

## Catholic Ecumenism

This dissertation was conducted under the direction of the Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph C. Fenton, S.T.D., as major professor, and was approved by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D. and Very Rev. Edmond D. Benard, S.T.D., Ph.D. as readers.



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# Catholic Ecumenism

THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM  
IN  
CONTEMPORARY PAPAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

A DISSERTATION

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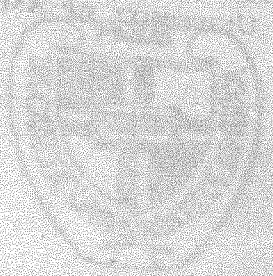
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TO  
THE MEMORY OF AN APOSTLE OF UNITY:  
VERY REVEREND PAUL JAMES FRANCIS, S.A.  
FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY OF THE ATONEMENT  
AND  
ORIGINATOR OF THE CHAIR OF UNITY OCTAVE  
THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



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## Foreword

At this time in many parts of the world, owing partly to various external events and changes of mental attitude, but under the inspiring grace of God, due chiefly to the common prayers of the faithful, a desire has awakened and is growing daily in the hearts of many who are separated from the Catholic Church, that a reunion be accomplished among all who believe in Christ the Lord. Assuredly to the children of the true Church this is a source of holy joy in the Lord as well as an inducement to lend their assistance to all who are sincerely seeking the truth by entreating light and strength for them from God in fervent prayer.<sup>1</sup>

These words of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office give expression to a curious phenomenon which we witness in contemporary society. The shrinking of the world by the speed of travel and the ease of communication has produced many species of social phenomena which were virtually unthought of in previous ages. The reverberations of purely local happenings pass far beyond the confines of the community into the world at large. The greatest single note to be perceived in all of this is the ethereal and unspecified desire for world unity. Yet, strangely enough, the very movements and institutions set up to achieve such a noble objective have rather served to reveal their divergencies in sharper focus. The basic issues which divide the human race are becoming gradually more clearly defined. The struggle which is likely to ensue from the conflicting conceptions of world order will probably be one of the gravest crises in all human history.

### Desire For Religious Unity

The religious phase of modern history bears a close parallel to events of the political and economic order. There, too, we see a will to unity in the religious field. The multifarious non-Catholic sects of Christendom, assessing their chaotic condition, find it to be contrary to the will of Christ. The Second World Conference on Faith and Order which met at Edinburgh in 1937 expressed it as follows: "We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary

to the will of Christ, and we pray God in His mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by His Spirit into fullness of unity."<sup>2</sup> They are beginning to realize, however dimly, that historical Christianity did not begin in the sixteenth century; that historical Christianity was one universal Church spread over the whole earth. The more enlightened among them are becoming aware that to this Church alone pertains the salvation of men and society, as they see it.

The realization that Christ wills His Church to be one and universal has passed from isolated aspirations of disparate groups to assume world-wide proportions.<sup>3</sup> Sectarianism is becoming more a source of embarrassment than a badge of glory.<sup>4</sup> Congresses and councils have been formed to examine the question. No longer do the participants of these discussions come from homogeneous denominations or from diverse groups envisioning national federations. While these still exist, their orientation is international and comprehensive of sectarian differences.<sup>5</sup>

### Ecumenical Movement

All these activities among non-Catholics in the direction of world religious unity are generically and collectively styled the "Ecumenical Movement."<sup>6</sup> Although there were many stirrings in the nineteenth century, the movement, as such, is a purely twentieth century product.

### World Missionary Conferences

In 1910 at Edinburgh a conference was held which bore the title "World Missionary Conference." Non-Catholic missionaries from different parts of the world came together to discuss common problems. The personnel of the conference was chiefly composed of Evangelical theologians from Anglo-Saxon countries. The big question was unity in the mission field. The divisions of Christendom appeared a scandal to the pagans among whom they worked. Distribution of territories, equitable allocation of funds etc. would do much towards eliminating this scandal. A permanent organization was set up called, the "International Missionary Council." Later meetings of this Council were held at Jerusalem in 1928; Madras, India in 1938; and Whitby, Canada in 1947. This represents the initial phase of the Ecumenical Movement.



## Life and Work Conferences

At a meeting of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches at Oud Wassenaer, Holland in 1919, Nathan Soderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, Sweden (of the established Lutheran body in that country) offered a motion that a "Universal Christian Council of Life and Work" be formed. After a preliminary meeting at Geneva in 1920, a big meeting was held at Stockholm in 1925 and at Oxford in 1937. The personnel of this movement was chiefly liberal in theology. The basic line of discussion was mainly sociological in character rather than doctrinal. This is the second phase of the Ecumenical Movement.

## Faith and Order Conferences

At the 1910 missionary conference, one of the participants was Charles H. Brent, at that time Episcopal Bishop of the Philippine Islands (later of Western New York). He discussed with some of his confreres the possibility of a meeting where doctrinal issues would be faced. So, at the General Episcopal Convention in 1910, Dr. William T. Manning introduced a resolution that all bodies which accept Jesus Christ as God and Saviour should be invited to join in a "World Conference on Faith and Order." The first big meeting of this group was held at Lausanne, Switzerland in 1927; again, at Edinburgh in 1937. Every conceivable school of thought was at this meeting from pure liberals to fundamentalists. They were mainly concerned with doctrines and forms of polity. This is the third phase of the Ecumenical Movement.

## World Council of Churches

There were two meetings going on at the same time in 1937: one at Edinburgh *viz.*, the World Conference on Faith and Order; the other at Oxford *viz.*, the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work. Delegates from each of these meetings met together at Westfield College, London with a view to fusing these two movements into one. Finally, at Utrecht, Holland in 1938, a provisional Constitution of a "World Council of Churches" was drawn up. Due to the War they were not able to meet until August, 1948 at Amsterdam, Holland. At this meeting we are told were "150 different church groups from 47 different countries, representing more

than 100,000,000 Christians of all colors and languages and creeds, dedicated to binding themselves to a working unity under the leadership of Christ."<sup>7</sup>

## Catholic Interest and Caution

Such a movement as this cannot fail to draw the interest of Catholics. Possessed as they are of a divinely given unity, witnessing thereby to the mission of Christ, they look with sympathy to the desire of these souls which has most likely been providentially elicited. However, while even the precise *terminus* of the movement is not clear to the participants themselves, there is reason for fearing that principles operative in the movement may draw them farther away from the will of Christ than they are at present.

The two most noteworthy perils to be noted in the movement are the rejection of notions that involve perfect unity of faith and government in the sense intended by Christ when He established His Church.

The first peril is what may be styled "doctrinal indifference."<sup>2</sup> This conception sets aside the Divine will for perfect unity of faith, by holding the possibility for a wide divergence of belief, not only in "unimportant matters, but even in matters of vital belief."<sup>8</sup> Referring to this type of outlook, Pius XI declares that, "anyone who gives assent to such theories and undertakings utterly abandons divinely revealed religion."<sup>9</sup>

The second peril rejects the divinely given constitution of the Church of Christ. This view would spurn completely the primacy of the Holy See by asserting that no ecumenical unity can or should exist "whose consummation would involve the acceptance of the Roman pretension."<sup>10</sup> To grant aid to such conceptions, Pius XI declared, "would give authority to a false religion completely foreign to the one Church of Christ."<sup>11</sup>

In their zeal for the reunion of Christendom, some Catholics have, at times, transgressed the measure of prudence and even sometimes have contradicted basic Catholic principles. In so doing, they have occasioned much misunderstanding to the prejudice of true Christian unity.<sup>12</sup> Hence, the Holy Office observes:

Certain attempts, that are being designated by diverse names in different countries, have hitherto been made by various persons, either individually or in groups to effect a reconciliation of dissident Christians with the Catholic Church. Such initiatives, however do

not always rest upon correct principles, although inspired by the best of intentions, and even when sprung from sound principles, they do not avoid besetting particular dangers, as past experience has shown.<sup>13</sup>

Consultation of the official documents of the Holy See will provide sound principles and directives for such work. There is certainly no want of clarity in these documents, nor do they vary in any respect from what has been always taught and practised in the Church with regard to dissenters from her faith and communion. No better service to these dissidents could be given than to offer them a clear and unequivocal declaration of our position.

The unity of Christians cannot be otherwise obtained than by securing the return of the separated to the one true Church of Christ from which they once unhappily withdrew. To the one true Church, We say, that stands forth before all and that by the will of its Founder will remain forever the same as when He Himself established it for the salvation of all mankind.<sup>14</sup>

It shall be our purpose, in this dissertation, to set forth those principles which are necessary for the reunion of Christendom insofar as they are contained in these documents of the Holy See. These principles offer the movement the only secure and divinely sanctioned answer to their search for the unity which Christ intended when He established His one and only Church.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Holy Office, *Ecclesia Catholica, Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXXII, 142; Eng. tr. "The Ecumenical Movement" in *The Catholic Mind*, xviii, 1050 (June 1950), p. 379.

<sup>2</sup>Quotation by Paul Griswold Macy, *The Story of the World Council of Churches* (New York: World Council of Churches, 1947) p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>See William Adams Brown, *Towards a United Church* (New York: Scribners, 1946) p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>See Charles Clayton Morrison, *Can Protestantism Win America?* (New York: Harpers, 1948) p. 180-181.

<sup>5</sup>See Henry P. VanDusen, *World Christianity: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (New York: Abbingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947) pp. 208-236.

<sup>6</sup>See John A. Mackay, "The Ecumenical Goal" O. F. Noble *Towards World-Wide Christianity* (New York: Harpers, 1946) p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>James W. Kennedy, *Venture of Faith* (New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1948) p. 13. A serviceable outline of the movement can be found in William Adams Brown, *op. cit.* (the whole work.)

<sup>8</sup>William Adams Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, XX, 6; Eng. tr. *The promotion of true religious unity*, (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1928) p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>John A. Mackay *op. cit.* p. 44.

<sup>11</sup>Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, XX, 11; Eng. tr. p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>For example, the following note is subjoined to a paper read at the World Council of Churches by an anonymous "Catholic commentator": "To tie up with *Mortalium animos* is not advisable, nor to the *Codex Juris Canonici* can. 1325, par. 3 which forbids discourse with people of other faiths. The widespread *Una Sancta* movement in Germany shows that since Pius XII this canon is no longer in force." cf. K.E. Skydsgaard "The Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Movement" in: *Man's disorder and God's design*, (New York: Harpers, 1948) I, 167. See also the treatment of interfaith discussions in Germany in: Adolph Keller, *Christian Europe Today*, (New York: Harpers, 1942) pp. 251-266.

<sup>13</sup>Holy Office, *Ecclesia Catholica*, AAS, XXXXII, 142; Eng. tr. "The Ecumenical Movement" *op. cit.*, p. 379.

<sup>14</sup>Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, XX, 14; Eng. tr. p. 14.

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## Introduction

To draw up a thesis on the Catholic conception of the reunion of Christendom is, in itself, an easy task. All the elements are clearly in evidence: the point of departure, the goal to be sought and the way towards its realization. Clarity and definiteness have ever characterized Catholic teachings. So great is their harmony among themselves and with Divine Revelation that each new problem which presents itself is met and resolved through the aid of principles at least implicitly contained in the treasury of revelation, through the cooperation of human reason enlightened by faith and the direction of the Divinely-sustained voice of the Vicar of Christ.

The principles, to which reference has been made, must draw their origin and efficacy as well as their motive and application from the supernatural order. Otherwise the certainty engendered will lack that finality which is required for supernatural faith and action. In the face of the problem of the reunion of Christendom, this becomes increasingly necessary. To restore men to the divine order presupposes a clear knowledge as to what it consists in; in what respect they have withdrawn from it; in what manner they are to return to it.

### Criteria of Evaluation

There are two operative criteria, drawn from the supernatural order, whereby any scheme for the reunion of Christendom can be fashioned or evaluated: The scheme must draw its principles from Divine Revelation; the scheme must have the sanction of Divine Authority.

We have said, first of all, that the principles for the reunion of Christendom must have their origin in Divine Revelation.<sup>1</sup> The

deposit of public revelation came to an end with the death of the last Apostle.<sup>2</sup> St. Paul said: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema!"<sup>3</sup> In its objective content, this revelation is fixed and immutable, though our understanding of it is susceptible of increase under the guidance of an infallible teaching authority.<sup>4</sup> There are two sources of this revelation: Scripture and tradition.<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to emphasize this fact, because, thereby, much misunderstanding will thereby be eliminated. As it was not the will of Christ that His followers should wander about in a sea of contradictions and confusion bereft of certainty and security, He left the care of His revelation to the living voice of His one Church.<sup>6</sup>

In the second place, the principles for the reunion of Christendom must also have the sanction of Divine Authority. The evidence for this can be inferred from the nature of the object sought. How otherwise could one know with certainty whether this or that scheme of reunion would in fact incorporate one into the unity of the Church of Christ or that he possessed the true faith and the divinely established means of salvation? Purely human ingenuity and the coalescence of many private opinions do not carry with them any assurance of Divine approval. There is only one agency empowered to speak for God in this world, and its decisions are ratified in Heaven—that is, the See of Peter: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."<sup>7</sup> These, then, are the two operative criteria in evaluating any scheme which proposes to reunite Christendom: Divine Revelation and approval of the Holy See.



## CHAPTER ONE

# The Concept of Ecumenism

### I. BASIC IDEAS

The term "Ecumenism" (or, "Occumenism") is very often found in contemporary religious literature in connection with the problem of the reunion of Christendom. Broadly and generically speaking, this term and its derivatives are employed to designate the complex of doctrines and methods looking to religious unity on a world-wide scale.

#### The Question of Terms

But before discussing the use of the term in the context of present-day movements, it would be useful to inquire into its philological origins. The word is derived from the Greek, "οικουμένη" and has for its meaning "the inhabited world." Originally, the conception was coterminous with the Greek Empire; later, the Romans employed it for their own empire. Latin authors used the term "orbis terrarum" which is its equivalent. St. Luke employs it in its civil sense when speaking of the decree of Caesar Augustus "that the *whole world* should be enrolled."<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew used the term in quoting the words of Our Lord, referring to the world mission of the Church: "... the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the *whole world*, for a witness to all nations ..."

The term was employed in some of the earliest Christian writings. For example, in the "Martyrdom of Polycarp" (156-7) we read that before he was put to death he prayed for everyone who had any association with him and "for the Catholic Church throughout the *whole world*."<sup>2</sup> Later, it was made the technical term for a general council of the Church. St. Athanasius (295-373) employed the term in this fashion when he said, "The word of the Lord uttered by the *Ecumenical synod of Nicea abides forever*."<sup>3</sup>

### Non-Catholic Use

Non-Catholic authors of the present day, writing on subjects pertaining to religious unity are fascinated by the term, so great is the contrast between their desires and their actual condition. It will be of interest, before proceeding, to examine into a few instances of the use of the term among these authors. Some use the term to express a mutual recognition between members of diverse sectarian "traditions" as fellow members of one Church: "In essence, 'oecumenism' is to take full seriously a fellow-Christian of a separated Church; to accept him 'in Christ,' and so in *Christ's Body*; to accept him, not in spite of, but *because of his membership in another tradition*."<sup>4</sup>

Some express themselves in terms of a *terminus ad quem*, that is, to some unspecified goal which, from their viewpoint, does not presently exist:

"In plain English, the Ecumenical Movement is a *movement towards one universal Christian Church, 'throughout the whole inhabited world'*."<sup>5</sup>

Others, again, take their view from a *terminus a quo*, that is, a gradual manifestation of an existing, though invisible, unity. For example: "The ecumenical reformation asserts the unity of the Church in the midst of the disunity of the churches."<sup>6</sup> "Ecumenical is the key word in the drama of an unfolding consciousness of world community constituted by common unities embracing all the many different kinds of Christians."<sup>7</sup>

The above citations will suffice to indicate the general tenor of non-Catholic treatment of the notion of Ecumenism.

### Catholic Use

Among Catholic authors, the term "Ecumenism" is not of frequent use, but it is beginning to take hold in circles interested in the reunion question. Of course, the connotation of the term is entirely different from that of the non-Catholic. For example, Father Charles Boyer, S.J. employs the term to designate a corporate return of a separated religious body to the Catholic Church in contra-distinction to individual conversion:

In the intention of its authors and promoters, ecumenism has always been a movement destined to unite (or at least to tend to unite) the

different Christian "churches" in one sole Church of Christ. A *Catholic ecumenism* will then look toward a return of the separated *Oriental Churches* and the Protestant communities to the Roman Church. It is not directed to individuals, but to those bodies of which the individuals are members."

We shall have occasion later on, to discuss this conception especially with reference to the "corporate" feature. We have simply placed the citation here to illustrate the use of the term itself.

### The Question of Ideas

Having set forth the various ways in which the term "Ecumenism" is employed, we now proceed to analyze those notions which provide the elements of a doctrinal definition.

Theologically and historically the term "Ecumenism" is intrinsically cognate with the term "catholicism." For example, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386) declared: "The Church is called Catholic, for the reason that it is spread throughout the whole world *διὰ τὸ κατὰ πάσης εἶναι τῆς οἰκουμένης* . . . and because it teaches universally and without defect all the dogmas which must come to the knowledge of men . . ."

In other words, "ecumenicity" is that property of the Church founded by Christ whereby it spreads itself throughout the whole world; it is the historical and progressive realization of the mission of Christ which is to reconcile all things in himself. We are wont to style this property of the Church as "Catholicity" both *de jure* and *de facto*. This is derived from the solemn commission made to the Church by Christ; as Pope Benedict XV expressed it:

The great and sublime mission which Our Lord Jesus Christ, just before returning to the Father, entrusted to His disciples in these words, "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi, 15), was certainly not to terminate with the death of the Apostles, but to endure through the medium of their successors until the end of time, that is, as long as there should be men to save by the teaching of the truth. And in fact since that day when they "went forth and preached everywhere," so that "their sound hath gone forth into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world," the Holy Church of God, remembering the divine command, has never ceased through the centuries to send out continually heralds and ministers of the Divine Word to announce the tidings of eternal salvation brought to the human race by Christ."

The reason for this ecumenical mission lies in the final cause of the Church; Pius XI said: "For the Church has no other reason for existence, than, by enlarging the kingdom of Christ throughout the world, to make all men participate in His salutary redemption."

It should be further noted that this ecumenicity is not simply a *material* diffusion throughout the world. It is *formal* ecumenicity as well. That is to say it is conjoined to unity and is numerically the same body that is spread throughout the world. As Pope Leo XIII expressed it: "The true union among Christians is that which Jesus Christ, the Author of the Church, instituted and willed, and which consists in a unity of faith and a unity of government."

The activities designated by the term "Ecumenism" in their objective and historical connotation are distinctive and proper functions of the one True Church alone. For to that Church alone was committed the task of teaching and sanctifying the whole world; this is embraced within its proper name, "Catholic." St. Augustine (354-430) wrote:

The Christian religion is binding upon us, as also the communion of that Church which is Catholic, and is called Catholic not only by its own members, but also by all its enemies. . . . For they [the heretics and schismatics] cannot be understood unless they describe it by that name whereby it is called by the whole world."

St. Cyprian (200-258) describes her Ecumenical diffusion, conjoined to unity:

. . . the Church, illumined by the light of her Lord, sends forth her rays throughout the world: still, it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is there any division in the unity of her body. She stretches her branches throughout the whole earth in the abundance of her plentiful growth. Further and further she extends her streams, yet one is her head, and one is her source . . ."

### Foundations of Ecumenism

The *remote* foundation of Catholic Ecumenism is the theandric and priestly office of the Church.<sup>22</sup> The Church is the continuation of the Incarnation and Redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The very *esse* of the Church is to be found in the name she has been given, the "Mystical Body of Christ."<sup>23</sup> Pope Pius XII notes:

. . . this naming of the Body of Christ is not to be explained solely by the fact that Christ must be called the Head of His Mystical



Body, but also by the fact that He so sustains the Church, and so in a certain sense lives in the Church that it is, as it were, another Christ... by His divine power (Christ) permeates His whole Body and nourishes and sustains each of the members according to the place they occupy in the Body, very much as the vine nourishes and makes fruitful the branches which are joined to it..."

As with her *esse*, so also with her *operatio*, the Church continues the work done by Christ with His perpetual support and influx of Divine power. Pius XII said:

The Word of God willed to make use of our nature, when in excruciating agony He would redeem mankind; in much the same way throughout the centuries He makes use of the Church that the work might endure... Our Saviour shares His most personal prerogatives with the Church in such a way that she may portray in her whole life, both external and internal, a most faithful image of Christ. For in virtue of the juridical mission by which Our Divine Redeemer sent His Apostles into the world, as He had been sent by the Father, it is He who through the Church baptizes, teaches, rules, looses, binds, offers, sacrifices..."

Catholic Ecumenism, then, is the historical and dynamic and progressive realization of the mission of Christ—to reconcile all things in Himself. It advances His Kingdom to the very limits of the world, with Himself as the primary agent, since He is the Head of the Body. This work of Christ is perpetually committed to the Church and this permanency is effected by the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, who is called the "soul" of the Mystical Body: "To this Spirit of Christ, too, as to an invisible principle, is to be ascribed the fact that all the parts of the Body are joined one with the other and with their exalted Head; for He is entire in the Head, entire in the Body and entire in each of the members..."

The proximate foundation of Catholic Ecumenism is that in virtue of which the mission of Christ is visibly and historically realized, namely, the immutable will of Christ that the incumbent of the See of Peter should enjoy a magisterial and juridical primacy over the whole Church. In the document of the Council of Florence, (1438-1445 A.D.) signed by the Greek dissidents on the occasion of their return to unity at that time, we read:

Again we define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the whole world [*εις παντα την οικουμενην*]

and that the same Roman Pontiff is the successor of St. Peter Prince of the Apostles and true Vicar of Christ, that he is the head of the whole Church and the father and teacher of all Christians; and to the same was given in the blessed Peter the power of feeding, ruling and governing the universal Church by Our Lord Jesus Christ, as is also contained in the acts of the ecumenical councils and the sacred canons."

Later, we shall have occasion to return to the ecumenical primacy of the Pope in the actual exercise of Catholic Ecumenism. Suffice it to say here that the Holy See is the divinely-given visible source of cohesion in the Mystical Body. Leo XIII said:

... it is clear that by the will and command of God the Church rests upon St. Peter, just as a building rests upon its foundation. Now the proper nature of a foundation is to be a principle of cohesion for the various parts of the building. It must be the necessary condition of stability and strength. Remove it and the whole building falls. It is consequently the office of St. Peter to support the Church, and to guard it in all its strength and indestructible unity."

#### Most General Sense

Gathering together the elements we have noted, the time has come to attempt a definition of Catholic Ecumenism. We may express it as follows: Catholic Ecumenism, in its most general sense, is that divinely commanded and divinely sustained work of the reconciliation of all men with God, through their incorporation into the unity of Mystical Body of Christ, proceeding from the effective direction of the center, which is the See of Peter, to the limits of the world. This centrality and universality is suggested in the words of St. John Chrysostom: (344-407) "The Father gives the revelation of the Son to Peter; and the Son commissions him to spread the knowledge of Himself and the Father throughout the whole world, and He gives all the power in heaven to a mortal man as He gives the keys to him who extends the Church throughout the whole world." Used in this most general sense, Catholic Ecumenism coincides with the field of missiology. For further information and development of the content of this notion, reference may be had to manuals which treat of the subject."

#### Special Sense

The concept of Catholic Ecumenism also admits of a special sense;

that sense, namely, in which it is employed in this dissertation. It differs from the general sense only as regards its immediate object. But before formulating this immediate object certain previous considerations are necessary.

There has never been and there is not now more than one Church of Christ. Its mission, its constitution and its unity are divinely-given and its duration is from the time of the Apostles until the end of the world. As St. Cyprian (200-258) said: "There is one God and one Christ and one Church and one chair founded by the voice of the Lord on Peter. Another altar cannot be established and a new priesthood cannot be instituted besides that one altar and one priesthood. Whoever gathers elsewhere, scatters."<sup>28</sup>

Down the ages many men have abandoned the divinely-given unity of the Church of Christ, by separating themselves from the bond of faith or charity with the divinely established center of the Church, the See of Peter.<sup>29</sup> These events were virtually revolts from the Divine Authority of Jesus Christ Himself. As the Lord had said to Samuel of old: "For they have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them."<sup>30</sup> Their acts of revolt are not correctly designated as divisions of the Church, but rather as separations from the Church. St. John notes: "They have gone forth from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would surely have continued with us; but they were to be made manifest, that not one of them is of us."<sup>31</sup>

To reconcile these men or their descendants to the unity of the Church is a sizeable project in the immense missionary enterprise of the Church. For example, St. Ignatius of Antioch (D. 107) declared:

As many as are of God and Jesus Christ, these are with the bishop; and as many, moved by penitence, as shall return to the unity of the Church, these also will be of God, so as to live according to Jesus Christ. . . . Be not mistaken, my brethren: if anyone should ally himself with a schismatic, he does not attain the inheritance of the divine kingdom; if anyone walks in a foreign teaching, he does not have a share in the passion [of Christ].<sup>32</sup>

We are now in a position to give a definition of Catholic Ecumenism in its specific sense. We may express it as follows: Catholic Ecumenism, in its special sense, is that divinely-commanded and divinely-sustained work of reconciliation, which has for its object the conversion and return of baptized dissidents to the unity of the Mystical

Body of Christ, which involves their acceptance of the faith and communion of the See of Peter and the Catholic Church throughout the world. This definition is confirmed by the following words of Pope Pius XI:

The unity of Christians cannot be otherwise obtained than by securing the return of the separated to the one true Church from which they once unhappily withdrew. To the one true Church of Christ, We say, that stands forth before all and that by the will of its Founder will remain forever the same as when He Himself established it for the salvation of all mankind.<sup>33</sup>

The exposition of this proposition is the proper burden of this dissertation.

## 2. PAPAL SOURCES

The teaching of Catholic Ecumenism has been consistent down the ages; its basic principles have ever been the same. Yet, in recent times, this has become more explicit due to the external pressure of contemporary history. The general movement towards unity outside the Church has elicited certain documents from the Holy See, both by way of instruction of Catholics and by way of invitations addressed to the non-Catholic world. These documents embody the ecumenical doctrine of the Church as immediately pertinent to the Ecumenical Movement. For the purposes of this dissertation, we choose for our primary consideration those documents which bear upon the general question of the reunion of Christendom. The documents which treat of special questions, such as the Greek Schismatics,<sup>34</sup> Anglican Orders and so forth would deserve a special treatment beyond the immediate scope of our present inquiry. Some will be used by way of illustration, but as subordinated to the general doctrine in which they are incorporated.

The first document studied here was occasioned by the institution of the Association for the promotion of the Unity of Christendom (A.P.U.C.). This organization was instituted as the result of a meeting which took place in the home of an Anglican clergyman, Frederick George Lee on September 8, 1857. Both Catholics and non-Catholics were present. Under the motion of a Catholic layman,



Ambrose Phillips de Lisle, the following resolution was adopted: "That a Society, to be called the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom, now be formed, 'for united prayer that visible unity may be restored to Christendom' . . ."<sup>10</sup> In its solicitation for membership the A.P.U.C. announced its purpose as follows:

An Association has been formed under the above title, to unite in a bond of intercessory prayer members both of the clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic, Greek and Anglican communions . . . To all, then whic, while they lament the divisions among Christians, look forward for their healing mainly to a corporate reunion of those three great bodies which claim for themselves the inheritance of the priesthood and the name of Catholic, an appeal is made . . ."<sup>11</sup>

The Association also published the "Union Newspaper" in which articles of very questionable calibre were admitted. The Catholic hierarchy became alarmed at the principles inherent in the Association which were gradually becoming manifest. Finally, in September 16, 1864 the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office directed a letter to Bishops of England, the *Apostolicae sedis*,<sup>12</sup> condemning the Association, setting forth its reasons for doing so. It was addressed to Catholics, warning them against the errors involved in the Association and forbidding their membership therein.

The following summer, 198 Anglican clergymen directed a letter to Cardinal Patrizi, prefect of the Holy Office. The drafting of the letter, it is asserted, was chiefly the work of the Catholic, de Lisle.<sup>13</sup> The letter sought to allay the fears that were expressed in the communication to the English Bishops. This letter evoked another statement of the Cardinal on November 8, 1865: *Quod vos*.<sup>14</sup> In this reply, the basic principles of Catholic Ecumenism were enunciated with great clarity and kindness.

A few years later, in the course of preparation for the Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX wrote two Apostolic letters: the one, *Arcano Divino*, to "All bishops of the oriental rite not in communion with the Holy See,"<sup>15</sup> the other, *Iam vos omnes*, to "All Protestants and other non-Catholics."<sup>16</sup> In these letters, the Pope urged the addressees to return to the unity of the Catholic Church on the occasion of this Ecumenical Council. These invitations were generally spurned. They embody many Catholic Ecumenical principles.

The next incident of note is the letter of Pope Leo XIII to Cardinal Satolli, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, *Coetus in*

*foederatis Americae*, of September 18, 1895.<sup>17</sup> In Chicago, in 1893, the Columbian Exposition, in addition to other matters, set up a "World Parliament of Religions."<sup>18</sup> Prominent members of the American Catholic hierarchy took part. The Pope, having learned about it some time later, expressed his disapproval in the letter cited. But the letter is of purely disciplinary character.

On June 20, 1894, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical, *Praeclara gratulationis*, on the reunion of Christendom.<sup>19</sup> It was occasioned by the great number of letters received from all parts of the world, congratulating him on his Episcopal Jubilee of the previous year. It pained him to think of how many people were still outside the Church. Accordingly he set forth principles of Catholic Ecumenism.

Later, on June 20, 1896, Pope Leo issued another encyclical, the *Satis cognitum*, on the unity of the Church,<sup>20</sup> in which these Ecumenical principles were further developed. This letter was occasioned by his dealings with the Anglicans on the question of the value of their orders.

In the year 1919, Pope Benedict XV was approached by several Anglican notables from the United States, inviting him to take part in the coming preparatory conferences of the "World Conference on Faith and Order" to be held at Geneva on the following year. They were kindly received, but were told firmly about the Ecumenical teaching of the Church. As they left the audience copies of the decrees of 1864 and 1865 were placed in their hands.<sup>21</sup> On July 2 of the same year, the decision was given in the form of an answer to a *dubium* addressed to the Holy Office, in which it was held that the two decrees referred to were still in force.<sup>22</sup> Together with this *dubium* the two decrees were also republished.

In 1927, the question was revived in connection with the Lausanne meeting of the World Conference on Faith and Order for which the earlier Geneva meeting was only preparatory. In another *dubium* proposed to the Holy Office, the answer of 1919 was reiterated.<sup>23</sup> Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical letter, the *Mortalium animos*, on January 6, 1928 which treated of the promotion of true Christian Unity.<sup>24</sup> This document contains much material on the subject of Catholic Ecumenism.

Under the Pontificate of Pope Pius XII, the Ecumenical Movement assumed even greater proportions. The World Council of Churches met at Amsterdam in the Fall of 1948. Prudence required that Catholics be again instructed on their basic principles of Ecumenism. Accordingly, a *Monitum* was issued by the Holy Office on June 5,

1948," and this was followed by a fuller *Instruction* on December 20, 1949.<sup>14</sup> Finally, an encyclical letter, *Humani generis*, of August 12, 1950<sup>15</sup> contained, among other matters, a condemnation of "imprudent eirenicism."

All the documents to which we have referred could fall into two classes: those embodying doctrinal material; those that are purely disciplinary in character. The disciplinary phase is not within the scope of this dissertation.<sup>16</sup> We are merely concerned with the doctrinal material.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "... the true religion cannot be other than that which is founded in the revealed word of God. This revelation, inaugurated at the beginning of time and continued in the Old Testament, Christ Jesus Himself perfected in the New. Now if God has spoken, and that He has indeed spoken is proven by history, there is no one who does not see that it is man's duty to believe God absolutely in His revelations and to obey Him without qualifications in His commandments. Precisely that we might rightly fulfil both duties for the glory of God and our own salvation, the only Begotten Son of God founded His Church upon earth." Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, XX, 8; Eng. tr.: *The promotion of true religious unity*, (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1928), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Condemned proposition from *Lamentabili* of July 3, 1907: "Revelatio, objectum fidei catholicae constituens, non fuit cum Apostolis completa." cf. Henricus Denziger et al. *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1937), no. 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 1:8.

<sup>4</sup> Vatican Council: *Constitutio de fide catholica*: "Hinc sacrorum quoque dogmatum is sensus perpetuo est retinendus, quem semel declaravit sancta mater Ecclesia, nec umquam ab eo sensu altioris intelligentiae specie et nomine recedendum. Crescat igitur . . . et multum vehementerque proficiat tam singulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis quam totius Ecclesiae, aetatum ac saeculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia; sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententiali" see: Denziger, *op. cit.*, no. 1800 (The reference in quotation marks is from the *Communitorium* of Vincent of Lerins no. 28, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, Migne, 1865) 50, 668.

<sup>5</sup> Vatican Council, *Constitutio de fide catholica*: "Haec porro supernaturalis revelatio . . . continetur in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quae ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptae, aut (ab) ipsis Apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante quasi per manus traditae, ad nos pervenerunt" . . . Denziger *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, *op. cit.*, 1787 see no. 783, see also 2 Thess. 2: 14.

<sup>6</sup> Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*: "The heavenly doctrine of Christ, although committed for the most part to writing by divine inspiration, could not unite the minds of men if left to the human intellect alone. It would, for this very reason, be subject to various and contradictory interpretations. This is not only because of the nature of the divergencies of the human mind and of it involves, but also because of the doctrines itself and of the mysteries the disturbing element of contrary passions . . . Besides Holy Writ it was absolutely necessary to insure this union of men's minds . . . that there should

be another principle. This the wisdom of God requires: for He could not have willed that the faith should be *one* if He did not provide means sufficient for the preservation of this unity and this Holy Writ clearly sets forth . . ." *Leonis Papae XIII Allocutiones, Epistolae, Constitutiones* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1900) VI, 164-165; Eng. tr.: John J. Wynne, S.J. ed., *The great encyclical letters of Pope Leo XIII*, (New York, Benziger, 1903) p. 360.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 16:19.

<sup>8</sup> Luke 2:1 "... απογραφουσαι πασαν την οικουμενην." see Joseph M. Bovei, ed., *Novi Testamenti Biblia Graeca et Latina*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1943) *loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 24:14: "και κηρυχθησεται τουτο το ευαγγελιον της βασιλειας εν δηγη οικουμενη εις μαρτυριον πασιν τοις εθνεσιν . . ." See Bover, *loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> "... και πασης της κατα την οικουμενην καθολικης εκκλησιας . . ." *Martyrium Polycarpi*, 8, 1; F.X. Funk, *Patres Apostolici* (Tubingae: 1901) I, 320.

<sup>11</sup> "το δε ρημα του κυριου το δια της οικουμενικης συναδου εν τη Νικαια γεννημενον μεκει εις τον αιωνα" *Epistola ad Afros*, 2; *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris Migne, 1857) 26, 1032.

<sup>12</sup> Oliver S. Tomkins "The Anglican Communion and the Occumenical Movement" in: E.R. Morgan and Roger Lloyd, *The Mission of the Anglican Communion* (London: S.P.C.K. & S.P.G., 1948) p. 108.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Marshall Horton, *Toward a Reborn Church* (New York: Harper, 1949) p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Robert S. Bilheimer, *What must the Church do?* (New York: Harper, 1947) p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> H.G.C. Herklots and Henry Smith Leiper, *Pilgrimage to Amsterdam* (New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1947) p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Boyer, S.J., "Ecumenism and Conversions" in: *Unitas*, (Eng. Lang. Ed.) I, no. 2 (April-June, 1909) p. 4

<sup>17</sup> "Catholica enimvero vocatur (ecclesia), eo quod per totum orbem . . . diffusa est; et quia universo et absque defectu docet omnia quae in hominum notitiam venire debent dogmata . . ." *Catecheses*, 18,23; *Patrologia Graeca, op. cit.*, 33, 1044

<sup>18</sup> Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum illud*, AAS, XI, 440; Eng. tr.: *Two encyclicals on foreign missions* (New York: America Press, 1944), p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> Pope Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, AAS, XVIII, 65; Eng. tr.: *Two encyclicals on foreign missions, op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Leo XIII, *Praeclara gratulationis: Allocutiones* V, 276; Eng. tr.: *Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII, op. cit.*, p. 308.

<sup>21</sup> "Tenenda est nobis christiana religio, et eius ecclesiae communicatio, quae catholica est, et catholica nominatur, non solum a suis, verum etiam ab omnibus inimicis. . . Non enim possunt intelligi, nisi hoc eam nomine discernant, quo ab universo orbe nuncupatur." *De Vera Religione* 7, 12 *Patrologia Latina, op. cit.*, 34, 128.

<sup>22</sup> "ecclesia Domini luce perfusa per orbem tatum radios suos porrigit: unum tamen lumen est quod ubique diffunditur, nec unitas corporis separatur. Ramos suos in universam terram copia ubertatis extendit, profluentes largiter rivos latius pandit: unum tamen caput est et origo una . . ." *De Catholicae Ecclesiae unitate c. 5 Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Lantinorum, op. cit.*, 31, 213, Eng. tr.: J.R. Vassal-Phillips, tr., *St.*



*Cyprus: On the unity of the Catholic Church*, (St. Louis: Herder, 1924) p. 30.

\* For a fuller treatment of this subject see: Kenneth Dougherty, S.A., *Ecclesia est theandrica ad instar Jesu Christi*, (Rome: Pont. Athanaeum published, Urbanianum de Propaganda fide, 1948) an S.T.D. dissertation as yet unpublished.

\* "Christus enim totus cum membris suis est, propter ecclesiam, quae est corpus eius, plenitudo eius." St. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 56, 61-62 *Patrologia Latina*, op. cit., 40, 258.

\* Pius XII, *Mystici corporis*, AAS, XXXV, pp. 190, 218 Eng. tr.: *The Mystical Body of Christ* (New York: America Press, 1943) pp. 21-25.

\* Pius XII, *ibid.* pp. 199, 218; Eng. tr. pp. 9, 24-25.

\* Pius XII, *ibid.* p. 219; Eng. tr.: pp. 25-26.

\* "Item diffinimus sanctam apostolicam sedem et Romanum pontificem in universum orbem tenere primatum, et ipsum pontificem Romanum successorem esse beati Petri principis apostolorum et verum Christi vicarium istere; et ipsi in beato Petro pascendi, regendi, ac gubernandi universalem ecclesiam a Domino nostro Jesu Christo plenum potestatem traditam esse, quomodo etiam in gestis ycuemenicorum conciliorum et in sacris ca. n. 18 (Roma: Universitatis Gregoriana, 1935) p. 17 see Denziger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, op. cit., no. 694.

\* Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum, Allocutiones VI*, 175-6; Eng. tr.: p. 374.

\* "Pater revelationem Filii Petro dedit; Filius vero et Patris et sui ipsius cognitionem per totum orbem illi disseminare commisit, ac mortali homini omnem in coelo potestatem dedit, dum claves illi tradidit, qui Ecclesiam per totum orbem terrarum extendit." St. John Chrysostom, *In Mattheo homilia*, 54, *Patrologia Graeca*, op. cit., 58, 534-535. It is interesting to note in this connection the awareness of the Popes of this commission. For example, Pope Pius XI said to the members of the Superior Council of the Propagation of the Faith: "This task of the apostolate which is the evangelization of the whole world, is strictly, the pontificate's entire 'raison d'etre.' The entire Catholic tradition calls the Pope: Dominus Apostolicus: so truly is the apostolate the truest and most precious substance of the Roman Pontificate." quoted by: Joseph Etienne Champagne, O.M.I., *Manual of Missionary Action* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1948) p. 29.

\* See, for example, Champagne op. cit. in previous note and J. Schmidlin, *Catholic Mission Theory* (Techy, Ill.: Mission Press, 1931).

\* "Deus unus est et Christus unus et una ecclesia et cathedra super Petrum Domini voce fundata. Aliud altare constitui et sacerdotium novum fieri praeter unum altare et unum sacerdotium non potest. Quisque alibi collegerit, spargit." *Epistola* 43, 5 *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinarum*, op. cit., 3, 2, 594.

\* "It is well known that, in order to escape from the subjection to Papal authority, the following phrase was adopted at the time of the Reformation... "We who have separated ourselves recognize only Christ as the head of our Church... Church communities have, in this respect, moved upon a declining path. At first, it was said by the Byzantines, "We recognize only Patriarchs, and each of these governing merely a portion of the Church; but no Pope, no head of the Patriarchs." Then came the English Church,

and it said, "Neither Popes nor Patriarchs, but merely Bishops." Upon their side, the Protestants of the Continent declared, "No bishops either, but merely pastors, and above them the sovereign of the country." Subsequently came the new Protestant sects of England with the declaration, "We have no need of pastors, but only preachers." Finally, appeared the "friends" (the Quakers) and many more communities who have made the discovery that "preachers also are only an evil, and that every man should be his own prophet, teacher and priest." Dr. Dollinger, *The Church and the Churches*, tr. W.B. MacCabe (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862) pp. 40-41.

\* I Kings (I Samuel) 8:7.

\* I John 2:19.

\* "Quotquot enim Dei et Jesu Christi sunt, hi sunt cum episcopo; et quotquot paenitentia ducti redierint ad unitatem ecclesiae, et hi Dei erunt, ut secundum Jesum Christum vivant... Ne erretis, fratres mei: si quis schisma facientem sectatur, regni divini hereditatem non consequitur; si quis ambulat in aliena doctrina, cum passione non communicat." St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistola ad Philadelphenses*, 3, 2-3 Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, op. cit., I, 256.

\* Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, XX, 14; Eng. tr., p. 14.

\* See, for example: Joseph Schweigl, "De unitate Ecclesiae orientalis et occidentalis restituenda, Documenta S. Sedis ultimi saeculi, (1848-1938) illustrata" *Periodica*, XVIII (1939) pp. 209-233.

\* Henry R.T. Brandreth, *The Oecumenical Ideals of the Oxford Movement* (London: S.P.C.K., 1947) p. 32.

\* Henry Edward Manning, *England and Christendom* (London: Longmans, Green, 1867) p. 138.

\* Holy Office, *Apostolici Sedi*, ASS, II, 657-662.

\* Brandreth, *Oecumenical Ideals of the Oxford Movement*, op. cit., p. 37.

\* Holy Office, *Quod vos*, ASS., II, 662-668.

\* Pope Pius IX, *Arcano divinae providentiae, Acta et decreta sacrosanctae oecumenici concilii Vaticani* (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1892) col. 7-8.

\* Pope Pius IX, *Jam vos omnes, Acta et decreta... concilii Vaticani*, op. cit., col. 8-10.

\* Pope Leo XIII, *Coetus in foederatis Americae, Allocutiones VI*, 97.

\* J.H. Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions 2v.*, (Chicago: Parliament Publishing co., 1893).

\* Leo XIII, *Praeclara gratulationis, Allocutiones V*, 272-285.

\* Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum, Allocutiones VI*, 156-189.

\* *Report of the Deputation to Europe and the East* (New York: World Conference on Faith and Order, 1920) pp. 10-12.

\* AAS XI, 309; also 310-316 for republished decrees.

\* AAS XIX, 278.

\* Pope Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, XX, 5-16.

\* AAS XI, 257.

\* AAS, XLII, 142-147.

\* AAS, XLII, 562-578.

\* For the disciplinary aspect confer: S.J. Kelleher, *Discussions with non-Catholics* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1943).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Desire of the Holy See

Repeatedly through the centuries, the successive occupants of the Chair of Peter have consistently urged the return of the wandering sheep to the one fold which they had abandoned. That this has been most noteworthy during the past century is evidenced by the documents which we have enumerated. Through them all, a consistent note is observable, namely, the intense desire of the Holy See for the reunion of Christendom.<sup>1</sup>

#### Papal Zeal

On the part of the Popes themselves, they are very conscious of their obligation to seek this reunion. Pius IX said:

We . . . who must fulfil with the greatest zeal all the functions of a good shepherd, and love with a paternal love and embrace in our charity all men wherever dispersed over the earth, address these letters to all Christians separated from us, and we again and again exhort and conjure them to return quickly to the one fold of Christ . . . we fear to have one day to render an account to Him who is our Judge, if we do not show them and prepare for them, as far as is in our power, the way to attain eternal salvation.<sup>2</sup>

This obligation is one of justice, because, in virtue of his office, the Pope is the vicegerent of Christ and the commission to "make disciples of all nations" rests upon his shoulders primarily and formally. Hence, the Pope is aware that he must use every right means to fulfil the command of Him whose place he holds on earth.

On the other hand, the Pope is impelled to seek this reunion by reasons of Divine Charity. Pope Leo XIII declared:

. . . We feel drawn to follow the example of Our Divine Redeemer and Master, Jesus Christ, who, when about to return to heaven, implored of God, His Father, in earnest prayer, that His disciples

and followers should be of one mind and of one heart. . . . And as this divine prayer and supplication does not include only the souls who then believed in Jesus Christ, but also every one of those who were henceforth to believe in Him, this prayer holds out to us no indifferent reason for confidently expressing our hopes, and for making all possible endeavors in order that men of every race and clime should be called and moved to embrace the unity of divine faith.<sup>3</sup>

However, this obligation is not unilateral. The Popes, indeed, realize their obligation to seek this reunion of Christendom, but, at the same time, there is a corresponding obligation on the part of the non-Catholic world to seek it, too. In 1868, Pius IX pointed out to an objective fact which is being verified in the events of contemporary history: "On this longed-for return to the truth and unity of the Catholic Church depends the salvation, not only of individuals, but still more of the whole Christian society; and the whole world cannot enjoy true peace, unless there shall be one fold and one shepherd."<sup>4</sup>

This obligation is not only an imperative course of action, by reason of an impending crisis which threatens the very existence of Christian society, but also because it derives from the explicit command of Christ. Leo XIII wrote:

If those about to come back to their most loving Mother (not yet fully known or culpably abandoned) should perceive that their return involves not indeed the shedding of their blood (at which price nevertheless the Church was bought by Jesus Christ) but some lesser trouble and labor, let them clearly understand that this burden has been laid on them not by the will of man but by the will and command of God.<sup>5</sup>

#### Sincere Charity

The earnest desire for reunion on the part of the Holy See is also evidenced by the kindness with which it received any invitation which was addressed to it on the part of dissidents. By reason of divine truth, which might be compromised, the Holy See has, indeed, refused to participate in certain meetings. But the expression of desire for right reunion has always accompanied the refusal. Thus, to the Anglican unionists, the Holy Office wrote the following:

May the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to fulfil and perfect without delay what He has begun in you by that good will towards the Church



which He has imparted to you. And this, in union with the Sacred Congregation, our most holy lord, Pope Pius IX, desires with all his heart; and earnestly beseeches from the God of mercies and Father of lights that all of you at length, escaping from your severed, dis-inherited condition into the inheritance of Christ, the true Catholic Church, to which unquestionably your forefathers belonged before the deplorable separation of the sixteenth century, may happily attain the root of charity in the bond of peace and fellowship of unity.\*

Indeed, the Holy See itself took the initiative on a number of occasions to invite the non-Catholic world to consider the plan of Christ as regards the unity of His Church. For example, when convoking the Vatican Council, Pius IX wrote an encyclical, "*Ad omnes Protestantas, aliosque acatholicos*" in which he urged: "Let all those, then, who do not profess the unity and truth of the Catholic Church avail themselves of the opportunity of this Council . . . (to) satisfy the longing of their hearts, and liberate themselves from that state in which they cannot be assured of their own salvation." Leo XIII also addressed his invitation thus:

Suffer that we should invite you to the unity which has ever existed in the Catholic Church and can never fail; suffer that we should lovingly hold out our hand to you. The Church, as the common Mother of all, has long been calling you back to her; the Catholics of the world await you with brotherly love, that you may render holy worship to God together with us, united in perfect charity by the profession of one gospel, one faith and one hope.\*

#### Firm Faith

In spite of such eloquent appeals for the reunion of Christendom, the Holy See has never lessened the firmness of its teachings or the unqualified presentation of conditions of reunion. This has been misunderstood and resented in many quarters of the non-Catholic religious world. Such, for example, could be found in the following report of a subcommittee on reunion for the Lambeth Conference of 1920:

We cannot do better than make our own the words of the report of 1908, which reminds us of "the fact that there can be no fulfillment of the Divine purpose in any scheme of reunion which does not ultimately include the great Latin Church of the West, with which our history has been so closely associated in the past . . ." But we realize that—to continue the quotation—"any advance in this direc-

tion is at present barred by difficulties which we have not ourselves created, and which we cannot of ourselves remove." Should, however, the Church of Rome at any time desire to discuss conditions of reunion we shall be ready to welcome such discussions.\*

The same document goes on looking with hope towards certain movements, "which may be fruitful in the future." One movement to which reference is made was the possibility of certain French Catholic groups going into schism in view of setting up an "independent Gallican Church." Unity by way of schism!

The Holy See desires reunion by the way of Divinely revealed truth alone. To compromise that truth in the least way is to betray Jesus Christ and the Divine constitution of His Church. The Holy Office in 1865 counselled the Anglican unionists, "... you must beware lest in seeking it (unity), you turn aside from the way."<sup>20</sup> Pope Pius XII, addressing a group of German Catholics, declared:

We know how urgent among many of your people, Catholics as well as non-Catholics, is the aspiration towards unity in the faith. And who could feel more intensely this desire than the Vicar of Christ Himself? The Church surrounds the dissidents from the faith with "sincere love" and with the warmth of prayers for the accomplishment of their return to their Mother, from whom God knows how many are distant without any personal guilt. If the Church is inflexible before all that could have even the appearance of compromise, or of an adjustment of the Catholic Faith with other confessions, or of its mixture and confusion with them, it is because she knows that there has always been and always will be one sole infallible and sure rock of the whole truth and of the fullness of grace come to her from Christ: and that this rock, according to the explicit will of our Divine Founder, is herself and simply herself.<sup>21</sup>

What resentful non-Catholics appear to be unable to see is the fact that the very immutability of the Catholic Faith and constitution is the best guarantee of a secure reunion of Christendom. A discerning Anglican writer, Spencer Jones, pointed out:

From this point of view, instead of saying that she is hopeless because she will not change we ought to say that the fact of Rome's not changing is proved to be an abiding fact and must be reckoned with as such. . . . In the same way I should say that the proper function of the Anglican Church and also of the Dissenting bodies is to change and to move, since this is in fact what they have ever done. . . . One of her own communion has stated the case for us . . . "It is," he observes, "a startling paradox but an equally certain truth, that in the very 'obstinacy' of Rome lies all hope of reunion.

Without it all hope of reunion would be impossible. Without it the very elements of Unity would be hopelessly destroyed. . . ."<sup>13</sup>

St. Peter wrote, "we have the word of prophecy, surer still, to which you do well to attend, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."<sup>14</sup> His successors in the same office address the same words to the divided world of today. In their ecumenical documents, we find several specific recommendations, viz., prayer and study.

#### Prayer and Study

Pius IX urged all non-Catholics to pray for unity:

Let all those, then, who do not profess the truth and unity of the Catholic Church . . . unceasingly offer prayers to the God of mercy, that He will throw down the wall of separation, that He will scatter the darkness of error, and that He will lead them back to the bosom of our Holy Mother the Church, in whom the whole doctrine of Jesus Christ is preserved and handed down, and the mysteries of heavenly grace dispensed.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, Catholics are urged to pray for this hoped-for reunion. In 1908, one Paul James Francis Wattson, S.A., founder of a religious community in the Episcopal Church instituted the "Church Unity Octave" a period of prayer (January 18-25th) which had for its object the restoration of all dissidents to communion with the Chair of Peter. A short time afterwards he and his Community, the Society of the Atonement, were received into the Church.<sup>16</sup> This Octave (now known as *The Chair of Unity Octave*) was given immediate approval of Pope Pius X. Later on September 25, 1916, Pope Benedict XV wrote an Apostolic Brief, extending it to world-wide observance and enriching it with indulgences. In this brief, he declared:

In every age it has been the concern of the Roman Pontiffs . . . that Christians who have unfortunately withdrawn from the Catholic religion should at length be recalled to it as to a forsaken Mother . . . With a glad mind we have heard from the Society which is called "of the Atonement" established in New York, that prayers have been recited from the feast of the Chair of Blessed Peter at Rome to the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in order that unity might be obtained from the Lord and at the same time we rejoiced that these prayers, blessed by Pope Pius the Tenth, and approved by

the Bishops of America, have been circulated far and wide through the United States. And so, in order that the prayers above mentioned may be offered to God everywhere and with abundant fruit of souls . . . we . . . grant and bestow in the Lord a Plenary indulgence . . ."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to prayer, non-Catholics are also urged to examine earnestly and honestly the security of their position and the position of the Catholic Church. Pius IX said:

. . . we cannot refrain from addressing our Apostolic and paternal words to all those who, whilst they know the same Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, and who glory in the name of Christian, yet do not profess the true faith, nor hold to and follow the communion of the Catholic Church . . . in order to admonish and to conjure, and beseech them, with all the warmth of our zeal and in all charity, to consider and seriously examine whether they follow the path marked out for them by Jesus Christ our Lord, which leads to eternal salvation.<sup>18</sup>

There can be no question, then, but that the Holy See desires the reunion of Christendom. The theme of the Amsterdam Assembly was: "Man's disorder and God's design;" the Holy See points to God's design as something immutable and perpetual as well as easily discoverable. That design transcends all human genius, because it is the ordinance of the Incarnate Wisdom of God. Departure from the Divine pattern bespeaks a shipwreck of the Christian faith and destruction of all hope for the true reunion of Christendom. The Holy See is unwilling to pay such a price for a reunion, however nobly its conception be expressed and however ingeniously planned on a human level, when the promises of Christ are set aside and the ordinance of God ignored.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Holy Office, *Quod vos*: "Quemadmodum Apostolica Petri sedes cum Catholica ecclesia exultat si quos noverit, qui a recto tramite deflexerint matremque suam dereliquerint, ad ejus sinum regressi velle: ita eosdem aegro animo repellere cogi, qui veram realemque catholicam non quaerunt unitatem." Proposition I of official summary at end of *Quod vos* letter of 1865, *Acta Sancta Sedis*, II, 668.

<sup>2</sup> Pius IX, *Jam vos omnes, Acta et decreta . . . Concilii Vaticani* (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1892) 9; Eng. tr.: David Lewis (ed.) *The Year of preparation for the Vatican Council* (London: Burns, Oates, 1869) pp. 56-57.

<sup>3</sup> Leo XIII, *Praeclara gratulationis, Leonis XIII Papae Allocutiones, Epistolae, Constitutiones* (Paris: Descler, 1900) V, 273.



\* Pius IX, *Jam vos omnes, Acta et decreta . . . Concilii Vaticani*, Col 9; Eng. tr., p. 57.

\* Leo XIII, *Satis cognitum, Allocutiones* VI, 156; Eng. tr.: *Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger, 1903) pp. 350-351.

\* Holy Office, *Quod vos*, ASS, 667; Eng. tr.: Henry Edward Manning, *England and Christendom* (London: Longmans, 1867) p. 246.

\* Pius IX, *Jam vos omnes, Acta et decreta . . . Concilii Vaticani*, Col. 9; Eng. tr., p. 56.

\* Leo XIII, *Præclara gratulationis, Allocutiones*, V, 279; Eng. tr., p. 311.

\* *The Lambeth Conferences* (1867-1930), (London: S.P.C.K., 1948) p. 128.

\* Holy Office, *Quod vos*: "Cavendum tamen vobis est, ne ipsam quarerentes deflectatis a via . . ." ASS, II, 662. Commenting on this document, Cardinal Manning notes: ". . . as the Holy Office affirms, there is no unity possible except by way of truth. Truth first, unity afterwards; truth the cause, unity the effect. To invert this order is to overthrow the Divine procedure. The unity of Babel ended in confusion; the unity of Pentecost fused all nations in one Body by the one dogma of faith . . . Truth alone generates unity." *England and Christendom op. cit.*, p. 160.

\* *Osservatore Romano*, Nov. 9, 1948 Quoted by Charles Boyer, S.J. "The Amsterdam assembly and the Ecumenical movement." *Unitas* (English Language Edition), V, I, n. 1 (Jan.-Mar. 1949) p. 11 Apropos of this is Cardinal Wiseman's statement of his method when dealing with the Oxford Tractarians: ". . . At the same time, a serious danger has to be avoided. No concessions could be made to error, beyond the acknowledgement of sincere belief that it was unconscious. To have allowed it (the Anglican Establishment) to possess a single mark or element of Catholicity . . . would have been both false in theology and pernicious in practice. It would have encouraged a fatal delusion, which, undisturbed, might have laid many asleep in a fatal contentment, who now repose in peaceful security in the bosom of their Mother, the Church. No real love for those involved in this state could be shown, except by energetic endeavors to snatch them from it. Whoever, therefore, wished to be truly their best friend, had to make up his mind to appear their most unrelenting opponent." *Essays on various subjects* (London: Charles Dolman, 1853) II, vii-viii.

\* Spencer Jones, *England and the Holy See* (London: Longmans, Green 1902), pp. 31-34 *passim*.

\* 2 Pet. 2:19.

\* Pius IX, *Jam vos omnes, Acta et decreta . . . concilii Vaticani*, Col 8; Eng. tr., p. 56.

\* For a complete story, see: David Gannon, S.A. *Father Paul of Graymoor* (New York: Macmillan, 1951) pp. 136-149, 256-283.

\* Benedict XV, *Romanorum Pontificum*, AAS, IX, 61-62; Eng. tr.: Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, pp. 257-258.

\* Pius IX, *Jam vos omnes, Acta et decreta . . . concilii Vaticani*, Col. 8; Eng. tr., p. 53.

## Introduction

Some pages back we have defined the special sense of Catholic Ecumenism which we are using in this dissertation: *"Catholic Ecumenism, in its special sense, is that divinely commanded and divinely sustained work of reconciliation, which has for its object the conversion and return of baptized dissidents to the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, which involves their acceptance of the faith and communion of the See of Peter and the Catholic Church throughout the world."* The definition was formulated so as to embrace the basic phases included within the notion of ecumenism. In this section we shall be concerned with unfolding the content of this notion.

When one considers the problem of the reunion of Christendom, three main lines of study are opened up: The first would be to examine the precise goal to be aimed at in any movement of this kind. The second would be to determine the actual starting point of such a movement. The third would be to discover the means or way from the starting point to the goal.

The non-Catholic "ecumenist" has, as yet, no definite answer to these questions. The technique known as "comprehension" cultivates a studied vagueness in expression seeking to encompass disparate and even contradictory ideas, interlarded with rhetorical effusion, in a form acceptable to all. Originating, as it does in the cardinal principle of protestantism of "the right and duty of private judgment," it seeks to resolve the division while preserving the cause. It is hardly a help towards clarity and definiteness; it is a positive obstacle to a consideration of the real issues as it is also of the actual attainment of the true reunion of Christendom.

On the other hand, the Catholic Ecumenist has definite answers to each of these essential questions without which no true movement towards the reunion of Christendom could be initiated or terminated.



## CHAPTER ONE

# The Goal of Reunion

## 1. THE UNICITY OF THE CHURCH

The foundation of the discussion of Catholic Ecumenism must repose in the fact that the Church of Christ is one and only one.<sup>1</sup> Antecedently to any other consideration, the explicit declarations of Scripture and the assurance of common sense requires that it be so. Whether one approaches the question from the angle of Protestant ecumenism which envisions its objective as reunion of the Church, or from the Catholic angle which looks for reunion with the Church, the starting point must be the fact that "there is but one Church of Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

### Admitted by All

Non-Catholic Ecumenism, even though the statement involves it in contradictions, most emphatically asserts that the Church of Christ is numerically one. As Angus Dun notes:

... there is that in all the churches which stands in contradiction to their plurality and divisions. They carry in their divided life that which brings them under judgement. Being many and divided, they all speak of THE CHURCH in the singular. Many of them treasure and use ancient creeds in which they constantly reaffirm, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" or "one Catholic and Apostolic Church" ... The churches constantly confess the Church ... by a tragic inadvertence did they become divided from that beyond themselves which they recognized as true Church.<sup>3</sup>

At the World Council of Churches meeting at Amsterdam, the General Secretary, W. A. Visser't Hooft expressed the difficulty as follows: "This is the dilemma which dominates the whole existence of the Council. Its member Churches are as yet unable to be together the one Church of God, but they are no longer able to

## The Goal of Reunion

regard their fellow-members as being outside the Church of God. They cannot unite, but neither can they let each other go. . . ."<sup>4</sup> There is, then, in the abstract, no difference between the Catholic and the non-Catholic ecumenist on the unicity of the Church. Pius XI remarked that, "They who profess themselves Christians cannot, we think, but believe in Christ's establishment of one Church and only one."<sup>5</sup> Leo XIII said:

... by the will of its Founder, it is necessary that this Church should be one in all lands and at all times. To justify the existence of more than one Church, it would be necessary to go outside this world, and to create a new and unheard-of race of men. That the one Church should embrace all men everywhere and at all times was seen and foretold by Isaias . . . "And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains." (Is. 2:2) But this mountain which towers over all other mountains is one; and the house of the Lord to which all nations shall come to seek the rule of living is also one. (Is. 2:2-3.)<sup>6</sup>

### One Founder and Purpose

The numerical oneness of the Church is easily inferred from its efficient and final cause. It has one Founder: Jesus Christ, and one goal: the perpetuation of His Redemptive work. Leo XIII tells us:

And since it was necessary that His divine mission should be perpetuated to the end of time, He took to Himself disciples, trained by Himself, and made them partakers of His own authority. And, when He had invoked upon them from heaven the Spirit of Truth, He bade them go through the whole world and faithfully preach to all nations what He had taught and what He had commanded. So that by the profession of His doctrine, and the observance of His laws, the human race might attain to holiness on earth and never-ending happiness in heaven. In this wise and on this principle, the Church was begotten.<sup>7</sup>

The Pontiff, in a few words, compresses the historical origins of the Church of Christ. Having come to gather into one all the children of God, the Saviour of the world gradually unfolded to His followers the grand conception of God's design. Pius XI tells us that, "He likened His Church to a kingdom, to a house, to a sheepfold, to a flock."<sup>8</sup> Thus he envisioned the corporate embodiment of His design as a single society, distinct and discernible from all others. The end to which He orientated the activities of this society is

completely supernatural; the historical continuation of His Personal mission. This society alone is properly ecumenical in that it is to spread throughout the whole world. When the Spirit of Truth was invoked upon the Apostles, the society was endowed with potential, or juridical, ecumenicity; under divine providence, it has attained actual ecumenicity. By reason of its supernatural character, the means it employs are proportionate and apt for the mission it has been given. Its mission is formally and fundamentally identical with that of Christ, hence its authority derives its efficacy from the same source: "As the living Father has sent me, so I also send you." The Church is one, then, because it has a single Founder and a single purpose; it is only one, because to one society alone was given the commission, means and authority proportionate to a supernatural end.

#### One Exemplar and Head

While, of their nature, the efficient and final causes of any reality are distinct notionally and really from that of which they are the causes, yet the ontological configuration of the thing produced will reflect both the agent and the end insofar as it embodies the exemplar according to which it was made. As the proximate efficient cause of the Church, Jesus Christ did not merely call the first members, propose the goal to be achieved by corporate action and furnish them with the means necessary to achieve it and then let it function according to His instructions. He continues His causality by reason of the fact that He is both Head and Exemplar of the Church, sustaining it in existence, energizing it by His vital action and configuring it to Himself; wherefore the Church is called His Mystical Body. Pope Leo XIII said:

... because it is the body of Christ it is living and energizing, because by the infusion of His power Christ guards and sustains it, just as the vine gives nourishment and renders fruitful the branches united to it... As Christ, the Head and exemplar, is not wholly in His visible human nature... nor wholly in the invisible divine nature... but is one in both natures, visible and invisible; so the Mystical Body of Christ is the true Church only because its visible parts draw life and power from the supernatural gifts and other things whence spring their very nature and essence."  
"Another head like to Christ must be invented—that is, another Christ—if besides the one Church, which is His Body, men wish to set up another."<sup>12</sup>

#### One Divine Life and One Visible Society

The Church is numerically one also by reason of its quasi-formal cause, i.e., the Holy Ghost and by reason of its material cause, i.e., its visible membership. But these are more logically treated under the heading of unity, which forms the topic of the next article.

#### Perpetual Indefectibility

This unicity of the Church of Christ forms an essential part of Catholic Ecumenism. However, it should be noted, the Church was not only numerically one from the will and intention of Christ, but also that it has ever been one and shall be one until the end of time. Pius XI notes:

So marvelously constituted a Church could not cease altogether and be extinguished when its Founder and the Apostles who first propagated it had died, for it had been commanded to lead to eternal salvation all men without distinction of time or place: "Going therefore forth, teach all nations." Would the Church lack power of efficacy in the perpetual fulfillment of its work when Christ Himself, as He solemnly promised, is with it forever? "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Necessarily, therefore, the Church of Christ ought not only to exist today and always, but still more, be the same as it was in the Apostolic ages, unless we should utter the absurdity that Christ Our Lord either was not adequate to His purpose or had erred when He asserted that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."<sup>13</sup>

So essential is this unicity of the Church that those who leave it forfeit the promises made to the Church and are wanting in essential means of salvation: "The Church of Christ, therefore, is one and the same forever; those who leave it depart from the will and command of Christ the Lord—leaving the path of salvation they enter on that of perdition."<sup>14</sup>

#### 2. UNITY OF THE CHURCH

From the last article, it can be seen that the unicity of the Church is the fulcrum and ground of Catholic Ecumenism. No hope for the reunion of Christendom can be essayed without taking this into account. This fact, as we have noted, is also perceived by the non-Catholic Ecumenist. To ignore this fact is to enter into the



realm of unreality supported neither by Scripture, history nor common sense.

On the other hand, no less important is the question of unity. Now, unity differs notionally from unicity in this respect: that unicity opposes plurality, whereas unity opposes division. The Catholic Ecumenist declares that, just as it is impossible than that there should be several churches of Christ, so also it is impossible that the Church of Christ be divided.

#### Non-Catholic Orientation

Many non-Catholic ecumenists also affirm not only the existence of but one Church, but the actual unity of that Church as well. But they conceive of the "Church" as an entity which contains the sects. As one writer put it:

She is *one*, and in spite of divisions knows herself as one because her head is one and the Spirit indwelling her is one. . . . In spite of the obscuring of that unity in the empirical "churches," the common belief in the Person of the one Christ is forcing believers in Him to seek to actualize the unity which belongs to the Church by virtue of its one Head, in whom it is God's purpose to gather all things together into one."

Taken within its own frame of reference, this statement embodies several manifest contradictions: The Church is said to be one entity even though it be contained in constitutionally distinct communities with contradictory teachings; at the same time and under the same aspect, it is both actually and potentially one: the one Head and one Spirit make her one actually, yet she is not one except potentially, being gravely divided in faith and rule.

#### Catholic Orientation

The foregoing citation has been given as an illustration by way of contrast to the doctrine which is here set forth. The Catholic Ecumenist affirms that unity is a perpetual visible token of the Church, to such an extent that the Church is incapable of division. There have been separations from the Church, but no division of the Church itself. Leo XIII declared, "*qui unicum condidit, is idem condidit unam,*"

But He, indeed, who made this one Church, also gave it unity, that is, He made it such that all who are to belong to it must be united by the closest bonds, so as to form one society, one kingdom, one body . . . He commanded that this unity should be so closely knit and so perfect amongst His followers that it might in some measure, shadow forth the union between Himself and His Father."

#### Comparison of the Two Approaches

Catholic Ecumenism looks out from a position of unity in possession; non-Catholic Ecumenism looks for unity not as yet possessed. Hence, their approach to the question is considerably different. The non-Catholic looks for theories and means of obtaining unity, while the Catholic aims to share a divinely-given unity which already exists. But the primary question is, not how unity can be achieved, but how Christ established it. God's design was complete and set in motion by Christ Himself, who continues to sustain His work and there is no evidence to show that He has changed His mind:

Not the foundation of the Church alone, but its whole constitution, belongs to the class of things effected by Christ's free choice. For this reason the entire case must be judged by what was actually done. We must consequently investigate not how the Church might possibly be one, but how He, who founded it, willed that it should be one."

#### Unity is Essential

Now, when one examines the explicit statements and various metaphors of Sacred Scripture, which set forth the Church of Christ, he cannot help but observe that the note of unity is essential to it." Moreover, since the Church is divine in origin and support, there cannot be wanting to that Church the means necessary to preserve it in the character in which it has been given:

For this reason we find it called in holy writ by names indicating a perfect society. It is spoken of as the *house of God*, the *city placed on a mountain* to which all nations must come; but it is also the *fold* presided over by one Shepherd, and into which all Christ's sheep must betake themselves. Yea, it is called the *kingdom* which God has raised up and which will stand forever. Finally it is the *Body of Christ*—that is, of course, His *Mystical Body*, but a body living and duly organized and composed of many members; members indeed which have not all the same functions, but which, united

one to the other, are kept bound together by the guidance and authority of the head."

So essential is this note of unity, that, without it, there cannot be one Church of Christ. Where it is found in all its fullness and supernatural splendor, there alone will be the one Church; by this token it is distinct from all the sects. Moreover, to this alone is conjoined the note of ecumenicity in space and time: diffused throughout the whole world and abiding until the end of time. The Holy Office noted:

If, indeed, you will examine the matter with care, and dispassionately consider it, evident proofs will show that this unity of faith and charity—that is, of communion—is, by the immutable institution of Christ, not only a chief and fundamental attribute of the Church, but a note, sure and ever visible, whereby the Church herself is securely and easily to be distinguished from all sects . . . As, then, the Church of Christ is Catholic, and is called so, by virtue of that supreme unity of faith and communion which, diffused as she is through all the nations and all time, she still firmly maintains; so, in virtue of that same unity, is she entitled Holy and Apostolic; and, as without such unity she would cease, *de jure* and *de facto*, to be Catholic, so she would lose at once the attributes of sanctity and apostolic succession."

#### Visibility of This Unity

This unity of the one Church is not some indefinite sentiment, but a concrete reality corporately embodied in a visibly constituted society. It is closely knit together by intellectual and moral bonds actuated by the perpetual presence of the Holy Ghost. In vain, is it asserted: "All must surely desire to hasten the day when the members of the one Church shall be at peace with one another, and united in the external bonds of one visible communion."<sup>23</sup> If the Church is one society, it must be one in the social collaboration of its members pursuing the same goal under the same head. It must, likewise, not only be materially visible as a society of Christians, but formally visible as the one society of Christ. Visible unity is not a mere *desideratum*, but a patent fact deriving from the very essence of the Church itself. Pius XI declared:

Indeed, a great many deny, for example that Christ's Church ought to be visible; at least in the sense that it should stand forth as one body of faithful united in one identical doctrine and under one

authority and rule. On the contrary, they understand by a visible Church nothing but a society formed by various Christian communities even though these adhere to different and even mutually contradictory doctrines. Instead Christ Our Lord founded His Church as a perfect society, external of its own nature and perceived by the senses, which would pursue for all future time the task of saving mankind through the guidance of one head, through being taught by a living voice, and through the dispensation of the sacraments, as fountains of the grace of heaven."

The witness of Scripture to the fact of this visible unity of the one Church is chiefly born in the designation, "Body of Christ."<sup>24</sup> Pope Leo XIII says:

. . . precisely because it is a body is the Church visible. . . . And as in animals the vital principle is unseen and invisible, and is evidenced and manifested by the movements and actions of the members, so the principle of the supernatural life in the Church is clearly shown in that which is done by it. . . . The union, consequently, of visible and invisible elements, because it harmonizes with the natural order and by God's will belongs to the very essence of the Church, must necessarily remain so long as the Church itself shall endure."<sup>25</sup>

The above passage indicates the vital link between Head and members, soul and body, invisible and visible, as the indivisible substratum of the living Church of Christ. Now Pius XII fills in the picture in terms of social manifestation:

Our union in and with Christ is first evident from the fact that, since Christ wishes His Christian Community to be a Body which is a perfect society, its members must be united because they all work together towards a single end. . . . Now since this social Body of Christ has been designed by its Founder to be visible, this cooperation of all its members must also be externally manifest through the profession of the same faith, and their sharing in the same sacred rites, through participation in the same sacrifice and practical observance of the same laws."<sup>26</sup>

This social embodiment of unity must, moreover, possess and preserve that specific form with which its Divine Founder endowed it. "The true union of Christians is that which Jesus Christ, the Author of the Church, instituted and desired, and which consists in a unity of faith and government."<sup>27</sup> These are the chief visible tokens of unity; implicit in them are the other features of unity of worship and intercommunion.



Unity of Faith

The profession of the one faith is essential to the one Church of Christ. No hope can be entertained for a true Christian unity which leaves this out of account. How could that be one Body which was not of one mind with itself and its Head? How could the Holy Spirit, who informs the Body, be uniformly the origin of and witness to contradictory teachings? What a monstrous caricature of the Body of Christ can be seen in the following: "The living Church of which Christ is the living head transcends all denominational 'churches' and includes the whole community of those who acknowledge his Lordship. . . . The fellowship of the ecumenical church transcends all ethical, doctrinal and organizational differences. . . ." This conception is, to say the least, essentially opposed to the plain teaching of the Scripture. How different is the Catholic Ecumenist approach on the same theme; Leo XIII points out:

Agreement and union of minds is the necessary foundation of the perfect concord amongst men, from which the concurrence of wills and similarity of action are the natural results. Wherefore, in His divine wisdom, He ordained in His Church unity of Faith; . . . one Lord, one faith one baptism . . . And so, the Apostle St. Paul not merely begs but entreats and implores Christians to be all of the same mind, and to avoid differences of opinions: "I beseech you brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms amongst you, and that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgement."

Moreover, this unanimous profession of the one faith has for its object the total content of Divine revelation. The formal motive of faith is the truthfulness of God revealing. Hence, all the teachings of Christ must receive unconditional assent by all the members of the one Church. The quality of that assent extends equally to every revealed truth distributively taken or to the whole body of truth collectively taken. To deny one single truth that God has revealed, even though one accepts all the rest, is equivalent to calling God a liar. Pius XI observes:

In matters of faith it is not permitted to make a distinction between fundamental and so-called non-fundamental articles of faith, as if the first ought to be held by all and the second, the faithful are free to accept or not. The supernatural virtue of faith has as its formal cause the authority of God the Revealer, which suffers not such a division. . . . For has not God revealed them all?

Unity of Government

In addition to the unity of faith, unity of government is also essential to the one Church of Christ. The Church is a perfect society. Hence, nothing is wanting to it which is necessary for the accomplishment of its mission. Now, its mission of teaching and sanctifying mankind cannot be realized unless, conjoined to the command of Christ, there was given to it the means necessary to carry out His will. There can be no question, then, of the fact that such as Christ willed, such was done. One non-Catholic writer notes:

Whenever individuals unite for any purpose whatever, there must necessarily be some kind of organization and government. Without some kind of government an organization cannot permanently exist. . . . Out of the ruins of the primitive Church arose the great pyramid of the Roman hierarchy . . . The great strength of Rome . . . lies in the form of its government. Therein lies the explanation of why the ecclesiastical empire of Rome has outlived all secular empires."

This writer reveals a more than usual discernment in perceiving the need of a government to preserve the existence of the Church and his observation as to the unconquered stability of the Roman Church is most apt. However, he errs gravely in assuming that the primitive Church fell into ruins; such a statement is an unconscious blasphemy against Christ, presuming, as it seems, that His divine promises were in vain. The stability of the Roman Church does not only lie in the form of its government, but also in the fact that it retains the form which Christ gave to the Church and through which form Christ still exercises His divine authority and priestly office. The very fact of its stability bears witness to its divine character. Leo XIII said:

For by the will and ordinance of God, its Founder, it is a society perfect in its kind . . . therefore it is endowed with a living power and efficacy which is not derived from any external source, but in virtue of the ordinance of God and its own constitution, inherent in its very nature. . . . Wherefore Jesus Christ bade all men, present and future, follow Him as their leader and Saviour; and this not merely as individuals, but as forming a society, organized and united in mind. In this way a duly constituted society should exist, formed out of the divided multitudes of peoples, one in faith, one in end, one in the participation of means adapted to the attainment of the end, and one as subject to one and the same authority. To this end He established in the Church all those principles which necessarily tend

to make organized human societies, and through which they attain the perfection proper to each."

It should be apparent from the foregoing passages that the unity of government, which is essential to the one Church of Christ, is not any kind of polity which may be found suitable at any given age or place, but only that precise kind of unity which Christ Himself gave to the Church and which He willed to remain until the end of time. Referring to the conjunction of the invisible and visible elements of the Church, Leo XIII declares: "But since the Church is *such* by divine will and constitution, *such* it must uniformly remain to the end of time. If it did not, then it would not have been founded as perpetual and the end set before it would have been limited to some certain place and to some certain period of time: both of which are contrary to the truth."

It is a contradiction to say that the Church is one inwardly, yet many outwardly. Note the following:

... Recall, then, I say, what church unity means. It does not mean outward uniformity of creed or polity... On the other hand, church unity does mean inward, organic, so to speak, divinely biological life, wherein all the varieties of organs and functions are vitally convergent to one end. You can organize an external organization—that is man's work. You cannot organize an internal organism—that is God's work."

Both the outward organization and the inward life are God's work. "Scattered and separated members cannot possibly cohere with the head so as to make one body." Pius XII wrote:

... how grievously they err who arbitrarily picture the Church as something hidden and invisible, as do they also who look upon it as a mere human institution with a certain disciplinary code and external ritual, but lacking power to communicate supernatural life... For this reason we deplore and condemn the pernicious error of those who conjure up from their fancies an imaginary Church, a kind of Society that finds its origin and growth in charity, to which they somewhat contemptuously oppose another, which they call juridical. But this distinction which they introduce is baseless. For they fail to understand that the same reason that led our Divine Redeemer to give to the community of men He founded the constitution of a society, perfect of its kind, containing all the juridical and social elements, namely, that He might perpetuate on earth the saving work of Redemption, was also the reason why He wished it be enriched with the heavenly gifts of the Consoling Spirit... There

can, then, be no real opposition or conflict between the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit and the juridical commission of Ruler and Teacher received from Christ. Like body and soul in us, they complement and perfect each other, and have their source in our one Redeemer, who not only said, as He breathed on the Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," but also clearly commanded, "As the Father hath sent me, so I send you;" and again, "He who heareth you, heareth me."

#### Unity of Worship

Closely annexed to this unity of faith and government is the unity of divine worship whereby the whole Body of Christ, Head and members, offers true and acceptable honor to God. Through it, too, all the members partake of the divine life by the use of divinely given means of salvation. Pius XII noted:

... the divine Redeemer has so willed it that the priestly life begun with the supplication and sacrifice of His mortal Body should continue without intermission down the ages in His Mystical Body which is the Church... Thus the society founded by the divine Redeemer, whether in her doctrine or government, or in the sacrifice and sacraments instituted by Him, or finally in the ministry, which He has confided to her charge with the outpouring of His prayer and the shedding of His blood, has no other purpose than to increase ever in strength and unity... The sacred liturgy is, consequently, the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members."

Implied in this declaration is the fact that the one Church of Christ alone offers this fit and acceptable public worship to God: "The Church alone offers to the human race that religion—that state of absolute perfection—which He wished, as it were, to be incorporated in it. And it alone supplies those means of salvation which accord with the ordinary counsels of Providence."

#### Perpetual Indivisibility

Certainly, that Church which is, and ever has been, numerically one and perfectly one in faith, government and worship and which has Christ for its Head and the Holy Spirit for its soul, must as a necessary consequence be infallible and indefectable in this unity



and ecumenicity. How else could it fulfill its ecumenical mission of instructing the nations and image forth the divinely given unity until the end of time? If Christ teaches through the Church, how could it err? If the Church is the Body of Christ, how could it be divided?

Its unity, however, the Church of Christ has never lost; never, for the briefest interval of time, will lose: forasmuch as, by the divine oracles, the Church is to endure forever. But how can its perpetual duration be believed, if the succession of ages bring about new aspects and form in its essential condition, even as the change-lapse so far from that unity of faith and communion in which it was founded by Jesus Christ and then propagated by the Apostles? ... Now, if the Church of Christ be altogether indefectible, it follows at once that it is to be asserted and believed infallible also in propounding the doctrines of the Gospel. And that Christ our Lord, by a wonderful gift, has bestowed on the Church, of which He is Himself the Head, the Bridegroom, and the Corner-stone, this prerogative of infallibility, is a fixed dogma of the Catholic faith. What man of sound mind, indeed, could persuade himself that error might lurk in the Church's public and authoritative office as teacher, instituted by Christ to this very end, that we should not now be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, in the wickedness of men, in craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive; and which He promised should never be destitute of His own presence, and should be taught all truth by the Holy Ghost: through which He willed that all nations should be called to the obedience of faith, and be taught what to believe and what to do; so that he should be condemned who would not believe the preaching of the Apostles and their lawful successors; and to which He gave the function and authority to prescribe the form of sound words, wherein all who are taught of God should unite? Hence St. Paul calls the Church the pillar and ground of truth. But how could the Church be the ground of truth, unless they who sought were secure of obtaining truth at her hands?"

#### Divine Support

Finally, the ultimate assignable reason for the stable unity, perpetual fruitfulness on an ecumenic scale, infallibility, and indefectibility of teaching and constitution of the one Church of Christ is the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not a mere fortuitous aggregation of individuals, but the living Mystical Body of Christ. Pius XII observes:

... if we compare a Mystical Body to a moral body, here again we must notice that the difference between them is not slight, rather

it is very considerable and very important. In the moral body, the principle of union is nothing more than the common end, and the common cooperation of all under authority for the attainment of that end; whereas in the Mystical Body, of which we are speaking, this collaboration is supplemented by a distinct internal principle, which exists effectively in the whole and in each of its parts, and whose excellence is such, that of itself it is vastly superior to whatever bonds of union may be found in a physical or moral body. This is something, as we said above, not of the natural but of the supernatural order. Essentially it is something infinite, uncreated: the Spirit of God, who, as the Angelic Doctor says, "numerically one and the same, fills and unifies the whole Church."

### 3. COMMUNION WITH THE SEE OF PETER

From the preceding articles, we have seen that the very nature of the Divine Plan of salvation requires that there be only one Church. Moreover, we have also noted that, by the will and intention of its Founder, this Church has enjoyed and will enjoy, a perpetual and perfect unity visible to the whole world. As a city seated upon a hill, it is easily discernible from all other claimants. The promises of Christ are infallibly efficacious—that one Church shall stand until the end of time. The will of Christ is eternally immutable as regards the nature and constitution of that one Church.

In vain is it urged that, because of sectarianism, the "ecumenical Church of Christ... is left impotent, a body without organs."<sup>14</sup> Sectarianism originated in departure from the one ecumenical Church of Christ. By the fissiparous process thus initiated, the sects deteriorated and fell apart into fragments with the resulting crisis of which they rightly complain. But the one Church of Christ continued to exist and function through divinely given organs. "Children did, alas, abandon their father's house but the house did not therefore fall into ruins, supported as it was by the unceasing help of God."<sup>15</sup> The perfection and stability of the One Church of Christ is such, that nothing is wanting to it which is necessary for the accomplishment of its divinely given task of applying the fruits of the Redemption to the successive ages of men.

#### Historical Identity of the Church

Now, in order to complete the notion and to specify with definite clarity this one Church of Christ, the Catholic Ecumenist declares