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Chrétiens désunis...*, p. 313: “incorporés authentiquement par leur baptême à l’Église catholique, au corps qui a en lui la plénitude du Christ, [...] pour développer le germe de vie chrétienne mis en eux par le baptême, qu’une partie plus ou moins grande et plus ou moins dévié des biens de la nouvelle.”

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem: “Le germe de la foi, vivant en eux, même s’ils l’ont gardé n’a pu rencontrer qu’une partie de ses objets la plupart déformés d’ailleurs.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem: “le germe de la charité vivant en eux, [...] n’a pu rencontrer, dans les communautés protestantes, qu’une petite partie des mystères ou il se nourrit et, [...] il reste privé de la pleine communion catholique et de cette régulation intérieure dépendante de la hiérarchie, qui est le principe dernier de l’unité proprement ecclésiastique.”

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 314: “sont chez eux isolées, et donc toujours incomplètes, souvent déviées et blessées, précaires et imparfaites.”

However, it is also true that the Church, which is a living organism, has not yet realized all the virtues/possibilities of her life form, Congar states. Moreover, he claims that “everything leads us to think that the Church is still at her beginnings.”<sup>24</sup> Being at the outset and the simultaneous emphasis on the fullness of the Church seem to be contradictory.

## 2. The goal of the reunification

The implications of Congar’s concept of Catholicism proved to be very significant. Due to its dynamic ability, it could be said that catholicity is not complete and perfect, as has been assumed so far. Congar has precisely defined the scope in which it is possible to accept the thesis that the catholicity of the Church is incomplete: it is given to us as a dynamic ability, and as such, it has not yet developed all of its effects.

The Dominican makes a distinction between the fullness of Catholicism (from the point of view of its dynamic possibilities) and the actualization of Catholicism. The implementation is not complete: the Church “clearly realizes this catholicity? only incompletely.”<sup>25</sup> The above distinction allows Congar to extract Catholicism in the aspect of its realization and specific expression. This is a visible, or a noticeable catholicity. It is because the only Church is affected by imperfection. It is worth emphasizing once again that the shortcomings of Catholicism in question concern only its real and actual implementation.

At this point, it would be useful to make reference to the remarks devoted to Congar’s concept of Catholicism. Due to this vision of current and virtual reality, the author is allowed to say: “The Church of Christ, our Church, fully catholic from the point of view of the dynamic possibilities of its vital substance,”<sup>26</sup> clearly realizes this catholicity only imperfectly. As for the issue of the catholic fullness of the Church, Congar states: “it can be said *a priori* that, undoubtedly, it is not and will never be perfect.”<sup>27</sup>

One of the most controversial statements that would soon have serious consequences for the author concerns the shape of the united Church. It reads as follows: “We do not think that the ‘united’ Church will

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 316: “tout porte à penser que l’Église est encore à ses débuts.”

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem: “ne réalise explicitement cette catholicité que d’une manière imparfaite.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem: “l’Église du Christ, notre Église, pleinement catholique au point de vue des possibilités dynamiques de sa substance vivante.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 315: “on peut dire a priori qu’elle n’est pas presentement parfaite et ne le sera sans doute jamais.”

form, strictly speaking, a new whole: for in my opinion the Church already exists; but I believe [...] that a ‘united’ Church will form a whole more richer than any existing Christian body, including the Catholic Church.”<sup>28</sup>

Immediately after this statement, the Dominican theologian very clearly spells out the scope of his thesis about a “richer” Church, which might yet arise from reunification. The conviction about such a Church is formulated by the author only from “the perspective of a clear and effective realization of the Catholic Church.”<sup>29</sup> He stipulates that “this could not be said either about his unity, which cannot be gained or lost, or about his catholicity, understood in its substance or principle.”<sup>30</sup>

Congar admits that unification aspirations must be associated with the necessity of certain sacrifices on the part of separated brethren. Nevertheless, neither the Protestants nor the Orthodox have to give up what is evangelical and Christian. It is not so much an “act of ‘submission’ to a certain authority as entering into the fullness and communion of all the goods of the New Covenant, into the Father’s House.”<sup>31</sup> As a result, the return no longer has the marks of renunciation or submission to the Catholic Church.

“O my separated brethren,” says Congar in the form of an invocation, “we call you to come to us not to triumph over you, but to enter together into full communion, into our Christ [...] so that we may live together with all the treasures of our Father. [...] We absolutely do not wish to be right against you, but that you may be right with us, that we may be right together, that we may realize together, hand in hand, one another’s sustained and necessary, the catholicity of all that belongs to Christ.”<sup>32</sup> As we see, Congar encourages not to convert, but rather to complement.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 321: “nous ne pensons pas que l’Église «réunie» formera un tout, à proprement parler, nouveau: car l’Église, selon nous, existe déjà; mais nous croyons, [...] que l’Église «réunie» formera un tout plus riche qu’aucun corps chrétien actuellement existant, y compris l’Église catholique.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem: “au point de vue de la réalisation explicite et effective de la catholicité de l’Église.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem: “cela ne pourrait être dit ni de son unité, laquelle ne peut gagner ou perdre, ni de sa catholicité considérée dans sa substance ou son principe.”

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 323: “un acte de «soumission» à une autorité, que par une entrée dans la plénitude et la communion de tous les biens de la Nouvelle Alliance, en la Maison du Père.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem: “O mes frères séparés, ce n’est pas pour triompher de vous que nous vous appelons à nous; c’est pour entrer ensemble dans la plénitude de la communion, en notre Christ [...], c’est pour que nous vivions ensemble de tous les trésors de Notre Père. [...] Nous ne désirons absolument pas avoir raison contre vous, mais que vous ayez raison avec nous, que nous ayons raison ensemble, que nous réalisions ensemble, au coude à coude, les uns aux autres appuyés et nécessaires, la catholicité de tout ce qui est du Christ.”



The applicable concept of unification in Catholicism was convertism. The hallmarks of this concept are borne to a large extent by Congar's position, when he states directly: "for us the Catholic Church is purely and simply *the Church* [*l'Église*]; so, in a sense, we believe that union is a certain 'return' to this Church."<sup>33</sup> This return, however, does not mean to be a simple absorption and it is another novelty of the Congar's concept.

The theologian also made a beautiful comparison of when exactly the unification would take place. Now he compared its advent to the realization of Lord's Parousia. "God himself knows its time and the desire to fix its day or define its way would be vain."<sup>34</sup> About us, overwhelmed by the difficulties on the way to unity and doubting its realization, Congar says: "We begin to ask, like holy women carrying spices: Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"<sup>35</sup> Concluding his reflections, the father of Catholic ecumenism pours into our hearts hope by stating: "But perhaps God's angels have received a mission that we do not suspect [...]."<sup>36</sup>

### 3. The relationship between Catholicism and ecumenism

As stated above, the concept of Catholicism is instrumental in Congar's attempt to define ecumenism theologically. At this point, it is appropriate to briefly characterize the relationship that exists between it and ecumenism. In particular, it will be a question of defining what it means to explain the problems of unification in terms of Catholicism. Such an explanation is, according to Congar, the main thesis of his work. In one of his articles he explicitly states that "the very rich concept of Catholicism also brings to the problem of reunification some elements of positive solutions, and even [...] a solution."<sup>37</sup>

Congar's view that the problem of ecumenism is essentially a problem of Catholicism may suggest a certain interchangeability of the two con-

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 320: "Pour nous, l'Église catholique est, purement et simplement l'Église, et donc, en un sens, la réunion est selon nous un retour à cette Église."

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 344: "Dieu seul en connaît le temps, et vouloir en fixer le jour ou en déterminer le mode serait vain."

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 345: "nous nous prenons à demander, comme les saintes femmes porteuses d'aromates: 'Qui nous enlèvera la pierre à l'entrée du sépulcre?'"

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem: "Mais déjà, peut être, les Anges de Dieu ont reçu des missions que nous ne prévoyons pas."

<sup>37</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Chronique...* p. 517.

cepts. However, it is not so. Congar speaks directly of “the great difference of values, logics and requirements between ecumenism and Catholicism.”<sup>38</sup> Catholicity is the “elevation of the multiple to a previously given unity.”<sup>39</sup> The opposite is true of ecumenism. Namely, it constitutes “introducing a certain unity into a previously given diversity.”<sup>40</sup> These statements allow us to grasp the fact that the concepts of Catholicism and ecumenism are realities with completely different starting points. Although both concern directly the issue of unity, Congar clearly differentiates between them.

With regard to Catholicism, unity is a previously given reality. Catholicism presupposes a strictly ecclesial, that is, communal reality of unity. Hence, it can be described by Congar as “unity assimilating multiplicity.”<sup>41</sup> Catholicity is the extension of unity (*extensio unitatis*<sup>42</sup>) or the universal capacity for unity (*universalis capacitas unitatis*<sup>43</sup>). By contrast, the starting point for ecumenism is diversity. To define it, Congar quotes at this point a statement by the Lutheran bishop, N. Söderblom, who was committed to ecumenism, and who described it as “unity in multiplicity.”<sup>44</sup>

The basis for Congar’s distinctions between Catholicism and ecumenism is also their relation to the external or human form of unity, for the reason that the Church, apart from being “a unity of the spiritual life”<sup>45</sup>, also has “the unchangeable organ of her unity.”<sup>46</sup> “Without respecting this human form of unity, there can be ecumenism, but there can be no true Catholicism.”<sup>47</sup> Like unity, Catholicity has its “external constitution.”<sup>48</sup> “Like unity, it is apostolic, communal, and hierarchical.”<sup>49</sup>

Ecumenism, on the other hand, is an illusion of Catholicism.<sup>50</sup> All those who “do not recognize among the existing Churches (*les Églises*) the Church (*l’Église*) of Jesus Christ, his Bride, visibly the one

<sup>38</sup> Y. CONGAR: *Chrétiens desunis...*, p. 180: “la grande différence de valeur, de logique et d’exigence qu’il y a entre l’«œcuménisme» et la catholicité”.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, p.125: “l’assomption du multiple dans une unité antérieurement donnée.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem: “l’introduction d’une certaine unité dans une diversité antérieurement donnée.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 180: “l’unité assimilant la multiplicité.”

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 125: “die Einheit der Mannigfaltigkeit.”

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 124: “unité de la vie spirituelle.”

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem: “un organ immuable de son unité.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, p. 125: “Hors le respect de cette forme humaine d’unité, il pourra y avoir «œcuménisme», il ne pourra y avoir vraiment catholicité.”

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem: “constitution extérieure.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem: “est apostolique, sociétaire et hiérarchique, comme l’unité.”

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem: “le mirage de catholicité.”

visible unity that Christ willed and prepared for her”,<sup>51</sup> succumb to this illusion.

The question of the relationship between the Church of Christ and other Churches, and in particular the question of its visible unity, underlies another distinction between Catholicism and ecumenism. Denial of visible unity seems to exclude catholicity. “Without this unity,” Congar states, “it is not really Catholicism that needs to be talked about, because it is a universal capacity of unity: it is rather ecumenism which, conversely, is a capacity of unity hidden in the diversity of Christian groups.”<sup>52</sup>

According to Congar, ecumenism appears as a kind of common denominator. “We will tend, of course, to enrich and increase as much as possible, but in any case we cannot consider that ‘catholicity’, unless we take the problem exactly the other way around.”<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusions

We dealt with the issue of Congar’s concept of Catholicism relating to the problem of ecumenism. Catholicity, present in its substance from the beginning of the Church, excludes an understanding of ecumenism which would assume that the Church is a reality yet to be constituted. For the Church *is* catholic in her unity.

The same catholicity, by virtue of its dynamic character, served Congar to give a new status to the idea of unification. In place of the current concept of conversion, valid on the basis of the Catholic Church, or the simple absorption of individuals by the fully formed Church, the French theologian proposes a *complement* or *integration* into the unity of the Church.

As a result of this process, the united Church will be no other body than the present Catholic Church, but it will be richer and more complete. This seems to be the meaning of the idea of Catholic “ecumenism”.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibidem: “ne reconnaissent pas, parmi «les Églises» existantes, l’Église de Jésus-Christ, son Épouse, visiblement une de l’unité visible que le Christ a voulue et préparée pour elle.”

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, p. 126: “sans cette unité, en vérité, ce n’est pas de *catholicité* qu’il faut parler, puisqu’elle est la capacité universelle de l’unité latente en la diversité des groupes chrétiens.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem: “l’on tendra, certes, à enrichir et à accroître le plus possible, mais qu’en tout état de cause on ne saurait considérer comme une «catholicité», à moins de prendre le problème exactement à l’envers.”

Practical actions proposed by the author lead to its implementation. They are aimed at deepening the understanding of the grace of Catholicism and removing obstacles in the way of its realization. This would be the subject of a separate study, as well as the attempt to define the further development of the theological search for unity by the French Dominican, who was undoubtedly the father of Catholic ecumenism.

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### Yves Congar — précurseur des principes catholiques de l'œcuménisme

#### Résumé

L'auteur de l'article analyse l'œuvre d'Yves Congar *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un «œcuménisme» catholique* (Paris 1937) et montre pourquoi le dominicain français peut être considéré comme un précurseur de l'œcuménisme au sein de l'Église catholique romaine. L'argumentation s'appuie sur la définition de la nature du processus d'unification des chrétiens, du point de départ, du but vers lequel se dirige le processus d'unification, ainsi que de la manière de concevoir le rapport entre catholicité et œcuménisme. Au lieu d'une conception fondée sur la conversion, actuellement valable dans l'Église catholique, c'est-à-dire d'une simple absorption des individus par l'Église pleinement formée, le théologien français propose une idée d'agrégation ou d'intégration dans l'unité de l'Église. À la suite de ce processus, l'Église unie ne sera pas différente de l'Église catholique actuelle, mais elle sera plus riche et plus complète.

**Mots-clés:** Yves Congar, œcuménisme, dialogue, catholicisme, précurseur, principe

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Yves Congar —  
precursore dei principi cattolici dell'ecumenismo

Abstract

L'autore dell'articolo analizza l'opera di Yves Congar *Cristiani disuniti. Principi di un «ecumenismo» cattolico* (Paris 1937) e mostra perché il domenicano francese può essere considerato il precursore dell'ecumenismo all'interno della Chiesa cattolica romana. L'argomentazione si basa sulla definizione della natura del processo di unificazione dei cristiani, del punto di partenza, della meta verso cui si dirige il processo di unificazione, nonché del modo di presentare il rapporto tra cattolicità ed ecumenismo. Invece della concezione della conversione, valida nella Chiesa cattolica, vale a dire di un semplice assorbimento degli individui da parte della Chiesa pienamente formata, il teologo francese propone un'idea di aggregazione o di integrazione nell'unità dalla Chiesa. Come risultato di questo processo, la Chiesa unita non sarà diversa dalla Chiesa cattolica attuale, ma sarà più ricca e completa.

**Parole chiave:** Yves Congar, ecumenismo, dialogo, cattolicesimo, precursore, principio



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## From Pilgrim to Local The Problem of Unity in Postmodern Philosophy

**Abstract:** In this article, the author outlines the problem of unity from the perspective of postmodern philosophy. Basically, unity of the human being is one of the most important problems of philosophy. Ancient philosophers identified human being as identical with citizenship. Man as a citizen of Athens was able to prove his citizenship of Athens by pointing to his ownership of family tombs and fireplace. Medieval philosophy continued the ancient idea but added one new aspect, hope. A medieval man was a citizen of the empire, but at the same time he or she was a citizen of Kingdom of Heaven. He or she was a pilgrim who travelled to God.

Modern philosophy develops unity in an absolutely different way of thinking. First, what we have to know is that unity is a problem. Second, if we would like to solve this problem, it is absolutely necessary to use a new terminology. In this article I emphasize like to highlight the phenomenon of identity through an analysis that the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman did in the past three decades. He divided a modern man into two categories.

First, Bauman characterized a modern man as a global, very rich and well educated and can invest capital in all countries of the world. The second type is a local. He is a type of modern man who is not necessarily poor, but who is bound to only one place where he resides. The problem of the locals is that they cannot freely travel and invest in their own capital. Locals live in one place, they have not enough power to influence local politics, economy, infrastructure, religions. Globals are able to influence the local community by means of politics, economy, social structures, and religion. Zygmunt Bauman describes the identity of modern man as a tension between locals and globals.

**Keywords:** unity, “global” identity, “local” identity, postmodernity

## Introduction

The ancient idea of *οικουμένη*, developed by Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers, was a summary of the concept of society's values. It was the idea of a general community of people of different nationalities, cultures, and religions, grouped and unified into a single empire. This idea became an unrealizable illusion at the end of the 4th century AD. Christianity in the Middle Ages tried to revive this idea, yet on a completely different foundation. Christian theology wanted all nations and cultures of Europe to be united by one religion. Only one shepherd was to lead all these nations. However, this shepherd was not to be Christ, but the Holy Church. This medieval idea of a universal and single Christian empire, especially in the Investiture Controversy, proved to be unworkable. Although optimistic at first, these attempts proved to be unfeasible over time. The reason is biblical teaching, at the core of which is embedded an aspect that makes these efforts unworkable.

This aspect can be summarized as follows: The Church has not been established as a political power. Jesus Christ established the Church as a *Communio Sanctorum*. Community of sinners which were saved by the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. There is one more aspect, which characterized medieval human being: awareness of temporality. The medieval man knew that he or she is only a pilgrim on this earth. They were aware they had no permanent place here. Man is here on Earth only temporarily. What applies to the individual can also be applied to supra-individual structures, or empires. Although in this case it was the Christian Kingdom.

The material world, as well as man and his culture, are fleeting. So, the only thing that identifies us as human beings with this place seems to be the old ancient idea of Athens' citizenship: graves and fireplaces. Man is identified with this place of residence, that is, with the graves of his parents and grandparents. Man is identified with this place of residence by his fireplace — the place where he and his descendants live. Neither aspect is sufficient in itself. Graves indicate the origin. They are a testimony of where man came from. Graves and fireplaces unite man with the Earth and society. However, it is not possible to say where one is headed and where one is going. The fireplaces say nothing about where a person came from. Rather, it shows where he is now. However, there is another dimension that old antiquity lacked. Namely, the perspective of hope. In other words, where is one headed.

The Middle Ages and scholastic theology and philosophy brought this perspective. And thus they also gave man a new concept of unity. The size

of a pilgrim has added to the graves and the fireplaces, a man who has his graves, his fireplaces and at the same time is on his way. So, he is heading somewhere. But the idea of direction has changed over time. In the Middle Ages, man turned to God. Following the idea of St. Thomas Aquinas, man is heading for the greatest good, God. That idea conveyed to man awareness where they are from, where they are actually, and where they are going. That idea united man with society, Earth, himself or herself and God.

What has united man as a man in postmodern time? It seems that postmodern man has to be constantly on the move and is also heading somewhere. But that direction is quite different from the medieval movement of the pilgrim who headed for the Kingdom of God. Modernity had purposefully and deliberately many aspects of medieval thought, but what postmodernity really lost is the dimension of hope. Well, at least the eternal hope. No matter how fast a person is, he is still going nowhere. He is moving but he is going nowhere. He is on the trajectory to the point without a goal. Because there is no eternal purpose of life. Only moment in time, relation of pleasantness, only place as geographical points. Without unity and integrity. In the words of Martin Heidegger, man is headed towards death.

## Methodology

In the presented text, we will focus on the paradigm shift, which is characterized by two great periods. We will therefore try to analyze texts, first a scholastic text, and later texts dealing with late modernity. At the same time, we ask ourselves what enabled medieval man to accept the identity of a pilgrim and late-modern man to accept the identity of a local? Therefore, it is an attempt to interpret texts that come from two different periods. Methodologically, we will rely on the analysis of the text and also on the comparison of texts. This comparison, as we assume, will allow us to present two basic paradigms that describe the reality that surrounds us, of which we are a part. It is therefore an interpretation of reality, not a descriptive positivist approach to data collection and analysis.



## Analysis of the pilgrim type

The Middle Ages knew their graves or the places from which man came. He knew his fireplace or the place where it was located. In addition, he knew that he was walking where he was at the time. Christianity has given man a meaningful goal. It could be metaphorically expressed as setting a person in motion. The Kingdom of God became the meaningful destination of the journey. Medieval texts in many forms of this idea seized and worked with it. One of those who expressed this idea comprehensively was St. Anselm of Canterbury. In his work *Proslogion*, he describes God as the highest conceivable good. St. Anselm of Canterbury in his work has written a very important fragment, which draws man's seeking for eternal good:

Alas, I am indeed wretched, one of those wretched sons of Eve, separated from God. What have I begun, and what accomplished? Where was I going and where have I got to? To what did I reach out, for what do I long? I sought after goodness, and lo, here is turmoil; I was going towards God, and I was my own impediment. I sought for peace within myself, and in the depths of my heart I found trouble and sorrow. I wanted to laugh for the joy of my heart, and the pain of my heart made me groan. It was gladness I was hoping for, but sighs came thick, and fast.<sup>1</sup>

In this fragment, St. Anselm of Canterbury unveiled the very fundamental concern of medieval man. Another philosopher and theologian who further developed this idea was Thomas Aquinas, the preeminent representative of scholasticism. In his *opus magnum*, *Summa theologiae*, he reflects on what it means to be a good person and a citizen:

Et quia homo secundum suam naturam est animal politicum, virtutes huiusmodi, prout in homine existunt secundum conditionem suae naturae, politicae vocantur, prout scilicet homo secundum has virtutes recte se habet in rebus humanis gerendis. Secundum quem modum hactenus de his virtutibus locuti sumus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. CANTENBURY: *Proslogion*. 1, 85—90.

<sup>2</sup> St. T. AQUINO: *Summa Theologica*. [36093] I<sup>a</sup>-IIae q. 61 a. 5 co. The author of the article translated this fragment into English as: "Because man is inherently a social creature, virtues occur in him in harmony with his nature, and they adopt the name of civic virtue, as they allow man to take the right attitude toward society. These virtues differ from each other. Namely, some of them concern pilgrims who want to be like God." Cf. Polish translation: Św. TOMASZ Z ARWINU: *Suma Teologiczna*. 11, p. 93.

The idea of the national identity of man as a member of the nation state, as we understand this idea today, was absolutely unknown to scholastic thought. A member of the nation was understood to have been a member of the Holy Roman Church. However, it would be a mistake to view medieval man as individual who feels uprooted, both socially and economically, let alone religiously. Although, thanks to St. Thomas Aquinas, we can liken a medieval man to a pilgrim, we must say that this pilgrim was deeply united with community in which he lived, to the political and economic relations in which he grew up, and with the religion of his time. He saw himself as a citizen of the world, traveling with the whole Church of Christ to the Kingdom of God. At the same time, he understands the Church as a temporary home, which is still an imperfect type of the eternal one. The pilgrim is led by the desire to pilgrimage with the whole Holy and United Church into the Kingdom of God. Yet, the pilgrim does not become a stranger and alienated from the world. Pilgrim was still a member of society and felt more integrated with society, because society had the same goal as he or she had.

St. Thomas Aquinas refers in this context to St. Augustine and other representatives of the patristic and scholastic tradition. He identifies the man with a member of the Church. Even better, he identifies him with the morality; the morality of a pilgrim who travels with the Holy Church. The identity of medieval man was created by connecting the ethos of a pilgrim who travels the world with the ethos of a citizen or, even better, the ethos of a member of a certain kingdom. However, it can be argued here that the pilgrim does not feel any lasting connection with the world, because what the pilgrim is heading towards is his destination and sees the journey only as a temporary home. However, this objection is unfounded. For a pilgrim who rejected the world, would have to define this world before having rejected the world as a permanent home. He would have to find reasons to reject it. So, he had to justify why he had not considered this world his permanent home and why he was on his way. That is, he had to understand the world and interpret that understanding as well. This presupposes an essential connection to the world. Similarly, St. Aurelius Augustine writes: “We must enjoy this world (*uti*), not enjoy it (*frui*), only then will we be able to understand the invisible things of God (*invivibilia Dei*) and see them through created things, that is, to attain eternal spiritual values through bodily early things.”<sup>3</sup> What reasons led the pilgrim to reject the world as a permanent place to dwell?

The world is not a permanent residence for two reasons. The first is the very nature of the material world, which is impermanent and change-

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<sup>3</sup> A. AUGUSTINUS: *Křesťanská vzdělanost*. Praha: Kalich, 2004, p. 50.

able. The second reason is human mortality. Therefore, nothing has duration, and nothing in this world is eternal. Therefore, the pilgrim does not reject the world as such. However, he refuses to grant absolute status to this world.

There is another reason why the pilgrim did not find a permanent place in this world. However, this reason is different from the previous ones. This is due to the understanding of the earthly church. St. Thomas Aquinas distinguished the eternal church, which is a type of the earthly church. The Church of the Earth is, in Thomistic philosophy, a traveling church, a church of pilgrims. *Respondeo dicendum quod homo in statu vitae istius constitutus, est quasi in quadam via, qua debet tendere ad patriam.*<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the forerunner of the earthly church is the heavenly church. Thomas Aquinas writes that after the resurrection of all the dead, the earthly church will be united with the church of heaven. We could interpret this fragment as meaning that the church is not connected to the country, culture, and nation. So, it does not fuse with the world in which it lives because it is the church of pilgrims, not the inhabitants or citizens of this world. This interpretation is also hinted on in other places of the *Summa theologiae*. For example, St. Thomas calls the goal of the Christian path the *heavenly homeland*.<sup>5</sup> Homeland, as indicated by St. Thomas, is understood as the Kingdom of God. That is a good, of course, but still not the highest good. The Kingdom of God is good, for the highest good, which is God, dwells in his Kingdom.

The Thomistic philosophy is based on two basic sources. The first is the Holy Scriptures, and the second is Aristotle's philosophy. Let us start with this philosophy. Thomas Aquinas knew Aristotle's work as he interpreted it himself and dedicated many of his works to him. These also include the *Nicomachean Ethics*. St. Thomas dedicated his own work, namely *Sententia libri ethicorum*, to it and therein he commented on Aristotle's book.<sup>6</sup> It follows from Aristotle's introduction to all ethics, confirming that all one's thinking and actions are directed to a certain good.<sup>7</sup> If all human activity is for good, then that good must be the highest good. This is God for Thomas Aquinas. Man's highest wellbeing is looking at God, writes St. Tomas in his greatest work.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ST. T. AQUINO: *Summa Theologica*. [33158] I<sup>a</sup> q. 113 a. 4 co.: "Man in earthly life is on the path on which he should go to his heavenly homeland." Compare with the Polish translation: Św. TOMASZ z AKWINU. *Suma Teologiczna*. 8, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem,

<sup>6</sup> ST. T. AQUINO: *Corpus Thomisticum. Sententia libri ethicorum*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ibidem, Lib. 1, 1, 8.

<sup>8</sup> ST. T. AQUINO: *Summa Theologica*. [33158] I<sup>a</sup> q. 113 a. 4 co. Cf. the Polish translation: Św. TOMASZ z AKWINU: *Suma Teologiczna*. 8, p. 86.

If God is the highest good, then it means that whoever follows the good goes to God. Such a person naturally becomes good and lives well. The reason for the pilgrimage to God is the pilgrim's desire to dwell with God. At the same time, St. Thomas mentions the good that comes from this pilgrimage to God. Man becomes virtuous and lives well on Earth.<sup>9</sup> The pilgrimage to God makes man virtuous, but these virtues are not self-serving. In contrast, these virtues mean that man lives well and therefore manages the Earth and completes the Earth. Paradoxically, the pilgrim thus becomes a benefit to the land through which he passes. At the same time, the unity that comes from the desire to dwell with God shapes the pilgrim's unity in a creative way in relation to the land he is walking on. Therefore, we can call this unity an axiological unity. Man is connected to the Earth because the pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God shapes him in the image of God. Although one does not feel at home here, one creates a home. Although he does not feel that he is the master over the world, it is the world that rules. Although he is a guest on this land, he takes care of the land. Although he meets other pilgrims, he is a brother to them. He feels gratitude for everything because everything is his gift.

Thus, we encounter paradoxes. On the one hand, there is a pilgrim in the world, and he desperately needs the world. On the other hand, the pilgrim only goes through this world. On the one hand, the pilgrim is responsible for this world. On the other hand, he is aware that all the values he professes come from the world he is just heading into. On the one hand, he is guided by the love of God. On the other hand, he proves this love to God by his love for this world. Rather, to people, that is, to responsible civic life. The medieval man lived on earth knowing that he was not alone. He lived on earth knowing that God was near him. Therefore, even more intensely and with greater responsibility, he turned to the country where he was walking and was grateful for it. It depended on how he lived on this earth.

## Analysis of the local type

The foundations of the modern society in which we live lie in modern and the Enlightenment philosophy. In the Enlightenment philosophy, man tried to emancipate him- and herself, and in the end, as Friedrich Nietzsche points out, they finally succeeded. Faith and hope died at the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

moment of Nietzsche's cry that "God is dead". But the present, as Theodor Adorno indicates, is the opposite of not the Middle Ages, but of the Enlightenment. Although one has lost one's Christian identity in the name of another identity, one cannot clearly define that identity precisely.

Contemporary literature, not only philosophical, but also sociological, economic or political, defines the contemporary world as a *globalized* one. To define a person's identity, we should start with this concept. As soon as we look for an answer to the question of what globalization really is, we immediately face difficulties. One of the first difficulties is the historical definition of the globalization process. The solid historical caesurae of globalization can be established as follows:

- the first period of globalization dates from the first half of the 19th century to the First World War;
- the second period of globalization starts with the second half of the 20th century and is still in progress until now.<sup>10</sup>

Both periods are completely divergent from each other. While the first period of globalization is characterized by the interconnection of world trade, capital markets, and the integration of the transcontinental labour market,<sup>11</sup> the second phase is fundamentally different. It is initially linked to post-World War II reconstruction and trade interconnection, with capital market interconnection reaching pre-World War I levels only in 1980. As Elsenhans claims: "Globalization has not been and is not an ongoing process or form."<sup>12</sup> Additionally, the second phase of globalization can be divided into smaller units. Therefore, we should ask whether it is in fact possible to create a single generalized definition of a globalized world.

Among the definitions that describe globalization from an economic point of view are the following: "It means the introduction of a division of labor on a global scale. It is the result of the oversaturation of domestic markets, which leads to new outlets, the use of new or cheaper material and human resources, and the allocation of capital in the territories that offer the most favourable conditions."<sup>13</sup> This very strict definition takes into account only the production of goods and their exchange. Globalization can be interpreted as a set of economic tools that serve to increase efficiency in the production and distribution of goods. Globalization, as this definition implies, serves humans. This immense advantage is underlined by "such [...] benefits of international trade as cooperation, mutual knowledge, tolerance, the use of capable people, regardless of nationality,

<sup>10</sup> H. ELSENHANS: "Globalizace, nacionalismus a stabilita předválečných systémů." In: W. DEMEL: *Dějiny světa*. Praha 2013, p. 263.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 263.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> P. HORVÁTHOVÁ: *Základy managementu*. Ostrava 2013, p. 66.

for foreign investors.”<sup>14</sup> The author is aware of the pros of a globalized world. There are also downsides: “The downsides of globalization, such as the degeneration of national cultures, the unification of countries, the threat to the environment, local unemployment, the weakening of the influence of national cultures, and the emergence of unexpected financial crises.”<sup>15</sup> While the pros can be expressed through economic categories such as trade, cooperation, jobs, then the disadvantages of a globalized world can be captured through non-economic categories such as degeneration of cultures, destruction of the environment, and weakening of cultures.

If we pay attention to the negative aspects of the globalized world, then most of the negative aspects will concern primarily cultures, national minorities, simply put, cultural, religious, nationalities of human identity. At this point, it is necessary to explain why we started talking about human identity, starting with the general concept of globalization. The globalized world cannot escape, this world will overtake every human being, and it is not in the power of an individual to escape the process of globalization. Zygmunt Bauman put it this way: “We are all globalized, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, economic or social security. The only question is whether we are among those for whom globalization means the realization of the ideal of freedom, the so-called globals at the top of today’s world, or, conversely, those for whom the process of globalization has triggered a bleak vision of leaving the local community without being welcome anywhere else — the so-called local.”<sup>16</sup> Bauman admits that globalization affects everyone, without exception.

Let us now turn our attention to the term that Zygmunt Bauman uses — local. It concerns a person who lives in a certain territory to which his house, work, family, friends, and also a certain nationality, tradition, culture bind him. To that extent, it can be stated that such an average person is no different from a person at the beginning of the 20th century. But in a globalized world, this person feels this in a different way. The superpersonal institutions that served man to define his own identity have now lost their influence on the formation of the country’s politics, economy, and culture. Because these roles have been taken over by multinational organizations and companies. Tomá Katrák writes about this in a political science magazine: “In a globalized world, power is far from politics, and politics is far from it. It is a situation in which locals are doomed to choose individual solutions to their problems, even at the cost

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<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 66.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>16</sup> T. KATRÁK: “Rev. of: Zygmund Bauman, *Globalizace: Důsledky pro člověka.*” *Politologický časopis* 1 (2000), pp. 80—82.

of not being able to pinpoint the causes of their problems and to control the breadth of the context of their solutions, which can bring new problems of a much more threatening nature.”<sup>17</sup> Hence, a local is a person who cannot escape the globalized world but who forms the place of his life that the globalized world offers. Globalization forms the place in which a local resides, without the local being able to influence how this place of his residence will be formed. He is imprisoned in one place, paradoxically at a time that demands mobility. When a local has to leave the place in which he resides, he is forced to do so, he does not leave of his own free will. The local is the opposite of the global, which in turn uses all the possibilities of global time-space interconnection.

This term, time-space interconnection, is a term derived from Anthony Giddens, from the book *Modernity and Self-Identity*. In his book, Giddens points to the rupture of traditional ties to place and time that have shaped local communities and nations for many centuries. With modernity comes a whole new kind of human identity. This identity of modern man is expressed by the financial possibilities of self-realization, regardless of place and time. Bauman describes this paradigm shift as follows: “Our civilization is the first culture in history that does not value the permanent, the first civilization that has been able to cut lives into a series of episodes without any consequences and possible commitments [...]. No people have ever inhabited, in a territory that human civilizations of the past considered uninhabitable.”<sup>18</sup> The movement in space, the use of time compression, the constant change of jobs, the formation of career, all this characterizes the modern person. However, only if he has sufficient education, financial resources, and frees himself from traditional structures. The present, which we can call in various ways, is characterized by the uprooting of all Christian values, without the possibility of rooting. We live in a time of uprooting without the possibility of rooting.

## Conclusions

The Enlightenment, which defined itself in opposition to the Middle Ages by wanting to emancipate man, re-create individuals, and give man a new identity, turned into the opposite of the words of Theodor Adorno. This contrast is modernity, or post-modern society. To define the cur-

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<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> Z. BAUMAN: *Individualizovaná společnost*. Praha 2004, p. 290.



rent concept of human identity in such a post-modern society, we must describe the paradigm shift.

The medieval man was aware that his life on earth was limited in time. So he invented an identity that gave his life a completely unique meaning. The identity of a medieval man was given his hope for eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. However, he could not live only in anticipation of the coming of this kingdom, and therefore all his earthly activity was determined by his belief that whatever good he did on earth would be rewarded in heaven. His relationship with the earth, nature, society, people, and, after all, also with himself was shaped by his faith in eternal life with God. Thomas Aquinas literally says that a person approaching God becomes like God, and his deeds on earth are good. So we are facing a paradox. Although the medieval man is aware of his mortality and his life on this earth can be compared to a pilgrimage, yet this pilgrim feels a strong bond to the earth and lives as well as he can. Because he has hope. He is rooted in it and lives from it. We will characterize such an approach with the words: Being towards life.

Martin Heidegger judged that modern man is best described in terms of being towards death. What led Heidegger to such a radical assessment? In his most famous work, *Being and Time*, he asks what we live on. He answers just as radically; we live on our own, and since we are moving towards death and have no hope as human beings, we are necessarily moving towards a radical end, or death. Heidegger rejects hope. After Heidegger, the modern man is a man uprooted from all the hope.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> M. HEIDEGGER: *Bytí a čas*. Praha 1996.



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LUCJAN KLIMSZA

### Entre l'idée d'un pèlerin et d'un local. Le problème de l'unité dans la philosophie postmoderne

#### Résumé

Dans cet article, l'auteur souhaite esquisser le problème de l'unité du point de vue de la philosophie. L'unité de l'homme est l'un des problèmes les plus importants de la philosophie en général. Les anciens philosophes identifiaient l'homme à la citoyenneté. Un homme en tant que citoyen d'Athènes a pu prouver qu'il était citoyen d'Athènes, qu'il avait des tombes familiales et des cheminées. La philosophie médiévale a continué l'idée ancienne, mais a ajouté un nouvel aspect - l'espoir. L'homme médiéval était un citoyen de l'empire, mais en même temps, il était un citoyen du Royaume des Cieux. C'était un pèlerin qui se rendait à Dieu. La philosophie contemporaine développe l'unité d'une tout autre façon de penser. Premièrement, nous devons savoir que l'unité est un problème. Deuxièmement, si nous voulons résoudre ce problème, il est absolument nécessaire d'utiliser une nouvelle terminologie. Dans cet article, nous voudrions souligner l'identité du phénomène à travers l'analyse que le sociologue polonais Zygmunt Bauman a menée au cours des trois dernières décennies. Le chercheur divise l'homme moderne en deux catégories : le premier type d'homme moderne caractérisé par Bauman est le type global. C'est un type d'homme moderne très riche et bien éduqué, capable d'investir des capitaux dans tous les pays du monde. Le second est le type local. Un local est un type d'homme moderne, pas nécessairement pauvre, mais attaché à l'endroit où il habite. Le problème des locaux est qu'ils ne peuvent pas voyager librement et investir dans leur propre capital. Les habitants vivent au même endroit, ils n'ont pas assez de pouvoir pour influencer la politique locale, l'économie, les infrastructures, les religions. Les mondialistes peuvent influencer la communauté locale par la politique, l'économie, les structures sociales et la religion. Zygmunt Bauman décrit l'identité de l'homme moderne comme une tension entre le Local et le Global.

**Mots-clés:** unité, identité «globale», identité «locale», postmodernité

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LUCJAN KLIMSZA

## Tra l'idea di un pellegrino e di un locale. Il problema dell'unità nella filosofia postmoderna

### Abstract

In questo articolo, l'autore vuole delineare il problema dell'unità dal punto di vista della filosofia. L'unità dell'uomo è uno dei problemi più importanti della filosofia in generale. I filosofi antichi identificavano l'identità dell'uomo alla sua cittadinanza. Un uomo come cittadino di Atene fu in grado di dimostrare di essere cittadino di Atene, di avere tombe di famiglia e caminetti. La filosofia medievale ha continuato l'idea antica, ma ha aggiunto un nuovo aspetto - la speranza. L'uomo medievale era cittadino dell'impero, ma allo stesso tempo era anche cittadino del Regno dei Cieli. Era un pellegrino in cammino verso Dio. La filosofia contemporanea sviluppa l'unità nel modo di pensare completamente diverso. Innanzitutto, dobbiamo sapere che l'unità è un problema. In secondo luogo, se vogliamo risolvere questo problema, è assolutamente necessario utilizzare una nuova terminologia. In questo articolo si vorrebbe sottolineare l'identità del fenomeno attraverso l'analisi che il sociologo polacco Zygmunt Bauman ha condotto negli ultimi tre decenni. Lo studioso ha distinto due aspetti dell'identità dell'uomo moderno: il primo tipo di uomo moderno caratterizzato da Bauman è il tipo globale. Questo è il tipo di uomo moderno, molto ricco e ben istruito, capace di investire capitali in tutti i paesi del mondo. Il secondo è il tipo locale. Il locale è un tipo di uomo moderno, non necessariamente povero, ma legato al luogo in cui vive. Il problema dei locali è che non possono viaggiare liberamente e investire nel proprio capitale. Il locale vive in un posto, non ha abbastanza potere per influenzare la politica, l'economia, le infrastrutture, le religioni locali. I globalisti possono influenzare la comunità locale attraverso la politica, l'economia, le strutture sociali e la religione. Zygmunt Bauman descrive l'identità dell'uomo moderno come una tensione tra Locale e Globale.

**Parole chiave:** unità, identità "globale", identità "locale", postmodernità





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## *Ut unum sint:* New Areas of Spiritual and Pastoral Ecumenism

**Abstract:** Care for Christian unity is part of the nature of the Church. Many years after the ecumenical movement began, signs of disappointment are appearing. The doctrinal dialogues and official meetings are still taking place, but spiritual and pastoral ecumenism is increasingly needed. It manifests itself not only in joint prayers but also in an actual exchange of spiritual gifts, pastoral inspirations and cooperation in many areas of the church and social life.

New aspects of such ecumenism have appeared. They take the form of various spiritual trends going beyond the boundaries of churches and communities (prayers, music, spiritual gifts) as well as a search for sources and guidelines for spiritual life that other traditions can offer. In particular, the new shape of ecumenism may be seen in Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. Therefore, the broadly understood Catholic charismatic renewal has a special place in the work for Christian unity. People must walk together, accompany one another, be hospitable and work for the benefit of others. Only then can the Holy Spirit lead the followers of Christ to unity.

**Keywords:** spiritual and pastoral ecumenism, Evangelical spirituality, Pentecostal spirituality, charismatic renewal

Ecumenism has become an inherent part of the contemporary Christianity. It is a great delight to see how much has been accomplished in the dialogue within post-Reformation communities as well as between Catholics and various Protestant confessions and Christians of the Eastern traditions. All this was possible thanks to the opening of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement after the Second Vatican Council. Later, the Teaching Office of the Church defined in greater detail the rules to be followed by the Catholic Church in promoting Christian unity.

Various multilateral discussions between theologians as well as numerous prayer meetings and other joint efforts in many areas demonstrate how much has been done so far. However, ecumenism seems to somehow have lost its momentum and show signs of discouragement. Another difficulty is the rather sceptical, or sometimes clearly hostile, attitude to ecumenism shown by some local Orthodox churches, conservative Catholic communities or Evangelical Christians. It is therefore reasonable to ask about the sense and outlook of ecumenism, as it concerns the lives of Christians and the *oikoumene*, that is, the whole inhabited world.<sup>1</sup>

A search for answers to the problem raised should focus on the contemporary Christian spirituality, as various trends, practices and directions more and more strongly go over the borders of Churches and ecclesial communities. In particular, this can be seen in Evangelical and Pentecostal spirituality and contemplative prayer. Spontaneous prayers, new Christian music and evangelization projects are becoming an increasingly strong bond between the baptized, irrespective of what confession they belong to. While the doctrinal dialogue should not be devalued, it is spiritual and practical ecumenism that seems a necessity now. We need to be aware of the way we have come so far as well as of the possibilities of exchanging spiritual gifts and of new ways of working towards unity of all Christians.

## 1. The way ecumenism has come so far

The 20th century was a specific time for ecumenism. The movement for Christian unity originated in Protestant communities and spread across other denominations. A significant step in the process was the opening of the Catholic Church to the inter-Christian dialogue, something John XXIII and the teaching of Vatican II considerably contributed to. The wealth of prayers, talks and other joint activities have brought major spiritual benefits to the entire Christian family. The development of ecumenism so far indicates its three key aspects, namely doctrinal, spiritual, and practical.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *ecumenism* comes from the Greek *oikoumene*, which means the inhabited world and combines two words: *oikos* (a dwelling place) and *oikeo* (to inhabit).

## 1.1. Doctrinal dialogue

A moment of major importance was when the Catholic Church joined the ecumenical movement. The Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* was a milestone in this respect. It discussed in considerable detail the intellectual dimension of ecumenism. In the first place, it called for dialogue on theology in order to correct misconceptions about Christians from other communities as well as to better understand one another and look for ways to foster unity.<sup>2</sup> Attention and kindness were seen as necessary for that purpose.<sup>3</sup> The ecumenical context should also be present in the university-level theological studies.<sup>4</sup>

These recommendations of Vatican II were put into practice in various official inter-ecclesial dialogues held and developed basically on a bilateral basis, but also among greater number of participants. Some of them were of great significance and bore good fruit. For example, a dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation led to the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*<sup>5</sup> on 31 October 1999. The document was adopted by

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<sup>2</sup> Ecumenism is understood as “every effort to avoid expressions, judgements and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult; then, dialogue between competent experts from different Churches and Communities. At these meetings, which are organized in a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his Communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features. In such dialogue, everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both Communions. In addition, the way is prepared for cooperation between them in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience...” THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Decree on Ecumenism* [further: DE], 4.

<sup>3</sup> “We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required, and this must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will. Catholics, who already have a proper grounding, need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background.” DE 9.

<sup>4</sup> “Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially of a historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond more exactly with the facts. It is most important that future shepherds and priests should have mastered a theology that has been carefully worked out in this way and not polemically, especially with regard to those aspects which concern the relations of separated brethren with the Catholic Church. This importance is the greater because the instruction and spiritual formation of the faithful and of religious depends so largely on the formation which their priests have received.” DE 10.

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that the *Declaration* was preceded by the *Justification by Faith* (1983) report of the Roman Catholic—Lutheran dialogue in the USA and *The Condem-*

the World Methodist Council (in 2006) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (in 2017). The *Declaration* does not, of course, resolve all the doctrinal differences but is an important point of reference for promoting unity. The Catholic-Anglican dialogue should also be appreciated, as it has led to the drafting of many joint documents,<sup>6</sup> which is a good outlook for further work on key issues, despite the serious challenge of the ordination of women permitted by the Anglican Church.

Particularly important is the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and various eastern Churches. On the one hand, there are contacts with the Ancient Churches of the East, focused on ecclesiology, Eucharist, collegiality, christological concepts (particularly in the dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East) and cooperation, which is necessary, especially in the Middle East. The key points in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Byzantine Orthodoxy are the Church's structure, sacraments, and ways to build unity. The basic documents in this respect are *The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982), *Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church* (1987), *The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church, with Particular Reference to the Importance of the Apostolic Succession for the Sanctification and Unity of the People of God* (1988), and *Uniatism: Method of Union of the Past, and Present Search for Full Communion* (1993). Another significant document is the Balamand Declaration (1993), which condemned proselytism by Catholics and Orthodox people. The communities of eastern Catholics are definitely a bone of contention for many autocephalous Orthodox Churches.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the talks between Catholics and representatives of some Evangelical denominations need mentioning. The dialogue is by no means easy, as the Evangelical communities differ radically from one another, with many of them operating at the national or local level only, and also because many Evangelical Christians are rather distant and aloof about ecumenism. However, theological contacts do exist and are aimed at getting to know each other, defining the terms used (e.g. baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit, sacraments-ordinances, pious practices), or clarifying con-

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*nations of the Reformation Era—Do They Still Divide?* (1986) study by the Evangelical and Catholic theologians in Germany.

<sup>6</sup> Examples of Roman Catholic—Anglican documents include *Salvation and Church* (1986), *The Final Report* (1982), *Church as Communion* (1991), or *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (2005). For more, see S. NOWOSAD, MIĘDZYNARODOWA KOMISJA ANGLIKAŃSKO-KATOLICKA: “Życie w Chrystusie: Moralność, Komunia i Kościół (No. 59—77).” *Forum Teologiczne* 13 (2012), pp. 201—219.

<sup>7</sup> This can clearly be seen in Central and Eastern Europe, where there have been plenty of disputes among the Greek Catholic Churches, especially the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

troversies (e.g. in the Catholic Marian devotions or Evangelical expressions of faith). A good example of tangible results of the dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals<sup>8</sup> are two documents: *Perspectives on Koinonia* from 1989 and *Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness* from 1997 or a Catholic—Evangelical document on the Word of God, Tradition and the Church in the work of salvation.<sup>9</sup> Also important in this evangelical trend is the dialogue with the growing number of New Charismatic Churches.<sup>10</sup> The talks between the Roman Catholic Church and the Baptist World Alliance have resulted in the drafting of a report *Called to Witness to Christ*.

These and other dialogues<sup>11</sup> are still very important and should not be discontinued, even if various tensions or serious doctrinal difficulties arise. A dialogue will always lead to a better understanding and mutual respect.

## 1.2. Spiritual ecumenism

A spiritual dimension is obviously necessary, as it is Jesus Christ who unites all the baptised. Therefore, it does not suffice to offer theological solutions only, but Christians should stay together before and with the Lord. Spiritual ecumenism is not only a matter of piety but concerns the entire Christian life.

What is fundamental is that the baptized truly live the Gospel and experience personal conversion. A sincere close relation with God will

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth recalling that 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the official Catholic—Pentecostal dialogue. See DICASTERO PER LA PROMOZIONE DELL'UNITÀ DEI CRISTIANI: *Cattolici e Pentecostali riflettono su kerygma/predicazione e vita Cristiana*, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/news/2022/2022-07-15-cattolici-e-pentecostali-riflettono-su-kerygma.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

<sup>9</sup> See *A Report of the International Consultation between the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance (2009-2016)*. “Scripture and tradition” and “The Church in salvation”. *Catholics and Evangelicals explore challenges and opportunities*, [http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/evangelici/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/2016-\\_scrittura-e-tradizione--e-la-chiesa-nella-salvezza--cattol/testo-in-inglese.html](http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/evangelici/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/2016-_scrittura-e-tradizione--e-la-chiesa-nella-salvezza--cattol/testo-in-inglese.html) [access: 10.08.2022].

<sup>10</sup> See THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: *The Characteristics of the New Charismatic Churches*, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/pentecostali/conversazioni-con-le-nuove-chiese-carismatiche/the-characteristics-of-the-new-charismatic-churches.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

<sup>11</sup> See F.R. GARRAPUCHO: “Międzykonfesyjne dialogi ekumeniczne. Bilans historyczny.” *Symposium* 16(1) 2007, pp. 67—79.



always lead to closeness with other people. It is hardly surprising then that daily prayer, daily Bible reading, staying united with the community (within a given Church), participation in community prayer and sacraments (ordinances) contribute to the growth of faith and individual bond with Christ and are a basis for promoting unity with those Christians who define various doctrinal concepts differently and express their faith using different rites. However, the unity of Christ does not rule out diversity, which can be “reconciled diversity”<sup>12</sup>. This requires conversion by each individual and community.<sup>13</sup>

This is what the Second Vatican Council recognised as the heart and soul of ecumenism: “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them. [...] All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love.”<sup>14</sup> This transformation involves defeating the sin and any evil, which are the deepest sources of

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<sup>12</sup> “Peace is possible, based on our confession that Jesus is Lord and on our evangelization along this path. It is possible. Even by showing that we have differences — this is obvious, we have differences — but that we desire to be a reconciled diversity. We should not forget that phrase, but say it to everyone: reconciled diversity.” FRANCIS: *Address*. Pentecost Vigil of Prayer, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170603\\_veglia-pentecoste.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html) [access: 4.03.2021].

<sup>13</sup> “We proceed along the road leading to the conversion of hearts guided by love which is directed to God and, at the same time, to all our brothers and sisters, including those not in full communion with us. Love gives rise to the desire for unity, even in those who have never been aware of the need for it. Love builds communion between individuals and between Communities. If we love one another, we strive to deepen our communion and make it perfect. Love is given to God as the perfect source of communion — the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit — that we may draw from that source the strength to build communion between individuals and Communities, or to re-establish it between Christians still divided. Love is the great undercurrent which gives life and adds vigour to the movement towards unity. This love finds its most complete expression in common prayer. [...] Even when prayer is not specifically offered for Christian unity, but for other intentions such as peace, it actually becomes an expression and confirmation of unity. The common prayer of Christians is an invitation to Christ himself to visit the community of those who call upon him.” JOHN PAUL II’s Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> DE 7.

division, but also practising the act of forgiveness. At the same time it requires a change of mentality, which allows for searching for unity and makes it possible to treat other Christians like true brothers and sisters in Christ. The process also involves overcoming prejudice and opening the hearts and minds to other people who believe in Jesus. The process may not be easy at times, but there is no alternative.

Spiritual ecumenism cannot take place without prayer — “This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name, *spiritual ecumenism*.”<sup>15</sup> In this spirit, every year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, dating back to 1908, is held. Initially, these events’ aim was to give Protestants of various denominations an opportunity to be together, but since Paul VI’s pontificate they have also been participated in by Catholics (although days of prayer for Christian unity have been organised by the Catholic Church since 1894). Another milestone was in 1966, when the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat, later transformed into the Pontifical Council, for Promoting Christian Unity began preparing biblical and prayer materials for the event. Since 1975, that task has been carried out by individual groups of Christians from different countries. The common prayers and joint celebrations, guest preaching, and interesting evangelization and formation initiatives are true good spiritual fruit of the “ecumenical weeks”. Also, other gatherings of Christians in various circumstances, whether of global or local nature, have become common. However, the official events have been losing momentum and new ways of reviving the spirit must be looked for. Spiritual ecumenism should in the first place be put into practice in local communities, parishes and churches. Grassroots meeting and prayer projects carried out by leaders of communities are also very valuable. The climate of the prayer of praise and sharing the Word of God in a more relaxed atmosphere brings together Catholics and Evangelical Christians. These initiatives are supported by the Global Christian Forum and respective national forums.

### 1.3. Relations and cooperation

Eventually, practical ecumenism, manifesting itself in the care for mutual relations and possible cooperation, is necessary. Undoubtedly,

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<sup>15</sup> DE 8.

a harmonious co-existence of Christians of different denominations is fundamental for their getting to know each other, sharing the joys and hardships of everyday life, being friendly and respectful of other people's important events, circumstances, and experiences.<sup>16</sup> That everyday experience is what was named the "ecumenism of walking together", which should always precede the "ecumenism of thinking together". Pope Francis aptly put it when speaking to Catholic members of the charismatic renewal: "Today Christian unity is more urgent than ever, Christians united by the power of the Holy Spirit, in prayer and in activity on behalf of the most vulnerable. To walk together, to work together, to love one another, and together to seek to explain our differences, to come to agreement, but as we keep walking! If we stop walking, we will never come to agreement. So it is, because the Spirit wants us to keep walking."<sup>17</sup> When Christians share their lives and focus on serving one another, they will create deep unity. But if they centre around doctrinal differences, a wall of suspiciousness and distrust will grow between them. Cooperation does not mean that the differences are to be undermined, but rather that they are properly placed in the context of the work for unity.

To support one another in the "walking together", Christians should truly work together. The cooperation should in the first place focus on bearing witness of faith and hope.<sup>18</sup> This is particularly important in this post-Christian world. An unequivocal testimony about the value of faith and relation with Jesus Christ is necessary for these truths to be heard by non-practising or non-religious people. At the same time, a multidimensional cooperation between Christians of various denominations is needed. The Second Vatican Council positively encouraged that by saying: "Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. This cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place be it in

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<sup>16</sup> A good example here may be the respect for other churches' calendars. A good practice is for Catholics to refrain from working outside on Good Friday in respect of the feelings of Evangelicals and other Protestants, and for Protestants to do likewise on Corpus Christi. Such gestures are particularly important in places where people of different confessions live.

<sup>17</sup> FRANCIS: *Address*. Pentecost Vigil of Prayer, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170603\\_veglia-pentecoste.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html) [access: 4.03.2021].

<sup>18</sup> "Before the whole world let all Christians confess their faith in the triune God, one and three in the incarnate Son of God, our Redeemer and Lord. United in their efforts, and with mutual respect, let them bear witness to our common hope which does not play us false." DE 12.

a just evaluation of the dignity of the human person, the establishment of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit, or also in the use of various remedies to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, housing shortage and the unequal distribution of wealth.”<sup>19</sup> Working together on social problems and challenges posed by the civilisation is a natural duty of Christians. On the one hand, it means offering real support for those in need, and on the other it brings individual communities closer together. However, it cannot boil down to the charity or educational aspect only. What is increasingly needed is cooperation in helping Christians who are persecuted or live in areas where they cannot freely practise their faith or where the living conditions are harsh. It is also difficult to spread the positive message of the Christian faith in the more and more secularised societies, with their attitudes to such issues as life of the unborn, sexual ethics, gender, and human rights.<sup>20</sup>

However, evangelization projects carried out jointly by Christians of different denominations remain a real challenge. They still raise a lot of doubts and concerns, especially about inviting the evangelized to particular communities where they could grow their faith. It should be noted, though, that more and more people do not practice faith at all — they live without God and do not hold Christian values in high regard. Giving witness of Jesus Christ and preaching the kerygma, also together with other Christians, are therefore a necessity.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Spirituality as a form of ecumenical rapprochement

Beside the doctrinal dialogue and the related structural ecumenism (i.e. ecumenism at the level of the superiors and official structures), there

<sup>19</sup> DE 12.

<sup>20</sup> A good example here may be the “Dignity of persons and respect for life” conference held by the Polish Christian Forum, <https://pfch.wsts.edu.pl> [access: 23.06.2021].

<sup>21</sup> “It is my hope that this important anniversary will strengthen these bonds and renew your zeal to proclaim, as missionary disciples, the joy of the Gospel in the ecclesial community and in society as a whole. In this way, bearing witness to the Lord’s prayer that all may be one (cf. Jn 17:21), you will be able to help our brothers and sisters experience in their hearts and lives the transforming power of God’s love, mercy and grace.” FRANCIS: *Message to the Members of the Commission for Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2022/documents/20220708-messaggio-dialogopentecostale.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

is the ecumenism of spirituality, which has been growing in significance. In particular, it encompasses the broadly understood Evangelical spirituality<sup>22</sup> and contemplative spirituality, and offers a real space for meeting others and exchanging spiritual gifts.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.1. Spirituality based on choosing Christ

In the Evangelical spirituality, and eventually in the entire Christianity, the initial personal experience of Jesus Christ is fundamental. This is particularly stressed by the Protestant tradition, especially that related to various awakening movements, which is closely connected with the witness of the apostolic Church: “Become a believer in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, and your household too” (Ac 16,31). As Benedict XVI aptly put it, “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”<sup>24</sup> A similar thought was voiced by bishops gathered at the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops’ Conferences: “The very nature of Christianity therefore consists of recognizing the presence of Jesus Christ and following Him. That was the marvellous experience of those first disciples, who upon encountering Jesus were fascinated and astonished at the exceptional quality of the one speaking to them...”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, spirituality should be broadly seen as a way of life, encompassing all its aspects, rather than be reduced to particular piety. The external expressions are secondary and should result from each person’s choice of Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

In Evangelical communities, such an act precedes the baptism with water and involvement in the church’s life. There, you can be baptised only after you reach the age of accountability and subscribe to the creed.

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<sup>22</sup> The English term “Evangelical” used herein should be translated into Polish as *ewangelikalny* rather than *ewangelicki*. The former is used to describe the communities and spirituality of the so-called free Churches or some Catholic movements focused on renewal of the Church, whereas the latter relates to the historical Reformation, especially Lutheran and Reformed, churches.

<sup>23</sup> See P. SAWA: “Duchowość ewangelikalna — szansa dla ekumenizmu.” *Studia Oecumenica* 16 (2016), pp. 253—275.

<sup>24</sup> BENEDICT XVI’s Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est*, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and CARIBBEAN BISHOPS’ CONFERENCES: *Concluding document*, No. 244.

The decision to live with Jesus Christ and walk the way of conversion always comes first. In historical Churches, where children are baptised, the faith of the Church and the parents is first, and the grace of life with God grows together with the Christian life. However, there is a clearly growing tendency in the Catholic Church to organize various evangelization retreats which end with the participants' taking a decision to follow Jesus Christ as their personal Lord. That act is rooted in the baptism and other sacraments. Things are similar with the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. For Pentecostals, the experience comes after the creed, conversion, and baptism with water. For Catholics, baptism in the Holy Spirit is sort of an update of the first baptism and confirmation. Putting the differences aside, we can see how important it is for Christians to personally choose Jesus Christ. When such a conscious act is not performed, Christianity is boiled down to a religious system and does not bring all the fruit promised in the Bible.

## 2.2. Evangelical spirituality

Besides the central event of personal experience of Jesus Christ's presence and entrusting one's life to Him, there are other important features of the Evangelical spirituality. Defining them is by no means easy though, mainly because of the diversity of the communities and their doctrines. However, the main indispensable features of Evangelicalism include focus on the Bible (explaining the world with the Scripture), focus on the Cross (emphasizing the role of the Cross, leading to strong Christocentrism), convertism (need for personal conversion) and activism (importance and necessity of evangelization).<sup>26</sup> All these values are important to Christians. The problem does not lie in formulating these parameters but in interpreting them and shaping spirituality based on other elements. To precisely define the doctrinal aspects and to get to know other ecumenical partners' points of view are the tasks of participants of the theological dialogue, whereas in the everyday life context it is important to promote unity based on what is common. Focus on the Scripture in personal and community prayer as well as in any pastoral activity is fundamental. In the Catholic

<sup>26</sup> See N. MODNICKA: *Małe świąty polskiego ewangelikalizmu. Studium z antropologii interpretatywnej*. Łódź 2013, pp. 21–24; Z. KARCZEWSKI: *Ewangelikalizm*, [www.teologia.protestanci.org/artykuly/art71.php](http://www.teologia.protestanci.org/artykuly/art71.php) (16 August 2016); Z. PASEK: "Wspólnoty ewangelikalne we współczesnej Polsce." In: *Ewangelikalny protestantyzm w Polsce u progu XXI stulecia*. Ed. T.J. ZIELIŃSKI. Warszawa—Katowice 2004, pp. 13–49.

Church reading the Bible by the faithful is more and more common, with meditation on the Word becoming a daily spiritual practice. In this way biblical mentality and proper spiritual sensitivity are formed, facilitating encounters with other Christians, especially of the post-Reformation traditions. In particular, this is done by people participating in the Church renewal movements and groups, for example the Neocatechumenal Way (focused on the tripod: Liturgy — Word of God — Community), Light-Life Movement (with its Bible-based retreats and daily Tent of Meeting practice), various communities relying on charismatic renewal (promoting reading of the Scripture), and St. Andrew Schools of Evangelization (with Biblical courses). Retreat centres promoting meditation, *lectio divina* and biblical formation also play an important role. They all help to discover the power of the Word of God and Jesus Christ's real presence in various circumstances of human life, which — besides exegesis and biblical theology — are a life-giving dimension of the biblical culture. In this way, the Catholics' interest in the Scripture is growing, which translates into actual opportunities to meet other Christians, especially those to whom the heritage of the Reformation is dear.

By putting the Bible first, the baptised live their lives with Christ in the centre. Jesus Christ, as the fullness of Revelation and the only Saviour, unites all Christians. Defining the *Solus Christus* principle anew remains a challenge. Being a Reformation principle, it determines Protestant theologies and spirituality. However, a Catholic voice on this matter might be significant too. Although there is basically no comprehensive study of that issue by the Catholic side, certain specific guidelines can be found in some statements. There is no doubt that the Catholic dogmatic theology emphasizes the central role of Christ in the salvation. "Any sort of allegations that the Catholic theology does not recognize Christ as the only Saviour and questions the absolute gratuitousness of His grace, offering salvation to the fallen man's freedom, are unjustified."<sup>27</sup> It is manifested in a properly shaped spirituality, in particular liturgy. Jesus Christ is the way to the Father and a glorification of Him — as exposed by the frequently used phrase "Through Christ our Lord". At the same time, a sound Catholic devotion, including popular piety, naturally puts Christ in the centre. Some devotional distortions, though, may obscure the orthodox direction — for example, when the worship of Virgin Mary or the saints is excessive or when people adopt theologically uncertain theories and practices. Therefore, the reforms introduced by Vatican II and later concerning

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<sup>27</sup> A.A. NAPIÓRKOWSKI: *Bogactwo łaski a nędza grzesznika. Zróżnicowany konsensus teologii katolickiej i luterkańskiej o usprawiedliwieniu osiągnięty w dialogu ekumenicznym*. Wydawnictwo Salwator: Kraków, 2011, p. 172.



prayer and opening of the Church to various renewal movements contribute to real Christocentrism. Keeping all this in mind, it is easy to see the specific areas where Catholics and Christians of other, especially Protestant, denominations could come closer together. This may translate into joint prayers and actions, including evangelization.

Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ's central role is closely connected with conversion, which is rooted in the choice of Christ as the Saviour and Lord and is expressed in holding biblical values and conscious development of spiritual life, affecting one's daily life. As noted by Tadeusz Zieliński, "to the awakened Protestants, the Church should be a community of authentic Christians, where a follower of Christ and other faithful are to praise God, accept His Word, support other Christians and engage in missionary work. In such a community, founded on Jesus Christ, God has united all His believers..."<sup>28</sup> To Evangelicals, this is connected with conscious baptism with water by individual persons. In the case of historical Churches, especially the Catholic Church, conversion relies on being baptised, usually in infancy, and means a conscious opening to the dynamics of the sacrament.

The fourth pillar of the Evangelical spirituality is involvement in the community life and evangelization work. Every member of the community of the baptized should be active and responsible. In Evangelical communities, members regularly take part in celebrations and other church meetings, financially support the church (in many cases by paying the tithe), undertake religious formation (in home groups, at Bible study meetings) and serve the community of the faithful or engage in evangelization projects (e.g. evangelization in the streets). In Catholic communities, believers participate in the liturgy and care for their local parishes. In particular, members of various religious movements and groups show responsibility for their local churches. They also have a more or less formalized spiritual formation, support their parishes financially, and take part in charity projects. The Church renewal movements are in large numbers involved in New Evangelization, putting into life the truth that the Church exists to evangelize and that this is its ultimate essence.<sup>29</sup> These New Evangelization forms create opportunities for Catholics and Protestants, especially Evangelicals, to meet, be inspired and work together.

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<sup>28</sup> T.J. ZIELIŃSKI: *Protestantyzm ewangelikalny. Studium specyfiki religijnej*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe ChAT, Warszawa 2013, p. 215.

<sup>29</sup> "The presentation of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution for the Church. It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved. This message is indeed necessary. It is unique. It cannot be replaced." PAUL VI: Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 5.



### 2.3. Affective spirituality

The spiritual (religious) experience<sup>30</sup> is important to all Christians. Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler define it as follows: “Experience is a form of knowledge which originates from direct perception of impressions coming from the (internal or external) reality beyond our control. [...] Since the presence of what is experienced attests itself, experience is accompanied by eminent certainty...”<sup>31</sup> It cannot be reduced to a feeling or emotional experience, then. A religious experience is about meeting God here and now, with the encounter having an impact on self-assessment in the context of what is supernatural and gives life its ultimate sense.<sup>32</sup> This inner experience is not generated by a man, for instance, with his thinking, but is God’s gift. Eventually, this is about an inner certainty and an experience of being loved by God, as well as about receiving the gift of salvation from Jesus Christ for free, which leads to spirituality understood as a personal relation between God and man. Each Christian tradition attaches key significance to that experience, but shows different ways to achieve it. For Catholics and Orthodox, sacramental life and permanent living in sanctifying grace are essential. For Protestant Christians, spiritual life is based on a voluntary act of faith, strengthened with the Word of God and the sacrament of Lord’s Supper. The theological dispute is about the possibility of experiencing God’s presence directly. According to traditional theology, there must be an intermediation of liturgical and sacramental signs, whereas the post-Reformation, and especially Evangelical, approach focuses on subjectivity of experience.

The issue of experience seems a very important one, especially in the time of searching for new ways to promote unity among Christians. Evangelicals emphasize the role of internal experience, which however cannot be reduced to a simple emotionality.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, a personal experience

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<sup>30</sup> Psychologists of religion believe that rather than speaking of “an experience of God”, which is difficult to verify, define and show, we should rather speak of a “religious experience”.

<sup>31</sup> K. RAHNER, H. VORGRIMLER: *Mały słownik teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1996, k. 108—109.

<sup>32</sup> “Therefore, spiritual experience includes the experience of transcendence, where a man in the holistic horizon intuitively (in a pre-experience) sees himself as relying on what is different, and on things and the world as a subject of his thoughts and actions...” H. VORGRIMLER: *Nowy leksykon teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Verbum. Wydawnictwo Księży Werbistów, Warszawa 2005, p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> “A feeling is a basic way to experience and a strong and different from thought movement touching the very centre of psyche (heart, soul), which can be expressed emotionally, verbally and in the body language.” H. VORGRIMLER: *Nowy leksykon teologi-*

in its broad sense is essential. That is why sometimes we mention *sola experientia* as the fifth post-Reformation principle. This does not mean a focus on emotionality though. All Christians acknowledge the significance of affects in spiritual life and religious experience.<sup>34</sup> It is not characteristic of the charismatic spirituality only. This affective dimension is an inherent part of the human nature and can be seen both in traditional and new forms. In fact, liturgy in the historical Churches has a strong emotional charge, just like spontaneous prayer of praise and new Christian music. The ways of expression are of course different. Nonetheless, an interaction is possible, with the traditional forms offering a testimony of order and the spontaneous (Evangelical) ones showing the role of heart and expression of inner feelings. Reflection is necessary in both cases. Therefore, the accusations that in Catholicism spirituality is focused on the intellectual and volitive dimension of faith and that Evangelical Christians reject theology and a rational reflection on faith and experience are false. It is worth remembering that an authentic religious experience, “being an inner self-testimony of supernatural reality (grace), can take place for human beings, or for humanity as a whole in its faith-history, only if it is accompanied by an objectifying, conceptual reflection.”<sup>35</sup>

## 2.4. Eastern spirituality

No discussion of the spiritual way to achieve unity among Christians can omit Eastern spirituality, in particular the spirituality of the Desert Fathers and the Byzantine tradition. This is all so more important in the light of a renaissance of interest in these sources of spiritual growth.

First, the way of the desert should be briefly described. The fathers of the first ages looked for silence, peace, and solitude. By doing that they meant to get closer to God but also to get to know and come to terms with themselves. Prayer and struggle with passions and secret desires helped to achieve that. The ultimate goal was to awaken one’s heart to

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czny. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Verbinum. Wydawnictwo Księży Werbistów, Warszawa 2005, p. 402.

<sup>34</sup> Being moved and touched, which has its source in the thought, is an important element of religion. The emotional ability to experience cannot be created, but it can surely be suppressed with false asceticism (over-intellectualized theology, suppression of feelings and intuition in the Church, etc.).

<sup>35</sup> KARL RAHNER, HERBERT VORGRIMLER: *Mały słownik teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1996, k. 109.

consciously experience God's presence and love. That school of life has its followers also in contemporary times. The testimonies of contemporary Eastern monks' lives and in particular the more and more widely available writings of the Desert Fathers have an influence on Western Christians, whether Catholics or Protestants, as well as on people who have abandoned their faith or are not baptized at all. Things are similar with the broadly understood constant prayer, whose origin traces back not only to the desert but particularly to the Athos hesychasm.<sup>36</sup> To illustrate that we can mention various meditation centres, which also have ecumenical features. A good example here are the Polish Benedictine monasteries — in Lubiń (training in non-discursive meditation)<sup>37</sup> and Kraków-Tyniec (training in Jesus Prayer)<sup>38</sup> — as well as the World Community for Christian Meditation, an ecumenical contemplative community.<sup>39</sup>

Another area is the liturgical and devotional tradition. Many western Christians are affected by the Eastern liturgy and celebrations, with their liturgical sensitivity, presence, and theology of the icon, the school of writing icons and various forms of praying together, especially with the Akathist Hymn to the Birth-giver of God, which is gaining popularity in Catholic communities. At the same time, the Catholic Church spreads its way of thinking and practising theology and undertakes various pastoral work initiatives.

### 3. New ways to promote Christian unity

The opening of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement has given a new shape to the efforts to foster unity, co-existence and collaboration of Christian denominations. The words and gestures of John Paul II, including in particular Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, and the care for ecumenism shown by Benedict XVI did a lot of good. However, it is Pope Francis' pontificate that is particularly marked with ecumenical efforts and service for the unity of Christians. The more than 50-years-

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<sup>36</sup> See J.-Y. LELOUP: *Słowa z góry Athos. Duchowość mnichów z góry Athos*. Trans. W. SZLĘZAK. Kraków 2012, pp. 51—59. For more information about Jesus Prayer, see MNICH KOŚCIOŁA WSCHODNIEGO: *Modlitwa Jezusowa. Jej początek, rozwój i praktyka w tradycji bizantyjsko-słowiańskiej*. Trans. S. HIŻYCKI. Kraków 2015, pp. 119—143.

<sup>37</sup> See <https://lubin-medytacje.pl/aktualnosci/> [access: 15.07.2021].

<sup>38</sup> See <http://domgosci.benedyktyni.com/oddychac-imieniem-modlitwa-jezusowa/> [access: 15.07.2021].

<sup>39</sup> See <https://wccm.org/> [access: 15.07.2021].

long history of the interconfessional dialogue with the participation of the Catholic Church is of course enormously important, but recent years have brought fresh air to the process. It will be no exaggeration to say that Christians are facing a new era of ecumenism. As important as the work done by theologians running the doctrinal dialogue was, the ecumenical rapprochement will now focus on spirituality, evangelization and responding to what the world needs, especially by truly clinging to Jesus Christ and building Christian life on the foundation of the Gospel. The experience gained in this respect by the Catholic charismatic renewal cannot go unnoticed.

### 3.1. Inspirations from spirituality

The broadly understood Evangelical spirituality offers new prospect for ecumenism. Various trends spread from one denomination to another, not disturbing their confessional identity. The trends include greater focus on Bible reading, teaching the Word of God, use of Christian music, interest in mysticism and use of spiritual gifts, and can be seen particularly clearly in the dialogue among Protestant communities as well as between Catholics and Protestants, mainly Evangelicals.

The first and foremost area is undoubtedly the need to be rooted in the Holy Scripture. The biblical revival in the Catholic Church opens Catholics up to Protestants, creating an atmosphere where they can truly meet. It also translates into what preaching methods are preferred. The reform of the Catholic liturgy following the Second Vatican Council placed greater value on the Word of God (more readings) in the celebration of the Eucharist and other church services, and shifted the emphasis away from a sermon understood as giving instructions to a homily understood as a deliberation about the Word read and the liturgy conducted. Moreover, the New Evangelization has brought a new form of teaching, which is more personal, with “we” and plural “you” replaced by “I” and singular “you”. It also stresses the fact that the Word of God acts here and now, so one may expect to see specific fruit of teaching. This model of proclamation brings the preachers of different denominations closer together, by letting them inspire one another and allowing for joint celebrations with guest preachers.

The second thing uniting Christians is the new Christian music. The songs are pan-denominational in nature, which creates rooms for spiritual meeting. It goes as far as to say that just like the 16th-century Reformation

was fuelled, among other things, by songs, today the Praise & Worship music, especially songs with one or more verses sung by the participants, conveys the message of and helps promote unity.<sup>40</sup> This can happen also because the songs are rooted in the Bible and express inner feelings rather than only describe a religious reality. The new music is more personal, helps identify with the lyrics and encourages contemplation. Additionally, there has been a clear shift in Christianity from traditional hymns to simpler songs and more instruments have been allowed, although the Catholic Church still has strict rules concerning that matter.<sup>41</sup> All this is in line with the changing music culture in the society.

The third area of spirituality is mysticism, or actually mysticism in its new meaning. Father Jan Andrzej Kłoczowski, a Catholic philosopher, says that “a mystic interiorizes religion, putting emphasis on the internal and individual relation with God. The personal emphasis sometimes causes tensions between the mystic and his or her religious community. The conflict does not always mean that the mystic dissents from the tradition, but rather that he or she is concerned with ensuring that the doctrinal message retain its spiritual power.”<sup>42</sup> It is not about some extraordinary experience, especially visions, but about a deep and unutterable sense of God’s presence and strengthening of the relation with God at a very personal level.<sup>43</sup> However, while Protestants will distance themselves from the classic Catholic mysticism, they may find its broader understanding more meaningful. This is particularly true for Pentecostal communities, which attach major importance to non-verbal and other than notional experience of God during prayer in tongues, silence after adoration or use of charismatic gifts. A meeting with Catholics from the charismatic renewal may help get to know each other better, share experiences and even work together. What matters are the results of the charismatic awakening — revival of faith, full spiritual life, love for the Bible and prayer, engagement in the Church’s mission. These things look similar in classic mysticism. In both cases, there occurs the “radical overwhelming” (manifesting itself

<sup>40</sup> See “Muzyka nowej ewangelizacji a doświadczenie duchowe. Kontekst, rzeczywistość, wyzwania.” *Studia Pastoralne* 12 (2016), pp. 88—109.

<sup>41</sup> See *Instrukcja Konferencji Episkopatu Polski o muzyce kościelnej*, [https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/instrukcja\\_muzyka\\_14102017.html](https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/instrukcja_muzyka_14102017.html) [access: 20.07.2021].

<sup>42</sup> J.A. KŁOCZOWSKI: “Zwrot do mistyki?” In: *Duchowość chrześcijańska na progu trzeciego tysiąclecia*. Eds. J. MACHNIAK, J.W. GOGOLA. Kraków 1999, pp. 87—88.

<sup>43</sup> “When God visits the soul directly, the soul [...] receives spiritual favours from God. The reason for this is that His Majesty dwells substantially in that part of the soul [...]. Since the Lord grants these communications directly, they are wholly divine and sovereign. They are all substantial touches of divine union between God and the soul.” JAN OD KRZYŻA: “Noc ciemna.” In: IDEM: *Dzieła*. Trans. B. SMYRAK. Kraków 1998, II, 23, 11, p. 516.

in revision of life), “total transformation” (new style of life), “the idea of wholeness” (the feeling of fullness during prayer), and awareness of revelation.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes some physical symptoms appear, such as the feeling of joy or fall, as described by classic Christian mystics.

The fourth area is the practice of charismatic gifts for the purposes of evangelization and building the community of the faithful. “Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world.”<sup>45</sup> This brings charismatic Catholics and Protestants closer together. Although there are noticeable differences in how the two denominations understand the theology of charisms, for instance, glossolalia or resting in the Spirit, the sharing of experience and joint charismatic service are important to all Christianity, bringing Christians of different denominations closer together. Besides the practising of gifts, it is necessary to reflect on the ministries undertaken or ensure that the communities do not close themselves up to or focus too much on charismatic gifts.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.2. Major impulses from Pope Francis’ pontificate

The pontificate of Pope Francis has had a profound impact on rapprochement of Christians. Francis’ numerous ecumenical meetings, gestures of respect, or reaching out — together with other church leaders — to help deal with the problems the world is struggling with, such as migrants or environmental pollution, are really meaningful and mind-opening. By way of example, we can mention here the visit Francis paid together with the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew and the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos on the Greek island of Lesbos, which has been struggling with huge numbers of refugees, on 16 April 2016, but also the steps taken together with Bartholomew to care for the natural environment, and the joint efforts made

<sup>44</sup> A. MIGDA: *Mistycyzm pentekostalny w Polsce*. Kraków 2013, pp. 197—199.

<sup>45</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 799. See *Wprowadzenie do nauki o Biblii oraz doktryny i praktyki ruchu zielonoświątkowego*. Eds. E. BEDNARZ, R. TOMASZEWSKI. Warszawa 2010, pp. 259—264.

<sup>46</sup> See S. FALVO: *Przebudzenie charyzmatów*. Trans. T. STAŃCZYK. Łódź 1995; K.M. RANAGHAN: *W mocy Ducha Świętego*. Trans. T.M. MICEWICZ. Warsaw 1993; B. LOCUM: *Dar prorocтва*. Trans. A.W. MIZIOŁEK. Ząbki 2012; A.J. PALLA: *Poznaj swoją osobowość i dary duchowe*. Warszawa 2010.



with Archbishop John Welby, the most senior bishop in the Church of England, to help solve the problems of Africa (e.g. South Sudan). The Bishop of Rome's support for many of those in need and his famous call for help to the poor are clear manifestations of what he considers his duty.

However, Francis' ecumenical efforts cannot be reduced to social causes only. The inter-ecclesial relations are also vital. One of the key ecumenical events that Francis participated in was undoubtedly the beginning of the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Reformation. On 31 October and 1 November 2016 Francis went to Sweden and the visit encouraged Catholics and Protestants to take a different look at each other, helped to better understand papal service and gave a new impetus to joint projects, prayer meeting and retreats. At that event the Pope did not of course celebrate the 16th-century schism in the Church but took part in a meeting of brothers in faith who bore witness to Jesus Christ together. This was a meaningful sign of the search for unity and mutual respect among Christians. That event should inspire others to move away from confrontation but look for closeness and authentic brotherly love. The same idea is also expressed in *From Conflict to Communion*, a document prepared by Roman Catholic and Lutheran theologians and published in Geneva and Vatican on 17 June 2013.<sup>47</sup> However, human gestures and theological work are not enough. What is still needed is prayer. During a meeting with representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, Francis said: "Let us not forget to start from prayer, so that it is not human plans that indicate the way, but the Holy Spirit: He alone opens the way and enlightens the steps to be taken. The Spirit of love cannot but drive us on the paths of charity."<sup>48</sup>

The words of apology uttered by the Pope to the members of the Waldensian Church for persecution by the Catholics were very moving.<sup>49</sup> Francis also asked Pentecostals to forgive the humiliation by Catholics — during a meeting with pastor Giovanni Traettino, the Pope said: "I ask your forgiveness for this! I ask your forgiveness for those Catholic brothers and sisters who understood and were tempted by the devil and did the same thing as Joseph's brothers. I ask the Lord to give us the grace to rec-

<sup>47</sup> See THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: *From Conflict to Communion Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/From%20Conflict%20to%20Communion%20EN.pdf> [access: 20.07.2021].

<sup>48</sup> FRANCIS: *Address to the Delegation of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180604\\_chiesa-luterana-tesca.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180604_chiesa-luterana-tesca.html) [access: 21.07.2021].

<sup>49</sup> See FRANCIS: *Address of the Holy Father*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150622\\_torino-chiesa-valdese.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150622_torino-chiesa-valdese.html) [access: 20.07.2021].

ognize and to forgive...”<sup>50</sup> Francis points to the value of forgiveness and a new look at Christians of other denominations. It is worth to remember that unity develops when one follows Jesus, which is something all the baptized are called to do, irrespective of what confession they belong to.<sup>51</sup> Various words spoken spontaneously by Francis to the ecumenical partners express the same message. For example, in a video recorded for the Charismatic Evangelical Leadership Conference hosted by Kenneth Copeland in the United States, Pope spoke about the need to pray together and look for unity.<sup>52</sup>

A special role in the work for unity of Christians is to be played by Catholic Pentecostal communities, which strongly rely on the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is why one of the tasks of Catholic Charismatic Renewal Internationale Service *Charis*, which was established by Pope Francis and brings together all Catholic charismatic communities, is “to promote the ecumenical dimension of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and foster the commitment to serving the unity of all Christians,”<sup>53</sup> relying on an exchange of spiritual gifts, contacts, and various areas of joint work.

Pope Francis clearly shows that there is no turning back from ecumenism and that its special form is living, praying and working together. During a meeting held on 3 July 2017 to commemorate a jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Francis said: “Today Christian unity is more urgent than ever, Christians united by the power of the Holy Spirit, in prayer and in activity on behalf of the most vulnerable. To walk together, to work together, to love one another, and together to seek to explain our differences, to come to agreement, but as we keep walking! If we stop walking, we will never come to agreement. So it is, because the Spirit

<sup>50</sup> FRANCIS: *Address*. Private visit of the Holy Father to Caserta for a meeting with the evangelical pastor Giovanni Traettino, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140728\\_caserta-pastore-traettino.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140728_caserta-pastore-traettino.html) [access: 20.07.2021].

<sup>51</sup> “When one walks in the presence of God, he is granted this brotherhood. When, on the other hand, we stop, we watch each other too closely, we are given another path... bad, bad! The path of gossip...” FRANCIS: *Address*. Private visit of the Holy Father to Caserta for a meeting with the evangelical pastor Giovanni Traettino, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140728\\_caserta-pastore-traettino.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140728_caserta-pastore-traettino.html) [access: 20.07.2021].

<sup>52</sup> “Evangelical pastor, close friend to Pope, dies after motorcycle crash”, ROME Reports in English, 0:49—1:06, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHQDXkWBt\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHQDXkWBt_M) [published: 21.07.2014].

<sup>53</sup> CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL INTERNATIONAL SERVICE (Charis): *Statutes*, II, Art. 3, f, <https://www.charis.international/wp-content/uploads/Statutes-CHARIS.pdf> [access: 25.01.2021].



wants us to keep walking.”<sup>54</sup> Ecumenism understood as serving others, walking together and accompanying others rather than as a developing a common doctrine is key. Such an approach makes it possible to look for unity, not only among leaders and theologians, but also among whole communities. A valuable example of how the Pope’s words can be put into practice would be prayer gatherings of all sorts, not only official but also spontaneous and local ones, with the people praising the Lord and sharing their personal experience of faith.<sup>55</sup>

No discussion of the new impulses for ecumenism during Francis’ pontificate can omit *The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum*, published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The document says that truth, love and humbleness should govern relations between Christians and that the ecumenical dialogue requires patience and perseverance. Diocesan bishops have a special duty in the search for ways of unity and should be men of dialogue. The document strongly stresses the need to discover common ways with the dialogue of love, truth, and life.<sup>56</sup> A good advice is to establish ecumenical dialogue structures at the level of parishes. They are to help conduct intensive ecumenical activities at local communities, with the faithful participating in special celebrations of other Christian churches. It is also a good way to learn about various pastoral propositions of other Christian communities. All this clearly shows that, as specified in the applicable Catholic Church documents, ecumenism is not a marginal reality but an essence of the Church.

<sup>54</sup> FRANCIS: *Address*, Pentecost Vigil of Prayer. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170603\\_veglia-pentecoste.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html) [access: 20.07.2021].

<sup>55</sup> “In our relations, we will follow these basic principles: respect for confessional identities, ecclesiality (communion of each participant with his Church/Community), non-proselytism, and the search for unity as a gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mk 9,38-40, 1 Co 12,4-6). With an open heart, we want to cultivate our communion in the Holy Spirit with fraternal spaces of prayer, formation and worship of the God Trinity, in the light of the Word (cf. Mt 5,9-13; Jn 4,23).” The Third International Conference of Praise and Worship Somos Um (We Are One), <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/pentecostali/autres-documents-et-evenements/en/en.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

<sup>56</sup> See PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: *The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum*, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/documenti/2020-l-eveque-et-l-unite-des-chretiens---vademecum-cumenique.html> [access: 20.07.2021].

### 3.3. Global Christian Forum and respective national forums

The need to build bridges between different denominations is felt by many environments, previously rather sceptical about ecumenism. Therefore, finding a new formula, where Christians could meet and cooperate, without questioning what has already been achieved, appeared necessary. The Global Christian Forum<sup>57</sup> and its local (national) counterparts seem to respond to that need. It was started in 1998 by Konrad Reiser, at that time General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. In 2002, *Guiding Purpose Statement* was signed, and the first international meeting was held in Kenya on 6—9 November 2007. The initiative was joined by many Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. Its formula offers an opportunity to meet for Catholics, and Eastern Christians, members of historical Churches originated in Reformation, and the so-called free Churches. The forum comprises joint prayers, exchange of thoughts and opinions, and other pastoral, scientific and formation projects. On the one hand, it provides opportunities to meet and get to know one another as well as to eliminate various prejudices. On the other, it is worthwhile to see how different denominations respond to the challenges of contemporary times. For example, the Polish Christian Forum has held major academic conferences which were an outcome of the prayers and meetings by representatives of Christian communities and which were a practical results of the dialogue and brotherhood efforts taken.<sup>58</sup>

## 4. Conclusions

To conclude briefly the foregoing considerations:

- Care for Christian unity is an essence of Christianity. It is a response to the priestly prayer of Jesus, who called to the Father: “May they all be one” (J 17,21a). Thus, no one can marginalize ecumenism or feel exempt from the obligation to promote it.

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<sup>57</sup> *Global Christian Forum*, <https://globalchristianforum.org/> [access: 25.05.2021].

<sup>58</sup> *Jeden Duch, różne dary, wspólne dobro*, <http://wst.kei.pl/wsts/event/11749/> [access: 25.05.2021]; *Na falach Ducha. Wyzwania pentekostalizacji*, <https://ekumenia.pl/aktualnosc/konferencja-o-pentekostalizacji/> [access: 25.05.2021]; *Godność osób oraz szacunek dla życia*, <https://pfch.wsts.edu.pl/> [access: 25.05.2021].

- Next to the doctrinal ecumenism, there is a need for development of the spiritual dimension. The search for unity is therefore possible thanks to the common prayer, support, sharing of daily activities, exchange of gifts and inspiring one another. Although it is difficult to achieve full unity, the cooperation and co-existence brings Christians closer together. An authentic focus on Jesus Christ, the only Saviour chosen by the faithful with an act of faith, is a crucial condition in this respect.
- The contemporary times see the emergence of new areas of ecumenism, namely biblical revival, new (spontaneous) forms of prayer, praise and worship music, new understanding of mysticism (related to the charisms from the Holy Spirit), and evangelization. The doctrinal dialogue should be continued by developing spiritual and pastoral ecumenical projects, so that the Christian message is conveyed more and more effectively.
- The dialogue between the Catholic Church and Evangelical communities, which are rather sceptical about ecumenism, remains a challenge. Cooperation is possible in giving testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, preaching the truth about the gift of salvation being offered for free, emphasizing that faith is chosen consciously and making use of spiritual gifts. What is particularly significant, communities may inspire one another in carrying out evangelization. It is no surprising then that Pope Francis points to fostering the unity of Christians as one of the key tasks of groups involved in the broadly understood charismatic renewal.
- Directions to be followed by the ecumenical movement now include: shifting from celebration to ordinary life and then to deeper celebration together, from prayer to collaboration and from too much care about one's denomination to openness assuming that one's identity is preserved. Then the ecumenical dialogue will be realistic and can be a part of the faithful's lives as it will open them up to the unpredictable actions of the Holy Spirit leading Christians to full unity in Jesus Christ.

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PRZEMYŚLAW SAWA

#### *Ut unum sint*:

#### Nouveaux domaines de l'œcuménisme spirituel et pastoral

#### Résumé

Le souci de l'unité des chrétiens fait partie de la nature de l'Église. Après de nombreuses années de mouvement œcuménique, une certaine déception est apparue. Les dialogues doctrinaux et les réunions officielles en cours sont toujours d'actualité, mais l'œcuménisme spirituel et pastoral est de plus en plus nécessaire. Il se manifeste non

seulement dans la prière commune, mais aussi dans un véritable échange de dons spirituels, d'inspirations pastorales et de coopération dans de nombreux domaines de la vie ecclésiale et sociale.

De nos jours, de nouveaux domaines d'un tel œcuménisme ont émergé. D'une part, ce renouvellement se manifeste dans diverses tendances spirituelles qui traversent les frontières des églises et des communautés (forme de prière, musique, pratique de dons spirituels); d'autre part, dans la recherche des sources et de lignes directrices pour la vie spirituelle dans différentes traditions. De manière particulière, la nouvelle version de l'œcuménisme inclut les communautés évangéliques et pentecôtistes. Par conséquent, le renouveau charismatique catholique au sens large occupe une place inaliénable dans l'œuvre de service pour l'unité des chrétiens. C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire de faire le chemin ensemble, de s'accompagner, d'être hospitalier, de travailler pour les gens. Ce n'est qu'alors que le Saint-Esprit conduira à l'unité des disciples de Christ.

**Mots-clés:** œcuménisme spirituel et pastoral, spiritualité évangélique, spiritualité pentecôtiste, renouveau charismatique.

PRZEMYSŁAW SAWA

*Ut unum sint:*

Nuovi spazi dell'ecumenismo spirituale e pastorale

Abstract

La preoccupazione per l'unità dei cristiani fa parte della natura della Chiesa. Dopo tanti anni di movimento ecumenico, si scorge una certa delusione. Anche se i dialoghi dottrinali e gli incontri ufficiali in corso rimangono attuali, l'ecumenismo spirituale e pastorale è sempre più necessario. Si manifesta non solo nella preghiera comune, ma anche in un genuino scambio di doni spirituali, di ispirazioni pastorali e di collaborazione in molti ambiti della vita ecclesiale e sociale.

Oggi sono emerse nuove aree di tale ecumenismo. Ciò si manifesta, da un lato, nelle diverse tendenze spirituali che attraversano i confini delle chiese e delle comunità (forma di preghiera, musica, pratica dei doni spirituali), dall'altro, nella ricerca di fonti e orientamenti per la vita spirituale in tradizioni diverse. In particolare, la nuova versione dell'ecumenismo include comunità evangeliche e pentecostali. Pertanto, il più ampio rinnovamento carismatico cattolico ha un posto inalienabile nell'opera di servizio per l'unità dei cristiani. Per questo è necessario fare insieme il cammino, accompagnarsi, essere ospitali, lavorare il bene altrui. Solo allora lo Spirito Santo condurrà all'unità dei seguaci di Cristo.

**Parole chiave:** ecumenismo spirituale e pastorale, spiritualità evangelica, spiritualità pentecostale, rinnovamento carismatico.





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## Perception of the Encyclical *Ut unum sint* amongst Slovak Youth

**Abstract:** The presented sociological study emerges from the area of sociology of religion that would like to describe and explain religious reality. Its main goal is to present John Paul II's encyclical *Ut unum sint* and its reception among Slovak youth. The study is divided into two parts. The introduction includes a short outline of the main reflections that appear in the encyclical *Ut unum sint* and some experiences connected with ecumenism in Slovakia — strongly dependent on specific people, priests or parishes. The first part presents the main tasks of Christian churches from the point of view of studied young people (e.g. charity, humanity, education or ecumenism). The second part sheds light on the possible differences between the chosen categories of the analyzed representatives of youth, particularly with regard to ecumenism. To that end independent variables were chosen: sex, place of residence, number of siblings, performance at school, attitude to religious faith, religious practices, and religious affiliation. The study is based in particular on the author's own sociological research conducted at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century.

**Keywords:** ecumenism, encyclical *Ut unum sint*, Slovakia, youth

### Introduction

*Ut unum sint* ("That they may be one") is an encyclical that was published by Pope John Paul II in 1995. It is one of fourteen encyclicals written by John Paul II. Like many encyclicals, also this one derives its title from its first few words. These words are taken from Jesus' prayer "at the hour of his Passion" in the Gospel according to John: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me



through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, 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” (Jn 17,20-21). *Ut unum sint* was the first encyclical ever dedicated exclusively to the ecumenical imperative. John Paul II writes: “To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father’s plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ’s prayer: ‘Ut Unum sint’”.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of ecumenism can be contemplated from a great many points of view — in the scientific sense (e.g., theological, psychological or sociological), in the religious sense (e.g., Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant), in the national sense (e.g., French, Polish or Slovak), etc. This article describes the phenomenon of ecumenism from the point of view of sociology, which analyzes socio-religious phenomena using empirical research and logical analysis.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, it attempts at presenting the issue of the (greater) need for ecumenism in the opinion of Slovak youth. It is based primarily on author’s own sociological research of morality and religiosity of Slovak youth, conducted at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. The research included a questionnaire, in which one question was about the (greater) need for ecumenism, or more precisely — whether the Church should encourage closer relations between Catholics and other Christian denominations.<sup>3</sup>

Before presenting the mentioned empirical analysis against a slightly broader background of the tasks of the Church, I would like to say a few words about ecumenism from the point of view of Slovak experiences. First, let me emphasize that in this case it is not about scientific knowledge based on methodologically correct empirical research, but rather about the so-called common knowledge based on one’s own and other people’s observations or experiences. It is obvious that these observations or experiences are, in principle, always selective and do not necessarily accurately describe the reality.

Based on the so-called common knowledge, observations and experiences, I can say that Christian churches in Slovakia encourage their mem-

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<sup>1</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Ut unum sint. On commitment to Ecumenism*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. TURNER: *Socjologia. Koncepcje i ich zastosowanie*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka Wydawnictwo, 1998, pp. 8—9.

<sup>3</sup> It was quantitative research by the means of a survey. Field data collection took place in November 2011. The target group (a basic set) was the school-leaving youth in the Spis Diocese. From the basic set a sample (random set) was deliberately created, which consisted of 1,225 young people (45 grades of ten public schools and two church schools). The implemented set consists of 1,127 respondents, which constitutes 92.0% of the random set.

bers, especially priests, to undertake ecumenical actions in a moderate way. In many parishes, the ecumenical movement begins and ends with a week of prayer for Christian unity from 18 through 25 January each year. Such a week of prayer is quite often without any real contact with the representatives or believers of other Christian denominations. However, in some cities, towns or villages, in addition to the above-mentioned week of prayer for Christian unity, regular common prayer of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday, with the participation of representatives and believers of various Christian denominations, is organized. Finally, it should be said that in some cities, towns or villages we can also observe mutual participation in liturgical celebrations — for example, for the 100th anniversary of a Catholic parish, representatives of other Christian denominations are also invited and come, and vice versa. However, a lot of this depends on specific cities, towns, villages, parishes, parish priests, and believers.

Since I do not have scientific knowledge based on methodologically correct empirical research on the subject described above, I will move on to an analysis of the (greater) need for ecumenism in the opinion of Slovak youth. In my own research, mentioned above, I was interested, among other things, whether the analyzed young Slovak people are satisfied with the current ecumenical activities of Christian churches or would they like to see their intensification. The entire article is divided into two sections: 1. The need for ecumenism among other tasks that the Church should deal with; 2. The need for ecumenism in relation to selected independent variables.

## 1. The need for ecumenism among other tasks that the Church should deal with

Certainly, there are many areas of the Church's activity — for example liturgical, educational, moral, social, charity, to name just a few. Among them, at least since the Second Vatican Council, there is also the area of ecumenical activity.<sup>4</sup> The Catholic Church is aware that it is of paramount importance to work on rapprochement between Catholics and other Christian denominations — above all for the good of a specific person who, for example, lives in a mixed marriage, was born in a mixed

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<sup>4</sup> SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Decree on Ecumenism "Unitatis redintegratio"*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1964.

family and, in seeking of the true God, meets with a lack of unity among Christians, etc. Before presenting an empirical analysis focused solely on the (greater) need for ecumenism, I would like to put it within a slightly wider context of the tasks of the Church. The respondents were particularly asked to do the following task: “Below there are some views related to the Catholic Church and its activity. We ask you to comment on the presented statements in accordance with your conviction.” The obtained empirical data are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** What should the Church be concerned with? (in %)

Below there are some views related to the Catholic Church and its activity. We ask you to comment on the presented statements in accordance with your conviction:	A	B	C	D	E
1. The Church should be more concerned with people and less with politics.	46.5	35.9	4.1	1.6	11.9
2. The Church should put greater emphasis on educating the young generation.	28.9	41.9	13.1	5.5	10.6
3. The Church should do charity work and be less concerned with its material goods.	51.1	32.0	6.0	1.3	9.5
4. The Church should more firmly oppose the use of contraceptives.	10.7	17.4	29.1	28.2	14.6
5. The Church should not yield in the fight against abortion.	24.0	22.0	19.8	20.2	14.0
6. The Church should soften (liberalize) its stance in relation to divorce.	19.0	34.7	20.9	13.5	11.9
7. The Church should admit to the sacraments married persons who are not married in the Church.	22.4	31.1	18.5	8.5	19.5
8. The Church should put more effort into encouraging rapprochement between Catholics and other Christian denominations.	30.9	37.3	7.2	2.9	21.7

Explanation: A — “I definitely agree”; B — “I rather agree”; C — “I rather do not agree”; D — “I definitely do not agree”; E — No answer.

Taking into account the highest evaluations (“I definitely agree”) and moderate evaluations (“I rather agree”), the following hierarchy of tasks of the Catholic Church can be presented (on which, according to the respondents, it should work more): do charity work (83.1%), be more concerned with people (82.4%), put greater emphasis on educating young generation (70.8%), put more effort into encouraging rapprochement between Catholics and other Christian denominations (68.2%), soften

(liberalize) its stance in relation to divorce (53.7%), admit to the sacraments married persons who are not married in the Church (53.5%) and should not yield in the fight against abortion (46.0%). Regarding the use of contraceptives, more respondents claimed that the Church should not oppose their use (57.3%) than oppose it (28.1%).<sup>5</sup>

The surveyed young people to a large degree pointed towards the so-called human tasks of the Church — charity or social tasks. It is interesting that they also relatively often mention the educational and ecumenical tasks. As part of this comparison, we can also refer to the results of the Slovakia-wide representative sociological research from 2014, according to which — 67.3% of the surveyed young people agreed with the view that contraceptives should not be condemned by the Church; 53.6% — that the Church should soften (liberalize) its position on divorce; 50.0% — that the Church should admit to the sacraments married persons who are not married in the Church. In the same sociological research, as many as 92.6% of young Slovaks were convinced that people of different religious or non-religious beliefs could live together without major problems.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, it should be emphasized that the importance assigned by the respondents (Slovak youth) to the (greater) need for ecumenism was relatively high (68.2%). In the hierarchy of the analyzed Church's tasks, on the basis of author's own research, it ranked fourth or even third — in relation to the highest evaluations (“I definitely agree”). The (greater) need for ecumenism was more or less situated at the same level as the greater emphasis on educating young generation. More than two thirds of the respondents underlined these tasks of the Church. The obtained result is a certain signal not only for the Catholic Church in Slovakia, but for other Christian churches as well. The young generation of Slovaks to a large degree demands that the Church encourage and work more on rapprochement between Catholics and other Christian denominations — perhaps because of sometimes painful experiences in their own families, parishes, villages, towns or cities.

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<sup>5</sup> O. ŠTEFAŇAK: *Religijni i moralni?* Lublin: Norbertinum, 2014, pp. 86—92.

<sup>6</sup> M. TÍŽIK, M. ZEMAN: *Religiozita obyvateľov Slovenska a postoje občanov k náboženstvu.* Bratislava: Sociologický ústav SAV, 2017, pp. 147—150, 184.

## 2. The need for ecumenism in relation to selected independent variables

After presenting the (greater) need for ecumenism within a slightly wider context of the tasks of the Church (according to the examined Slovak youth), I would like to bring our attention to an in-depth analysis of the issue considered herein in relation to the selected demographic, social or religious characteristics. It is obvious that the (greater) need for ecumenism can be viewed differently by young people from various locations, young people with a diverse attitudes to religious faith or young people from different Christian denominations. Table 2 presents possible differences in the views of the surveyed young people on the (greater) need for ecumenism in relation to sex, place of residence, number of siblings, and their school performance.

**Table 2.** The need for ecumenism in relation to selected demographic and social characteristics (in %)

Categories	A	B	C	D	E	Together
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	31.0	36.2	7.7	3.3	21.8	100.0
Female	30.9	38.7	6.7	2.5	21.3	100.0
<b>Place of residence</b>						
Village	32.8	38.7	8.6	2.2	17.7	100.0
Town up to 20,000 residents	27.5	37.1	6.1	4.6	24.6	100.0
City of over 20,000 residents	30.8	34.8	5.2	2.8	26.4	100.0
<b>Number of siblings</b>						
Family with 1 or 2 children	29.9	35.8	7.3	3.0	24.0	100.0
Family with 3 children	34.9	34.9	7.1	3.6	19.5	100.0
Family with 4 children or more	28.2	43.3	7.2	2.2	19.1	100.0
<b>School results</b>						
Very good	30.8	36.0	7.2	2.4	23.6	100.0
Good	30.8	39.8	6.5	2.9	20.0	100.0
Average or bad	31.3	34.2	8.4	3.5	22.6	100.0
<b>Total (N = 1,127)</b>	30.9	37.3	7.2	2.9	21.7	100.0

Explanation: A – “I definitely agree”; B – “I rather agree”; C – “I rather do not agree”; D – “I definitely do not agree”; E – No answer.

On the basis of the empirical data obtained, it may be highlighted that the view suggesting that the Church should encourage and work more on rapprochement between Catholics and other Christian denominations was “definitely” or “rather” agreed on by 68.2% of the respondents (respectively: 30.9% and 37.3% ), as many as 10.1% of the respondents “rather” or “definitely” disagreed with the statement (respectively: 7.2% and 2.9%) and as many as 21.7% of the respondents were unable to clearly answer the posed question. At the same time, a relatively high degree of corrective responses (“I do not know”) proves, first of all, the ignorance of a significant part of the surveyed young people about the reflected topic. A large percentage of the surveyed young people simply do not know to what extent the Church encourages its members to be ecumenical or to what extent it is working on the rapprochement between different Christian denominations and, consequently, do not know if it should encourage or work more on the issue.

From the viewpoint of the selected demographic or social characteristics, the independent variable that significantly differentiated the surveyed Slovak youth, at the significance level of 0.05, was only the social characteristic “place of residence”. From the point of view of the demographic characteristic “sex” ( $p = 0.810$ ) and the social characteristics “number of siblings” ( $p = 0.271$ ) and “results at school” ( $p = 0.784$ ), there were no significant statistical differences between the selected categories of young people. Therefore, it can be said that boys and girls, young people from families varying in the number of members and students with various school achievements, expressed more or less at the same degree the view that the Church should encourage and work more on rapprochement between different Christian denominations (approximately two thirds of the respondents).

In relation to the social characteristic “place of residence”, a statistically significant correlation can be confirmed only at the significance level of 0.05 and with a very weak statistical dependence ( $p = 0.022$ ;  $V = 0.089$ ). In any case, it can be stated that the (greater) need for ecumenism was indicated slightly more often by youth from villages (71.5%) than by youth from small towns (64.6%) or larger cities (65.6%). On the other hand, together with an increase in the number of residents, the percentage of corrective responses (“I do not know”) increased as well: village — 17.7%; town up to 20,000 residents — 24.6%; city of over 20,000 residents — 26.4%. All differences in the views of the surveyed young people on the (greater) need for ecumenism in relation to the selected religious characteristics (attitude to religious faith, religious practices, and religious affiliation) are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The need for ecumenism in relation to the selected religious characteristics (in %)

Categories	A	B	C	D	E	Together
<b>Attitude to religious faith</b>						
Firm believer	36.1	35.2	6.5	3.7	18.5	100.0
Believer	29.3	43.0	7.7	2.4	17.6	100.0
Undecided	38.2	34.1	8.1	0.6	19.1	100.0
Indifferent or non-believer	27.5	24.8	5.5	6.0	36.2	100.0
<b>Religious practices</b>						
Regularly	31.2	42.8	7.5	2.2	16.3	100.0
Irregularly	32.8	36.9	10.7	3.3	16.4	100.0
Rarely	31.6	37.8	6.6	2.8	21.2	100.0
Not at all	28.0	23.0	5.5	5.0	38.5	100.0
<b>Religious affiliation</b>						
Catholic Church	30.4	41.1	7.7	2.5	18.3	100.0
Protestant Church	44.3	31.1	6.6	–	17.9	100.0
Non-denominational	21.5	20.7	5.0	7.4	45.5	100.0
<b>Total (N = 1,127)</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Explanatory notes: A – “I definitely agree”; B – “I rather agree”; C – “I rather do not agree”; D – “I definitely do not agree”; E – No answer.

From the viewpoint of selected religious characteristics, it can be confirmed that statistically significant differences were noted in each of the three correlations presented: attitude to religious faith ( $p < 0.0005$ ;  $V = 0.133$ ), religious practices ( $p < 0.0005$ ;  $V = 0.131$ ) and religious affiliation ( $p < 0.0005$ ;  $V = 0.184$ ). In relation to the declared attitude to religious faith, a statistical correlation with a weak dependence was noted. It is interesting that strong believers (71.3%), believers (72.3%) and undecided, but connected to the religious tradition (72.3%), expressed the (greater) need for ecumenism more or less at the same, that is, relatively high, level. It is possible that each of the categories mentioned had slightly different motivations for it, but as a result, all three of them expressed the (greater) need for ecumenism in a significant degree. On the other hand, people who were religiously indifferent or who did not believe most often indicated a corrective response (“I do not know”) (36.2%).

A slightly different situation appeared in relation to the declared participation in religious practices, although also in this case a statistical correlation with a weak dependence was noted. In two sentences it can be said that the indicators of the (greater) need for ecumenism decreased together with the decline in participation in religious practices: regularly — 74.0%; irregularly — 69.7%; rarely — 69.4%; not at all — 51.0%.



On the other hand, together with the decline in participation in religious practices, the percentage of corrective responses (“I do not know”) increased: regularly — 16.3%; irregularly — 16.4%; rarely — 21.2%; not at all — 38.5%.

Finally, in relation to the declared religious affiliation, we observed a statistical correlation of almost average strength of dependence. As an aside, it should be said that for methodological reasons only the views of Catholics, Protestants and non-denominational were compared. As far as other religious groups are concerned (e.g. Orthodox or members of new Christian movements), the fact that they do not have many followers made it impossible to include them in the statistical analysis. In any case, it is interesting that although Catholic youth in a relatively high degree expressed the (greater) need for ecumenism (71.5%), Protestant youth voiced such a need even more often (75.4%), and above all more intensively (“I definitely agree”): Catholic Church — 30.4%; Protestant Church — 44.3%). On the other hand, people who did not belong to any religious denomination most often indicated a corrective response (“I do not know”/no answer) (45.5%).

To conclude the second part of the study, it should be emphasized that statistically significant differences when it comes to the issue of the (greater) need for ecumenism were, as a matter of fact, observed only in relation to religious characteristics — at least at the significance level of 0.01. It is indeed interesting that the (greater) need for ecumenism was largely indicated by strong believers, believers, and only connected to the religious tradition (except these who are religiously indifferent or non-believers), by people who regularly, irregularly or at least rarely participate in religious practices (except these who do not practice at all), and by Catholic or Protestant youth (except non-denominational). Therefore, it can be concluded that people who are more or less religious (apart from non-religious ones) largely demand that the Church should encourage and work more on rapprochement between Catholics and other Christian denominations — perhaps on the basis of sometimes painful experiences in their own families, parishes, villages, towns or cities.

## Conclusions

After a short presentation of the so-called common knowledge about ecumenism from the point of view of Slovak experiences and a much longer presentation of scientific knowledge about the (greater) need for



ecumenism in the opinion of Slovak youth, we can say, following the well-known Polish sociologist of religion Janusz Mariański, that it is not enough just to look back (“to read the protocols from the last meeting”) and from there to draw models for the current situation. However, the adaptation of the Church to social changes has its limitations. Therefore, it is more about a dialogue with people of a new mentality than about adaptation or imitation. It is about understanding the problems of contemporary people and trying to solve them together. The Church should not call for the fight against modernity, but transform it within its evangelizing mission, through open discourse and dialogue with other people who put forward different proposals of solutions for human and religious problems.<sup>7</sup>

The presented views of the surveyed Slovak youth on the (greater) need for ecumenism should be read primarily in the context of a relatively low level of ecumenical engagement in the Slovak reality, and also in the context of sometimes painful experiences of young people in their own families, parishes, villages, towns, or cities, which quite often causes weakening of religious faith. The presented relatively strong desire of the young generation of Slovaks that the Church should encourage and work more on closing of the ties between Catholics and other Christian denominations is certainly also the desire of Jesus Christ himself, who before his Passion and Resurrection prayed: “Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one” (Jn 17,11b). Indeed, it is necessary to go further in the ecumenical work — above all for the good of a specific person who, for example, lives in a mixed marriage, was born in a mixed family or in seeking the true God, faces the lack of unity among Christians.

It is also the desire of the Second Vatican Council, which in its decree on ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio* emphasizes that: “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.”<sup>8</sup> Finally, it is also the urging of John Paul II, who in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* underlines that: “To believe in Christ means

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<sup>7</sup> J. MARIAŃSKI: *Sekularyzacja i desekularyzacja w nowoczesnym świecie*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2006, pp. 189—193.

<sup>8</sup> SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Decree on Ecumenism “Unitatis redintegratio”...*, p. 1.

to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer: 'Ut unum sint'.<sup>9</sup>

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### Perception de l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* par les jeunes slovaques

#### Résumé

L'étude sociologique présentée dans cet article trouve sa source dans le domaine de la sociologie de la religion qui aspire à décrire et à expliquer la réalité religieuse. Le but principal est de présenter l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* de Jean-Paul II et sa réception par les jeunes slovaques. L'étude se compose de deux parties. L'introduction comprend un bref aperçu des principales réflexions qui apparaissent dans l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* et des expériences liées à l'œcuménisme en Slovaquie, des expériences évidemment dépendantes des personnes qui les ont vécues qu'ils soient prêtres ou paroissiens. La première partie présente les principales tâches des églises chrétiennes du point de vue des jeunes (par exemple la charité, l'humanité, l'éducation ou l'œcuménisme). La deuxième partie met en lumière les différences possibles entre des représentants de la jeunesse, notamment au regard de l'œcuménisme. Pour ce faire, des variables indépendantes ont été choi-

<sup>9</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Ut unum sint. On commitment to Ecumenism*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995, p. 9.

sies: sexe, lieu de résidence, nombre de frères et sœurs, performances scolaires, attitude vis-à-vis de la foi religieuse, pratiques religieuses et appartenance religieuse. L'étude s'appuie notamment sur les propres recherches sociologiques que l'auteur a personnellement menées au début de la deuxième décennie du XXIème siècle.

**Mots-clés:** œcuménisme, encyclique *Ut unum sint*, Slovaquie, jeunesse

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## Percezione dell'enciclica *Ut unum sint* da parte dei giovani slovacchi

### Abstract

Lo studio sociologico presentato in questo articolo emerge dal campo della sociologia della religione che aspira a descrivere ed a spiegare la realtà religiosa. L'obiettivo principale è presentare l'enciclica *Ut unum sint* di Giovanni Paolo II e la sua ricezione da parte dei giovani slovacchi. Lo studio si compone di due parti. L'introduzione include una breve panoramica delle principali riflessioni che compaiono nell'enciclica *Ut unum sint* e alcune esperienze relative all'ecumenismo in Slovacchia, fortemente influenzate dalle esperienze delle persone che le hanno vissute siano essi sacerdoti o parrochiani. La prima parte presenta i principali compiti delle Chiese cristiane dal punto di vista dei giovani (per esempio la carità, l'umanità, l'educazione o l'ecumenismo). La seconda parte mette in luce le possibili differenze tra i rappresentanti dei giovani, in particolare per quanto riguarda l'ecumenismo. Perciò sono state scelte variabili indipendenti: sesso, luogo di residenza, numero di fratelli e sorelle, rendimento scolastico, atteggiamento nei confronti della fede religiosa, pratiche religiose e appartenenza religiosa. Lo studio si basa in particolare sulla ricerca sociologica che l'autore ha personalmente svolto all'inizio del secondo decennio del XXI secolo.

**Parole chiave:** ecumenismo, enciclica *Ut unum sint*, Slovacchia, gioventù



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## Reception of John Paul II's Encyclical *Ut unum sint* in Cieszyn Silesia

**Abstract:** There are places where the ecumenical movement is born and grows out of the very essence of social and cultural reality. Cieszyn Silesia belongs to one of such places. Situated on the meeting point of various nationalities, cultures, and Churches, it constitutes a border region in a literal and symbolic sense. This region has become the home for the largest population of the Lutherans in Poland. The ecumenical movement which has been born and developed here is a necessary and inevitable consequence of such coexistence of Churches — the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran. Both Churches have become symbols of ecumenical life based on faith, tolerance, experience and respect. Nowadays all of these factors create a modern ecumenism.

Ecumenism in Cieszyn Silesia has a very long and rich history. The phenomenon of Churches' coexistence appeared almost five centuries ago. It means that the ecumenical movement had existed here long before the Catholic Church promulgated the encyclical *Ut unum sint*.

On the basis of the examples of the ecumenical relationships mentioned in the article, it can be said that the look of the “wise” today at its “yesterday” helps to build a better “tomorrow”. Therefore it can be said that on the basis of a well-lived present, firmly rooted in history, rises a favourable hope for the future of the Church.

Presenting the reception of John Paul's II *Ut unum sint* among the multi-denominational population of Cieszyn Silesia one could quote Reverend Professor Waław Hryniewicz, one of the most remarkable Polish ecumenists: “An authentic reception can be achieved only when the partners differ from each other because diversity enables the true relation of giving and taking.”

**Keywords:** ecumenism, Cieszyn Silesia, encyclical *Ut unum sint*, history, reception

In relation to Cieszyn Silesia, and particularly Cieszyn, which was from 1290 to 1918 the capital of Cieszyn Duchy, one can talk about a certain *genius loci* which means a place “endowed with a spirit”, where after 1517 the echoes of the Reformation arrived really soon. *Genius loci* applies to a place thought to be as one of the important elements in the search of existential space of people belonging to various Christian and religious communities. Both history and the present day show us a lot of evidence how important it is to understand the spirit of the place well. It inspires us with ecumenical activities on three planes — spiritual, cultural, and academic. A good example is the “September Bible”, which can be found in Cieszyn. It is the first publication of the New Testament translated by Reverend Martin Luther published in Wittenberg in September of 1522. Though the edition of the work was three thousand copies, which was really high in those days, in the Polish collections there are only few copies. In the central catalogue of old prints in the National Library in Warsaw you can find, besides the print which is in the possession of the Cieszyn Library, only three copies of this work — two in Toruń (in the Main Library of Nicolaus Copernicus University and Municipal Library), and one in the University Library in Wrocław.

## 1. Methodological approach

Since the Second Vatican Council, the ecumenical movement has gained a permanent position in the activities of the Roman Catholic Church. The Council expressed the desire of the Church to begin ecumenical actions for the unity of Christians. The Church encourages “all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism”<sup>1</sup> (DE 4). John XXII and his successors, since the beginning of their ministry, focused on ecumenism as the priority of their pontificates, and John Paul II said in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* that “[t]he Catholic Church embraces with hope the commitment to ecumenism as a duty of the Christian conscience enlightened by faith and guided by love” (UUS 8).<sup>2</sup> In that way the pursuit of the unity of Christians becomes the programme of the Church.

Alexander Schmemmann, one of the contemporary Orthodox theologians, in his dissertations on Eucharist said that “in the heart of Christianity

<sup>1</sup> *Dekret o ekumenizmie „Unitatis redintegratio”* (hereafter: DE). In: *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*. Eds. S. JAWORSKI. Poznań 1968.

<sup>2</sup> JAN PAWEŁ II: *Encyklika „Ut unum sint”* (hereafter: UUS).

there is the memory of one Man, of one moment, of one night when in the darkness of that night the words were said: 'This do in remembrance of me'.<sup>3</sup> Paraphrasing it, one may advance a thesis that in the heart of Christianity there is the memory of Good Thursday, of the Upper Room when Jesus, before saying the words "This do in remembrance of me", said: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are" (J 17, 11), which are His testament for us. Therefore, unity is a gift from Jesus and at the same time a task for Christians. Ecumenism, in that meaning, is Jesus' order which the Christians should fulfill; it is "the duty of the Christian conscience" and "the way of the Church" (UUS 8).

According to the Sacred Council, the term ecumenical movement indicates the initiatives and activities undertaken, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity (DE 4). On the other hand, reception, which is an indigenous ecclesiastical phenomenon, is indispensable for ecumenism and unity. It is "an expression of spiritual exchange between individuals and entire communities."<sup>4</sup> The process of reception takes place in Churches and Christian communities and they accept in the great sense of togetherness of faith the theological formulations, various traditions and Church structures. The ecumenical reception, recognizing the right of other denominations to their own identity, gets out significant values from them which enrich all Christians. The engagement of Churches in the ecumenical movement is "the first form of mutual reception and a silent acceptance of ecclesiality of other communities."<sup>5</sup> Reception, recognizing the rights of other Churches, is the basis for rapprochement and ecumenical agreement between Christians on the way to unity. Therefore the task of ecumenical reception is to lead again "to the integration of many denominational traditions and elicit from them essential and lasting values which would be able to enrich all other Christians."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A. SCHMEMANN: *Velkij post*. Pariž 1981, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> The issue of reception as an ecumenical task for Churches and Church communities was widely discussed by Rev. Hryniewicz in: *Hermeneutyka w dialogu*. Opole 1998, pp. 125—192.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 159.

## 2. The post-conciliar reception of *Ut unum sint* — John Paul II's encyclical in Cieszyn Silesia

Ecumenism in Cieszyn Silesia has a very long and rich history. It means that it had come into being even before the encyclical by John Paul II, *Ut unum sint* (1995). For the people living here for ages, Cieszyn Silesia was always the centre of two confessions: Roman Catholic and Lutheran, which at the same time became the symbol of ecumenical life, namely, faith and tolerance, survival and respect. The people also retained their own traditions and culture. Nowadays all these factors shape the modern picture of ecumenism. It also happens that the members of the Catholic Church get married to the Lutherans and that way marriages of mixed denominations appear. The faithful not only get married to each other but they work and participate in the religious, cultural, social and political life together. The phenomenon of the coexistence of the various confessions appeared here almost five centuries ago, when the Protestant influences reached Cieszyn Silesia. Thanks to mutual kindness and understanding, especially in the 19th century, there was a boom in education, which was ecumenical. Children of different confessions attended schools run by the Catholic and Evangelical Churches and the same concerned secondary and high schools — everyone, regardless the confession, could find their place there. In Cieszyn Silesia numerous ecumenical actions on spiritual, doctrinal, practical and folk field were being held. Living a moment in a positive meaning, based on history, a hope of light for Church rises.

### 2.1. Spiritual ecumenism

According to the Decree on ecumenism, the transformation of heart and sanctity of life connected with prayers for the unity of Christians constitute the soul of the ecumenical movement (cf. DE 8). The ecumenical prayer, as a form of spiritual ecumenism, is an effective means of asking for grace of unity and a sign of bounds linking the baptized according to the words of Jesus: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18, 20).<sup>7</sup> The importance of prayer for the unity of Christians was stressed by John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut unum sint*: “Along the ecumenical path to unity, pride of place certainly belongs to *common prayer*, the prayerful union of those

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. DE 8.

who gather together around Christ himself. If Christians, despite their divisions, can grow ever more united in common prayer around Christ, they will grow in the awareness of how little divides them in comparison to what unites them. If they meet more often and more regularly before Christ in prayer, they will be able to gain the courage to face all the painful human reality of their divisions, and they will find themselves together once more in that community of the Church which Christ constantly builds up in the Holy Spirit, in spite of all weaknesses and human limitations” (UUS 22).

In Cieszyn Silesia, in Poland and in the entire Roman Catholic Church the ecumenical prayer started together with the fulfillment of the Second Vatican Council resolutions and a significant place belongs to the Week of Prayers for the Unity of Christians celebrated from 18th to 25th January each year.

In the discussed area, besides Catholics and Lutherans, there are also members of the Orthodox, Polish Catholic Churches and the Seventh-Day Adventists participating in the prayers in this special week. In many places in Cieszyn Silesia, especially where there are Evangelical parishes and people of both denominations live, the ecumenical services for the unity of Christians are celebrated every day. The word of God is preached by Roman Catholic and Evangelical clergy, and the performances of choirs enrich the services.

During one of the ecumenical services, Rev. Jan Gross, the chairman of the Silesian Department of Polish Ecumenical Council, said that after so many years of common prayers it seems that we are much closer: “We understand each other better, many prejudices fell into oblivion, what was impossible once now is real.”<sup>8</sup> The World Day of the Bible is another occasion to celebrate biblical and ecumenical services in many towns and villages in Cieszyn area. It started in 1998. The biblical services are preceded by lectures from biblical theology. The participants are not only Catholics and Evangelicals but also members of the Polish Catholic Church and the Seventh-Day Adventists.<sup>9</sup> The organizer of these meetings is the Committee of Ecumenical Biblical Days. The idea of this ecumenical cooperation is focused on making the Holy Bible more popular among young people (Bible contests run in schools).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J. BUDNIAK: *Ekumenizm jutra na przykładzie Śląska Cieszyńskiego*. Katowice 2002, p. 127.

<sup>9</sup> IDEM: “Ekumenizm na Śląsku Cieszyńskim na przełomie wieków.” In: „*Pojednacie się*”...: *materiały z sesji naukowej: pastoralny i społeczno-kulturowy wymiar ekumenizmu na Śląsku Cieszyńskim Bielsko-Biała 24—25 marca 2000*. Eds. J. BUDNIAK, H. RUSEK. Cieszyn 2000, p. 74.

<sup>10</sup> J. BUDNIAK: *Ekumenizm jutra...*, p. 119.



Every year, as part of the Week of Prayers for the Unity of Christians, Catholic and Evangelical bishops take part in the Bible marathon in the Library in Bielsko-Biała. During this marathon certain parts of the Holy Bible are read by guest of various denominations invited for this event and by the representative of the Jewish community, too. The marathon is directly broadcast by the diocese radio Anioł Beskidów ('Angel of the Beskid Mountains').

Since 1997, Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches have organized the "Jonasz" Bible contest. It is an annual event for students of all kinds of schools. This is an initiative under the auspices of Catholic and Evangelical bishops. Several thousand primary and secondary school students from Bielsko—Żywiec Roman Catholic diocese and Cieszyn and Katowice dioceses of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession, as well as young people from the Silesian Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession from the other side of the river Olza in Czech Republic take part in this contest.

Bogusław Czyż, the president of the Religious Education Society "Jonasz" from Skoczów, who has been organizing this event for 17 years together with the Religious Education Department of Bielsko—Żywiec curia, admits that thanks to this contest the relations between the representatives of various denominations have developed and improved. "The competition brings people together, lets them not only explore the Bible, but also enables meeting the other person. I am pleased with the fruitful results of this cooperation."<sup>11</sup> So far 400,000 students have taken part in this event.

In the year 2008, the parish of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession in Cieszyn celebrated its 300th anniversary of founding which was the occasion for a very festive ecumenical service. The service took place on 5 October in Jesus Church inaugurating the jubilee celebrations and was attended by many faithful and clergy. There were representatives of all Churches and Christian communities in Cieszyn Silesia and the Roman Catholic Church was represented by Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy. Polish President Lech Kaczyński and the Chairman of European Union Parliament Jerzy Buzek were also present.

The common prayer for freedom which is the gift of God's love must be based on four pillars: truth, justice, love, and freedom because "real freedom flourishes only when the heart conquers hate, resentment and jealousy, when you say 'no' to selfishness and everything that makes the human being concentrate on themselves and defense their self-interests."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> In the private archives of the author. Cat. number JB/KBib/2014.

<sup>12</sup> JAN PAWEŁ II: "Jak budować pokój?" *L'Osservatore Romano Pol* 254(6) (2003), p. 32.

Ecumenical services for peace — taking example from the inter-religious prayer meetings organized for the first time in Assisi in 1986 whose initiator was Pope John Paul II — are another example confirming the unification initiatives. The first international service attended by clergy from Poland and the Czech Republic took place in John the Baptist Church in Brenna on 18 March 2002. There were representatives of five Christian Churches and the common prayer was presided over by the bishop of Bielsko—Żywiec diocese, Tadeusz Rakoczy, Bishop Tadeusz Szurman from Katowice diocese of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession was the preacher.<sup>13</sup>

Polish President Bronisław Komorowski, appreciating the role and the significance of ecumenical dialogue in Cieszyn Silesia, came to Cieszyn to participate in the ecumenical prayer for peace in the world on 1 September 2011. There also participated Catholic and Lutheran bishops, as well as many faithful of both religions. Referring to the geographical position of Cieszyn, President Komorowski said that “a voice from here, from the border of nations, languages, cultures and religions proves that being different does not mean misfortune but beauty and wealth of Poland and all world's nations.”<sup>14</sup> The sermon during the service was preached by Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy. Addressing the congregation, the bishop asked everybody to pray in their everyday prayers for freedom in families, in Poland and in the world. It was the second service for freedom in the history of the diocese.

The next service for peace took place in the Romanesque chapel in Cieszyn — the oldest church in Poland, on 5 June 2019. Three Christian traditions participated in the ceremony: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Lutheran. During the service, the bishops made a joint appeal for freedom in the world.

## 2.2. Academic ecumenism

In a way the history of academic ecumenism in Cieszyn Silesia begins with the International Ecumenical Congress held in Cieszyn on the premises of the University of Silesia from 21st to 28th August 1995. The words “Renew us through prayer and work. *Ora et labora*” were the leading motto of lectures given by academics representing three Christian traditions — Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Lutheran. Welcoming

<sup>13</sup> “Brenna jak Asyż.” *Głos Ziemi Cieszyńskiej*. Cieszyn 22.03.2002, pp. 1—2.

<sup>14</sup> In the private archives of the author. Sygn. JB/nab.p/1.09.2011.

the Congress participants, Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy expressed his own joy and the joy of the entire local Church by saying:

The 28th International Ecumenical Congress is held here, in this town Cieszyn, in Poland, on the piece of land where the holy commandment of Christian unity is fulfilled. The commandment is even more holy because it is not expressed by a direct order but by a prayer, an intimate conversation with Father on the night before His death and in the face of the fulfillment of the entire paschal mystery. Christ entrusts this matter to us through the Holy Father with such zeal which is proper only to Him, the only Begotten Son of God and more and more this sensitivity ignites Churches, communities of people who believe in Christ. The Congress takes place on the earth where the evangelic call for Christian unity responds the everyday need of people who live here.<sup>15</sup>

All Christian denominations from Europe, the United States and Madagascar were represented in the Congress by 340 people. The importance of this event was highlighted by the presence of invited guests: Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz and Polish President Lech Wałęsa.

The Cieszyn Silesia calendar has permanent ecumenical ceremonies that have a religious and state dimension. The fact that the words of prayer for unity of Christians in the Jubilee Year (25 March 2000) were pondered during ecumenical services and academic sessions takes the rank of a symbol. It took place in two Polish towns — Białystok (Roman Catholic—Orthodox) and in Bielsko-Biała (Roman Catholic—Evangelical). The ecumenical service in Bielsko-Biała was preceded by an academic session in St. Jan Kanty Theological Institute. During this session, Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy focused on the values that the ecumenical process should contain and be guided by. They are: faith shaping our daily life, prayer, discernment of God's will expressed in the Holy Bible, repentance and conciliation. The bishop said that living in love with an individual human being leads to unity of all people and the condition of it is

acknowledgment and confession of sins against unity, change in the way of thinking and behavior towards other brothers and sisters, readiness to accept the logotype of Christ's Gospel, sensitivity of the heart to the word of God and in its light to another man and their inner freedom.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "Ordinary Bishop of Bielsko-Żywiec diocese Tadeusz Rakoczy's speech to the participants of the International Ecumenical Congress." In: J. BUDNIAK: *XXVIII Międzynarodowy Kongres Ekumeniczny w Cieszynie. Ora et labora*. Cieszyn—Bytom 1996, pp. 33—36.

<sup>16</sup> T. RAKOCZY: "Słowo wygłoszone podczas nabożeństwa ekumenicznego w kościele pw. Najświętszego Serca Pana Jezusa w Bielsku-Białej. 25 marca 2000 roku." In: *Pojednajcie się*..., p. 224.

During the ecumenical service which completed the conference, Archbishop Alfons Nossol asked two questions in his sermon: What will the future united diversity be like and when exactly will the hour of unity strike? Answering the questions he recalled the great witness of faith John Paul II who before the eyes of the whole world on the first Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of Forgiveness in the year 2000, apologized on behalf of the daughters and sons of the Church bearing the name of Christians. The archbishop, continuing his idea, said:

[...] then the Pope embraced the legs of the Crucified, kissed them begging Him to forgive us our sins which led to divisions; begging Him for grace that we would get rid of any further willingness that divides us, tears apart Christ's robe; that our hearts would be filled with an ardent love of unity, of true reconciliation. When this old man with such a youthful heart and spirit embraced Christ's cross, I was reminded of the words by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther: *Crux probat optima...* (In our faith everything is confirmed by the cross...).<sup>17</sup>

The Decree on ecumenism highlights that “it is necessary to get to know the spirit of the separated brethren” (DE 9). Conferences and academic sessions serve this purpose and constitute an area of ecumenical meetings. Dialogue is the way on which exists the possibility of mutual meetings and understanding the other. This form of ecumenism is included in all ecumenical conferences and academic sessions held both at the University of Silesia in Cieszyn and in St. Jan Kanty Theological Institute in Bielsko-Biała. The conferences have been held every year since 1999 when the University of Silesia in Cieszyn had the Department of Pedagogy where students specialized in Catholic and Evangelical religious education to be teachers of both Churches — Catholic and Evangelical. Unfortunately, the specialty was canceled in 2007 because the University of Silesia in Katowice opened the same specialty in its Theological Department preparing young people for their future work as religious teachers.

### 2.3. Practical ecumenism (socio-cultural)

As faith without deeds is dead, neither can one speak of authentic ecumenism without mutual actions. The encyclical emphasizes: “ecumenical cooperation is a true school of ecumenism, a dynamic road to unity. Unity

<sup>17</sup> A. Nossol: “Homilia ekumeniczna.” In: “*Pojednajcie się*”..., p. 227.

of action leads to the full unity of faith: ‘Through such cooperation, all believers in Christ are able to learn easily how they can understand each other better and esteem each other more, and how the road to the unity of Christians may be made smooth’” (UUS 40). One of the priorities in the ecumenical activity, and also the base of practical activity, are couples of different denominations (generally known as mixed couples). These marriages should be given special care by the Churches. The following rules are vital in the ecumenical pastoral work of families: encouraging the faithful to pray for the unity of Christians and to participate in common services and other forms of parish activities; getting more knowledge about Churches; reminding parents that the child despite their affiliation to one Church should be educated about the spiritual riches of the other Church through participation in celebrations, services and common visits in the other church.

There are parishes in Cieszyn Silesia where the parish priests — Catholic and Protestant — visit the multi-religious families together. First they pray together and then have a discussion on different subjects with the members of the family. The ecumenical ministry, understood as such, can be a device to strengthen the love between the spouses. Their love, on the other hand, is an example of ecumenical love and a sign of unity for the divided Church. Well-run ministry of mixed couples can bring good results. The couples might become excellent examples of ecumenical activities. Since 1999 Cieszyn Silesia has been host to the Festival of Religious Creativity “Psallite Deo”. The event is organized under the auspices of the ordinary of Bielsko—Żywiec diocese and the head of Cieszyn diocese of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession, the ordinary of Łódź—Poznań diocese of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the bishop of the Evangelical-Reformed Church in Poland. This cultural and musical event has an ecumenical character and the concerts take place in Catholic and Evangelical churches. In the area of Cieszyn Silesia there are kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools run by Catholic Church and Evangelical Church. The schools are attended by students of both denominations. Recently, there has been a research made on the students which says that the young people have a positive attitude towards each other and the teachers are kind and without any prejudices.

### 3. Conclusions

The importance of ecumenical movement in Cieszyn Silesia was appreciated by John Paul II during his visit in Skoczów on 22 May 1995, when he canonized Jan Sarkander. In his speech dedicated to the clergymen and congregation of two Churches, he said:

The region where we are right now, I mean [...] Cieszyn Silesia, is known in Poland as a place of special ecumenical testimony. For ages it has been a place of harmonious coexistence between the members of the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church, and their intensive ecumenical dialogue. The dialogue which is carried out with a deep conviction that so much joins us — that we are joined by a common faith in Christ, and by our common motherland. Today's meeting with you is a perfect opportunity to express my gratitude that the ecumenical dialogue is permanently developed and deepened, and that it is reflected in many forms of constructive cooperation: both on the diocesan level and in parishes.<sup>18</sup>

In Cieszyn Silesia there is a strong ecumenical awareness and it seems to be a role model for other communities. Cieszyn Silesia citizens believe that it is possible to aspire to unity. God's providence led them to this point of having one region but two different Christian confessions so there is no other possibility then trying to unite.

The joint voice of Christians in the issues of morality, culture and upbringing unites the society giving them a sense of unity in the pursuit of the common goal, which is building a civilization of love, peace and justice. In those activities, in which more and more young people are involved, the testament of Jesus "That they may all be one" (J 17, 21) is fulfilled. Analyzing the reception of the encyclical *Ut unum sint* of the most eminent Polish ecumenist, Reverend Professor Waclaw Hryniewicz could be quoted: "The authentic reception can occur when partners differ from each other, because diversity enables a real relationship of giving and taking."<sup>19</sup> The look of the wise "today" at its "yesterday" helps to build a better "tomorrow" and constitutes a kind of rules of actions for Churches and Christian communities in Cieszyn Silesia.

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<sup>18</sup> JAN PAWEŁ II: "Przemówienie wygłoszone w czasie spotkania z wiernymi w kościele ewangelicko-augsburskim w Skoczowie." In: *Drogowskazy dla Polaków Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*. Kraków 1999, vol. 3, p. 273.

<sup>19</sup> W. HRYNIEWICZ: *Hermeneutyka w dialogu*. Opole 1998, p. 158.

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JÓZEF BUDNIAK

## Réception de l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* de Jean-Paul II en Silésie de Cieszyn

### Résumé

Il y a des endroits où le mouvement œcuménique est né et s'est développé à partir de la spécificité de la réalité sociale et culturelle. Ces lieux incluent la Silésie de Cieszyn, située à la frontières de nations, de cultures et pendant plusieurs siècles — de religions. C'est une région frontalière au sens littéral et symbolique. C'est dans cette région que la plus grande communauté des luthériens de Pologne a trouvé sa place aujourd'hui. Ici, le mouvement œcuménique est une conséquence nécessaire et inévitable de la coexistence des Églises catholique romaine et évangélique d'Augsbourg. Ces églises sont devenues un symbole d'une vie œcuménique fondée sur la foi et la tolérance, la vie en commun et le respect. Aujourd'hui, tous ces éléments forment un portrait moderne de l'œcuménisme. L'œcuménisme dans la Silésie de Cieszyn a une longue et riche histoire. Le phénomène de la coexistence des églises est apparu dans cette région il y a près de cinq siècles, ce qui signifie que l'œcuménisme existait ici bien avant que l'Église catholique romaine publie la première encyclique œcuménique *Ut unum sint*.

Sur la base des exemples de relations œcuméniques présentés dans l'ouvrage, on peut dire que le regard de l'un « aujourd'hui » sage sur son « hier » permet de construire un meilleur « demain ». On peut donc être tenté de dire qu'un présent bien vécu, bien ancré dans l'histoire, suscite une espérance positive pour l'avenir des Églises. Pour présenter la réception de l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* de Jean-Paul II parmi la communauté pluriconfessionnelle de la Silésie de Cieszyn, on citera l'un des œcuménistes polonais les plus remarquables, le professeur Waclaw Hryniewicz: « Une réception authentique peut avoir lieu lorsque les partenaires diffèrent les uns des autres, car la diversité permet une véritable relation de donner et de recevoir ».

**Mots-clés:** œcuménisme, Silésie de Cieszyn, encyclique *Ut unum sint*, histoire, réception

JÓZEF BUDNIAK

## Ricezione dell'enciclica *Ut unum sint* di Giovanni Paolo II in Slesia di Cieszyn

### Abstract

Ci sono luoghi dove il movimento ecumenico è nato e si è sviluppato dalla specificità della realtà sociale e culturale. Questi luoghi includono la Slesia di Cieszyn, situata ai confini di nazioni, culture e per diversi secoli — di religioni. È una regione di confine nel senso letterale e simbolico. È in questa regione che oggi ha trovato posto la più grande comunità di luterani in Polonia. È qui che il movimento ecumenico è una conseguenza necessaria e inevitabile della coesistenza delle Chiese cattolica romana ed evangelica di Augusta. Queste chiese sono diventate il simbolo della vita ecumenica basata sulla fede e sulla tolleranza, sulla condivisione di esperienze e sul rispetto. Tutti questi elementi



formano oggi un ritratto moderno dell'ecumenismo. L'ecumenismo in Slesia di Cieszyn ha una storia lunga e ricca. Il fenomeno della coesistenza delle chiese è apparso in questa regione quasi cinque secoli fa. Ciò significa che l'ecumenismo esisteva qui molto prima che la Chiesa cattolica romana pubblicasse la prima enciclica ecumenica *Ut unum sint*.

Sulla base degli esempi di relazioni ecumeniche presentati nell'opera si può affermare che lo sguardo di un „oggi” saggio sul suo „ieri” rende possibile la costruzione di un „domani” migliore. Si può quindi essere tentati di affermare che un presente ben vissuto, ben ancorato nella storia, suscita una positiva speranza per il futuro delle Chiese. Presentando la ricezione dell'enciclica *Ut unum sint* di Giovanni Paolo II presso la comunità multireligiosa della Slesia di Cieszyn, si cita uno dei più eminenti ecumenisti polacchi, il professore Waław Hryniewicz: „Una ricezione autentica può avvenire quando i partner differiscono l'uno dall'altro, perché la diversità consente a un vero rapporto di dare e di avere”.

**Parole chiave:** ecumenismo, Slesia di Cieszyn, enciclica *Ut unum sint*, storia, accoglienza

Part Two

# Reviews





Marek MARCZEWSKI: *Leiturgia — Martyria —  
Diakonia. Koinonia.*  
Lublin 2021. 311 pp.

Following the Bible, all Christian denominations agree that the inner nature of the Church is expressed in a threefold task: proclaiming the word of God (*martyria*), administering the sacraments (*leiturgia*), and the service of charity (*diakonia*). All of these vital functions of the Church serve the ultimate goal of building community in Christ: *koinonia en Christo*. The book by the pastoralist and pastoral educator Marek Marczewski DSc, working as a professor at the Higher School of Social and Economics in Gdansk, is based on the ancient Christian notions. As the author emphasizes in the introduction, the book “aims to introduce theological and ascetic reflection on the implementation of attitudes that shape deacons in their threefold task (service) and help to implement them to the reality of home, the domestic Church, in the realization of the family as the *community-koinonia*” (p. 16). The book is dedicated to permanent deacons in Poland due to the fact that their number is constantly increasing in Polish dioceses; in addition, the author for many years of his professional life has been dealing with the issues of permanent diaconate in theology and the post-conciliar practice. Of course, the publication can also serve seminarians for whom diaconal ordinations are a transition stage to ordination to the presbyterate and all those who are involved in the salvific ministry of the Church (pastoral ministry). It can be said that the book deals with specific aspects of pastoral theology, especially the fundamental functions of the Church, thanks to which she comes to fruition.

The originality of the study in question lies in the fact that the author makes abundant use of the scholarly achievements of an outstanding

Polish pastoralist practicing theology in its ecclesiological aspect, Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki (1921—1987). A look at the life functions of the Church in the light of the theological and pastoral thought of the founder of the Light-Life Movement is worth popularizing primarily because his vision was ahead of his time. Thus, the depth and farsightedness of Blachnicki's theological thinking and the author's reference to contemporary documents of the Church and selected theologians make the look at the basic functions of the Church not only fresh but inspiring for further reflection, both in theory and pastoral practice. This applies especially to the realization of the Church in the family and the role that a deacon can play in it, which is analyzed in the context of the author's academic interests.

In the introduction to the first chapter, "Leiturgia", the author emphasizes that one of the last documents of the Holy See, *The Directory on the Service and Life of Permanent Deacons* published by the Congregation for the Clergy, pays special attention to the implementation and spirituality of the liturgical service. In view of the above, the book deals with the following topics: liturgy as an expression of God's rational service (cf. Romans 12: 1—2), education to the liturgy, the priestly community of the Church actualized by the sacraments and virtues, and the domestic Church as a community in dialogue with God. Especially the last point of this chapter in light of The Letter to the Philippians and the First and the Second Letter to Timothy shows the role of the Church as family and the domestic Church in the context of the deacon's ministry. Chapter Two, "Martyria", deals with the following issues: faith in the context of the preaching of the word of God, the Christian formation of adults, evangelization that leads to *diakonia* the deacon as a servant of the Word and the domestic Church as a community of faithful and evangelizing. In this chapter, the Christian formation of adults is first and foremost distinguished as a specific catechumenate that should have specific stages: preparation and education to living the word of God, to the life of prayer, and to the sacramental life. The formation must be associated with the word *metanoia*; it must prepare adults for the attitude of testimony and *diakonia* for the sake of specific community. An essential role in this formation initiated by evangelization is played by the discovery of the value of a small group, as the Church is a sacrament of community or a community of a sacrament. The third chapter, "Diakonia", deals with the following: *diakonia* as the source and inspiration of the basic functions of the Church, the sources of *diakonia*, the Christ-Deacon in the mystery of the Passover (here two texts by Bishop Zbigniew Kiernikowski are presented) and the domestic Church as a community at the service of man. The first point in which the author explains the meaning of the term *diakonia* is extremely important; it is this word that is essential for the entire

third chapter of the work. It is understood here as a feature and attitude of the entire Church, which should carry out her mission in imitation of her Lord, who came not to be served but to serve. In this light, the author explains the relationship between the deacon's office (diaconate), and *diakonia* and the specificity of the deacon's office: the deacon is the animator of the Church's *diakonia*, the deacon is the sacrament of Christ the Servant, and the deacon is an office that "secures" the Church's attitude of service. The second section of the chapter is worth emphasizing as well. It delves into the sources of *diakonia* following Paul VI and explains why the word itself, being the centre of the plan of salvation, is entirely explained by its negation: *Non serviam*. The problem of *koinonia* is taken up at the end of the book. The author presents here a synthetically original concept of the pastoral theology of Fr. Blachnicki. It is worth noting that the issues raised in particular chapters are inspired by a new division of pastoral theology suggested by Blachnicki. It is within the framework of such a division of the pastoral theology into general (pastoral ecclesiology) and specific that the creator of the ecclesiological deduction of the pastoral theology postulated that the specific pastoral theology should, within the life functions of the Church, deal with individual spheres or "areas" of its implementation, that is, within the area of the sign, in the life of the individual, and in the community. As has already been mentioned, the author, following Fr. Blachnicki's theological and pastoral achievements, enhances his thoughts by using contemporary documents of the Church, statements of popes, and the academic achievements of many theologians. In this context, it is to be regretted that the author did not include a bibliography in his book, as it would certainly show, *inter alia*, the richness of the Church's documents on the subject in question, and how prolific and versatile Fr. Blachnicki was in his theological and pastoral work. The reviewer wishes the author, while analyzing faith, hope, and charity, took into account such encyclicals as *Lumen fidei*, *Spe salvi*, *Deus Caritas est*, or *The Directory for Family Pastoral Care*, announced by the Polish Bishops' Conference in 2008. It is an important document because its main motive was difficulties encountered by the lay faithful in engaging in fulfilling liturgical functions. Also, it is of a concrete help for pastors and lay faithful and based on the ecclesiology of Vatican II; it had been devised for a better understanding of liturgical services and functions and more effective formation of people who fulfil them.

The issues addressed by the author, which are very deep and extremely important for realization of the salvific ministry of the Church, certainly require theological background. Therefore, it surely is a drawback that the author does not make an unprepared reader's life easier. The author of

the publication often uses long citations with no appropriate comments of explanations. The abundance of footnotes does not solve the problem either, as in the majority of cases they are based on literal quotes. Concise introductions to individual chapters would certainly contribute to a fairly comprehensive view of the issues raised, contrary to the otherwise important but too extensive texts that could be separate sections in the work. Moreover, it seems that the last part of the work on *koinonia* should be a separate chapter and not only given in lieu of conclusions, as focusing only on the synthetic presentation of Blachnicki's concept of pastoral ecclesiology and the *koinonia*-based pneumatological principle of the formal pastoral theology and pastoral ministry does not exhaust the extremely important issue of the realization of the Church in the community, which in fact was the motive behind the academic research of the "prophet of the Living Church": to deal with liturgy, fundamental catechetics, the theology of the life of the Church, and finally its implementation in the local community and in the Light-Life Movement. Summing up, it should be concluded that the reviewed book is certainly valuable from the substantive point of view, and also for Christians of various denominations. It offers the opportunity to learn about the life functions of the Church from a biblical diaconal perspective that is close to all churches and Christian communities.

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Bishara EBEID: *La Tunica di al-Masīh.*  
*La Cristologia delle grandi confessioni cristiane*  
*dell’Oriente nel X e XI secolo.*  
Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale — Edizioni  
Orientalia Christiana, Valore Italiano,  
2019. 741 pp.

Bishara Ebeid belongs to the rising generation of Christian experts in the Middle East. He himself was born in northern Israel (in I‘billin); his father is a Greek Orthodox believer and his mother is a Maronite. He is a polyglot: he has spoken Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek since he was young. He studied Orthodox theology at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki. He later went to Rome to continue his postgraduate studies at the Pontificio Istituto Orientale (PIO), where he wrote a dissertation focusing on the Trinitology and Christology of three prominent Arabic theologians in the 10th and 11th centuries who were representatives of three Christian denominations and who knew each other or reacted to one another in writing. The dissertation was successfully defended and published in an exceptional edition by Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, the publishing body of PIO.

Fr. Massimo Pampaloni SJ, supervisor of the thesis and dean of the Faculty of Eastern Church Sciences of the PIO, wrote the introduction (pp. 7—13). In addition to the content, the system of Arabic transliteration and the list of abbreviations of frequently quoted works, the author presents the motives of his work when he subscribes to very lively studies of the legacy of Arab Christianity (pp. 27—33).

Ebeid divided his work into four parts, with a total division of seventeen chapters.

The introductory first chapter outlines the context of Arab theology, namely, the theology of Christian thinkers who have historically expressed themselves and written in Arabic (“Teologia in lingua araba: Storia e letteratura”, pp. 35—81).



What follows is the book's Part One (*Sa'īd Ibn Batrīq e la sua dottrina*, pp. 83—215), consisting of four chapters. First, in the second chapter, the author presents in detail the life and work of the Melchite Patriarch and theologian, originally from Cairo, Sa'īd Ibn Batrīq (877—940). The analysis proper begins in the third chapter, where he precisely conveys Batrīq's interpretation of the history of Melkite theology on the basis of the Trinitology and Christology of the first six councils. In the fourth chapter the author presents an analysis of Batrīq's Trinitology and in the fifth chapter he analyzes Batrīq's Christology.

Part Two (*Sawīrus Ibn al-Muqaffa' e la sua dottrina*, pp. 217—404), which also consists of four chapters, is devoted to the famous Coptic theologian Sawīrus Ibn al-Muqaffa' (910/915—987). This famous author was introduced in Czech monographically by Mlada Mikulicová (see Bishop Severus of Asmúnajn, Karolinum 2012). Ebeid's approach is, of course, more detailed. The sixth chapter is devoted to the presentation of the said theologian's life and work. Very interestingly, in the seventh chapter, the author synthetically elaborates on the Jacobite interpretation of dogmatic development, noting al-Muqaffa's reaction to Batrīq's version of the history of dogma. In the eighth chapter he presents a trinitological analysis and in the ninth a Christological analysis of al-Muqaffa's thinking and work.

The book's Part Three (*Elia di Nisibi e la sua dottrina*, pp. 405—571) is dedicated by Bishara Ebeid to the Nestorian theologian Elijah of Nisibis (975—1046). In the tenth chapter, he presents Elijah's life and work. In the eleventh chapter, he presents a Nestorian view of dogmatic development. In particular, the author presents Elijah's response to Batrīq's Melchite interpretation of the history of dogma. Of course, he pays more attention to the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. In the twelfth chapter, Bishara Ebeid works on a trinitological analysis of Elijah's work, and in the thirteenth chapter, he presents a very comprehensive Christological analysis.

After the analytical part, Bishara Ebeid approaches an admirable synthesis, so Part Four (*I tre autori in comparazione: verso una proposta inclusiva*, pp. 573—672) is devoted to a comparison of the theology of all three theologians. First, in the fourteenth chapter, he compares three expositions of the history of dogma: Melkite, Jacobite, and Nestorian. He does the same (in chapter fifteen) on the basis of Trinitology. There he notes the used Trinitarian models, terminological issues and the relationship to non-Christian rejections of the trinitarian mystery. The following sixteenth chapter compares Christologies. He notes “when” and “where” the two natures of Jesus Christ were united, “what” was the “result” and “what kind of unification” we can speak of. He answers all the questions from the point of view of Melkite, Jacobite, and Nestorian theology.

In the last (seventeenth) chapter, the author offers an audacious proposal in the form of so-called inclusive theology. First, he discusses the peculiarity of the Christology and Trinitology of each particular author. Each of them usurped the “historical truth”. Ebeid adds that with the advancement of historical science, it often turns out that each of the interpretations has its part of the truth. However, all these interpretations must be taken into account for the real truth. “No one can represent the absolute historical truth. Only together can one come to a picture that encompasses all statements and is, in fact, very close to the real truth.” (p. 641)

Ebeid notes what all three denominations have in common: the Trinitarian faith, the first two councils, and an anti-Marian narrative. According to Ebeid, the problems arise with the Christological conflict between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius. In Trinitarian theology, he first asks what can be said about a mystery that is inherently incomprehensible in words? He gives the example of the Cappadocian fathers there, who are the basis for his proposed inclusive theology. After all, the theology of all three denominations is based on their conclusions.

In the Christological part, he summarizes in great detail the terminology of not only the three theologians, but also notes the various Christological declarations and confessions. The solution is that each of the three Christologies is based on certain philosophical terms and certain semantic content. Thus, from certain points of view, all three Christologies are right, because each of them, from different angles, with different terms and different emphases, underlines the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God. We will only reach the actual truth if we reject all *a priori* rejections and ideological battles against other traditions. On the contrary, it is necessary to open up oneself to the other and include his statement because, in the end, his statement will complement one’s own. Only all three views together will help to look at the clear truth.

The beautifully written monograph also includes an extensive bibliography (pp. 673—716) and a very practical Appendix. Therein, the author presents a schematic expression of Trinitarian and Christological thinking of all three authors, including his inclusive proposal (pp. 719—722). This is followed by indexes of both, names (pp. 725—727), and subject one, where first Arabic terms are introduced (pp. 728—731), and later Greek and Syrian (pp. 732—733) ones, and finally Latin and Italian ones (pp. 734—737).

I dare say that the monograph is a cornerstone of future Arab-Christian studies. It gives a very deep insight into the three key Christian denominations and gives an understanding of their mutual theological controversies. However, the monograph deals not only with the history


of theology, but secondarily proves how important the studies of Arabic Christian literature are even today, which — especially in the epoch encompassing centuries from 9th to 13th — certainly did not rest on its laurels and tried to constantly reinterpret dogma. For this reason, this monograph is a necessary aid for historians of Christian thought. In the Western world in particular, the disregard for the history of Christianity in the Middle East pertained to the centuries between 7th and 12th. This monograph shows how wrong this disregard has been.

Also I would highly recommend that the author present his concept of inclusive theology in a comprehensive study or book. His perspective is unique and very modern and topical for ecumenism or interfaith dialogue. Based on the impossibility of usurping historical truth, the author's concept connects very closely with the possibility of human knowledge. Friedrich Nietzsche and his notion of perspectivism could certainly be invited here. So it would be very interesting to contextualize inclusive theology in gnoseology, philosophy, and the history of theology. As the author presented it in the monograph in question, it is fully sufficient, but I think the intuition is much more fundamental and it would really be advisable to treat it in a monographic way.

At the beginning of the review, I indicated that Bishara Ebeid belongs to the rising generation of Christian experts in the Middle East. Maybe I should adjust my opinion: Bishara Ebeid is already rightfully one of the top experts in the history of Arabic theology.

In conclusion, I should add that in his monograph Ebeid is ultimately concerned with the unity of the Christian churches, which is so much wanted and so much needed. However, this is not a cheap ecumenical fraternity. It is indeed a comparative historical theology par excellence.

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Michał SADOWSKI: *The Trinitarian Analogies in the Christian Arab Apologetic Texts (750—1050)*.

Series: Syro-Arabica. Vol. 7.

Cordoba: CNERU / Beyrouth: CEDRAC,  
2019. 307 pp.

Michał Sadowski (1980—2019), a talented young Polish researcher in the field of Arabic Christian studies, left our world suddenly even before he reached the age of forty. He taught dogmatic theology at the Faculty of Theology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. Among a number of excellent scholarly articles, he left behind a posthumously published monograph based on a dissertation he defended at the Roman Angelicum (Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino), which addresses Trinitarian analogies in apologetic texts by Arabic authors between 750—1050, that is, from the beginning of Christian Arabization until the mid-11th century.

The book series was edited by Ronney el Gemayel SJ and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, which is a fact that connects two Mediterranean universities. In the West it is the University of Cordoba and its CNERU (Cordoba Near Eastern Research Unit) and in the East it is the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut and its CEDRAC (Center for Documentation and Greek Arabic Research).

Sadowski explains the choice of the topic of his research in the introduction. On the one hand, this epoch of Arab theological heritage, between the 8th and 11th centuries, had been regrettably under-researched on a global scale. On the other hand, it was an incredibly creative epoch when it comes to local theology. This is probably Sadowski's goal, to show the ingenuity of Arabic theologians writing in Arabic. After the occupation, they were forced by Muslim conquerors to accept the Arabic language. In addition, they were under constant pressure to justify the Christian faith and especially its Trinitarian mystery. Christians there adopted and deepened an analogous way of thinking and, based on

analogous Trinitarian models, proved that the Christian Trinitarian faith is not against reason and is not tritheism.

The author presents his interpretation in four parts. Part One (*Analogy: Method and Use in the Trinitarian Discourse*, pp. 7—53) considers the topic of analogy as an adequate theological method. In particular, it considers its possible use in Trinitarian theology. Moreover, he concludes that this is the most biblical and adequate way to talk about a mystery. This is evidenced by Jesus' rhetoric full of narrations and analogies.

In Part Two (*Description of the Trinitarian Analogies in Christian Arab Apologies*, pp. 55—134) Sadowski presents, analyses, and comments on nine texts by Arabic authors. It begins with the classical text considered to be the first Christian text in Arabic, dated for the mid-8th century (*Fī Tathlīt Allāh al-Wāhid*), followed by the text of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (died 823), Melkite Theodore Abu Qurra (died 830), the Jacobites of Abu Rā'ita at-Takriti (died 830), the less known Ibrahim at-Tabarani and Butrus al-Bai Ra'si (both active in 9th century), the famous Jacobite theologian and philosopher Yahya ibn 'Adī (died 974), Nestorian Abu al-Faraja Abdallah ibn al-Tajjib (died 1043), and finally, Elijah of Nisibis (died 1046). In the individual passages, he notes significant works, but also significant analogies used by the particular figures.

In Part Three (*Trinitarian Analogies in Arabic: Their Origin*, pp. 135—201) Sadowski shows his overview in the history of theology, because he very synthetically maps analogous thinking in the patristic epoch there. He studies applied analogies with authors such as Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, James of Sarug or John of Damascus (and others). Then he pays close attention to the individual themes of patristic analogies. He presents an example about the tree, the water, the eye, also about the body (and soul and spirit), mouth (and language and word).

In Part Four (*Doctrinal Significance of the Trinitarian Analogies*, pp. 203—256) the author proves that his intention is primarily theological. His knowledge of Greek and Arabic is only an aid to deep dogmatic syntheses. He notices there the analogies used to describe the unity in the Trinity, or the secrets of the Trinitarian dynamics of procreation and procession. It also draws attention to analogous terminology describing substance, attribute, hypostasis. At the end of this section, he highlights the usefulness and true theology of these analogies in Arab Christianity, which has lived and continues to live in the Muslim milieu.

In a short conclusion (pp. 253—256), the author underlines not only the contemporary uniqueness of the use of analogy, but also the possible reach of its present use for intra-Christian dialogue and interreligious dialogue. It opens up another possible field of research, within Christology

or Mariology. In the conclusion, Michał Sadowski also says that it would be good to supplement the monograph with Syrian authors and Syrian literature. This is also an opportunity to continue research.


In the Appendix (pp. 257—263), he documents ten known patristic Trinitarian analogies that were not used by Arab authors. After a bibliographical list (pp. 267—293), the monograph presents useful indexes (pp. 297—307), first with biblical references, then with Qur'anic quotations and proper names. What follows is a register of Arabic, Armenian, Greek, Hebrew and Syrian technical terms. There is also an index with local names and used manuscripts. The block is closed by a thematic index.

The monograph boasts original languages, with particular emphasis on Greek and Arabic, and always with a faithful translation into English.

It seems to me that the author's emphasis was placed on the theology of Arabic authors. Better said, Sadowski emphasizes the method in their theology. I leave language and terminological diversity aside. Although it pays attention to the various concepts used by the analysed authors, it does not place so much emphasis on explaining these differences in terms of their denominations and theologies growing out of singular branches of Christianity. This is certainly not a mistake, but this is where another possible continuation of the current research lies. Namely, it would certainly be worthwhile to clarify the method of using the analogy for Melkites, Jacobites and Nestorians.

Without any shadow of pathos, I can say that the prematurely deceased Michał Sadowski remains one of the key authors in this field, which is exemplified by the reviewed monograph mapping the theological thinking of Arabic-speaking Christian authors. He proved by the theological form that the use of analogous thinking is a very original contribution of Arab writers. The seventeen studied analogies represent the theological ingenuity of Christian Arab thought. In my opinion, the peer-reviewed monograph should become compulsory reading in seminars on dogmatic and fundamental theology. The use of allegorical thinking and the philosophy of the symbol is extremely important, especially in today's media age. Arab Christians can help us with this.

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The publication is indexed in the following databases:

BazHum  
Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL)  
Index Copernicus  
Worldcat  
Erih Plus

Copy editor  
Krystian Wojcieszuk

Cover designer  
Paulina Dubiel

Typesetting  
Marek Zagniński

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Electronic version is the original one. The journal was previously published  
in printed form with the ISSN 2353-4877.

The journal is distributed free of charge ISSN 2391-4327.

Published by  
**Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego**  
ul. Bankowa 12B, 40-007 Katowice  
www.wydawnictwo.us.edu.pl  
e-mail: wydawnictwo@us.edu.pl

First impression. Printed sheets: 8.25. Publishing sheets: 9.0.



About this book

Free copy

ISSN 2391-4327



9 772391 432203

